

# **THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION OF MATTHEW**

**An Explanation of the Writing of the Synoptic Gospels**

***B Ward Powers***

A dissertation submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

at the South African Theological Seminary

APRIL 2010

Supervisors: Dr K G Smith, Dr W R Domeris

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work, and has not previously been submitted to any institution for a degree.

B Ward Powers  
Sydney Australia

April 2010.

## ABSTRACT

The Synoptic Gospels are remarkable for the extent of their similarities and the significance of their differences. There is a longstanding widely-held consensus that the explanation of these features is the Markan Priority hypothesis, which places Mark as written first of all, and then used by the other two authors.

This dissertation presents an alternative explanation of the evidence: that the Gospel of Matthew was published progressively over several decades in a series of documents, some of which were later collected and used by Luke in writing his Gospel; and then Mark wrote third, using the other two Synoptics together with the preaching of Peter.

The existence of such early pre-Gospel documents is referred to by Luke in his Preface, and by Papias. The evidence is presented for the writing of such documents by the apostle Matthew and their use by Luke for the writing of his Gospel.

The testimony of the early church Fathers is that John Mark wrote the Second Gospel from Peter's preaching, commencing shortly prior to Peter's death, and completing and publishing his work soon after the death of this apostle. Mark's Gospel is explained as a handbook for preachers and evangelists in the early church, embodying the *kerygma* they proclaimed - the "action" stories showing who Jesus was, and what he did. Mark drew upon the two Major Synoptics for his material and his structure (first following the sequence of Luke and then of Matthew). However, Mark's vocabulary and his grammar reflect to a considerable extent the language of the preaching of Peter. A chapter of significant statistics supports this, showing the large extent to which the Gospel of Mark differs in these features from Matthew and Luke.

The two major Synoptic explanations, Markan Priority and Markan Posteriority, and the arguments in support of each, are examined for validity and coherence. The demonstration is given to show that Markan Dependence (the hypothesis that Mark is dependent upon Mark, Luke, and Peter) is superior in its explanation of the text of the Synoptic Gospels, and of other available evidence (including the church Fathers).

Further chapters provide more detailed consideration of the relationship of Luke and Matthew, precise details of the relationship of Mark to the Majors in the matter of pericope sequence, a consideration of other Synoptic explanations which have been put forward, and a detailed comparison of the text of the Rich Young Man pericope in the three Synoptics.

The Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis (including Markan Dependence) is shown to offer a better explanation of the data than Markan Priority or other hypotheses currently offered.

## CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?	5
The five basic propositions to which the evidence points	
2. THE CASE FOR THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION OF MATTHEW	49
The first of the two “legs” of the Progressive Publication hypothesis	
3. EXPLAINING MARK’S GOSPEL	88
Its nature and purpose, and a new pseudo-Markan pericope	
4. FLESHING OUT THE FACTS AND FIGURES	139
Just what the Synoptic textual similarities and differences are	
5. THE MARKAN PRIORITY EXPLANATION	201
The arguments in support, and the case against	
6. THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE EXPLANATION	257
For and Against, and some rebuttal	
7. SEVENTEEN IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST	301
Why Markan Priority cannot possibly be the answer	
8. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LUKE AND MATTHEW	398
The indications why Luke cannot have known Matthew	
9. PUTTING THINGS IN ORDER	436
A complete explanation of the order of the Synoptics	
10. A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OTHER IDEAS	506
The Complete Independence view, and other possibilities	
11. NOW TAKE THE CASE OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN	541
Detailed consideration of the text of this pericope	
12. IN CONCLUSION	593
Summing up the evidence, and where it points us	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	630

## **CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

### **1.1 THE FACTS OF THE MATTER**

- 1.1.1 Crying Out for an Explanation
- 1.1.2 Explanations of Distinctive Terminology
- 1.1.3 What Does It Matter Anyway?

### **1.2 SYNOPTIC EXPLANATIONS**

- 1.2.1 Earliest Times
- 1.2.2 Owen and Griesbach
- 1.2.3 William Sanday's Seminar and B H Streeter
- 1.2.4 Dom John Chapman, Bishop B C Butler, and Successive Dependence
- 1.2.5 The Lukan Priority View (the Jerusalem School)
- 1.2.6 The Ur-Gospel View
- 1.2.7 The Cross-Fertilisation View
- 1.2.8 Summary

### **1.3 THE VARIOUS HYPOTHESES ADVOCATED OVER THE YEARS**

- 1.3.1 The Complete Independence View
- 1.3.2 The Successive Dependence View
- 1.3.3 The Lukan Priority View
- 1.3.4 The Markan Priority View
  - (a) The Two-Source (or Two-Document) View
  - (b) The Farrer-Goulder View
- 1.3.5 The Markan Posteriority View
  - (a) The Two-Gospel View (the Farmer School)
  - (b) The Fourfold-Gospel View (the Orchard View)
- 1.3.6 The Cross-Fertilisation View

### **1.4 THE EXPLANATORY HYPOTHESIS PROPOSED**

#### **THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION OF MATTHEW VIEW**

The Five Propositions:

- 1: Matthew Responds to a Growing Need: Initial Written Accounts
- 2: Many Have Taken It In Hand To Write
- 3: Luke Collects His Material
- 4: Publication of the Two Major Synoptic Gospels
- 5: Mark Produces A Special-purpose Gospel

# **CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

## **1.1 THE FACTS OF THE MATTER**

### **1.1.1 Crying Out for an Explanation**

A thoughtful reader of the New Testament Gospels will quickly be struck by a noticeable feature of the first three: their similarities—the bits they have in common; and their differences—the places where they vary from one another, and even on occasion may seem to contradict each other.

The purpose of this dissertation is to consider these issues of Synoptic similarities and differences, to examine the immense variety in the explanations that have been offered down the years from earliest times in the Christian era to the present century, and their shortcomings, and to offer an explanation which (it will be contended) accounts for all of the data more comprehensively and more convincingly than any of the others hitherto proposed.

These Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are often called the Synoptics, a word which means “look at them together, each one with the others”. And when they are compared side by side, these quite remarkable similarities and differences cry out for an explanation.

There are sections where the three Synoptics, or two of them, run parallel in content, or—in places—where for quite a few words at a time they are word-for-word identical. Now if this is in a teaching that Jesus gave or a story that he told, then the explanation could simply be that this is indeed what was said (or reported), and the authors (the two of them, or all three) got it right (whatever their sources). But if it is a piece of narrative—a description that some author has written—then this explanation is not adequate, and we need to look for another. The words that would spring to mind for us would be “collusion” or “copying”—either one Gospel writer copied from another, or they used a common source (written or oral).

But the differences between the Synoptics are also at times quite remarkable and cry out for an explanation: for if one Gospel writer used another—if A used B—why does A change so much of B? By accident? To make a point? By way of correction? Under the influence of some external consideration (e.g., a later church tradition or doctrine)? All these possibilities, and more, have been put forward in the wealth of literature that discusses these issues. These Synoptic differences are so great and so varied that large numbers of solutions to this Synoptic enigma have been proposed to account for them.

The differences are of three main varieties: differences of points of detail in the stories that they contain; differences of content in the stories overall (including that some stories or “units” of material are included in only one Gospel, some in two, and some in all three); and thirdly, where the Gospels do contain the same pericopes, differences in Synoptic order: that is, differences in the sequence in which they say things happened.

How are we to account for these differences? How do we account for the similarities? Seeking to give a satisfactory explanation of all these phenomena is something of a problem. This entire issue of the similarities and differences between the first three Gospels has been designated “the Synoptic Problem”, and over the last two to three centuries it has been one of the major issues of New Testament scholarship.

There are those who have propounded the complete independence of the three Synoptic Gospels, explaining away their similarities. And there are those who have attributed the similarities to some measure of copying between the three authors, these scholars then explaining away the differences. Each of the Synoptics has been pronounced by some of the scholars to be the first written, and then there still remains for explanation the question of the similarities and differences between the other two (whichever you consider them to be). The permutations of possibilities give rise to quite a few differing hypotheses being advanced to explain the data.

An explanation of Synoptic relationships (that is to say, a solution of the Synoptic Problem) needs to address all these Synoptic features, and it will be—or ought to be—judged on the basis of its explanatory power. That is, on the extent to which it can supply a convincing and satisfactory account of what we observe in these Gospels.

### 1.1.2 Explanation of Distinctive Terminology

Numbers of terms and abbreviations are used in the discussion of the Synoptic Problem. Those used in this dissertation are:

// indicates parallel passages in the other Gospel(s)

cf. compare            sc. know, recognize, understand

E: (after a Bible reference) indicates the End of the chapter the passage comes from

L: The Gospel material found only in the Gospel of Luke

M: The Gospel material found only in the Gospel of Matthew

P: Designation for Mark’s third source: Peter, and Private information

Q: (from German *Quelle*, “source”): postulated source that was used by Matthew and Luke for the material they have in common that is not in Mark, or even used simply for material that they have in common, without necessarily implying a commonality of source

Double tradition: Material common to Matthew and Luke

early church Fathers: the earliest Christian writers

Major Synoptics: the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, called thus not only because of their considerably greater length but also because they received a great deal more attention than Mark from the early church Fathers onwards

Markan Priority: The view that Mark was the first Synoptic written

Markan Posteriority: the view that Mark was the third Synoptic written

Markan Dependence: the view that Mark was the third Synoptic written, and was dependent upon Matthew, Luke, and the preaching of Peter

oral tradition: Gospel material transmitted orally (as distinct from in written form) during the period after Christ's resurrection

Patristics: relating to the early church Fathers

pericope (pronounced "peRICKoppee"): a section or unit of Gospel material which is more or less independently distinguishable, be it a teaching or an account of an event (the term is used rather loosely by some authors)

sondergut (German term): material unique to one particular Gospel

Triple Tradition: Material paralleled in all three Synoptic Gospels

### 1.1.3 What Does It Matter Anyway?

A querulous Bible reader may raise an objection to this entire discussion: "But what does it matter anyway?" Actually, it matters seriously, for several important reasons.

Firstly, at the academic level: here is a significant issue in New Testament research which has been a focus for Gospel scholarship for more than two centuries. If there is now a hypothesis propounded that has greater explanatory power than those offered hitherto, then it should be examined and assessed, and a verdict given on its validity. All kinds of repercussions flow from the explanation one adopts for Synoptic differences. For example: certain hypothesis variations of the "literary interdependence" view will push one towards giving the Gospels a late date, which in turn will affect one's approach to questions of authorship, which interacts with one's assessment of how close in time the Gospel material is to the events recorded and thus to a measure of its reliability.

In 2000 David Black and David Beck convened a Conference at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary which gathered together (to quote the convenors) "some of the world's leading experts in the field of New Testament studies". The purpose was to assess the current state of scholarship relating to the Synoptic Problem. The papers presented to that Conference have been published (2001) by Baker Academic as *Rethinking The Synoptic Problem*, edited by Black and Beck. One point of consensus



amongst the differing viewpoints put forward at that Conference was the crucial nature of this issue in New Testament scholarship. Craig Bloomberg expresses this consensus when he writes (40),

the Synoptic Problem is an important matter. ... When we recognize the solution to the Synoptic Problem to be a central building block in our understanding of how to answer questions about the trustworthiness of the Gospels and the distinctive theologies of each evangelist, we cannot help but appreciate its importance.

Secondly, at the practical/pastoral level: what are we to make of the Gospel accounts where they differ? For at times they tell quite a different story. As in the differing accounts of Simon Peter's call in Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20) on the one hand and Luke (5:1-11) on the other. Again, when the synagogue ruler Jairus came to Jesus, was his daughter already dead (Matthew 9:18) or still alive, though close to death (Mark 5:23//Luke 8:42)? And regarding the rich ruler who came to Jesus: was he still young (Matthew 19:20), or does his claim to have kept the commandments **from the time of his youth** (Mark 10:20//Luke 18:21) indicate that he was young no longer? Did Jesus encounter blind Bartimaeus when entering (Luke 18:35) or leaving Jericho (Matthew 20:29//Mark 10:46)? Was the name of the tax collector Matthew (Matthew 9:9) or Levi (Mark 2:14//Luke 5:27)? And so on—there are countless similar differences.

I am not saying that these differences cannot be reconciled: armies of Christian writers have proffered explanations of such differences down the years. What I am saying is that there is no attempt **in the Gospel texts themselves** to give any reconciliation of such differences.

Now, if you are, say, preaching about one of these stories, you can avoid all such problems by simply choosing one of the Gospel accounts and ignoring any other version.

Or, one approach suggested is to say that all three accounts are quite independent—there was no literary copying at all, and the differences we see in the stories are exactly the kind of differences which would be found between the accounts of any two (or three) witnesses of the same event. Fair enough, this Complete Independence view could account for the Synoptic differences, but how about those remarkable similarities (of wording, and at times of pericope order) in the Synoptics?

But when one proposes such an approach as this, what we have begun to do now is to start seeking for an explanation for these similarities and differences. And that is exactly what this present dissertation is about: to examine the Gospel material, and to seek for an explanation that accounts for the observable data.

## 1.2. SYNOPTIC EXPLANATIONS

### 1.2.1. Earliest Times

What did the Early Church Fathers say about the issues of the Synoptic Problem? By and large they ignored it. There is consistent testimony on one point: the Fathers are unanimous in accepting that Matthew was the first Gospel to be written. The patristic information, with a fresh translation of the relevant passages from the Fathers, is readily accessible in David Alan Black's *Why Four Gospels?* (2001: 37-44). If indeed Mark was the first Gospel to be written—as is commonly held today by many—this piece of information was not known to a single one of the earliest Christian writers.

But while numbers of the Fathers do comment on the question of the *order of writing*, it is without in any way addressing the question as to how the Synoptics were related in terms of sources or any possible copying. There are, however, two exceptions, John Chrysostom, and Augustine: these men *did* comment specifically on the question of possible Gospel interrelationships. These two Church Fathers were the first to address the question of any kind of interrelationship between the Gospels, or the use of one Gospel by another author. They both wrote at about the same time (c.400) and expressed different views.

John Chrysostom strongly affirmed the independence of the Gospel authors and considered that the nature and extent of their agreements and differences is “a very great demonstration of the truth” of what they have written. (This is the *Complete Independence* view.) And Augustine asserted that the order which the Gospels have in the canon—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—was the order in which they had been written, and that each writer utilized the work of his predecessor(s). (This is the *Successive Dependence* view.)

The most explicit statement of this Independence position by John Chrysostom is found in his *Homilies on Matthew* preached in Antioch in Syria during the latter part of the fourth century. In Homily I.5-6 he discusses the four Gospels, expressing the view that the authors wrote independently of each other and that the disagreements between them, while minor, show that they did not act in collusion, and thus that their basic agreement on all essentials “becomes a very great demonstration of the truth”. Chrysostom's full comment reads (2-3):

And why can it have been, that when there were so many disciples, two write only from among the apostles, and two from among their followers? (For one that was a disciple of Paul, and another of Peter, together with Matthew and John, wrote the Gospels.) It was because they did nothing for vainglory, but all things for use.

‘What then? Was not one evangelist sufficient to tell all?’ One indeed was sufficient; but if there be four that write, not at the same times, nor in the same places, neither after having met together, and conversed one with another, and then they speak all things as it were out of one mouth, this becomes a very great demonstration of the truth.

‘But the contrary,’ it may be said, ‘hath come to pass, for in many places they are convicted of discordance.’ Nay, this very thing is a very great evidence of their truth. For if they had agreed in all things exactly even to time, and place, and to the very words, none of our enemies would have believed but that they had met together, and had written what they wrote by some human compact; because such entire agreement as this cometh not of simplicity. But now even that discordance which seems to exist in little matters delivers them from all suspicion, and speaks clearly in behalf of the character of the writers.

Subsequently, in Homily IV.1, on Matthew’s Genealogy, Chrysostom makes two further comments concerning the Gospels: that Matthew was followed by Mark and Luke; and that the two later ones supplemented the earlier. He says (20):

‘Why then,’ one may say, ‘doth not Mark do this, nor trace Christ’s genealogy, but utter everything briefly?’ It seems to me that Matthew was before the rest in entering on the subject (wherefore he both sets down the genealogy with exactness, and stops at those things which require it): but that Mark came after him, which is why he took a short course, as putting his hand to what had been already spoken and made manifest.

How is it then that Luke not only traces the genealogy, but [traces] it through a greater number? As was natural, Matthew having led the way, he seeks to teach us somewhat in addition to former statements. And each too in like manner imitated his master; the one, Paul, who flows fuller than any river; the other, Peter, who studies brevity.

Note that this comment does not contradict what Chrysostom had said earlier: he is not implying that Mark *utilized* or *copied from* Matthew, nor Luke from Matthew (or Mark), but that Mark was brief because Matthew had already written fully (and also because Peter, the implied source of Mark’s information, was one “who studied brevity”), and Luke in his genealogy traces it through a greater number of ancestors than Matthew because “he seeks to teach us somewhat in addition to former statements” and because he “too in like manner imitated his master, ... Paul, who flows fuller than any river...”

Thus Chrysostom’s view was that the integrity of the Gospels depended upon the complete independence of their respective accounts. Chrysostom cites no source for his information; his comment apparently represents his own judgement in the matter. His comment is an uncritical assessment: that the Gospels were not interrelated, but were works of completely independent authorship.

In about AD 400, in Book 1 of *The Harmony of the Gospels*, Augustine set out the first statement of any of the church Fathers that discussed the interrelationship between the Gospels. Augustine wrote as follows (Book 1, 2.3-3.6):

Now those four evangelists whose names have gained the most remarkable circulation over the whole world, and whose number has been fixed as four ... are believed to have written in the order which follows: first Matthew, then Mark, thirdly Luke, lastly John. ...

And however they may appear to have kept each of them a certain order of narration proper to himself, this certainly is not to be taken as if each individual writer chose to write in ignorance of what his predecessor had done, or left out as matters about which there was no information things which another nevertheless is seen to have recorded. But the fact is, that just as they received, each of them, the gift of inspiration, they abstained from adding to their several labours any superfluous conjoint compositions. For Matthew is understood to have taken it in hand to construct the record of the incarnation of the Lord according to the royal lineage, and to give an account of most part of His deeds and words as they stood in relation to this present life of men.

Mark follows him closely, and looks like his attendant and epitomizer. For in his narrative he gives nothing in concert with John apart from the others: by himself separately, he has little to record; in conjunction with Luke, as distinguished from the rest, he has still less; but in concord with Matthew, he has a very large number of passages. Much, too, he narrates in words almost numerically and identically the same as those used by Matthew, where the agreement is either with that evangelist alone, or with him in connection with the rest.

On the other hand, Luke appears to have occupied himself rather with the priestly lineage and character of the Lord. ... Luke, on the other hand, had no one connected with him to act as his summarist in the way that Mark was attached to Matthew. And it may be that this is not without a certain solemn significance. For it is the right of kings not to miss the obedient following of attendants; and hence the evangelist who had taken it in hand to give an account of the kingly character of Christ has a person attached to him as his associate who was in some fashion to follow in his steps. But inasmuch as it was the priest's wont to enter all alone into the holy of holies, in accordance with that principle, Luke, whose object contemplated the priestly office of Christ, did not have any one to come after him as a confederate, who was meant in some way to serve as an epitomizer of his narrative.

The overall consequence of Augustine's comments, in which he simultaneously upheld that the number of the Gospels has been fixed as four and implied dismissively that Mark was of negligible value if one had Matthew, was to lead to a neglect of Mark's

Gospel that continued until the development of Synoptic scholarship in the last two centuries or so.

Augustine says nothing of the exact nature of the relationship of Luke or John to those Gospels which were (on this view) written before them, beyond his brief comment, "And however they may appear to have kept each of them a certain order of narration proper to himself [a reference, apparently, to the different order of the pericopes in the Gospels], this certainly is not to be taken as if each individual writer chose to write in ignorance of what his predecessor had done, or left out as matters about which there was no information things which another nevertheless is seen to have recorded."

The primary emphasis of Augustine's comment is that Matthew was the first Gospel written and that Mark was Matthew's "epitomizer", so that the second Gospel contains little that is not in the first. This is the only Gospel relationship that is explicitly developed. The final clause just quoted suggests that each writer knew everything that all his predecessors had written, while the clause prior to it refutes the idea of a writer choosing to write in ignorance of what his predecessor had done. Hence this view has been termed the "Successive Dependence" view.

However, in an essay "Augustine and the Augustinian Hypothesis: A Reexamination of Augustine's Thought in *De Consensu Evangelistarum*" (in *New Synoptic Studies*, Ed. Farmer, 1983) David Peabody draws attention to a further comment by Augustine which points to a change of mind.

Peabody describes the view of Synoptic relationships which Augustine sets out in Book 1, and then continues (47):

From 2.1.2 to 4.3.10 Augustine was involved in a careful comparison of the four gospels. Up to this point in the *De Consensu [Harmony]* he had considered all of the parallel material within all four of the gospels and all of the *Sondergut* within Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Therefore, only the *Sondergut* of John remained to be considered when he came to 4.10.11. At this point Augustine made his concluding statement about the gospels in relationship to one another, looking back on his work with the Synoptic Gospels and looking forward to his work with the Johannine *Sondergut*.

Augustine's "concluding statement", in Book 4, 10.11, gives what he calls "the more probable account of the matter", in which he says of Mark that "he holds a course in conjunction with both [the other Synoptists]. For although he is at one with Matthew in the larger number of passages, he is nevertheless at one rather with Luke in some others." Peabody points out that, in context, this looks very much as if Augustine has come to the conclusion, after his detailed consideration of the Synoptic writings, that

Mark is “at one” with both Matthew and Luke in ways which indicate Mark was writing after them, i.e. his Gospel was the third written.

This interpretation of Augustine’s comment is not beyond contention, but I find it quite convincing. If Peabody’s assessment of Augustine is correct—and it certainly appears to me to be very well taken—then when he began writing his *Harmony of the Gospels* Augustine took over what he judged to be Irenaeus’s view (the view also of Origin) of the order of the Gospels as Matthew—Mark—Luke—John, and he understood this also to mean their **order of writing**. Then in the course of his examination of the textual evidence Augustine was led to consider a second view, which he describes now as “more probable”. That is, Augustine places Luke alongside Matthew as a source for Mark. Peabody interprets Augustine’s later comment to indicate that, after his careful comparison of the Synoptics, he had come to the conclusion that Mark is literarily dependent upon both Matthew and Luke: so that the Gospel of Mark must have been written after the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

However, the apparent change in Augustine’s view in the course of his Gospel studies, and his comment about his change of mind, went unnoticed by those who continued to endorse Successive Dependence. Augustine’s name is still being given to his earlier view that places the sequence of the Gospels, and their relationship, as Matthew—Mark—Luke—John, so that modern writers continue to attribute this to him as the “Augustinian Hypothesis”.

Here the matter rested until the eighteenth century. Dungan (1999: 140) explains: “Augustine’s exhaustive discussion of the similarities and differences among the Gospels became the last word on the subject for more than a thousand years.”

### 1.2.2 Owen and Griesbach

In 1764, in Britain, Henry Owen published *Observations on the Four Gospels* in which he set out a careful case for recognizing that Mark was third-written and that it made use of Matthew and Luke.

Owen himself regarded his Synoptic explanation as strengthening one’s confidence in the accuracy of the Gospels at a time when some were calling this into question. In his Preface (iv) he explains,

Could we truly discover at what time, for whose use, and on what occasion the Gospels were respectively written, we should doubtless be able, not only to understand them more perfectly, but also to read them with more profit, than we have the happiness at present to pretend to. For such a discovery, as it would throw light on the difficult passages, and help

us to reconcile the seeming contradictions, that obstruct our progress in these sacred studies, so would it impart an additional lustre, force, and propriety to the several arguments that the Scripture offers for the confirmation and improvement of our faith.

He returns later (83) to this question of “seeming contradictions” thus:

How, then, came they not to avoid the many contradictions observable among them? These are only seeming contradictions; and vanish most of them, on a close comparison of the several passages: and were we sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances of the facts, the views of the Relators, the turns of their expressions, and the method they used in their computations, the rest would doubtless immediately disappear; and the several Gospels would perfectly correspond with each other.

Owen summarizes the work of Mark (74):

It is apparent that St. Mark makes quick and frequent transitions from one evangelist to the other; and blends their accounts, I mean their words, in such a manner as is utterly inexplicable upon any other footing than by supposing he had both these Gospels before him.

As Owen looked upon the Synoptics, thus linked by the literary relationship that he had pointed out, he was strengthened by his studies to recognize (85) them to be ...

... one complete, entire system of Divinity, supported by the strongest proofs that the subject is capable of, and defended against all the objections which either Jews or Gentiles, or even its more dangrous heretical Professors, could make to the truth and certainty of it.

Their literary links were an additional sign of their genuineness (110):

They likewise quoted each other's words, and thereby recommended each other's Histories. A circumstance of great advantage, whatever some may think of it, to the service of the Christian cause. For by this means they became not only mutual Vouchers for the truth of these *genuine* Gospels, but at the same time joint-opposers of all those *spurious* ones that were impiously obtruded on the world. [Owen's italics.]

Owen's book did not create much of an impact in the scholarly world. Then in 1774 Johann Jakob Griesbach produced the first volume of a new critical text of the Greek New Testament, covering the Gospels, and he arranged the Gospels in the form of a Synopsis. Then in 1776 he reissued this *Synopsis of the Gospels* as a separate work.

It is not known whether Owen ever encountered Griesbach, the scholar who was to become identified most closely with the Matthew-Luke-Mark thesis. Indeed, the extent to which Griesbach was aware of the earlier work of Owen is uncertain, but they may well have met when Griesbach visited London in 1769. But in any case it is known that Griesbach had a copy of Owen's book in his library, though he may not have read it as he makes no mention of it—it could be that he reached his conclusions independently, from his own studies.

Griesbach's *Synopsis* placed parallel passages in Matthew, Mark and Luke in adjoining columns, which allowed their side-by-side comparison. This made possible, for the first time, a careful pericope-by-pericope and verse-by-verse study of the similarities and differences in sequence and content between the first three Gospels, and thus facilitated the investigation of their interrelationships and origins. Reicke (*Griesbach Studies*, in Orchard & Longstaff, 1978:69) comments,

And in fact all scholarly discussion of the relations between Matthew, Mark and Luke which has taken place during the last 200 years goes back to Griesbach's publication of his *Synopsis* in 1776.

Griesbach himself entered into a thorough examination of what his *Synopsis* revealed, and concluded that the evidence indicated that Mark wrote third and had used Matthew and Luke. The first outline of the Synoptic theory that Griesbach came to adopt was published in 1783.

This view which places Mark as third-written became widely known because of Griesbach's work and consequently is very frequently referred to as the Griesbach hypothesis or (more recently) the Owen-Griesbach hypothesis.

In 1786 G C Storr introduced the theory of Markan Priority, and vigorously rejected Griesbach's hypothesis which placed Mark last amongst the Synoptics. Then Griesbach produced in 1789 a more detailed treatment of his viewpoint, *Commentatio*, reissued with additions in 1794, in which he also replied to Storr's criticisms.

However, William Baird (1987: 35) tells us that

Griesbach believed that Luke was dependent on the Gospel of Matthew [and] ... had presented [this thesis] in a paper during the celebration of Easter at Jena in 1783, eleven years before the publication of his monumental *Commentatio*.

Griesbach's treatment of this thesis was carefully examined by H H Stoldt in an appendix to the second German (1986) edition of his *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*. Baird (38) reports that Stoldt analyzed Griesbach's treatment and concluded, "Griesbach's claim that Luke used Matthew cannot be sustained." It would seem that Griesbach himself realized this upon reflection, for (Baird 38)

Stoldt also observes that Griesbach's secondary hypothesis is found exclusively in his earlier work. After further research on the synoptic problem, and in the course of the ongoing controversy, Griesbach may have been content to let his notion about Luke's use of Matthew slip into undisturbed silence.

But Griesbach was not totally silent about his new conclusion, as we shall see.

Griesbach wrote in Latin—his 1794 *Commentatio*, setting out his hypothesis,



remained unavailable in English until Orchard provided a signal service in undertaking its translation, and it is now accessible in the Cambridge monograph *J J Griesbach: Synoptic and Text-Critical Studies 1776-1976*. The title of Griesbach's *Commentatio* is rendered into English by Orchard as *A Demonstration That Mark Was Written After Matthew and Luke*.

Griesbach was now exclusively concerned with the question of the nature of the relationship which exists between the three canonical Synoptic Gospels, and he found this fully explained by the dependence of Mark upon Matthew and Luke. He did not investigate the prior stage, that is, what lay behind the canonical Synoptics and how they came into existence.

Commenting on this, Bernard Orchard says (1978: 17, 129) that Griesbach

... established the sequence, first, Matthew and Luke, second, Mark. But he nowhere in this treatise discussed the relationship of Luke to Matthew, though he is aware of the question. ... Griesbach allows that it is a question that should have an answer, but in fact it would seem that he took no steps to answer it.

As Orchard has mentioned, the relationship of Luke to Matthew is left undiscussed in his *Commentatio* - Griesbach never does tell us explicitly what he considered it to be. The Griesbach hypothesis does not include any statement about the relationship of Luke to Matthew.

Farmer's Two-Gospel school of thought is convinced otherwise. Farmer wrote (1964: 69),

According to Griesbach, Luke first used Matthew, and then Mark combined Matthew and Luke. This means that Mark was combining two Gospels between which there already exists a relationship of literary dependence.

That Luke used Matthew is a view that Griesbach had held briefly and then abandoned. So Farmer is rather overstating the Griesbach hypothesis, as Griesbach sets it out in his *Commentatio*. The only time when Griesbach referred to the relationship of Luke with Matthew, this is what he actually wrote (ET 1978: 131):

Therefore, the question comes back to this: how did it happen that *Luke* arranged parts of his narrative otherwise than Matthew? This is not the place for examining the question, since we are dealing with Mark. We shall only permit ourselves to note that Luke has departed less than Matthew from the true sequence of events.

We observe here that Griesbach expressly sets on one side any discussion of the question of the relation of Luke to Matthew with the comment, "This is not the place for examining the question, since we are dealing with Mark"; and he does not return to it at

any other place. Thus Orchard is quite correct when he says (1976: 17) that Griesbach “nowhere in this treatise discusses the relationship of Luke to Matthew”. But in fact Griesbach’s comment, although indeed it does not **discuss** the relationship of Luke to Matthew, allows us to perceive what Griesbach, upon reflection, had come to hold that relationship to be.

In saying “We shall only permit ourselves to note that Luke has departed less than Matthew from the true sequence of events”, Griesbach indicates: “Matthew has departed from the true sequence of events and Luke has not done so at all, or at least to a lesser extent.” This means either (or both) that Matthew had a plan of arrangement of pericopes which was not as chronological as was Luke’s, and/or that Matthew was less informed about the sequence of events than was Luke. In either case it shows quite clearly that in Griesbach’s view Luke was not dependent upon Matthew for the sequence of pericopes in his own Gospel. This is the inescapable conclusion to be drawn from the meaning of his words.

Thus Griesbach’s comment indicates that Luke had independent knowledge of “the true sequence of events”, knowledge that enabled him to give these events in chronologically correct order on occasions when Matthew did not. And this in turn indicates that Luke had **independent knowledge of the pericopes themselves**, for clearly Luke cannot have known the “true sequence” of the pericopes while being ignorant of the pericopes. Griesbach’s comment does not totally preclude Luke from having known Matthew’s Gospel; but it does preclude Luke from having drawn his material and sequence of pericopes exclusively from Matthew, in those that they have in common. Furthermore, it shows that Griesbach held the view that Luke was in some significant measure independent of Matthew, had access to chronological information different from (and more accurate as regards “the true sequence of events” than) what is given in Matthew, and that Luke was guided by a different principle of compilation of pericopes from that of Matthew. That is, Griesbach did not regard Luke’s Gospel as dependent upon or drawn from Matthew: Luke was sourced independently.

But it has become the norm to attribute to Griesbach himself the later (Farmer) idea that Luke had available—and used—Matthew. Typical of this is the comment found in Gundry’s *Survey of the New Testament* (2003: 94). This says that according to Griesbach, “Matthew wrote first. Then Luke used Matthew. Finally, Mark wrote an abbreviated combination of Matthew and Luke.” Gundry then sets out this assessment of Griesbach’s view as a diagram on page 97.

The assertion that Griesbach’s hypothesis was that Luke used Matthew is **simply not**

**so.** Griesbach specifically said that Luke's relation to Matthew was not an issue that he dealt with, and his one brief comment that touches on the matter indicates (as we have just seen) that he considered Luke independent of the completed Matthew.

For a time after it was set forth, the Griesbach hypothesis was the prevailing viewpoint amongst German New Testament scholars and had many prominent adherents. Why this view then fell into disfavour and dissuetude, and the Markan Priority hypothesis came to prevail instead, are investigated by H H Stoldt in his thorough treatise *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis* (1977, E.T. 1980). Stoldt goes on to detail the weaknesses of the Markan Priority hypothesis, and after comparing this view with the Griesbach hypothesis he concludes (259)

Henry Owen and Johann Jacob Griesbach correctly recognized that Matthew and Luke formed the textual basis for Mark. And Griesbach in fact proved this with a textual analysis carried out with philological precision.

However, the Griesbach hypothesis found little favour in Britain. It was supported by Samuel Davidson in 1868 in the second edition of his *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament* (reissued in 1882 and 1894). But it was strongly opposed by Edwin A Abbott and F H Woods.

Abbott's article on "The Gospels" appeared in Volume x of the 1879 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In it Abbott asserted (791) that "It can be proved by *reduction ad absurdum* that Mark did not copy from Matthew and Luke." Abbott's argument consisted of a demonstration that it was impossible for a person such as Mark to produce a document such as the Second Gospel by combining the material of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the way that the Griesbach hypothesis contends occurred. This is certainly a serious assertion: if it could not be done, then clearly Mark did not do it. In this dissertation I will answer Abbott's assertion in the most effective way: by doing it.

In 1886 Woods read a paper on the Synoptic Problem in which he set out four arguments against the Griesbach position. His four arguments are:

- (1) We cannot reasonably account for the remarkable omissions which St Mark must continually have made ...
- (2) It is almost impossible to suggest any method by which St Mark could have made his selection.
- (3) This view would not account for the order of St Mark in several passages ...
- (4) Lastly, this view leads us into greater difficulties than those it proposes to solve.

His conclusion is,

We seem therefore forced to adopt the opposite alternative, viz., that St Matthew and St Luke both made use of a Gospel very nearly agreeing with our present St Mark in its subject matter and the order of its contents.

The arguments of Woods and Abbott carried the day. After recording (63-85) these objections raised against the Griesbach viewpoint, Farmer comments in wonderment (1964: 84-85),

The historian of the Synoptic Problem is led to ask anew, 'how could it have been possible for the Griesbach hypothesis to have received no more serious attention than was afforded to it by the leading students of the synoptic problem at both Oxford and Cambridge, even granting the powerful influence of the arguments of Woods and Abbott against this hypothesis?'

The criticisms made by Woods and Abbott in Britain were so effective that no voice was raised thereafter in advocacy of Markan Posteriority. Consequently, the main proponents of Markan Priority during the past century or so have engaged in only very limited rebuttal of the Markan Posteriority position.

But the publication of Bishop B C Butler's careful critique of Markan Priority in 1951—see below—caused waves in the scholarly world. Later in the decade that followed Butler's publication, William Farmer encountered it and reached the conviction that Butler had undermined the basis of Markan Priority. As a result of his own study of the issues he produced in 1964 his *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, in which he presented the case for reopening the discussion of the Synoptic Problem, and reexamined the Griesbach hypothesis that Mark was third-written and had used Matthew and Luke.

Farmer's work, and that of his students and followers, who now term their position the "Two-Gospel" view, has indeed succeeded in reopening the Synoptic debate. Since the publication of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem* there has been an increase in the attention paid by writers to the rebuttal (as distinct from the mere rejection) of Markan dependence upon Matthew (and Luke). Farmer's position has been subjected to detailed challenge. The best-known systematic presentations of the case against the Griesbach Hypothesis (Markan Posteriority) are: "Can The Griesbach Hypothesis Be Falsified?" by C H Talbert and E V McKnight (1972), and "The Priority of Mark and the 'Q' Source in Luke" by Joseph A Fitzmyer (1970). And the detailed comparison of the Markan Priority and Markan Posteriority perspectives in explaining general phenomena and particular passages in the Synoptics has been attempted with great care and thoroughness in C M Tuckett's *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis* (1983).

Thus we can see that the “Two-Gospel” case has received much attention, but it has not found widespread acceptance. The two main reasons for this have been:

1. The Two-Gospel school hold that Luke used Matthew for his Gospel, and many scholars find convincing reasons why they cannot accept this; and
2. Ultimately the reasons put forward by the “Two-Gospel School” for Mark writing his Gospel when the church already had Matthew and Luke—and how Mark would have had to have treated these Gospels—have not been considered persuasive.

### 1.2.3 William Sanday’s Seminar, and B H Streeter

The Markan Priority hypothesis was given a solid foundation in Britain by Abbott, Woods (whom I have mentioned, above), and Sanday. In fact, it is beyond question that the main influence in the establishing of British views on the Synoptic Problem was the Oxford Seminar conducted by William Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford University.

Sanday began this Seminar in 1894, and it met several times a year for many years to engage in the study of the Synoptic Gospels with the express intention of addressing the Synoptic Problem and of considering the consequences of the outcome at which they arrived: which was the Two-Document view (that Matthew and Luke drew upon Mark together with a postulated second document, Q). This Seminar included many people who made their own personal contribution to New Testament scholarship, including John Hawkins (with his *Horae Synopticae*, 1899, revised 1909), W C Allen (author of the influential *ICC on Matthew* 1907, which I cite numerous times in this dissertation), and B H Streeter. These four men were the major contributors to Sanday’s volume *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* published in 1911. In the first words of his contribution to this book (235) Allen says,

The criticism of the Synoptic Gospels seems to have reached this point. It is very generally agreed that Matthew and Luke have edited and enlarged the Second Gospel. The points still debated in this connexion [sic] are details. The main fact is, as it would seem, undeniable.

Streeter’s *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, published in 1924, which summed up and consolidated where the researches of scholarship had reached by this time, included a very clear and compelling presentation of the case for the Two-Document hypothesis, Mark and Q. The concept of Q is introduced because the Markan Priority hypothesis—that Mark’s Gospel was the first of the Synoptics to be written, and was used by Matthew and Luke in writing their Gospels—can only be called upon to explain

the sections that are parallel in Matthew and Mark, or Mark and Luke, or all three. But this hypothesis on its own is insufficient to account for all the features of similarity in the Synoptics, for there are several major passages and a large number of shorter sayings that are absent in Mark but parallel in Matthew and Luke. Most of those who hold the Markan Priority view accept also the hypothesis that the material common to the two Major Synoptics but not in Mark is derived by Matthew and Luke from a source these scholars designate Q.

A range of opinion exists concerning the nature of Q. Streeter regarded Q as having been an actual document, and he was supported in this by numbers of other scholars such as T W Manson and Vincent Taylor. Others, such as Styler (1962: 223), consider it better to employ the term Q to denote the material common to Matthew and Luke (but absent from Mark) rather than to denote a document. From this perspective, Q consisted most probably of a mixture of short documents in Greek and Aramaic and a rather amorphous body of semi-fixed oral tradition.

Yet again, there are other scholars who accept Markan Priority but who do not find the evidence for Q to be convincing and who therefore reject this hypothesis. Thus in “On Dispensing With Q”, Austin Farrer (1955: 55-86) contends that Luke drew on Matthew, and there is thus no case for Q. He was supported by Michael Goulder and this position has been advocated in 2001 by Mark Goodacre (see §5.4.3, below, and in more detail, Chapter Ten, §10.4.2).

The view that Mark and Q are the sources for Matthew and Luke became commonly known as the “Two-Document hypothesis”—though this term is something of an anomaly for those scholars who do not consider Q to be one document but several, and/or who regard Q as having contained oral tradition, and the term is increasingly being replaced by “Two-Source hypothesis”, which has the same meaning without carrying any implication about the nature of Q. I am happy to use either term.

As Q is regarded as the source for the material that Matthew and Luke have in common and that is not paralleled in Mark, so its role is to offer an explanation for the similarities between the Major Synoptics that cannot be explained by Markan Priority. Thus Q is something of a mathematical abstraction dependent upon Markan Priority. It is derived by adding up all the common material in Matthew and Luke, and deducting from this all the material that is in Mark as well, and what you have left you can call Q: i.e.,  $(Mt \text{ also } Lk) - Mk = Q$ .

As the Q hypothesis is subordinate to the question of Markan Priority, I shall focus my attention primarily upon the question of the priority of Mark and its use as a source by Matthew and Luke.

In his *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, Streeter goes further than Mark and Q. He suggests that Matthew and Luke each had used written sources for the material peculiar to their respective Gospels (and he designates these sources as M and L)—thus developing the Two-Document hypothesis into a Four-Document hypothesis. He hypothesizes further that there was an original draft of Luke's Gospel (which he terms Proto-Luke) which Luke completed before encountering Mark and into which he then added sections of Mark.

Streeter did not carry many scholars with him in his thesis of Proto-Luke, although quite a few have been willing to adopt the terms M and L—though often these terms are used as a convenience to designate the material rather than to indicate a commitment to the belief that these symbols necessarily refer to actual documents. Streeter was however outstandingly successful with his presentation of the Two-Document theory, so that his book became for many years the classic statement of the case and every other book written on this topic since then has of necessity had to interact with Streeter's position and with his arguments in favour of his conclusions: books both by those who accept this position and those who oppose it.

Streeter is, as he tells us, the inheritor of a "century of discussion" and he sets out to summarize the fruits of this. He says (157):

A century of discussion has resulted in a consensus of scholars that ... the authors of the First and Third Gospels made use either of our Mark, or of a document all but identical with Mark. The former and the simpler of these alternatives, viz. that they used our Mark, is the one which I hope in the course of this and the following chapters to establish beyond reasonable doubt.

In his presentation of what he entitles "The Fundamental Solution", he says (151-152; and also 159-162):

I will now present a summary statement of the main facts and considerations which show the dependence of Matthew and Luke upon Mark.

Streeter expends some of his most telling sarcasm upon the idea that Mark could have in front of him all that Matthew contains, and not use more of it. Therefore (he concludes), clearly Mark was written before Matthew, not afterwards.

Concerning Mark's postulated "abbreviation" of Matthew, what Streeter says (158) is,

Now there is nothing antecedently improbable in the idea that for certain purposes an abbreviated version of the Gospel might be desired; but only a lunatic would leave out Matthew's account of the Infancy, the Sermon on the Mount, and practically all the parables, in order to get room for purely verbal expansion of what was retained. On the other hand, if

we suppose Mark to be the older document, the verbal compression and omission of minor detail seen in the parallels in Matthew has an obvious purpose, in that it gives more room for the introduction of a mass of highly important teaching material not found in Mark.

This argument—a development of Woods’s first point (above) in 1886—carried a great deal of weight then, as it has over the years. France still finds it decisively persuasive in 2007. In his *Commentary on Matthew* (2007:20), France notes,

I am unable to explain how the Gospel of Mark could be written by someone who had the much fuller Gospel of Matthew in front of him; he would have had to omit, for instance, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount and yet find space for considerable and rather inconsequential expansion of the narrative detail in many of the stories of Jesus’s ministry. ... The remarkable “omissions” in his gospel, therefore, make much better sense if he did not have Matthew (and Luke), or the materials they used, in front of him. In other words, I continue to believe in the priority of Mark.

Streeter has acknowledged that “there is nothing antecedently improbable” in the idea that there could be “certain purposes” for which a person such as Mark might produce a shorter version of a Gospel such as Matthew. But clearly he cannot think of any possible reason why Mark could have treated Matthew in the way that has presumably happened on the basis of Matthean priority. Therefore as Streeter can’t think of it, Mark would have had no such reason, therefore only a lunatic would act in such a way, therefore Mark cannot have had Matthew in front of him, and therefore Mark is prior. France (and a host of others) go along with this reasoning.

Yet eleven pages later, in commenting (1924: 69) on “Matthew or Luke purposely omitting any whole section of their source”, Streeter makes a pronouncement which equally applies to Mark and is worth noting in connection with our present consideration:

Very often we can surmise reasons of an apologetic nature why the Evangelists may have thought some things less worth reporting. But, even when we can detect no particular motive, we cannot assume that there was none; for we cannot possibly know, either all the circumstances of churches, or all the personal idiosyncrasies of writers so far removed from our own time.

In Chapter Five I will examine this “Markan omissions” argument, with all the rest of those adduced in support of Markan Priority.

Streeter’s arguments did not go unchallenged in the following decades, especially by Chapman and Butler (see below), but these scholars won only limited support, so that in 1962 G M Styler, in his excursus “The Priority of Mark” (223), was able to say:

After a century or more of discussion, it has come to be accepted by scholars almost as



axiomatic that Mark is the oldest of the three Synoptic Gospels and that it was used by Matthew and Luke as a source. This has come to be regarded as ‘the one absolutely assured result’ of the study of the Synoptic Problem.

The Markan Priority hypothesis has been so widely accepted not because it explains everything satisfactorily, but because it seems to do a better job than any alternative thus far on offer. There are indeed lots of problems with Markan Priority as an explanation of the data, and lots of problems with the traditional reasons given in support of it, reasons going back to B H Streeter, who gave it its classic form in 1924.

It deserves to be noted that a substantial volume of literature exists—some from years ago, and some of recent origin—which casts grave doubt upon the validity of this “Mark first” or Markan Priority explanation. The arguments for Markan Priority have all been tested, and assessed, **and rebutted**, by a variety of authors. A string of monographs and detailed studies have exposed the weaknesses of the grounds for the Markan Priority hypothesis, a hypothesis which has difficulty in explaining observable Synoptic data apart from a resort to subjective opinion, or to dependence upon coincidence.

The snag is that while it is pretty easy to find holes in the case for Markan Priority, there have been similar holes to be found in the other explanations that have been proffered.

To cite Styler again: he recognized that the Markan Priority hypothesis was not without its problems. But he holds firmly to the Markan Priority explanation because it has fewer problems than any other explanation. For example: Styler demolishes the view of Bishop Butler (who contends that the order of writing is Matthew-Mark-Luke), and says about this view (228), “Butler’s treatment of this leaves me quite unconvinced”. In summary, Styler writes, “Our explanation of **his** favourite cases may be cumbersome; but his explanation of **our** favourite cases is incredible”.

Styler concludes (232), “Until some less incredible explanation is forthcoming, the natural conclusion that Mark is prior to Matthew will continue to hold the field.”

In my judgement Styler’s analysis remains valid. Most scholars hold to Markan Priority (with or without the postulating of another source designated Q, to explain Matthew-Luke agreements), not because they can’t see the problems with this hypothesis, but because it seems to hold up as a better explanation than any alternatives, and can be said to cover more of the observable data.

At the 2000 Conference on the Synoptic Problem to which I have referred earlier, there was agreement between all participants that Mark is clearly the middle factor

between the two Major Synoptics, so that the two basic alternative hypotheses which correspond with the data are **either** that Mark was first-written, and was used by Matthew and Luke (i.e., some version of Markan Priority); **or** that Mark was third-written and it used Matthew and Luke as sources (i.e., some version of Markan dependence on the other two Gospels). Scot McKnight's assessment (2001: 77) sums this up:

Whether first or third, Mark is the middle factor. ... We are reasonably confident that Matthew, Mark and Luke are related at the literary level and that it is highly likely that they are mutually dependent, however one might see that relationship or set of relationships.

In putting his own position, McKnight acknowledges (67) that the so-called proofs of Markan Priority put forward by B H Streeter in 1924 are not decisive for Markan Priority as against Markan Posteriority, and that either explanation is possible. The choice between them is to be made on the basis of probability. He says (86), when weighing alternative explanations, "We are dealing with probabilities, not possibilities. I don't rule out the possibilities. I only ask which is more probable." McKnight's assessment of the evidence brings him down on the side of Markan Priority, which he holds (he says) because of the balance of probabilities.

In other words, we find McKnight asking in 2000, as Styler did in 1962, "Where is the more convincing alternative?"

McKnight and numerous others today acknowledge that the issue is actually far from decisively settled. Even so, it is still a commonplace to see Introductions and Commentaries (and other volumes) proceeding upon the basis of Markan Priority without revealing any awareness of the dubious nature of the foundation upon which it now rests. Two examples (among many):

John Nolland's Commentary on Matthew says (2005: 4-5),

Though there is continuing vigorous argument, the majority view is, but with less confidence than was the case a generation ago, that Mark is the earliest of the Synoptic Gospels, and that Mark was in turn used by both Matthew and Luke. ... This commentary proceeds on the general assumption that Matthew had available the Gospel of Mark, or something much like it, and that he shared a considerable body of additional common source material with Luke, but probably did not receive it in quite the same form as that used by Luke.

In his Commentary on Mark, *Jesus: Servant and Savior* (1989: 14), R Kent Hughes simply states,

Mark is the *oldest* of the Gospels. Matthew and Luke made such great use of it in their own Gospel accounts that between them they reproduced all but a few verses of Mark's!

If we are going to adhere to Markan Priority, we ought at least to be aware (honesty demands it) of the flimsy and precarious nature of the foundation upon which it rests. This dissertation summarizes the arguments advanced in support of Markan Priority, and points to the rebuttal of these arguments that competent scholars have given over the years. It can then be assessed whether any objective, factual, valid support for this hypothesis remains.

#### 1.2.4 Dom John Chapman, Bishop B C Butler, and Successive Dependence

For most of the Christian centuries it would seem that the question of the inter-relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to each other was of small interest to scholars. While the Markan Priority hypothesis was growing in acceptance and popularity in Britain under the influence of the Oxford Seminar (see above), there was the occasional voice raised in protest against this view. In particular H. G. Jameson published his *The Origin of the Synoptic Gospels* in 1922, criticizing the arguments put forward for Markan Priority as being “inconclusive”, and advocating the Successive Dependence explanation.

When Streeter published his definitive *The Four Gospels* in 1924, he did not mention Jameson by name in it, nor acknowledge the seriousness of this scholar’s questioning of fundamental tenets of Markan Priority, but quite clearly he has Jameson’s book in view when he writes (157-158 and 164):

The attempt has recently been made to revive the solution first put forward by Augustine ..., who styles Mark a kind of abridger and lackey of Matthew ... But Augustine did not possess a Synopsis of the Greek text conveniently printed in parallel columns. Otherwise a person of his intelligence could not have failed to perceive that, where the two Gospels are parallel, it is usually Matthew, and not Mark, who does the abbreviation. ... How any one who has worked through those pages with a Synopsis of the Greek text can retain the slightest doubt of the original and primitive character of Mark I am unable to comprehend. But since there are, from time to time, ingenious persons who rush into print with theories to the contrary, I can only suppose, either that they have not been at the pains to do this, or else that—like some of the highly cultivated people who think that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, or that the British are the Lost Ten Tribes—they have eccentric views of what constitutes evidence.

This put-down of the work of Jameson was neither fair nor accurate, but it worked. Opposition to Streeter’s views was effectively silenced.

Well, not quite. During World War 1 something unexpected had been happening in the life of an army chaplain, John Chapman. In his book, *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, he

explains that while recovering after being invalided back to Britain at the end of 1915, he used his time to make a thorough examination of the Greek of the Synoptic Gospels, testing the evidence for Markan Priority.

He records how, from his careful examination of the material, two things stand out for him with crystal clarity: Firstly, Mark's Gospel makes use of Matthew, and not vice versa—this is the inescapable meaning of the evidence; secondly, Peter stands rock-square behind Mark, and the apostle's touch is to be seen at point after point after point in this Gospel.

Book 2 of Chapman's study treats Luke's Gospel, with chapters on "On The Impossibility of Q", "The Centurion And The Talents", "Where Luke Follows Matthew", "Why Luke Omitted Bits Of Mark And Left Gaps", "How Luke Dealt With Mark", "Luke's Four Additions To His Marcan Matter", and "How St. Luke Wrote His Gospel". He saw Luke as drawn from Matthew, Mark, and other material which Luke had himself collected.

Chapman particularly challenged Streeter's treatment of Q, concerning which he says (98, 126):

And further, Canon Streeter has shown that certain parts of this unknown document must have overlapped Mk.

Hence we arrive at the absurdity that Q is not only all the heterogeneous resemblances (distant or close) between Mt. and Lk. against Mk., but may include any part of Mk. also (why not the whole of Mk.?) and any part of Mt. peculiar to him and any peculiar to Lk.

Hence *there is no part of the three Synoptic Gospels which may not quite well be derived from Q! ...*

[After further analysis he continues:] Consequently these passages have shown that Q, as a source of Mt. and Lk., independent of Mk., is impossible, since it must include Mk.

I hope the absurdity of all this is clear to the reader. It merely means that *the assumption of a common source for Mt. and Lk. always leads us to find this source to be the common source of three Gospels*. This is not a two-document hypothesis, but a one-document hypothesis, and it is simply a *reductio ad absurdum*. ...

Q is not a collection of discourses, independent of Mk., *but a name to cover any source one meets with*, and might have included any part, or the whole, of Mt., Mk., or Lk. In fact, it might be the whole Bible.

Chapman's quite substantial (312-page) book *Matthew, Mark and Luke* occupied him for the last eight years of his life and was published posthumously in 1936. It has (so far as I can ascertain) never been reissued after its initial publication.

In spite of the care and thoroughness with which Chapman elucidated his position, his

work made rather little impact on Synoptic scholarship. For example, Kümmel, in his detailed treatment of the Synoptic Problem in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, does not so much as mention Chapman's name or book. Many of the writers who refer to Chapman's work do so in passing in a way which suggests that they are not personally acquainted with it.

A major exception is William Barclay in his *Introduction to the First Three Gospels*. Barclay has misread Chapman's position at some major points, but notwithstanding this misreading of Chapman, Barclay has given a very fair survey of Chapman's book, taking in all 14 pages (1975:172-185) for his summary and assessment of Chapman's position. Barclay is not persuaded—he still holds firmly to Markan Priority. But his thoughtful conclusion is very fair in its acknowledgement of the strength of Chapman's position. Barclay says (184-185):

That there is a case to present there is no doubt; that that case has been unduly neglected there is also no doubt. Whether the case is strong enough to overturn the widely accepted arguments for the priority of Mark must remain in doubt. It may in the end be safest to say that the view that Mark is the earliest gospel still holds the field, but it cannot be regarded as a totally closed question.

Although he rejects Chapman's position, Barclay does not attempt a detailed rebuttal of his view. Such a reply to Chapman is given by Ned Stonehouse in his *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, 1963:73-77.

In his assessment of Chapman, Stonehouse centres his attention on demolishing some minor and unimportant peripheral speculations (which Chapman has labelled as such). In his treatment of Chapman (73-77) Stonehouse does not face up to, let alone counter, Chapman's serious explanation of why Matthew, not Mark, must be recognized as prior on the basis of a careful comparison of the text.

Fifteen years after the publication of Chapman's *Matthew, Mark and Luke*—in 1951—Cambridge University Press published B C Butler's discussion of the Synoptic Problem, *The Originality of St Matthew*. This book, subtitled explicitly "A Critique of The Two-Document Hypothesis", was much shorter than Chapman's volume (179 pages against the 312 larger-sized pages in Chapman—in content, Butler's book is only half the size of Chapman's). Butler also supports Successive Dependence, taking the same basic view as did Chapman, and follows a somewhat similar line of argumentation for it.

Butler presents a comprehensive rebuttal of the five "heads of evidence" or arguments given by Streeter for Markan Priority. He is particularly effective in demolishing the assertion that pericope order in the Synoptics presents an argument which favours Markan Priority.

Butler's book received more serious attention from scholars than had Chapman's before him. Two of the most careful treatments are those by G M Styler (1962) and N B Stonehouse (1963).

To quote Styler in some detail (223-224):

After a century or more of discussion, it has come to be accepted by scholars almost as axiomatic that Mark is the oldest of the three synoptic gospels and that it was used by Matthew and Luke as a source. This has come to be regarded as 'the one absolutely assured result' of the study of the synoptic problem.

It has also been usually agreed that, besides Mark, Matt. and Lk. shared another source of material, denoted by the symbol 'Q'. ...

But it came as a shock when in 1951 Dom B.C. Butler published his book *The Originality of St. Matthew*, attacking the Q-hypothesis and the priority of Mark at the same time. In a minutely detailed study he subjected both hypotheses to a severe criticism, and argued strongly for the priority of Matt. Mk., he argued, was dependent on Matt.; Lk. was dependent on Mk. for the material which the two had in common, and on Matt. for the Q-material.

Styler acknowledges (225) that Butler's attack has been completely successful in demonstrating that Streeter's first three arguments do not establish Markan Priority:

Now it is obvious that the priority of Mk. will satisfactorily *explain* these phenomena. But its advocates have made a serious mistake in arguing (or assuming) that no *other* hypothesis will explain them. Butler is correct in claiming that they are guilty of a fallacy in reasoning.

Styler considers that the other reasons for accepting Markan Priority remain completely valid, and he is far from being persuaded to Butler's alternative. He carefully evaluates these other reasons and is therefore able to say (224),

In spite of much close and careful reasoning, and the existence of at any rate *some* passages which tell in favour of Butler's conclusion, scholars have not abandoned the usual belief in the priority of Mk. In this Excursus it will not be possible to examine all Butler's arguments and instances one by one. But an attempt will be made to show that the belief in the priority of Mk. is in fact securely grounded, and to make clear the principal arguments on either side, on which the decision must turn.

One of the foundational tenets of Butler's position is that there is no Q, and the material common to Matthew and Luke was derived by Luke directly from Matthew.

Styler considers the sources that are needed, on both theories, to account for what is found in the Synoptics, and concludes (231):

Our explanation of *his* favourable cases may be cumbersome; but his explanation of *our* favourable cases is incredible.

Styler's Excursus concludes (232) with the judgement, "Until some less incredible explanation is forthcoming, the natural conclusion that Mk is prior to Matt. will continue to hold the field."

There is no doubt that many students of the Synoptics are appreciative of Styler's work and consider it to be an effective reply to Butler. The Styler Excursus is highly regarded and widely quoted.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of Moule's *Birth of the New Testament* containing Styler's Excursus, there appeared (in the following year—1963—in America, and the year after that in Britain) another book that took account of Butler's arguments: *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* by Stonehouse. He shows the implausibility of Butler's view that Luke used Mathew (60-61, 65), and he does discuss (79-83) Butler's treatment of Streeter's "fourth head". Yet although he refers to Butler more than half a dozen times he never really attempts a detailed rebuttal, especially of Butler's case that Mark used Matthew rather than vice versa. He says (79), "Although Butler's discussion of these materials is worthy of close attention, it does not seem to me to be necessary to enter upon a detailed treatment of it. In weighing the evidence which he presents one would have to keep in view that he is virtually presupposing the validity of his own theory of Gospel relationships."

To summarize the situation in relation to the Successive Dependence viewpoint of Chapman and Butler:

Augustine's initial view of Synoptic interrelationships has continued to be accepted by some scholars down to the last century. In particular, Chapman (1936) and Butler (1951) expounded this hypothesis and attacked the standard arguments given for Markan Priority and belief in Q. Chapman's *Matthew, Mark and Luke* is a very detailed work of serious scholarship, and it is a matter of some surprise that—both when it first appeared, and since—scholars in general have either ignored it or dismissed it in very cavalier fashion. But there is one major reason for this to which Barclay drew attention: at some of the crucial points of his reasoning, Chapman's hypothesis was singularly unconvincing. Butler's arguments against the Two-Document hypothesis received (as noted above) more serious attention from scholars than those of Chapman; but his presentation of the Successive Dependence alternative proved no more convincing.

Now, taken together, the various objections which scholars have raised (set out earlier) present a strong case for rejecting the second element of Successive Dependence—that Luke knew and used Matthew—as a satisfactory part of a solution for the Synoptic Problem. The weakness for both Chapman and Butler was in their attempts to

explain what Luke must have done to Mark and (particularly) to Matthew if Luke was indeed third and using the other two. Those scholars who have actually read either or both of Chapman and Butler have focussed on these weaknesses, and quite failed to address the way in which—and the extent to which—they have demonstrated the case for Matthean priority.

Thus Stonehouse demolished one peripheral and subordinate suggestion by Chapman—as Chapman himself calls it, “a fiction devised to explain one feature of the theory of Matthean priority”—but he has failed to direct himself to the careful argumentation presented by Chapman for the view that an examination of the text of Matthew and Mark shows that Mark used Matthew and not vice versa. The plain fact is that Chapman’s arguments showing Mark as subsequent to Matthew and using his Gospel—and referring to the longer and more detailed records of Christ’s teaching given there—**have not yet been answered**. Ignored, yes, but not answered.

But in fact the case for rejecting the idea of Mark as being prior to Matthew (and especially Butler’s critique of Streeter’s arguments for Markan Priority) is to be recognized as very well taken indeed. For these two scholars have drawn attention to some serious weaknesses in the customary arguments that had been put forward to substantiate the Markan Priority/Two-Document theory. Numbers of Gospel scholars have recognized the force of these criticisms by Chapman and Butler, and have adjusted their case for Markan Priority accordingly. Yet those same arguments in support of Markan Priority continue to be advanced in current works of scholarship as if Chapman and Butler had never tackled the issues!

These points from Chapman and Butler are worthy of the most careful noting. However the case for the Successive Dependence hypothesis as a whole fails in relation to putting Luke last. The problems with this idea are too conclusive. Yes, Mark used Matthew, as this theory says. But Luke cannot be put third, after Mark.

I can find no-one who advocates the Successive Dependence hypothesis today. The scholar who has inherited the mantle from Chapman and Butler—Dom Bernard Orchard—has staunchly argued on the evidence for Mark being subsequent to Matthew, but advances the Fourfold-Gospel hypothesis which places Mark after Luke. Orchard’s position is currently advocated by David Alan Black.

I discuss further the significance of the Successive Dependence hypothesis in Chapter Ten, and the Fourfold-Gospel hypothesis of Orchard and Black in Chapter Six.

### 1.2.5 The Lukan Priority View (The Jerusalem School)

The first modern-times explanation of Synoptic relationships to be proposed was that



of Henry Owen, published in 1764, with his hypothesis that Mark was the third Gospel author to write, and that he made use of both Matthew and Luke (see §1.2.2).. Two years later Anton F Büsching, in Germany, advocated the order Luke-Matthew-Mark. Neither of these authors created much of an impact in the scholarly world. Then in 1783 Griesbach began to argue for the Markan Posteriority view, which thereafter became widely popular. But Büsching's hypothesis languished.

Then In 1963 Robert L. Lindsey, a Baptist pastor in Jerusalem, published the outcome of his Synoptic research. Lindsey's independently-reached solution to the Synoptic Problem was the theory of Lukan priority—he argues that Luke was written first and was used by Mark.

A number of scholars in Israel, most prominently Prof. David Flusser of the Hebrew University, have espoused Lindsey's source theory. These scholars, now collaborating as the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, believe that a Hebrew Vorlage lies behind the Greek texts of the Gospels. They maintain that by translating the Greek texts back into Hebrew and interpreting how this Hebrew text would have been understood by first-century readers, one gains a fuller understanding of the text's original meaning.

The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research is actively engaged in developing and promoting its viewpoint of Synoptic explanations. I was able to hear one of its members, Halvor Ronning of the Hebrew University, give a presentation of the Jerusalem School Hypothesis, i.e., Lukan Priority, at the Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. in November 2006. The Jerusalem School considers that its studies can make a significant contribution to Synoptic scholarship.

I find that this hypothesis takes an interesting slant on a number of Synoptic passages, and I am intrigued by the emphasis of the Jerusalem School upon the Hebrew background of the Gospels (there is indeed room for further research in this matter). I certainly agree with its rejection of the idea of Markan Priority. I do not find however that it calls into question in any way the hypothesis I am propounding for the origins of the Greek Synoptic Gospels.

### 1.2.6 The Ur-Gospel Explanation

Amongst the varied proposals put forward in the last decades of the eighteenth century to explain the writing of the Synoptic Gospels was the *Ur-Gospel* hypothesis of G E Lessing: that there has existed an original Gospel, an Ur-Gospel, which was the basis from which our three canonical Gospels have been derived. Lessing identified this Ur-Gospel with the Aramaic *Gospel of the Nazarenes* which Jerome mentioned as having

been known to him. Lessing proceeds to state that it was in due course “found necessary ... to make extracts or translations of it” in Greek, and “The first of these extracts, the first of these translations, was made, I think, by Matthew.” So in turn did Luke, and then Mark.

Thus Lessing postulated that there was one original written Gospel behind, and a source for, the three canonical Synoptic Gospels, an original or Primal Gospel, or (to utilize the German term) an Ur-Gospel.

Others have taken up this basic concept of an Ur-Gospel and explained the idea further. In particular Eichhorn advanced (1794/1804) a very complicated version of the Primal Gospel hypothesis (which however won little support) and then Lachmann in *Studien unde Kritiken* (1835) developed the thesis that all three Synoptics are dependent upon a common original source, from which in particular they drew their order of pericopes.

In various versions, the Ur-Gospel hypothesis had a significant following in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Dungan (1970: 81) has remarked,

“If one were to survey the entire literature from its beginnings in the late 18th century, the most popular solution—representing the largest percentage of all that has ever been written on the subject—would clearly be the Urgospel approach.”

During the past century or so, numbers of scholars took it in hand to respond to the Ur Gospel hypothesis and very effectively refuted it. In recent times it has not had any advocates.

There is no actual evidence in support of the existence of an Ur-Gospel—it is at best a hypothetical possibility—and there are quite a few weighty arguments against this hypothesis. It is only to be expected that, as Stoldt says (4), “research of the previous century rejected ... ur-gospel solutions—and justifiably so. They belong to the misinterpretation of the Gospels.”

### **1.2.7 The Cross-Fertilisation View**

Some scholars—including R T France—are forced by the multiplicity of the “problems” that exist with the “solutions” put forward, to conclude that a simple solution is impossible, and the actual explanation of what happened in the production of the Synoptics as we now have them is incredibly complex. Thus France in his *Commentary on Matthew* continues (2007:20-21),

The simple x-copied-y approach to the Synoptic Problem which has characterized many of the proposed “solutions” seems to me more appropriate to a modern scholar’s study than

to the real world of first century church tradition. ... I incline to the view ... that neat theories of literary dependence (even complex ones like that of Boismard) are unlikely to do justice to the varied data of Synoptic texts.

He points the reader particularly to “In Favour of Complicated Solutions” (97-100) in E. P. Sanders and M. Davies, *Studying*, and to the approach of J.A.T. Robinson in *Redating the New Testament*.

In his Commentary on Mark (2002:43), France has explained this further:

This concept of “cross-fertilisation” rather than a purely “linear dependence” seems to me to take a more realistic account of the likely growth of the gospel traditions in the first-century churches, which were not sealed units but remained in contact with one another as Christians travelled around the eastern part of the empire ... In such a situation it would be natural for traditions about Jesus to be shared and compared, and for the collections of what later came to be known as “gospel” material to grow up in different locations, each in its own distinctive form but with constant opportunity for influence and expansion from traditions preserved in other church centres.

France’s conclusion in the matter is (2002:45),

I do not believe that I have solved the Synoptic Problem, nor do I believe that anyone else has provided an explanation which does full justice to all the extraordinarily complex data. But ... it suggests that a full “solution” is neither possible nor necessary, that any tidily defined scheme of literary dependence ... fails to do justice to the rich variety and cross-fertilisation of Jesus traditions which might reasonably be expected to have occurred within the living and mobile complexity of early Christian preaching and teaching across the eastern Mediterranean world of the first century. In the light of that situation, I do not need a solution to the Synoptic Problem.

To any who might be tempted by the approach arrived at by France, I would point out the need to be aware of the inner contradictions it contains.

In a passage that I quoted earlier (§1.2.3 of this dissertation), France pointed to the “remarkable omissions” in Mark as the reason why this author could not have had access to the Major Synoptics. Yet in this “fluid” period of “cross-fertilisation” which France envisages as the milieu within which the Synoptics developed, there was “constant opportunity for influence and expansion from traditions preserved in other church centres”, such that material “distinctive” to one Gospel “tradition” was able to be incorporated into—or at least influence—other Gospel traditions: “hence perhaps the more verbatim agreements in parts of the ‘Q’ material” (France, 2002: 44). But if there was indeed such a period of fluidity and cross-fertilisation, and the “omissions” in Mark were due to Mark’s

ignorance of other “traditions”, there would have been opportunity for the “editors” or custodians of the Mark traditions to expand them and add-in such other material.

Furthermore, if there was such a period when the incipient Gospel traditions of Matthew and Luke circulated side-by-side as it were, and influenced each other to the point of producing the “more verbatim agreements” which they contain, it will be incumbent to explain how no-one at that time noticed the numerous points where the Major Synoptics disagree with each other, but allowed these to remain as they do.

So the idea of “constant opportunity for influence and expansion” in a period of fluidity—the “cross-fertilisation hypothesis”—also contains issues in need of further explanation.

### **1.2.8 Summary**

Thus we have seen that each of the three Synoptic Gospels in its turn has been championed as being the first written, and then having been used by the others. Then, there are those scholars who support the view that there is no literary dependence amongst the Synoptics.

And at the other end of the spectrum of possibilities, there are others who contend that the Synoptic interrelationship is so complex and convoluted that we cannot now know it, and never shall: so (they say) the Synoptic Problem can in fact never be solved. In his Commentary on Matthew Leon Morris concludes his comments on the Synoptic Problem with the opinion (1992: 17), “It seems to me not only that have we not solved the Synoptic Problem, but also that we are not likely ever to solve it.”

Every suggested Synoptic solution will, in the nature of the case, require to stand upon two legs, if it is to cover the totality of the problem. Thus whether one’s solution (for example) places Mark first or third, it is then necessary to explain the relationship of Matthew and Luke. Or, if one is persuaded to the complete independence of the Synoptics, one must account for the close similarities between them that exist.

The differing approaches taken towards these “two legs” will account for further differences between the theories proposed. It is possible to develop even more multifaceted theories, with additional complexities, but these move further into the realm of speculation, and away from such data as we have. The ones which are able to be assessed against the data (and their most recent exposition) are set out below.

## **1.3 THE VARIOUS HYPOTHESES ADVOCATED OVER THE YEARS**

### **1.3.1 The Complete Independence View**

There is no literary relationship between the Synoptics. Their similarities are due to

“the linguistic fixing of the Gospels” in transmission (Linnemann 1992: 155-176), and “shared common traditions” (Farnell 2002: 191).

FARNELL David, “The Case for the Independence View” in Thomas 2002.

LINNEMANN Eta 1992, *Is there a Synoptic Problem?* (Baker)

THOMAS Robert and FARNELL David 1998, *The Jesus Crisis* (Kregel)

THOMAS R (Ed) 2002, *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Kregel)

### **1.3.2 The Successive Dependence View**

Matthew was first written; Mark used Matthew; Luke used Matthew and Mark.

This was Augustine’s original view. It was advocated by Jameson (1922), Chapman (1936), and Butler (1951). There is no recent exposition of this view.

### **1.3.3 The Lukan Priority View (The Jerusalem School)**

Luke was first written; then Mark used Luke and Matthew.

LINDSEY R L 1992, “A New Approach to the Synoptic Gospels” (*Mishkan* 17.18; 87-106)

### **1.3.4 The Markan Priority View**

Mark was first-written, and was used by both Matthew and Luke, Then:

#### **(a) The Two-Source (or Two-Document) View**

Matthew and Luke also drew upon Q (Streeter adds, “and M and L”).

BLACK David Alan & BECK David R 2001, *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem* (Baker)

McKNIGHT Scot “A Generation Who Knew Not Streeter”, in BLACK & BECK 2001

WILLIAMS Matthew 2006, *Two Gospels into One* (Kregel)

#### **(b) The Farrer-Goulder View**

Luke also drew upon Matthew (as in the Two-Gospel View)

GOODACRE Mark 2001, *The Synoptic Problem* (T & T Clark)

### **1.3.5 The Markan Posteriority View**

Matthew was first-written; Mark was last-written, and used both Matthew and Luke.

#### **(a) The Two-Gospel View (the Farmer School)**

Luke drew also upon Matthew. The advocates of this view postulate late dates for the writing of the Synoptics. Mark is “composed primarily of supplementary or edited material” (Peabody 2002:18)

McNICHOL Allan (Ed) 1996, *Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke’s Use of Matthew* (Trinity)

PEABODY D B (Ed) 2002, *One Gospel from Two: Mark’s Use of Mt & Luke* (Trinity)

### **(b) The Fourfold-Gospel View (the Orchard School)**

Postulates early dates of Synoptic writing. Mark directly reflects Peter's teaching.

BLACK David A 2001, *Why Four Gospels? Historical Origins of the Gospels* (Kregel)

#### **1.3.6 The Cross-Fertilisation View**

There was "cross-fertilisation" between the Gospels rather than a "linear dependence", allowing "influence and expansion" of one or another of the developing Gospels during a period of fluid interaction (France 2002:43).

FRANCE R T 2002, *Commentary on Mark* (Eerdmans/Paternoster; 43-45)

FRANCE R T 2007, *Commentary on Matthew* (Eerdmans; 20-21)

### **1.4 THE EXPLANATORY HYPOTHESIS PROPOSED**

The hypothesis presented in this dissertation is the Progressive Publication of Matthew. Like the Two-Gospel (Farmer) school and the Orchard/Black view, it places Mark as third-written. But it rejects the proposition that Luke knew the published Matthew, and offers a different explanation of the writing of the two Major Synoptics.

The explanation of Synoptic interrelationships that I present here will (I contend) answer all the problems which exist both with Markan Priority and with these other hypotheses. It is, moreover, an explanation which accords both with internal observable data and external evidence.

In putting this forward, I draw attention to the way in which scholars investigating the Synoptic Problem throughout the years seem to be agreed upon the acceptance of one fundamental presupposition. They differ as to the order and interrelationship of the Synoptics; they differ concerning the nature, scope, contents, language, date, and so forth, of the sources, written and oral, lying behind the Synoptics; but they all seem to accept that Matthew, Mark and Luke were written (or, at least, were published) in some particular order, and the nature of the Synoptic Problem is to decide, on the basis of the evidence, what that order was.

This presupposition, regarded virtually as axiomatic, is stated explicitly by William Farmer (*The Synoptic Problem*, 1964: 199) in this way:

However important the part oral tradition and other written sources may have played in the composition of the Synoptic Gospels, the problem of determining which was written first, which second, and which third still persists. One of the three was written before the other two. One was written after the first, and before the third. And one was written after the other two.

But I am questioning, is this necessarily so? I am suggesting that the key to the

Synoptic Problem lies in the recognition that ***one of the Gospels was written and published in stages, and that that Gospel was Matthew***. That is, the Gospel of Matthew had its beginnings in a series of separate documents authored by the apostle Matthew over a period of some years, which thereafter were circulating independently in the churches, before being edited and expanded by this same apostle Matthew into the Gospel we now have.

Thus the distinguishing characteristic of the position I am presenting is its proposal of the progressive publication of Matthew, and to indicate this and differentiate this hypothesis from others with which it partly agrees, I will refer to it by this distinctive feature as the Progressive Publication hypothesis. Moreover, the evidence also indicates that Mark was third-written, and that this Gospel has drawn upon both Major Synoptics, together with the preaching of Peter. Thus this hypothesis, in its complete form, is that of Markan Dependence.

It is well worth while, then, to see if this Synoptic hypothesis can do a better job accounting for the observable data, i.e. has greater explanatory power than other hypotheses on offer. Indeed, I would contend that when this hypothesis is seriously examined, it will be seen that it meshes well what we know of the situation in the early church, and with the external evidence of church history, and it explains all the observable data of the Synoptic Gospels.

I intend to show how this hypothesis derives from several propositions, which I submit are abundantly supported by the evidence and which together offer the most convincing explanation of all the observable data. This is a new hypothesis in that it has not been presented before in this manner, with its components assembled and defended in these propositions. But almost all of these individual components have in fact been put forward and often advocated vigorously over the decades by competent Gospel scholars, as I shall set forth. What I am doing is to bring these components all together, show how they interrelate, and draw conclusions from them.

So I offer next, in this chapter, an outline of this hypothesis. I indicate the main areas of observable data with which it interlocks, so that its overall cohesiveness can be seen. Then in the following chapters I look in rather more detail at the evidence upon which it rests. I indicate where and how it is superior to other hypotheses on offer (including how it will explain what they do not). I examine numbers of key Synoptic passages which are much more convincingly explained on this basis. And I show how it offers a simple but complete answer to one of the greatest Synoptic enigmas: the order of pericopes in all three Synoptic Gospels.

## THE FIVE PROPOSITIONS OF THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION HYPOTHESIS

There are five propositions upon which this hypothesis rests.

### **Proposition 1: Matthew Responds to a Growing Need: Initial Written Accounts**

In Jerusalem, the apostle Matthew produced, between the time of Christ and about AD 60, a series of short accounts of different episodes from the life and teaching of Jesus. Of all the eyewitnesses known to us, Matthew would be pre-eminently the best qualified to produce written records of Christ's life. As a former Roman customs official at Capernaum on the Great West Road, the main trade route from Syria and the East to the Mediterranean, he would of necessity be fluent in Greek and Aramaic, and probably in Latin and Hebrew as well, and would be able to read and write (a far from universal accomplishment in those days). Many scholars have recognized these facts, among them R H Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in Matthew* 1975: 174; J N Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* 1968: 176-191; and the references they give.

Shorthand had been in use for some time in the ancient world, and it would be a reasonable expectation that Matthew knew and used one of the available shorthand systems in his official taxation work. It is not unlikely that Matthew used these skills in making notes of Christ's deeds and teachings at the time they occurred. The development and use of shorthand in the ancient world is discussed by, amongst others, E J Goodspeed, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, 1959: 86-88, 108-110; R H Gundry, 1975: 182; W Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary on Matthew*, 1973, numerous places; B Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 1961: 148-156.

In any case it would be highly probable that the apostle Matthew was the author of much of the eyewitness material which according to Luke's account (1:1-4) was circulating at the time when Luke was gathering the content for his own Gospel. Luke 1:2 refers to eyewitness material "handed on" to others—παράδιδομι in this and similar passages means: "of oral or written tradition: hand down, pass on, transmit, relate, teach".

The alternative would be to say that, of these various documents of which Luke was aware, **none** at all came from the apostles, the very men who were chosen by Christ specifically to be his companions (Mark 3:13-14) and to whom he gave much of his teaching privately (for example, Mark 4:34) and who alone would be in a position to record many of the details of what he said and did, and whom he designated his witnesses (Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8). It is highly improbable that the apostles would have no connection at all with the production of these accounts of Christ's life and



teaching which began (Luke says) to circulate. Or, if it be acknowledged that some of these accounts *did* originate with the apostles, that Matthew had no share in their production.

The circumstances which would give rise to the writing down of such accounts are easy to envisage. Jewish Christians from the churches of Palestine, coming up to Jerusalem for the feasts, would meet with the Christian congregation there and hear the preaching and teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42; 6:2-4). All the first Christians were Jews or proselytes. As late as Acts 21:20 reference is made to the thousands of Jewish believers who are “zealous for the law”. In accordance with Judaistic practice the Jewish Christians would go up to Jerusalem regularly for the feasts. In addition, Acts implies that travelling up to Jerusalem by Christians generally was frequent throughout this period (for example, Acts 21:15-16).

Coming in many cases from congregations where there were few eyewitnesses to Christ's life, and where there was a thirst for more information about him, these pilgrims would be eager to take home from Jerusalem a record of what they heard there. Albright & Mann (1971:CLXXIV-CLXXV of their Introduction in the *Anchor Bible: Matthew*,) refer to the “relatively small number of people who had access to the facts of Jesus's ministry”, and they add that because of this and other factors they believe “we must reckon with the desire to record the oral tradition at a comparatively early date”. And if such Christians had made request for a written record of teaching that they had heard from the apostles, the logical member of the apostolic band to provide this for those who asked would be Matthew. And so they went back to their churches with a written account of something Christ did or said: a few sentences of teaching, perhaps, in some cases, or a lengthy story of a complete incident.

The first Christian congregations in Palestine would include some that were Aramaic-speaking, and therefore material that was produced for them in this way would be in Aramaic. Papias's information about *λογια* produced by Matthew (as recorded in Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.16) indicates the existence of these Aramaic documents written by Matthew. And, in view of the number of Hellenist or Greek-speaking Christians in Palestine and nearby areas, there would have arisen a demand for similar material in Greek, and Matthew would soon have found himself asked to meet requests of this kind.

### **Proposition 2: Many Have Taken It In Hand To Write**

But these Matthean accounts would not be the only ones which began circulating. Other eyewitnesses would be motivated to take pen in hand in similar fashion and begin

recording the teaching and deeds of Christ of which **they** were aware. We have the evidence of Luke's Prologue to tell us this was so. These accounts would also have been of varying lengths, and written in either Aramaic or Greek. They would circulate side by side with those already written by Matthew, and, doubtless, side by side with oral traditions about Christ.

The various churches would in the process of time accumulate numbers of these short accounts and would add to their own collections by exchanging copies with other churches around them. We know that this occurred in the case of Paul's Epistles, and there is no reason for it happening in relation to the Pauline documents and not in the case of the documents of the incidents and sayings from the life of Christ to which Luke refers. In fact the Prologue to Luke's Gospel looks like a reference to the very situation which I have just outlined.

An obvious question may strike us: If there were circulating in the churches a host of short documents from the thirties to the fifties (as Luke indicates and this present hypothesis now elaborates), how would it happen that none of them survived for us now to find?

Let us remember that none of the original New Testament documents has been preserved: that everything we possess is a copy of a copy. Why should any scribe have wished to copy some partial piece of text once the full Gospel of Matthew and Luke were published? The part would be absorbed in the whole. Any Gospel segments we now find are almost certainly going to be parts of or extracts from the canonical Synoptic Gospels as we have them.

But supposing they weren't—supposing that some family (say), possessing one or more such original documents as here suggested, were to copy them and pass them down the generations and a copy of such an early document were to come to light today, how would we know? It would simply look to us like a section of the later Gospel into which it became incorporated. It is an interesting thought, and perhaps worthy of further investigation, whether any of the Synoptic Gospel fragments which we possess could be a copy, not of part of a complete Gospel, but of a pre-Gospel documents of exactly the kind under discussion. If such were the case—if we had any such extract amongst the multitude of early Gospel manuscripts that have been found—how would we know? A section of such a document could look the same as a part of a complete Gospel. So perhaps this could be so. But again I ask: How would we know?

**Proposition 3: Luke Collects His Material**

During his travels in company with Paul, Luke made notes of the various things said and done, and these, when written up, became the second half of his book the Acts of the Apostles. He also formed the intention at some point of investigating the period before his personal involvement. The opportunity for this came during AD 56 to 58, the years while he was in the Palestine area and Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24:27).

For this work, he was interviewing eyewitnesses and collecting the information which he used in writing the first half of the Acts. It was also his opportunity to prepare, similarly, to engage in the second task which at some stage he had decided to undertake: to write an account of the ministry and message of Jesus.

In his Prologue to his Gospel he relates that he carried out a very thorough and careful investigation of everything connected with the life of Christ. Whatever documents were available to him, he collected at this stage (perhaps he had even begun collecting them even earlier). He took them with him to Rome, managing to keep them safe during his shipwreck on Malta on the way there.

There is widespread agreement with this understanding of the implications of Luke's Prologue that I have just given. The distinctive proposition that I am putting is that these documents that Luke collected did **not** (as some people would think) include Mark's Gospel, for this had not yet been written, but that amongst the eyewitness material to which Luke himself refers were numerous separate short accounts written by the apostle Matthew.

**Proposition 4: Publication of the Two Major Synoptic Gospels**

Meanwhile, while Luke was on his way to Rome with Paul, in Jerusalem Matthew produced further material, and then decided to issue a "collected edition" of his records of the deeds and teaching of Jesus. He used the basic outline of Christ's life as his framework, but within this he made only a very limited attempt to assemble his material in the order in which the events occurred or the teaching was given. More frequently the basis on which he arranged his material was **topical** rather than **chronological**. Given, then, the different plan on which Matthew constructed his Gospel by comparison with Luke, it is not surprising to see particular events or sayings being placed differently in these two Gospels.

The evidence from an examination of the First Gospel indicates that Matthew, in compiling his material for his Gospel, used what he had previously written (rewriting it—

as distinct from just translating it—in Greek where he had originally written in it Aramaic), adding some extra stories where thought desirable (including his opening chapters, and his distinctive material in the Passion narrative), and providing his “program notes” linking one block of material with the next.

In their *Anchor Commentary on Matthew* (1971:CLXV), Albright and Mann say,

What we appear to have in Matthew's gospel is a kind of teacher's guide, a collection of blocks of material from the private instruction of Jesus to the inner circle, together with other material from public teaching, and the whole assembled in a rather loose chronological framework.

I expect that the place of publication of the finished Gospel would very probably have been Jerusalem. But nothing hangs on this identification. Someone else may conclude its place of writing was Antioch, or anywhere else in the Judea/Syria area.

Meanwhile Luke, in Rome with Paul, and working from the material he had collected in Palestine, composed his Gospel, completing and publishing it in AD 60 or thereabouts. (I explain the case for this date in the next chapter.)

So: did Luke see Matthew's Gospel? As a completed Gospel? No, he did not. The arguments which numerous scholars have put forward against Luke using Matthew's Gospel are valid. But then, so also are those arguments to which Farmer has pointed us, for Luke to have known Matthew, because of passages that show close identity between the two Gospels.

In this dissertation (Chapter Eight) I will examine in detail the case for the assertion that Luke knew, and used, Matthew (central to the Two-Gospel school of Farmer and his supporters), together with the evidence against it. It will be seen that the evidence, considered in its totality, supports the explanation that Luke read and used the **sections of Matthew** which had been in circulation in the churches, and of which he had obtained copies in his collecting of information.

As the evidence indicates that neither Matthew nor Luke saw the completed Gospel written by the other prior to publishing his own, this points to the publication of both of them in the same year. Thus AD 60 would also be the publication date for Matthew.

Thus we come logically to conclude that material originally written by the apostle Matthew and circulated during this period between the time of Christ and AD 60 became incorporated independently in **both** the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke, though neither of these writers saw the finished Gospel of the other.

**Proposition 5: Mark Produces A Special-purpose Gospel**

Mark was not an eyewitness of the life of Christ, but (as Papias and other Fathers have told us) he was an associate of the apostle Peter, and he wrote his Gospel based on Peter's preaching. The early church Fathers identify the date of the writing of Mark as being about AD 65. The place was Rome.

By this time also the Gospels of Matthew and Luke had begun to circulate in the church, and Mark used them both as the basis of his Gospel. We can describe the Synoptic relationship as "Markan Dependence": Mark's Gospel is dependent upon, and derived from, the other two.

That is to say, Mark had **three** sources for his Gospel: what he heard from Peter, together with the written Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It is the purpose of this present treatment to demonstrate that this is the explanation of the Gospel of Mark to which the evidence points.

Mark is the shortest Gospel, and yet Mark's account of any given pericope is invariably the longest—except for places where Mark omits teaching or speeches which Matthew or Luke (or both) include at this point, or else Mark gives this teaching in part only. Mark's greater pericope length is because he conflates Matthew and Luke, and adds-in a plethora of further points of detail not to be found in the other two Gospels but drawn from his third source: what he had learned from Peter.

Mark consists almost entirely of "action stories" which show Jesus healing, performing miracles, engaged in conflict with his opponents, and so on: such teaching as there is, either arises out of these situations or is illustrative of the teaching aspect of Jesus's ministry, and in any case is always related directly to one or more of the main themes of Mark.

In his Gospel, Mark does not assume the post-Easter faith, as do Matthew and Luke. Mark traces the journey of the disciples from doubt and disbelief, and aims to take his readers and hearers on that same journey. His Gospel is an evangelistic tool—a resource book for evangelists—aimed at introducing Jesus to the interested outsider. It was intended to be used as a source-book in evangelistic preaching, and even to be read aloud in various locations where people gathered.

So Mark had a specific linguistic program and purpose in view. While skilfully conflating the accounts of Matthew and Luke, Mark transformed their more literary wording into clear and simple, everyday language—into the language of conversation and preaching—changing some of their vocabulary into the common words used by his hearers, and rendering the whole into simple, straightforward sentences. In fact (as

Streeter himself has most perceptively noted, 1924:163), Mark is wording his Gospel in the colloquial spoken Greek of Rome and its Empire.

Mark is quite consistent in producing his Gospel: he includes the material that is in Matthew and Luke which was in accord with his themes, and he **excludes the rest**. Mark's Gospel sets out the *kerygma* being preached to unbelievers. It is "pure" *kerygma*, while Matthew and Luke are combinations of *kerygma* and *didache*. Mark's Gospel climaxes with the cross, and with the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God—which he does not teach earlier. His motivation in producing his Gospel is exactly the same as that of those Christians today who publish extracts from Scripture in modern speech for use in evangelistic outreach: for like those who do this today, Mark knew that the rest of the Gospel story was readily available in the church for those who became interested.

It is straight-forward to explain the order of Mark's Gospel:

(a) In accordance with his intention to produce a Gospel of the deeds rather than the teaching of Jesus, Mark therefore adopted a framework which avoided the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, and Luke's Central Teaching Section. This Markan framework consists of two parts: first, he followed the order of Luke's Gospel to Mark 6:14 (Herod's comment about Jesus), and thereafter the order of Matthew's Gospel.

(b) Into the Lukan part of his framework he added four sections from Matthew: Mark 1:16-20; 3:22-35E; 4:30-34; 6:1-6. Into his Matthean framework he added four short sections drawn from Luke, consisting of material not paralleled anywhere in Matthew: 6:30-31; 9:38-41; 11:18-19; 12:41-44E. These insertions were placed in Mark's Gospel at the same point at which they occurred in his source (Luke).

The figure that is customarily given for unique verses in Mark is usually 50 to 56 verses, but I have found on my count that the equivalent of 155 verses of Mark (or 23½%, just under one quarter of the Gospel) consists of material which could not have been derived from either Matthew or Luke, because it's **not there** (or, to state this data in the Markan Priority way, verses which consist of Markan material that was not then used either by Matthew or by Luke in their respective Gospels). This comprises for the most part a wealth of small but vivid details not found in the Major Synoptics, details which had lodged in Mark's memory from the preaching of Peter, and with which he has enlivened his stories.

## CONCLUSION

I submit that all of the difficulties, problems and inadequacies of the Markan Priority view are met completely by the Progressive Publication hypothesis (including Markan

Dependence) as I have outlined it. I contend that there is nothing inherently improbable in any part of this hypothesis, but rather that it is in accord with all the known facts, and is compatible with the external traditions about authorship. It provides a framework within which it is readily possible to explain all the observable phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels.

This view that I am putting forward has no need of Q. We can recognize **all** the material in Matthew and Luke that shows evidence of a common literary source as having been based upon documents written by Matthew and progressively circulated over the years, documents which were amongst all those collected by Luke, to which Luke refers in his Prologue, and which he utilized in writing his own Gospel.

This hypothesis shares with the William Farmer Two-Gospel school the belief in Markan Posteriority (i.e. that Mark's Gospel was written third, and used Matthew and Luke as sources). But apart from this, it is a very different approach. In particular, contrary to the Two-Gospel school, I find the evidence to be strongly against the idea that Luke ever saw Matthew's Gospel in its final form: there are many sections of Luke's Gospel which can be accounted for only on the basis that Luke had **not** seen Matthew's Gospel.

It is to be noted that the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis is not dependent upon coincidence, or assuming that which is to be proven, or circular argument, and it involves a minimum of subjective assumptions. It meets fully the various criticisms which have been levelled in the past against other forms of the Markan Posteriority or Griesbach explanation.

This hypothesis accounts for the interrelationship between the three Synoptic Gospels solely in terms of the three men known to us from the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, without hypothesizing other authors in order to account for this interrelationship. But it also recognizes and encompasses the role of the other eyewitnesses/writers, together with Luke's own investigations, to whom and to which Luke refers in his Prologue. And it rests also upon the well-attested tradition in the early church Fathers that Peter's preaching stands behind Mark's Gospel.

A tremendous amount of New Testament scholarship has proceeded upon the assumption of Markan Priority. The very existence and extent of this body of scholarship will tend in itself to create an inertia that is resistant to the suggestion that we may need to think again about "the one absolutely assured result of the study of the Synoptic Problem". In this connection there is food for thought in the words of Vincent Taylor (*The Gospel According To St. Mark*, 1966: 76), in comments that he wrote about other

Synoptic research (which he rejected), but comments which I find very apposite here concerning Markan Priority (which he accepted):

There is no failure in Synoptic criticism, for, if we reject a particular suggestion worked out with great learning and ability, we are compelled to reconsider the evidence on which it is based and seek a better explanation, knowing that a later critic may light upon a hypothesis sounder and more comprehensive still.

That, I suggest, is how we should regard the idea of abandoning the hypothesis of Markan Priority, in the light of the case I present for the Progressive Publication of Matthew's Gospel.

This then is the outline of the Synoptic explanation to which I find the evidence points. The remainder of this dissertation is to consider in more detail the grounds of support to be adduced for these five propositions—and, in looking at the data, to compare the explanatory power of this hypothesis with the alternative hypotheses which have been put forward hitherto.

There is a possible misunderstanding of this five-fold thesis that I wish to guard against. The last thing that I would want to suggest is that I consider the Gospel writers to have been no more than compilers, assembling a collection of previous documents; or even editors, carrying out the task of editing such material. They were indeed in every sense *authors*, with an aim and a purpose in their work. And the evaluation of that purpose and of their interests and their theology, and so forth, is a valid exercise. But in their writing, their authoring, they drew upon documents that they had at hand.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE CASE FOR THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION OF MATTHEW**

#### **2.0 THE ROLE OF WRITING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA**

Writing was in common use for formal accounts, and even more so for informal, private notes.

#### **2.1 PROPOSITION 1: MATTHEW RESPONDS TO A GROWING NEED**

2.1.1 Initial Written Accounts—Tracts, Fragments, and Fly-Sheets

2.1.2 Luke, Papias, and Matthew's Logia

The first stage of Matthew's Gospel was the notes made by this apostle during the life of Jesus. Copies of his short accounts began circulating at an early date.

#### **2.2 PROPOSITION 2: MANY HAVE TAKEN IT IN HAND TO WRITE**

2.2.1 Luke's Explanation

2.2.2 What Are We to Think of Q?

Luke was aware of the "many" who were compiling eyewitness accounts about Jesus. The alternative to the Q explanation.

#### **2.3 PROPOSITION 3: LUKE COLLECTS HIS MATERIAL**

2.3.1 The Authorship of the Third Gospel

2.3.2 Luke Seizes His Opportunity

The occasion and sources of Luke's Gospel.

#### **2.4 PROPOSITION 4: PUBLICATION OF THE TWO MAJOR SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

2.4.1 The Four Characteristics that Luke Claims for his Book

2.4.2 The Dating of the Synoptic Gospels

2.4.3 The Authorship of Canonical Matthew

Luke's intention for his Gospel: comprehensive, thorough, orderly, trustworthy. The basis for dating the Synoptics. Matthew and Luke written AD 60; Mark AD 65.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE CASE FOR THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLICATION OF MATTHEW**

This chapter demonstrates how the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis is based upon known first-century evidence

The Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis has two interdependent “legs” upon which it stands:

(a) That between the time of our Lord’s earthly ministry and about AD 60 the apostle Matthew produced numerous short accounts of events and teachings from the life and ministry of Jesus, some in Greek and some in Aramaic, which then circulated independently in the church. Some of these documents were collected by Luke and incorporated into his Gospel material; and Matthew subsequently issued a collected and expanded edition of his own material. This is the specifically “Progressive Publication of Matthew” leg, which accounts for the coming into being of the two Major Synoptics in the church.

(b) That Mark, to meet what he perceived to be a need in the church, produced a special-purpose “preachers’ edition” of Gospel material in about AD 65, drawing upon three sources: the two Major Synoptics then available in the church, together with his own recollections of the preaching of the apostle Peter. This “leg” of the hypothesis can be termed “Markan Dependence”, in contradistinction from the idea of Markan Priority.

In this chapter I shall examine the support for the first of these two “legs”, or foundations, of the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis.

But first of all, it is important to consider what scholars have said about attitudes to writing in the first century, and the bearing this question has upon our further examinations.

#### **2.0 THE ROLE OF WRITING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA**

Significant differences exist in regard to the assumed background against which the Gospels were written. For example, some writers have drawn attention to the use of writing in the world of the first century, in both Jewish and Greek cultures, while other scholars have stated that the Jews were oriented against recording material in writing, and they have found in this an explanation for the “oral period”, the gap that (they believe) lasted several decades between the happening of the events to which the Gospels refer and the writing of the Gospel accounts.

The witness of history does contain evidence that there was a preference amongst the Jews and in the early church for the oral account rather than the written record, the living witness in preference to the impersonal book. Thus the Jews' Aramaic translation of their Scriptures and their commentaries on these Scriptures were transmitted orally for a period of time running into centuries. The books of Gerhardsson (1961, 1964, and 1977) and Riesenfeld (1970) are carefully-documented accounts of how this was done, and why it was preferred. There is some evidence for this same kind of attitude in the early church.

Thus Papias, in a famous comment (in Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.39.4; Maier, 1999: 127) indicated that he much preferred to have the comments of a living witness to merely reading about the deeds and sayings of Jesus. Papias is quoted as writing, concerning reports of what had been said by the "disciples of the Lord" and their immediate followers, "For I did not think that information from books would help me as much as the word of a living, surviving voice." (I will say more about words from Papias shortly in this chapter.)

It is an error, however, to take this evidence as indicating either that there was a low level of literacy in the Middle East in the first century, or that there was a general antipathy towards writing itself. The evidence indicates the opposite of this.

From the classical periods of Greece and Rome we have received an abundance of literature of every kind that shows that writing—and reading—were normal activities for the populace in general. Reading and writing were standard skills taught to the young in the schools. When Hellenistic culture was spread through the Middle East in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great, this included not merely the spoken but also the written use of the Greek tongue. Recent evidence of this has been the papyri finds in Egypt, which have included an abundance of documents written by ordinary people in the course of their normal lives: shopping lists, accounting records, and an overwhelming wealth of business and private correspondence—letters to and fro between businessmen and their agents and representatives, letters amongst members of a family, and close friends, and casual acquaintances. It is possible to see a close parallel between the ease and frequency with which people in first-century society would make written notes or write letters, and the situation in our own society today.

And books, though extremely expensive by today's standards, were widely circulated and widely read. Alexandria was renowned for its library with volumes upon every conceivable subject of interest in the ancient world. It is reported about this library (Carl Sagan, 1980: 32) that:

The organizers combed all the cultures and languages of the world. They sent agents abroad to buy up libraries. Commercial ships docking in Alexandria were searched by the police—not for contraband, but for books. The scrolls were borrowed, copied, and then returned to their owners. Accurate numbers are difficult to estimate, but it seems probable that the Library contained half a million volumes, each a handwritten papyrus scroll.

In addition to formal books and informal notes, writing was used in ancient society in the same ways as it is today: for gravestones and inscriptions on tombs, for notices and announcements—for example, the inscriptions on the walls of the Temple, and Pilate's inscription written about Jesus for placement on the cross (John 19:19-20).

People would immediately and automatically turn to writing whenever the situation required it. Thus the Tribune Claudius Lysias wrote a formal letter about Paul's case to accompany Paul to Governor Felix (Acts 23:26); and it was taken for granted that a written explanation would accompany Paul when he was sent to Rome (Acts 25:26).

There was no antipathy towards writing in Christian circles. The comment of Papias indicates his enjoyment of meeting people who had themselves known Jesus or the apostles and early Christian leaders; it certainly does not mean that he was opposed to the use of written records as such. After all, we only know that he said what he said about the matter because he himself **wrote it down!**

The clearest evidence for all this is the New Testament itself: we note how Paul resorted promptly and unhesitatingly to writing a letter when he had something to say (as did also the authors of the other New Testament epistles). Nor is it possible to maintain that this was something he did only when he had no alternative open to him. On at least three occasions Paul sent a trusted colleague **with** the letter, so that if he had regarded the writing of a letter as a matter of last resort, only to be employed when no living being was in a position to take his message, then the Epistles to Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians would not have been penned. For Tychicus took these three letters in person, and thus could have delivered Paul's message orally **instead of** taking a letter, if Paul had had a negative attitude to the use of writing. Rather, Tychicus took each of Paul's letters and added his own further comments to it.

Thus in Colossians 4:7-8 Paul says, "Tychicus will tell you all about my affairs; he is a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts." In Ephesians 6:21-22 there is an almost identical comment. The bearer of the letter would **supplement** Paul's letter with additional information of his own, but Paul did not think that an oral message delivered by his colleague to those Christians was preferable to his sending a message in writing.

This background data becomes relevant to our present investigation because of the way in which it has been suggested that the Gospels were written quite late, after a gap of many decades from the events they describe, this delay being due to the antipathy of the Jews and the early Christians to the use of writing for their message. Only when the last of the eyewitnesses and their immediate followers were passing away—the argument goes—did some men see the need to overcome this antipathy and, with some measure of reluctance but under the necessity of the situation, sit down and compose the written Gospel records which have come down to us.

This view was advanced by Vincent Taylor, who said (1930: 7-8),

Why the Gospels were not written earlier, and by actual eyewitness, is easily answered. In the first place, in the primitive Christian communities, oral testimony was more highly valued: men preferred the “living and abiding voice.” ... Only as eyewitnesses died, and the Coming was delayed ... was the demand felt for written records of what Jesus had said and done.

Thus similarly, R O P Taylor in “Hindrances to Writing”, in his *Groundwork of the Gospels* (1946: 62-63), says, “There was a positive distrust of writings. ... They viewed writings with suspicion.”

But the background data of the first century to which attention has been drawn shows that such an “anti-writing” picture of the situation in the early church is not an accurate one.

Nor is it any answer to say that it was acceptable in *Hellenistic* culture to use writing, but unacceptable in *Jewish* culture.

First of all Paul, the most prolific of letter writers, was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” and there is not the slightest evidence that he found writing about the gospel an “un-Jewish” thing to do. Secondly, if this comment were valid it would not in any case have affected the writing of a Gospel by Luke, who was a Gentile—and those who hold this viewpoint do not also normally regard Luke as the earliest Gospel written. Thirdly, we find exactly the same positive attitude towards writing on the part of the very Jewish church leader James. His letter is considered by most scholars to be one of the earliest of the New Testament epistles, and we should note particularly that when he wished his judgement at the Council of Jerusalem to be circulated to the churches he sent representatives to report that judgement, and (Acts 15:19-23, 30-31) he also **recorded it in writing and sent a written letter with them!** (Observe the similarity here with what Paul did in regard to Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians, as we have just noted.)

Thus the evidence shows that Christians in the early church were quite ready to accept the use of writing for recording and conveying their message, and there is no evidence at all that gives any grounds for believing that they had any kind of objection to its use. There is consequently no justification for the suggestion that the first Christians would have been slow and reluctant to set down in writing the details of the life and teaching of Jesus.

While all this is true of formal writings, it is even truer of informal, private notes. Gerhardsson's account (1961) of the transmission of oral tradition within Judaism shows that this was accomplished by means of a form of written mnemonics akin to shorthand. That is to say, the Jewish tendency towards oral transmission did not **preclude** the use of written notes but in fact **required** it.

A consideration of all these factors will allow us to note the very extensive use by the Jews of oral transmission for their traditions—with the implications that this has for the consideration of the transmission of the “Jesus traditions” during the so-called “oral period”, as is shown in the research and writings of Gerhardsson. But it will also act to prevent us adopting an unbalanced view of the first-century situation, over-exaggerating this “antipathy” to written accounts to the point of accepting without justification the belief that the early Christians would have had strong feelings against making any written record of the deeds and sayings of Jesus, feelings that would have required a lengthy passage of time and exceptional circumstances to overcome.

Even if such an attitude had existed within the Jewish section of the church (and the evidence is against this), it would certainly not have influenced the Greek-speaking church—and the New Testament was written in Greek! Moreover we need to bear in mind that the same Jews who are thought to have had such an attitude, themselves had, and venerated as the record of God revealing himself and speaking to men, **written** Scriptures.

This data indicates that there was no factor inherent in the first-century situation that mitigated against the writing down of the gospel record at an early date but that, on the contrary, there is a strong probability that, in accordance with the custom of the time, written notes (ὑπομνηματα, *hypomnēmata*) of Jesus's deeds and sayings would have been made by eyewitnesses at or immediately after the time of occurrence. These private notes would then pave the way for and provide the core for the subsequent fuller writing down of the sayings and deeds of Jesus by the apostle Matthew and other eyewitnesses. To consider, then, the evidence that we have for this.

## 2.1 PROPOSITION 1: MATTHEW RESPONDS TO A GROWING NEED

### 2.1.1 Initial Written Accounts—Tracts, Fragments, and Fly-Sheets

The idea that there were written sources of some description behind our canonical Gospels has a long history. This idea is widely accepted, irrespective of which Synoptic Gospel is considered to be the first written. Thus T H Robinson, an advocate of Markan Priority, says (1928: ix) that

... we have no certainty as to the literary processes of the church till we find a book known to us to-day as the gospel according to Mark. ... Working, no doubt, on material already to hand in written form, at least in part ...

This idea of written sources has surfaced in numerous different forms, usually being attached to whichever view of Synoptic interrelationship the particular writer espoused.

Much of the later speculation about these documentary sources looks back to comments made by the church Father Papias, and preserved in the *Church History* of Eusebius.

The early church Fathers were not very much interested in the order in which the Gospels were written, nor in their interrelationships. Eusebius (3.39.15-16, Maier 1999: 127-130) informs us that Papias (c.110) referred briefly to the writing of John, Mark and Matthew, but not in a way that gave any information about order of writing, or the slightest hint of any interrelationship. Then Eusebius records Papias's comments about Mark, and then, following this, what Papias has written about Matthew. Eusebius says:

Such is Papias's reference to Mark. Of Matthew he had this to say: "Matthew compiled the sayings [*logia* of Christ] in the Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as best he could."

We shall have occasion to consider what Papias said about Mark at a later point. For the moment, we focus on his reference to Matthew writing *ta logia* in Hebrew (or, Aramaic). Initially this was taken in the eighteenth century (particularly in Germany) to refer to a kind of Proto-Gospel. Bo Reicke (1978: 52) comments that:

the Proto-Gospel Hypothesis, stems from a remark of Papias implying that Matthew had compiled the *logia* in Hebrew (Eusebius, History III.39.16). Following this, Epiphanius and Jerome held that there was an older Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew, and claimed that it had reappeared in the Hebrew or Nazarene Gospel of the Syrian Judaeo-Christians. This theory was taken up in 1689 by Richard Simon in Normandy, the pioneer of New Testament text criticism. He asserted that an old Gospel of Matthew, presumed to have been written in Hebrew or rather in Aramaic and taken to lie behind the Nazarene Gospel, was the Proto-Gospel.

When the hypothesis of Markan Priority gained favour, the *logia* became the forerunner of the concept of Q as the source for material common to Matthew and Luke but absent from Mark. But the idea of *logia* written by Matthew in Hebrew/ Aramaic during the time prior to the existence of the Gospel that now bears his name is a concept totally independent of any attachment to the Markan Priority hypothesis. It can well be taken as referring to (primarily teaching) material written by Matthew and subsequently incorporated (in Greek translation) into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke ***totally without reference to whether any of that common material became included in Mark.***

Bo Reicke (1978: 52, 72) then describes the Fragment Hypothesis:

... the Fragment Hypothesis had been conceived in 1783 by Johann Benjamin Koppe in Göttingen. He assumed the existence of a number of shorter and longer accounts in Hebrew and Greek no longer accessible, but which had been used by the Synoptists. ... He preferred to regard the Synoptic Evangelists as dependent on a plurality of earlier sources, like those alluded to in Luke 1:2. More exactly he supposed that Matthew, Mark and Luke had collected longer and shorter reports, spread among the Christians in oral and written form and moulded into narratives, speeches, parables, sayings of Jesus and other categories. By his assumption of several fragmentary sources Koppe anticipated the so-called Fragment Hypothesis propagated by F.Schleiermacher in 1817; and by his reference to categories first developed in oral form he anticipated the inauguration of form criticism by M. Dibelius in 1919.

David Dungan (1999: 323) comments further concerning Koppe that he brought out

a publication in 1782 denouncing the idea that there had been any *direct* literary utilization by the canonical authors of each other's writings. Koppe insisted that the Preface to the Gospel of Luke was proof that the canonical Gospels were based on earlier Greek and Hebrew narratives.

Subsequently, reports Dungan (1999: 325-326),

The University of Berlin New Testament scholars W.M.L.De-Wette and Friedrich Bleek adopted the emerging consensus that both Luke and Matthew had made independent and differing use of a mass of earlier written and oral sources.

Kümmel comments (1972: 84),

Schleiermacher in 1817 ... advanced the suggestion that a collection of the sayings of Jesus that goes back to the apostle Matthew had been incorporated into this Gospel as an important component.

Stoldt reports (1980: 48) that in a discourse published in 1832 Schleiermacher made



these comments about the Papias quotation concerning the *logia* written by Matthew in Hebrew:

Matthew has written a collection of statements made by Christ which may have been only single proverbs or extended ones, or most probably both. *Papias' expression simply cannot mean anything else.*

In more recent times, other authors have concluded that there is evidence for documents behind and incorporated into our canonical Gospels. In 1906 F C Burkitt considered this question and decided (62-64) that “the Eschatological Discourse in Mark xiii once circulated, very much in its present form, as a separate fly-sheet.”

The following year—1907—W C Allen discussed in his commentary on Matthew the question of the sources for Matthew and Luke and in particular the proposal, “The two Evangelists drew from independent written sources.” He goes on to comment as follows (xlvii):

It is quite unlikely that when these editors drew up their Gospels S. Mark's writing was the only written source before them. So far as S. Luke is concerned, he distinctly implies that there were many evangelic writings. And indeed nothing is in itself more probable than that sayings, parables and discourses of Christ should have been committed to writing at a very early period. Not, of course, necessarily for wide publication, but for private use, or for communication by letter, or for the use of Christian teachers and preachers.

There are numerous scholars who emphasize the “oral period” of tradition transmission, providing careful argumentation for their position, and who query the existence of such early written material. But the question must be asked whether it is possible to be as easily certain as this that all the early sources of the Synoptic Gospels were oral, not written. During the fifties, extensive work in this area was done, quite independently of each other, by Wilfred L Knox and H A Guy.

Knox died in 1950 and his work *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels* was published posthumously in 1953 (Vol. 1, St. Mark) and 1957 (Vol. 2, St. Luke and St. Matthew). Guy's book *The Origin of the Gospel of Mark* appeared between these two dates, in 1954, and contains one brief reference (on page 47) to Knox's first volume.

Knox forcefully argues (Vol. 1, 1953: 3-7) for the existence from very early times of written pericopes and pericope clusters and collections:

But the situation of the primitive Church would demand collections of the sayings and doings of Jesus of this kind. We have noticed that mission-speeches of a more or less definite pattern can be found in the New Testament. But a mere summary of the vital facts of the Gospel—that Jesus went about doing good, that he died for our sins and was raised

on the third day according to the Scripture—, however bulky the quotation of *testimonia* might be and however full the story of the Passion, would not permanently satisfy the homiletic needs of the Church. Those who had accepted Jesus as Lord for whatever reason, as for instance the hearing of a sermon, the witnessing of a miracle of healing or an outpouring of the Spirit, or again conviction that Jesus was indeed the fulfilment of prophecy, would inevitably seek to know what manner of man the Lord had been. ...

Converts would certainly ask questions which must needs be satisfied. ... For such a view we have the evidence of such passages as Acts 10:37f., where the brief summary of the ministry in the typical primitive *kerygma* is a fairly transparent literary device for avoiding the necessity of a fuller account; the hearers are supposed to know the story and therefore Peter need not repeat it here; but normally the hearers would not know. The similar Pauline *kerygma* of Acts 13:24ff. leaps from the Baptist to the crucifixion; but no body of converts could be permanently content to know nothing of the intervening period. ...

The rest of their common material—and it must be remembered that ‘Q’ is simply a symbol of the material common to Matthew and Luke which is not found in Mark—may have been derived from the same document; but some at least of the difficulties of the Q hypothesis are more easily explained if it be supposed that both evangelists were drawing on collections of material which in some cases reached them in the same written form, but [which] in others had an independent history behind them.

Then in an Epilogue at the end of his Volume 2 (138ff.), Knox adds:

Among the avowed interests of the present study, as of almost all studies of the history of the synoptic tradition in modern times, has been “the quest of the historical Jesus”. Yet the questions of historicity and authenticity cannot be usefully discussed before the closest detective work has been done on the synoptic sources. In this book it is claimed that with admittedly varying degrees of probability, yet without relapse to airy speculation, it is still possible to trace the use by the evangelists, notably Mark and Luke, of short tracts telling of the ministry of Jesus, such as would be required by individual missionaries sent out by the primitive Christian centres, Jerusalem and Antioch. For their work the single pericope with its isolated and often anecdotal character would scarcely be adequate. On the other hand we are not postulating circumstances where the full Gospel story is needed for sustained reading or for liturgical usage. The stage here envisaged was no doubt early. Probably even in the late thirties, and certainly by the early fifties of the first century, shorter tracts of the type postulated would have become the normal type of Christian propagandist literature.

Like Knox, H A Guy (1954) writes from within the perspectives of the Markan Priority view, and strongly affirms the written sources behind all three Gospels.

Occasional references have been made by scholars to the proposals of Knox and Guy since their books appeared, but I can find little in the way of careful evaluation of their ideas: that at an early date, and parallel with the oral transmission of sayings and stories of Jesus, there were numbers of short written records of these in circulation as well.

However, C F D Moule (1962: 55) believes that:

It is not difficult to imagine how self-contained units of Christian teaching came to be hammered out, first orally, then as written fly-sheets or tracts—often in several differing though related shapes, according to the contexts in which they were used. When therefore John Mark (for example) sharpened his reed pen and dipped it in the ink to write, he had already behind him a considerable tradition of Christian speaking and possibly writing, by Peter and others—recognized patterns of argument and exhortation, of defense and attack, of instruction and challenge—from amongst which he might select his narrative material and his sayings. The earliest Christian writers were probably already heirs to a considerable body of tradition.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of a number of written documents behind the Gospels was first enunciated in 1782-1783, and became referred to as the Fragment Hypothesis, and in various forms has been held by a string of different scholars down the years.

What does this data show? It discloses that numbers of different scholars, from different centuries and different cultures and backgrounds, and with varying theological outlooks and holding different positions in regard to Synoptic relationships, had this one thing in common: they came to the view that behind the Synoptic Gospels were numerous earlier written documents. These scholars were not in agreement concerning any details about these documents: how many of them there might have been, and what role they played in the writing of the Synoptics, and even which Gospel(s) they can be detected in. They call them tracts, fragments, fly-sheets. They often link them with the predecessors that Luke mentions in his Prologue, compilers busily at work putting together narratives of the events of the life of Jesus. They may or may not identify them with Matthew's *logia* (which they may view as a substantial Proto-Gospel, or may take to be a number of separate accounts of things that Jesus said). But they do say that there is good reason to recognize that there were such documents in the period between the ministry of Jesus and the writing of the canonical Gospels. That is, in their different ways (and with vastly different conclusions) they have taken seriously the evidence for early Gospel fragments and segments.

I cannot find any of them with whom I would closely agree. I consider that in many instances their conclusions go beyond the structure of the evidence. I certainly do not hold the theological attitude to the Synoptics that I detect in many of them. But I wholeheartedly agree with them in the one factor in which they agree: the existence of numerous documents of varying length lying behind the Synoptics.

### 2.1.2 Luke, Papias, and Matthew's Logia

We know that there were numerous short documentary records of the life and teaching of Christ in circulation because Luke and Papias tell us there were. Let us consider more carefully what they say.

What exactly is Luke explaining to us in his Prologue? He is informing us about the early stages in the development of written Gospel material.

Concerning Luke's Prologue, Plummer (1896: 2) says,

This prologue contains all that we really know respecting the composition of early narratives of the life of Christ, and it is the test by which theories as to the origin of our Gospels must be judged. No hypothesis is likely to be right which does not harmonize with what is told us here.

Luke 1:1-4 may be translated as follows:

Seeing that many have set to work putting together a consecutive narrative [ἀναταξασθαι διηγησιν] covering the things that have been fulfilled amongst us, exactly as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered to us, it seemed good to me also, after investigating everything thoroughly and accurately from the beginning, to write a chronological account for you, most excellent Theophilus, in order that you may know more fully about the truth, reliability and certainty [all implied by ἀσφαλεια] of the matters of which you have been informed.

The words ἀναταξασθαι διηγησιν are rendered by Plummer (1896: 2) as "to arrange afresh so as to show the sequence of events". I am intrigued to see that (Vol 1, 1886: 55) Godet asks, concerning these words,

Did this arrangement consist in the harmonizing of a number of separate writings into a single whole, so as to make a consecutive history of them? In this case, we should have to admit that the writers of whom Luke speaks had already found in the Church a number of short writings on particular events, which they had simply united: their work would thus constitute a second step in the development of the writing of the gospel history.

Godet himself then rejects this idea, because it would interpose "intermediate accounts between the apostolic tradition and the writings of which Luke speaks". But

when we recognize that these short writings had originated from the apostolic circle itself (that is, **from Matthew**) then Godet's objection is answered.

I believe Godet's rejected suggestion is in fact an accurate description of **exactly** what was happening: Luke found that many people were gathering the various eyewitness traditions of the deeds and teachings of Jesus, and were combining them together into a consecutive narrative.

The word Luke uses for the "delivering" or "handing on" by the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word—παράδιδομι—can refer to either (or both) oral or written tradition. Plummer says (1896: 3),

He gives no hint as to whether the facts were handed down orally or in writing. The difference between the *polloi* and these *autoptai* is not that the *polloi* wrote their narratives while the *autoptai* did not, but that the *autoptai* were primary authorities, which the *polloi* were not.

Ellis says (1966: 63), "delivered: i.e. in both oral and written form." So also Leon Morris (1974: 66). A B Bruce (1897: 459) says,

Verse 2: καθως implies that the basis of these many *written* narratives was the παράδοσις of the Apostles, which, by contrast, and by the usual meaning of the word, would be mainly though not necessarily exclusively oral (might include, e.g., the Logia of Matthew).

Luke is not criticizing these compilers for what they are doing; but he quotes their activities as a reason (almost a justification) for his doing the same thing ("It seemed good to me also ... to write ..."). "Many" persons had each begun assembling these eyewitness reports into some kind of narrative account.

Luke saw himself in a position to do this also, and do it better. He was writing an account that would be comprehensive, thorough, orderly, and trustworthy. He thus states the four characteristics of his own work (and it may perhaps be inferred that he is motivated to engage in his project because these characteristics, which he regards as important, are, in some measure at least, absent from the work of the others).

The apostolic accounts of which Luke writes were not necessarily in writing. Luke's word παράδιδομι could include oral accounts as well. But it would be going well beyond what Luke says to assume that these accounts did **not** include written records. Rightly understood, Luke's explanation says that from the apostles there came numerous accounts of events, and teachings of events, of which they themselves had been eyewitnesses.

This is the most logical thing you could expect. These were the men who were called by Christ and commissioned to be his witnesses (Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8).

What Luke says they were doing was precisely what Christ called them to do. What we can glean from Luke's explanation is that this apostolic eyewitness testimony was being written down.

The first thing for us to recognize then is: the overwhelming preponderance of probability, from Luke's explanation, would be that from the apostolic band there went into circulation various accounts of the things Jesus said and did, and that some of these accounts came to be written down.

The man at the centre of this activity was the man who was called from a secretarial-type appointment as a Roman official to join a group commissioned to become witnesses for Jesus. Luke tells us what was happening: the apostles were bearing eyewitness testimony to the events. Papias puts a name to this. He tells us: Matthew wrote down the *logia*. As we look at the situation we see that this is inherently unlikely **not** to be true.

Matthew was sufficiently impressed with what he saw of Jesus to follow him. We should think a bit more deeply about what this bare statement indicates.

Jesus spent some time teaching in the Capernaum area, This is where Matthew Levi had his Customs Office, on the Great West Road. He had an unending stream of travellers passing by and coming to him to pay their tax. People had congregated from everywhere to hear the teaching of Jesus. They heard what he was teaching and they saw the miracles he performed. Reports of these deeds and teachings were circulating widely, and in the nature of the case Matthew Levi was in just the job and the location to hear them all.

Then came the day when Jesus approached his Customs Desk and called him to become a follower. The records of this (Matt 9:9//Mark 2:14//Luke 5:27) do not hint at a moment's hesitation. Matthew immediately arose, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Matthew had a lucrative business as a taxation official in the Roman administration. We understand quite a bit, from our knowledge of Roman institutions and practices, about what this meant. This job would not make a man popular, but it would certainly make a man rich. Yet Matthew Levi left it in an immediate response to the call of Jesus.

This response demonstrates one thing beyond all doubt: Matthew recognized the importance of Jesus—who he was, and what he was doing and teaching. We must not oversell this point: there was still a lot that Matthew had to learn and see. But we do know that Matthew's participation within the band of disciples was such that when Jesus chose twelve of them to be apostles and to have the role above all to be his witnesses, Matthew was one of those twelve.

To have this evidence about the apostle Matthew—his background, his training and employment in the Roman administration, his response to the call to follow Jesus, his appointment to the role and responsibility of apostle—and to believe that he would *not* write down what Jesus was doing and teaching requires a far bigger leap of faith than believing that he did. It would be psychologically impossible that such a man as Matthew, trained and experienced in writing records and reports (remember, he was a Roman official and such work was requisite for him—it went with the job) would not have recorded things Jesus said. He had the ability, the means, the opportunity, the motivation, and he wouldn't have done it?

What happened after his call? We have no direct evidence for this. But an awareness of Matthew's circumstances and background points unerringly to it: he took down in his notebook what Jesus was teaching. He had been used to writing reports for his Roman employers, he had left this to follow Jesus, he heard the important things that Jesus was saying, and he would not make a record of them? No, rather, he wrote down what Jesus taught. There and then. Logic demands it. Papias confirms it.

In his *Memory and Manuscript* (1961), Birger Gerhardsson discusses (154-160) the use of written notes, especially notes taken down of lectures and rabbinic teaching, in contemporary Judaism in the time of Christ:

In order to mark a fact, impress it clearly on the memory and prevent faulty memorization, the Rabbis often provided it with a *siman*. ... These *simanim* often serve to prevent mistakes in respect of authors, figures or other facts which are easily confused in the memory. ... We thus see that these *simanim* are often expressions of a system of abbreviations which has with some justification been compared to shorthand.

It would be most natural, then, if this practice of a rabbi's students making notes of his teaching were to be followed by Matthew (in particular) for recording Christ's teaching. Gerhardsson (195) describes

... the way in which the evangelists copied down and/or edited their work on the basis of material which had long been in use in the work of preaching and teaching, and which had therefore been memorized or—one might suppose—existed in private notebooks.

Gerhardsson goes on (201) to discuss the Christian use of the codex rather than the scroll for their writings:

It is a known fact that in the Christian church we find the Holy Scriptures in codex form at an unexpectedly early date. This is all the more remarkable when we consider the Hellenistic and Jewish milieus. In the Graeco-Roman world the scroll enjoyed almost undisputed supremacy as the repository of literary work: a book was a scroll. In Judaism,

too, the scroll was unchallenged as the vehicle for the written divine Word. With this in mind it is all the more remarkable that as early as the beginning of the second century—and presumably even earlier—the codex was used in the Church. Some scholars have connected this with the possibility that the gospel literature was derived from *notebooks*, which were often in codex form.

R H Gundry (1967: 182) attributes the origin of much gospel material to Matthew's notebook, acknowledging that he is adopting a hypothesis that has been supported by E J Goodspeed (1959), and before him, B F C Atkinson (1954: 771), and A T Robertson in *Studies in Mark's Gospel* (1919, 1958: 28). Gundry also recognizes the points of similarity between his views and Gerhardsson, but says expressly (183), "My own hypothesis stresses note-taking, whereas Gerhardsson stresses memorization."

Gundry explains his case thus (181-184):

There is but one hypothesis known to the present writer which can meet the requirements of the data which has been discovered in this study. It is the hypothesis that the Apostle Matthew was a note-taker during the earthly ministry of Jesus and that his notes provided the basis for the bulk of the apostolic gospel tradition. The use of notebooks which were carried on one's person was very common in the Graeco-Roman world. In ancient schools outline notes (γραμματα ὑπομνηματικά) were often taken by pupils as the teacher lectured. The notes became the common possession of the schools and circulated without the name of the lecturer. Sometimes an author would take this material as the basis for a book to be published (γραμματα συνταγματικά). Shorthand was used possibly as early as the fourth century B.C. and certainly by Jesus' time. The Oxyrhynchus papyri show that scribes and clerks were often trained in shorthand. Rabbinic tradition was transmitted by the employment of catchwords and phrases which were written down in shorthand notes. Thus, from both the Hellenistic side and the Judaistic side it is wholly plausible to suppose that one from the apostolic band was a note-taker—especially since the relationship of Jesus to his disciples was that of a teacher, or rabbi, to his pupils.

As an ex-publican, whose employment and post near Capernaum on the Great West Road would have required and given a good command of Greek and instilled the habit of jotting down information, and perhaps a Levite, whose background would have given him acquaintance with the OT in its Semitic as well as Greek forms, Mt the Apostle was admirably fitted for such a function among the unlettered disciples [Acts 4:13]. We can then understand how all strands of textual tradition made their way into the whole of the synoptic material, for the looseness and informality of such notes made it possible for Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek all to appear in them.



Gundry's view is endorsed by Hendriksen (1973: 90; cf. also 53-54), who says: "Matthew's *notes* ... could very well account also for" that Gospel material which is found not only in Matthew but "in all three Synoptics".

A few pages later (1973: 96) Hendriksen adds,

Again, as a tax collector Matthew was obliged to make written reports of the moneys he collected. He may even have known shorthand. [That shorthand was well-known and widespread even before Matthew was born is also confirmed by the fact that already in 63 BC Marcus Tullius Tiro, a friend of Cicero, had invented a system of shorthand that was widely taught in the schools of the empire and used by the *notarii* in the Roman Senate to take down the speeches of the orators. And the Greek world was not behind in this, as Milligan and others have shown.] He was therefore the logical person to take notes on Christ's words and works.

David Hill (1972: 54) cites Gundry's comments as above, and goes on to add,

The wide use of shorthand and the employment of note-books in the Graeco-Roman world, the ancient school practice of circulating lecture notes which could be used later in published works, and the later transmission of rabbinic tradition through shorthand notes, support the suggestion.

There is certainly, then, in the judgement of quite a few scholars, a case to be made for the proposal that Matthew's Gospel had its origins in notes that Matthew made, at the time, of Christ's deeds and words.

Then Matthew's accounts began to be copied, and to circulate. We can recognize two factors as contributing to this.

Perhaps (as some suggest; for example Gergardsson 1961: 202), these notes were at first intended only for limited private use. Or perhaps from the beginning Matthew had in mind their wider circulation. There was Matthew's own innate perception of the importance of what Jesus was saying (which he was recording). He was aware that those who heard would not remember all of it. (The idea that the Jews of Jesus's day had wonderful memories with perfect recall is an unsubstantiated myth.) And always, as Jesus was teaching, there were untold multitudes who were *not* there on any given occasion to hear it. There would be the inner compulsive response "Others must hear this also" that would lead Matthew to make some copies for distribution.

And secondly, Matthew began to receive requests. People who heard Jesus wanted a record of what they heard that they could take back to their villages and their families. People who were not there wanted to learn what Jesus had taught.

## CONCLUSION

Aramaic was the mother tongue of most of his hearers: so Jesus gave much of his teaching in Aramaic. And Matthew wrote down in Aramaic what Jesus taught in Aramaic. And his record of the sayings and teaching of Jesus was copied and circulated in Aramaic. Did this actually happen? Papias says that it did.

There are certain situations in life where you **can**, and therefore you **do**. Matthew was in such a situation. It reveals a distinct failure to understand how people tick to look at Matthew and to say that he would not, did not, do exactly what church history tells us he did: write down what he heard Jesus teaching. In Aramaic, yes. But in the Greek tongue also.

Moreover, we ought to recognize that this was part of the divine purpose for Matthew, from the time of his call. Indeed, earlier than that—from his training and preparation before his call.

## 2.2 PROPOSITION 2: MANY HAVE TAKEN IT IN HAND TO WRITE

### 2.2.1 Luke's Explanation

Matthew was not the only one to write. "Many have taken it in hand ..."

The apostles were not the only eyewitnesses. Hundreds saw and heard one part or another of Jesus's ministry. In his Prologue, Luke tells us of a response to this fact which developed: many took it in hand to begin writing down the things they had heard and seen.

So Luke gives us further information about these early documents. It seemed a good idea to write his own record (he tells us), seeing that others were already doing the same thing. They had collected various accounts, originating with the apostles and other eyewitnesses, that recorded the deeds and teaching of Jesus. "Many" had begun assembling these into some kind of narrative account. Luke saw himself in a position to do this also, and do it better. He was writing an account that would be comprehensive, thorough, orderly, and trustworthy.

When Luke says (1:1-4) that

many have set to work putting together a consecutive narrative covering the things that have been fulfilled amongst us, exactly as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered to us,

undoubtedly this refers first and foremost to the apostles. They were *par excellence* the "eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered to us".

But Jesus had taught crowds of people over several years, and had performed many healings in their midst. So as well as the apostles, there were quite a few other eyewitnesses of such events—many who had themselves become believers, and were engaged in witness to their Lord. For instance, seventy or seventy-two of them who went out on mission for Jesus on one occasion during his years of ministry (Luke 10:1); and a hundred and twenty by the time of the ascension (Acts 1:15). Some of these also, then, who were “eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word” began to write down their recollections.

Then, furthermore, there were the “many” who set to work assembling this material into “a connected narrative” of what had happened. And this was happening before Luke wrote: that is, during the thirties, forties and fifties.

An objection has been made on occasion to this scenario: that the Jews of those times had a prejudice against putting sacred things into writing (I have discussed this earlier this chapter), and, furthermore, in any case Christian believers were expecting the imminent return of Christ and so (it is said) would not have been motivated to take time to write things down. Concerning this, Knox writes (Vol. 1, 1953: 5),

It is indeed sometimes urged that the first generation of Christians was so filled with enthusiastic expectations of the immediate return of the Lord that its members had no interest in the details of his life. [Dibelius, *Formgeschichte d. Evang.* 9, 22.2] This seems to me frankly incredible. The missionary could hardly call on men to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah whom the rulers of the Jews had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead, unless they were prepared to vindicate this somewhat startling message by giving an account of the things which Jesus had said and done. And no expectation of the Lord’s return, however enthusiastic, is likely to have retained for long an intensity sufficient to stifle the ancient and deep-rooted curiosity of the human mind and its desire to be told a story.

Indeed, a century or so ago, W C Allen (1907: xlvii, xlix) had responded to these assertions thus:

The assertions frequently made, that the Christian eschatological doctrine would have acted as a prejudice against writing down the words of Christ, and that the Jewish scruple about committing the oral law or the targums to writing would have transferred itself to the early Christian community and the teaching of their Master, are purely conjectural, and without foundation. We are dealing with a society in which, as the letters of the New Testament show, writing was well known and in common use. In every Christian community there would probably be found individuals who possessed in writing some of the words of

Christ. ... If there were any good reason for denying the existence of a multiplicity of written sources, the conception of oral tradition as a source for these sayings would be less artificial and more agreeable to the data than the hypothesis of a single written source. In view, however, of the facts ... it would be arbitrary to assign all the sayings common to Mt. and Lk. to oral tradition. Wherever verbal agreement extends over several verses, it may reasonably be supposed either that Lk. had seen Mt., or that both writers had before them written sources containing, not, indeed, identical, but similar sayings. That amongst these written sources one or more may have been used by both Evangelists is, of course, possible, but can nowhere be proved with certainty so long as the possibility remains that the literary link consists in the dependence of Lk. upon Mt.

These comments by Knox and Allen remain totally valid today. In Chapter Eight I set out a substantial number of convincing reasons for seeing that the literary link between the two Major Synoptics cannot be that Luke knew the Gospel of Matthew. This removes Allen's caveat and leaves him as a supporter of my basic premiss.

These apostolic and other eyewitness remembrances of Jesus's words and deeds were, then, coming to be assembled together into longer narratives or "pericope clusters". It is completely impossible for us to know to what extent this grouping-together of pericopes could have been done by the original author at the point of first issuing them, by that author at a subsequent time, or by some other person (such as those about whom Luke is hinting). But this would be a logical next step. Knox (Vol.1, 1953: 4-6) fills this out:

Moreover the travelling evangelist of the primitive Church would need some material for his work beyond the two elements of the mission-speech with its *testimonia* and the Passion story. For this purpose the individual pericope would be too short; the whole Gospel would be too long. What he would need would be a compilation of sayings or miracles or a mixture of the two, having some general unity either of thought or verbal association to aid his memory.

Thus there would arise a number of "Tracts" containing accounts of the ministry of the Lord on earth, either written or committed to memory; it is at least reasonable to suppose that the great Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch would exercise some supervision of these collections and not leave the individual to compile his own and to introduce matter of his own invention. We know little of the process by which the Church detached itself from Judaism; it would appear from the only evidence available that for some time Christians attended the synagogue but had their own worship as well (Acts 2:46). But we must allow for the possibility that in some places Christians would be expelled from the synagogue

quite soon, while elsewhere a particular synagogue might be dominated by a Christian majority, supported by the Elders, even if it were not entirely Christian in its membership; elsewhere again Christians might be allowed to express their opinions quite freely.

These conditions would demand something more than a mere repetition of an outline *kerygma* of the Gospel, backed by a selection of proof-texts from the Old Testament and “prophecies” of an apocalyptic type; it seems quite incredible that in these cases, particularly where Christians had been expelled from the synagogue, there would be no attempt to provide a record of what Jesus had done and taught. ...

Writings of this kind ... would be a natural growth, not a literary product. They would be of the sort of length which could easily be committed to memory, and furnish the basis for a sermon to instruct a congregation, to confirm their faith under persecution, or to edify them and emphasize their responsibilities as Christians. They could be used as an addition to the synagogue lessons or as a substitute for them. The practice attested by Justin Martyr of reading the memorials of the Apostles at Christian worship may well go back to the very early beginnings of the Church; it would be extremely perilous to argue from the absence of any mention of the practice in earlier Christian writers that it cannot have existed, in view of the scanty nature of our records.

The investigative research which H A Guy published in *The Origin of the Gospel of Mark* led him to a similar conclusion. Guy writes (1954: 123, 127):

We know that collections in writing of the sayings of Jesus were made at an early date.

If written collections of the teaching of Jesus were made quite early, it is at least possible that written accounts of incidents also were set down. These first attempts would consist of the stories told by the preachers. ... The independence and isolation of the episodes would be preserved if each story was first set down on a separate sheet of papyrus.

Guy then examines in some detail a simple question that other writers who postulate early documents are slower to address: In what form did these documents circulate? His explanations here are worthy of our note. He continues (127):

We have had evidence in recent years of the extent to which the papyrus codex, consisting of a number of sheets bound together, was in use among the early Christians instead of the papyrus roll, which was the more common form for books.

Guy then enumerates various examples of early Christian use of papyrus sheets and codices. He continues (128):

There is thus at least a likelihood that even in the first century the Christians used papyrus sheets, and this becomes a probability when we remember the frequent use of such sheets in ordinary correspondence in the Roman Empire. The letter of Paul to Philemon was

probably written on one sheet, both sides perhaps being used. Separate papyrus sheets would also be much cheaper for Christians to use than an expensive roll, some of which was almost bound to be unused. The papyrus roll itself was of course but a number of sheets stuck together. The “rubbish heaps” of Egypt have revealed to us thousands of such sheets in daily use, some of them dating from New Testament times, employed for personal letters, business contracts, bills, receipts and invitations. Leaves in common use varied from 15.5 inches in length to small pieces of only a few inches. A quite frequent size was 9 to 11 inches in height and 5 inches wide. Study of the earliest pieces of Christian writing which we now possess shows that similar sheets were in use in the Church very early in its existence.

Guy sums up the conclusions to which his investigation has led him (130-132):

The general conclusion from this investigation is that a sheet of papyrus in use among the Christians of the second century—if not of the first [century]—might be from 2.245 inches to 10 inches in height and from 2.2375 inches to 8 inches in width. With these we may compare the sheets containing the Oxyrhynchus sayings of Jesus, which are 5.75 inches by 2.2375 inches. A page would thus contain from 400 to 800 Greek letters, according to the size of the sheet and the scribe’s handwriting.

There is at least one paragraph in the Gospels which apparently circulated as an independent unit, presumably written on a sheet of papyrus—the story of the adulteress. (This is the only way in which its presence in some MSS. at John 7:53ff., its total omission in others, and its inclusion at Lk 21:38 in the Ferrar Group can be accounted for.) Scribes included it where they thought fit, while some omitted it altogether. In the Westcott and Hort text the paragraph contains 820 Greek letters. There are, however, many words bracketed as doubtful; if these are not counted, the total is 705. This fragment could thus have been contained on a sheet of papyrus approximately the same size as a page of the Chester Beatty codex or the John Rylands fragment of the Fourth Gospel. ...

There is admittedly no parallel to this practice in the case of disciples of the Jewish Rabbis, who depended on oral instruction and repetition of their teaching. But the Christians would not feel bound by this precedent. Their teaching was not for a select circle of disciples but was an open proclamation of good news for all men. They would desire as wide a circulation as possible for the stories about Jesus. What is more natural than that the preachers or their disciples would use odd pieces of papyrus, instead of embarking on the formidable task of writing a book and using a valuable and expensive papyrus roll?

## CONCLUSION

We find support, then, for the idea that there were numerous eyewitnesses in addition to the apostles who wrote down what they had heard and seen of the ministry of Jesus,

and that there was a very definite demand for these written records, both to help Christians learn more about their Lord and in particular as an aid for preachers and leaders in the growing church. And the more widely the church spread during the thirties, forties and fifties, the more insistent became this demand. And it is significant to note Guy's careful explanation of what they wrote **on**.

Amongst these writings would be:

- (a) Material that had originated from within the apostolic group—and (as seen earlier) there is every evidence for attributing this to the apostle Matthew;
- (b) Varied accounts from other, nonapostolic, eyewitnesses;
- (c) Narratives or clusters of pericopes, either originating from these authors themselves, or being assembled by others (the “many” to whom Luke has referred).

### 2.2.2 What Are We to Think of Q?

Further obvious data in this connection is before us in the passages in Matthew and Luke between which there is such close correspondence as to lead us to think of a common written source. This is the material commonly designated as Q.

Obviously we must account in some way for the material common to the two Major Synoptics. The standard, Markan Priority, view is that the material of the Triple Tradition—that is, material closely similar in wording and content, and found in all three Synoptics—is explained on the basis that it is original in Mark and drawn from that source by the other two. But if (as I am setting out to show) Mark is third-written, not first, then we must now recognize a source that comprises all the material common to Matthew and Luke, completely irrespective of whether or not it is also found in Mark.

My hypothesis must account for this common material. It does so on this basis:

(a) Where there is such close correspondence between the Major Synoptics as to require literary dependence, the source is an original document written by Matthew in Greek, copied and circulated, obtained by Luke when gathering his material for his Gospel, and also incorporated by Matthew when he prepared his Gospel.

(b) Where there is such close correspondence between the Major Synoptics as to require literary dependence, but with some verbal variation, the source is most likely to be an original document written by Matthew in Hebrew/Aramaic, obtained by Luke when gathering his material for his Gospel, either already translated into Greek when Luke found it or else translated by Luke himself, and also rewritten in Greek by Matthew when he prepared his Gospel. Albright & Mann comment (1971: LI):

In relation to this version, it may be said that many minor variants in the use of “Q” material between Matthew and Luke can be ascribed to varying translations of the original.

Similarly David Hill (1972:25) writes:

The fact that in many passages in the material common to Matthew and Luke the extent of verbal agreement is considerable although far from total (as it is in other passages) makes it likely that we are dealing, not simply with a common written Greek source, but with alternative translations of earlier Aramaic material as well.

(c) There are a number of verses in the two Major Synoptics that record the same incident or that have similar subject matter, but where there do not appear (from examination and comparison of the text of these two Gospels) to be adequate grounds for concluding that the two accounts in the two Major Synoptics have been derived from a single document. Where it is clearly the same speech being reported or the same incident being described, but there are significant differences of wording, or detail, or perspective, the explanation is that the account in Matthew's Gospel is his own, and the account in Luke's Gospel is sourced by Luke from a nonapostolic eyewitness report of the event.

(d) In numerous pericopes, where a teaching is being recorded with significant differences of wording or context between the Gospels, we have in fact in the two Gospels the record, from two different sources (Matthew and another eyewitness), of **two** distinct occasions. We have only to think of the number of situations in which we could expect Jesus to repeat the use of his stories, his parables, his sayings, to different audiences in different places on different occasions. It is totally gratuitous and unrealistic (and quite opposed to our own normal ministry experience) to decide that Jesus could only have spoken any given teaching on the **one** occasion, and then for us to draw from this assumption the deduction that if any two pieces of teaching (often dubbed "doublets") look similar, they must be variants of something said on that one occasion.

There may be occasional redaction of a pericope by one author or the other so as to fit it harmoniously into the setting into which he is placing it. But this has been very much overworked as an explanation for passages that are much more reasonably seen as an occasion of one of the four explanations above. The best that can be said of this "redaction" approach in a great many instances is that it is an unnecessary hypothesis.

## CONCLUSION

The above explanation points to the existence, behind Luke's Gospel, of a variety of documents of various kinds and sizes, many of them of Matthean authorship, and many of them from other, non-Matthean, eyewitnesses. And that fully accords with what Luke himself tells us.



And behind the material in Matthew's Gospel is: the apostle Matthew.

This explanation, when you think about it, allows us to dispense with the use of the concept of Q altogether,

In Chapter Three we will look at instances of each of these different kinds of situations in the text of the Major Synoptics.

## **2.3 PROPOSITION 3: LUKE COLLECTS HIS MATERIAL**

### **2.3.1 The Authorship of the Third Gospel**

Though not universally agreed, this question is not highly disputed territory, and therefore, as on this point I am in complete agreement with the majority scholarly consensus, it will not be necessary to do more than state this consensus: The Gospel of Luke was written by the same author as the Acts of the Apostles, that is to say, by the physician who accompanied Paul on his travels for many years.

Thus in order to understand the background to the writing of this Gospel, we will commence with what we are able to know about this man, and what he himself tells us in his opening Prologue about the writing of this book.

### **2.3.2 Luke Seizes his Opportunity**

In AD 56 Luke arrived in Palestine in company with Paul. We can recognize from the "we" passages of Acts, which give Luke's first-hand eyewitness accounts of the events that he himself shared in, that by the time he came to Palestine he had already begun the practice of recording material about the spread of the Christian gospel. It seems clear then that he had already formed the intention of writing it up as a connected account. In any case his visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17) and the two years he spent in Palestine while Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) provided a perfect opportunity—and, it would appear, his only significant opportunity—for collecting the material that he used in writing the first half of the Acts of the Apostles, concerning events of which he himself was not an eyewitness.

If, then, Luke was engaged between AD 56 and 58 in discussions with eyewitnesses, and in collecting information to provide the basis for his record in Acts of the events from Pentecost onwards, it is clear that he used the same opportunities, and questioned the same people, about the life of Christ. He does not say at what time he first learnt about the documents in circulation that set forth narratives of the events of the life of Christ. It may have been earlier than his AD 56 visit to Jerusalem and Palestine. In fact, there are good grounds for believing that Paul had in his possession—and used in his ministry—copies of pericopes of incidents and teachings of Christ's life. (Paul frequently quotes

from Christ's teaching or shows a knowledge of things Christ said.) Be that as it may, it is certainly most unlikely that it would have been later than AD 56 or in some other area that Luke first came across the accounts he mentions. And in this Prologue to his Gospel he states that he carried out a very thorough and careful investigation of everything connected with the life of Christ.

So it is legitimate to conclude that while Luke was in Palestine he completed the collection of the material for his Gospel, and took it with him to Rome, managing to preserve it intact during his shipwreck on Malta on the way there.

What then would have been the sources that Luke used for his Gospel? We can recognize the existence of these different sources:

(a) Numerous pericopes of varying lengths that had originally been written by Matthew: some of which Matthew wrote in Greek, and some of which he originally wrote in Aramaic (i.e., the *לויא* to which Papias referred). Of those in Aramaic, numbers were translated into Greek by Luke himself for inclusion in his Gospel; while other accounts that Matthew originally wrote in Aramaic had already been translated by others into Greek, for the use of Greek-speaking Christians, before Luke came across them;

(b) Numerous pericopes of varying lengths written by yet others, some almost certainly in Aramaic (and translated by/for Luke), and some in Greek. (It is interesting that in their *Commentary* (1971:CLXXV) Albright & Mann say, "In the course of writing this commentary it has become increasingly clear to us that we may well be dealing with material which had been transmitted in Aramaic and occasionally in Hebrew.")

(c) Copies of written (but unpublished) notes made of various teachings and incidents by some who were present at the time. The existence of such eyewitness notes, privately preserved, is conjectural, I acknowledge, but highly probable. Many who were deeply impressed by what they heard and saw during the ministry of Jesus would have been motivated to preserve a record of it. (I consider the argument has been overstated that in the first century people all had such excellent memories that even those who could write would not trouble to write down those things that they wanted to remember accurately and permanently.) And during his research for his Gospel, Luke would have had ample opportunity to learn about the existence of such private records, and to track them down in order to copy them.

(d) Oral tradition not committed to writing prior to the time Luke himself recorded it.

(e) Information that Luke was himself able to obtain in Palestine through his own investigation and interviews (including details of time, place, circumstances, response, and so on).

## 2.4 PROPOSITION 4: PUBLICATION OF THE TWO MAJOR SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

### 2.4.1 The Four Characteristics that Luke Claims for his Book

Luke was no mere collector and compiler of documentary information. In his Prologue he tells us that he has personally investigated everything accurately from the beginning, and written an orderly account.

(a) ἀνωθεν, “from the beginning”, indicates that in his investigation he has traced back to the earliest happenings connected with the coming of Jesus. Thus we see that in his Gospel he commences prior to the birth of John. What Luke says here connects up with his earlier comment and suggests that “investigating everything accurately from the beginning” involved him in firsthand discussions with those who were “eyewitnesses from the beginning”, both apostles and others.

(b) παντα, “everything”, shows the scope of his investigation. He wanted to find out all that could be known about Christ's life and teaching. Thus we see that Luke's Gospel commences at an earlier point in time than either of the other Synoptics, and carries through to a later point in time, and includes a great deal of Jesus's teaching (especially in parables) and a number of his miracles and other happenings that we do not find elsewhere. Luke's interest in tracing the course of everything from the beginning raises a question about the Markan Priority theory: Why would Luke have omitted so much of the detailed information of Mark's Gospel if he used it as his source? And in particular, why would he have left out completely a number of Mark's pericopes, including the entire section Mark 6:45 to 8:26 (“the Great Omission”)? Advocates of Markan Priority have suggested a number of possible explanations, in particular that Luke was not interested in points of detail, that he already had stories rather similar to some that he omitted, that he cut his Gospel to a length that would fit into a single roll, that he considered some of Mark's material irrelevant or theologically objectionable, and that the edition of Mark from which he was working lacked the Great Omission. But the question is raised in an even more acute form if one is forced to conclude (as many scholars do) that the most valid explanation of much of the material that Luke shares with Matthew but not with Mark is that Luke had access to Matthew's Gospel. If one seeks to avoid this problem by saying that Luke had access only to **some** portions of Matthew, this is in fact to adopt a view similar in its essentials to the Progressive Publication hypothesis. But these various other explanations that are put forward virtually amount to a denial of Luke's expressed interest in tracing every aspect of Christ's Life.

(c) ἀκριβως “accurately”, draws attention to the third of Luke's concerns—he is no

mere uncritical collector of traditions of untested veracity. He brought to bear upon his work a critical judgement, assessing and weighing the traditions he was able to collect, checking out his information and authenticating his facts before including material in his Gospel. The other compilers of narratives were, as we have seen earlier, engaged in assembling isolated (and frequently quite short) traditions into a connected sequence. Now, it is completely unreasonable to hold that Luke knew of the collections of material that others had made, and refers thus to this other material, **and yet** did not look at these narratives he mentions, and would then claim to have checked out “everything”. Moreover, in the nature of the case his statement that he investigated **everything** would of necessity mean that he became involved in an evaluation of the **order** into which these others cast their pericopes. That is to say, “an accurate investigation of everything” inevitably involves the question of the **order** in which he is going to assemble his material, from all his sources, and thus of the **order** in which events took place. And this, in fact is the next aspect that Luke mentions.

(d) καθεξής, “in order”, underlines Luke's concern with this question of **sequence of events**. The commentators are divided as to whether καθεξής indicates **chronological order** or means some other kind of order. Thus Kümmel (1973: 137) is quite definite in saying of Luke that “his intention to write everything ‘in the right order’ (καθεξής) cannot indicate a strict chronological order,” while Godet (1870, 1:62) on the other hand insists that that is precisely what it does mean: he writes, “here the term must stand for chronological order.” To a significant extent their opinion on this point correlates with their overall conclusion as to whether or not Luke's Gospel sets out everything in chronological order (or whether, for instance, Mark is to be regarded as more chronologically accurate where it diverges from Luke). I think it is reasonable to say that the word καθεξής certainly **may** mean “chronological order” but does not **necessarily** do so: the kind of order that is meant is best ascertained by looking at the actual contents of Luke.

It is to be noted how, throughout his Gospel, Luke shows a constant concern with questions of the time, place, and sequence of the events he records (see details, §4.5.1). This is shown in the dating he provides for the commencement of his account (1:5; 3:1-2), his giving of the best estimate of Jesus's age that he had been able to find (1:23), and the way in which virtually every separate incident he records is linked with the previous one by some note of time and place transition. And where he cannot ascertain this information, he says so: for example, 5:12, “While he was in one of the cities”; 5:17, “On one of those days”; 13:10, “Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath”. All in all, it seems pretty clear that the evidence in Luke's Gospel itself

indicates that he **intended** to write in chronological order to the extent to which, in his investigations, he was able to discover what that order was. He may or may not have succeeded in his intention at all points and this is a matter open for further investigation and discussion (there are for instance a few places where I think Matthew's order is clearly to be preferred): but there is good reason for taking καθεξης in 1:3 to be a statement of Luke's plan to give a **chronological** account. (I discuss this further in §4.6.4.)

## CONCLUSION

The significance of Luke's fourfold claim—that he investigated and traced the course of everything accurately from the beginning, and had written his account of everything in order—is reinforced by his final comment. He is writing so that Theophilus may be enabled to know for certain (ἐπιγινωσκω) the truth, the reliability, and the certainty (all conveyed by the word ἀσφαλεια) of the λόγοι of which he had been informed. Luke is giving an assurance to Theophilus (and, of course, to other readers) that the account that he has produced can be depended upon completely to convey the message of which they had heard. This indicates the measure of Luke's confidence that in what he had written he had carried through the standards and the program that he set out in the previous verse.

So it is legitimate to conclude that while Luke was in Palestine he collected all the material for his Gospel, and took it with him to Rome.

### 2.4.2 The Dating of the Synoptic Gospels

The date of the publication of Luke's Gospel is closely tied to that of his sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. Acts commences where the Gospel ends, and in the opening words of Acts Luke indicates to Theophilus that this volume is indeed a sequel to his first book. We must commence therefore by enquiring, What was the date of writing of Acts?

On the usually-accepted chronology of Paul's life (with which I completely concur), Paul reached Rome in either February or March of AD 60. In the closing verses of Acts, Luke tells us that Paul remained there (ἔμεινεν) for two whole years: that is, the account in the book of Acts ends early in AD 62.

But Luke's account doesn't **conclude** so much as simply **stop**. This raises the obvious question that numerous scholars have addressed across the years: Why stop the story here? Why stop **now**?

One of the scholars who has spent considerable time and labour looking into this

question is Adolf Harnack. He sets out his final conclusion in chapter III of his *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels* (1911). He tells us (93) that his understanding of this issue has been maturing for “more than fifteen years”, and then he argues strongly for dating the writing of Acts at the conclusion of the “two years” mentioned in its closing verses. This (he says) is the first impression that one receives from these words, and (94) it “will continue to hold the field against all other possibilities ... This also is the significance of the aorist ἐμεινεν ... it shows that the situation is now changed.”

Harnack then considers the possible change that may have followed upon those two years, and points out that, whatever that change may have been, Luke could not possibly have stopped his account on this note if that account were written some years later. Harnack avers, “Thus, according to the concluding verses, the Acts was written very soon after the day on which St Paul was condemned to leave his hired lodging” (95).

On 97 he sums up thus:

The more clearly we see that the trial of St Paul, and above all his appeal to Caesar, is the chief subject of the last quarter of the Acts, the more hopeless does it appear that we can explain why the narrative breaks off as it does, otherwise than by assuming that the trial had actually not yet reached its close. It is no use to struggle against this conclusion. If St Luke, in the year 80, 90, or 100, wrote thus, he was not simply a blundering but an absolutely incomprehensible historian!

Harnack points out that the clear impression, from the references in the book to Peter and Paul, is that both apostles were still alive at the time of writing. The only realistic explanation of why the book ends in such a manner is because Luke had brought his account up-to-date to that time. It is clear from the way he finishes (“for two whole years”) that it was not written at a later time—Luke could hardly say “two years” if he wrote later and things had continued unchanged for several years further. Similarly, if Paul had come to trial and the outcome was known at the time he wrote, it is inconceivable that Luke would end his account without a mention of this. After further discussion of these issues, Harnack sums up (99) his discussion thus far:

We are accordingly left with the result: that the concluding verses of the Acts of the Apostles, taken in conjunction with the absence of any reference in the book to the result of the trial of St Paul and to his martyrdom, make it in the highest degree probable that the work was written at a time when St Paul’s trial had not yet come to an end.

Harnack then mentions briefly a number of negative factors that point to this date, the total absence of any hint of crucial events affecting both Christians and Jews that occurred in the following years: Nero’s persecution of Christians, the rebellion of the

Jews against Rome, the destruction of Jerusalem, the lack of any use or even mention of Paul's epistles (unaccountable if the Acts were written years later). Harnack says (100) concerning these and similar matters,

St Luke's absolute silence concerning everything that happened between the years 64 and 70 AD is a strong argument for the hypothesis that his book was written before the year 64 AD.

Harnack's thesis was written about a century ago. In 1976, J A T Robinson published the fruits of a careful and thorough investigation of the dating of all the books of the New Testament. He spends several pages (in Chapter Four) discussing Harnack's treatment of the dating of the Acts. He notes the changing and maturing of Harnack's views over a period of time, until this scholar was forced by his weighing of the evidence to decide for the early dating of Acts. Robinson comments (90):

Harnack is still worth quoting, not merely because he is one of the great ones in his field, whose massive scholarship and objectivity of judgement contrast with so many who have come after him, but because on this subject he was forced slowly and painfully to change his mind.

Robinson then elucidates and expands upon the reasons that led Harnack to change his mind, adding more of his own pointing to an early date for Acts (e.g., 88, the absence in Acts of any mention about "the flight of Christians to Pella prior to the beginning of the [Jewish] war in 66"; and [89] the lack of "any hint of the death of James the Lord's brother in 62, which took place at the hands of the Sanhedrin *against* the authority of Rome"). Explanations for the ending of Acts other than the simple one that Luke took his account up to his time of writing are (Robinson says, 90) "recourses of desperation".

If then Acts is to be dated AD 62, this would indicate that Part One of Luke's account (i.e., his Gospel) should be dated a couple of years earlier, that is, in c. AD 60.

What then of the date of Matthew?

Robinson traces in detail the various relevant features in Matthew's Gospel that bear upon the question of dating. In particular he points out (103) that

Matthew represents the gospel for the Jewish-Christian church, equipping it to define and defend its position over against the arguments and institutions of the main body of Judaism.

He shows that Matthew's manner of writing indicates (104) that "the old *status quo* is still in operation"—i.e., this Gospel must be dated before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and the devastating changes it wrought upon Judaism. For Matthew's writing presupposes a still-operating temple and sacrificial system (e.g., Matthew 12:5-7), with

payment of taxes for the upkeep of the temple (17:24-27), a time when there was a stand-off between Jews and Christians but not yet a total and open breach—as distinct from how one would write if speaking of something that had been wiped away by a catastrophic destruction.

After considering all the relevant factors that he can identify, Robinson says (107), “In this case we have pushed Matthew back at any rate before 62, which is exactly the date to which we were driven by Acts, with Luke a little earlier.” He therefore dates the Synoptic Gospels in the period from AD 50 to 60.

It is interesting to see how, again and again, Robinson refuses to base his dates upon any particular “solution” to the Synoptic Problem. He considers the issues both from the perspective of Markan Priority and Markan Posteriority, without allowing his conclusions to be determined by either, but, rather, by investigations independent of Synoptic hypotheses.

David Black makes a similar and independent assessment of what can be seen in Matthew that bears on its dating, listing (2001:67-68) ten significant features that need to be noted, including, “It indicates that the social milieu of Jesus’ time was still intact when Matthew was written (see the phrase ‘even unto this day’ in Matt 27:8; 28:15).”

Black’s conclusion is (69),

The formation of Matthew’s Gospel probably took place in the first decade of the church’s life, that is, before 44, and thus not only before 1-2 Thessalonians and Galatians but probably before Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem “after fourteen years” (Gal 2:1; cf. Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).

## CONCLUSION

When scholars have come to accept AD 65 as the date for Mark’s Gospel (largely on the basis of the testimony of the early church Fathers), and they take this Gospel as being prior to the Major Synoptics (because it was supposedly used by them), these scholars are then compelled by their assumptions to reject the evidence that would date Matthew and Luke in c. AD 60.

But when one recognizes the validity of the evidence pointing to the Markan Dependence explanation, then the chronology falls quite smoothly into place. I would agree with Black to the extent that **some portions** of Matthew were written (and in circulation) by AD 44—though not the complete Gospel quite as early as this date. I see, rather, the evidence pointing to the conclusion that Matthew and Luke were published in the same year (for they did not see each other’s Gospel), and that that year was AD 60.



Mark used them both in the writing of his Gospel, and this Gospel dates from the period around the death of Peter, as the early church Fathers have testified. That is, it was published in AD 65.

### **2.4.3 The Authorship of Canonical Matthew**

A substantial number of scholars reject the Matthean authorship of the First Gospel. Quite a few of these are willing to acknowledge that some Matthean writing lies behind it, particularly the *logia* mentioned by Papias—they often conjecture that this is the basis for how the name of Matthew came to be attached to the entire Gospel. But let us consider more fully this question of the authorship of the canonical Matthew.

The apostle Paul ended up (under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit) writing a significant section of the New Testament. Matthew was called to be with Jesus during the exciting years of his earthly ministry so that he could record them. He was a prepared and chosen vessel just like Paul, and similarly, was called to have a vital ministry in writing. He, too, wrote (under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit) a significant section of the New Testament.

It is incredible that so many New Testament scholars, without one piece of definite evidence to suggest it, would deny the Matthean authorship of the First Gospel (authorship by the one man so obviously prepared by the Lord for just such a task) and would attribute it instead to some later anonymous person writing many years afterwards.

Like Esther (Esther 4:14), Matthew was one who had come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

Like Paul, he was prepared and chosen and called and appointed to the ministry that church history affirms he fulfilled: writing his account of the life and ministry of Jesus. Acts 9:15 says of Paul that “he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel”. Paul himself recounts (Acts 22:14-15) how Ananias said to him, “The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.”

These things are written about Paul and his call; but every word applies with equal force and relevance to Matthew: how the Lord God was at work in Matthew’s life years beforehand, preparing him for this very task, bringing him to his employment in the Customs Office in Capernaum during the period when Jesus was ministering there, moving his heart to respond to the invitation to join Jesus’s band of followers. A preparation, all of it, that fitted and equipped him in every way with the training and the skills and the opportunities to participate in, and record, the ministry of Jesus.

Although the First Gospel does not ascribe its authorship to Matthew, church history did. Unanimously. But it has become fashionable with a plethora of modern scholars to denigrate the testimony of church history.

Thus we find Alfred Plummer writing in his *Commentary* ("The Author", 1896:viii-x) telling us that "it is difficult to believe that it is the work of the Apostle." His explanation is,

Whoever wrote it took the Second Gospel as a frame, and worked into it much material from other sources. ... And it is not likely that the Apostle Matthew, with first-hand knowledge of his own, would take the Gospel of another, and that other not an Apostle, as the framework of his own Gospel. There would seem, therefore, to be some error in the early tradition about the First Gospel. ... When the unknown constructor of the First Gospel took the Second Gospel and fitted on to it the contents of this collection of Utterances, together with other material of his own gathering, he produced a work which was at once welcomed by the first Christians as much more complete than the Second Gospel ... The answer, therefore, to the question, Who was the author of the First Gospel? is a negative one. It was not S. Matthew. The writer was an early Jewish Christian, not sufficiently important to give his name to a Gospel, and in no way desiring to do so.

W.C.Allen wrote similarly in 1907 (lxxx-lxxxi); in discussing the tradition in the church Fathers, he said

This tradition (and inference) is, however, directly contradicted by the testimony of the First Gospel itself, for that work clearly shows itself to be a compilation by someone who has interwoven material from another source or other sources into the framework of the Second Gospel. This renders it difficult to suppose that the book in its present form is the work of the Apostle Matthew. It is indeed not impossible, but it is very improbable, that an Apostle should rely upon the work of another for the entire framework of his narrative. ... It would therefore seem that ... the only course open to us is to assert that tradition has here gone astray. ... The compiler was either unknown, or, if known, a man of second rank within the church.

The year 1915 saw the publication of A H McNeile's *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, which says (xxvii) of the Gospel's author,

He was certainly not Matthew the apostle. Apart from the characteristics just mentioned, one who could write with the paramount authority of an eyewitness would not have been content to base his work on that of a secondary authority.

McNeile (same page) dates the Gospel between about AD 80 and 100.

Similarly J C Fenton writes (1963:12) that

since 1835, when it was first put forward, the view has become widely accepted that

Matthew drew upon Mark, and that Mark's is the earlier Gospel. ... It is usually thought that Mark's Gospel was written about AD 65; and that the author of it was neither one of the apostles nor an eyewitness of the majority of events recorded in his Gospel. Matthew was therefore dependent upon the writing of such a man for the production of his book. What Matthew has done, in fact, is to produce a second and enlarged edition of Mark. Moreover, the changes which he makes in Mark's way of telling the story are not the corrections which an eyewitness might make in the account of one who was not an eyewitness. Thus, whereas in Mark's Gospel we may be only one remove from eyewitness, in Matthew's Gospel we are one remove further still.

And so Fenton (11) dates Matthew as written "between about AD 85 and 105".

I have upon my shelves commentary after commentary and a range of other works that similarly reject Matthean authorship, and describe the testimony of the church Fathers to this authorship as being mistaken. There is a consistency about their reason for this: they accept the Markan Priority explanation of Gospel interrelationships, and they then pronounce it as unthinkable that an apostle would base his Gospel upon that of a nonapostle.

There is one other reason sometimes found—Gundry (1975: 184) mentions it:

Another objection to Matthean authorship often heard is that Mt's frequent disinterest in the vivid details of Mk shows him not to have been an eyewitness.

T H Robinson (1928: xiii) also writes of this. He says,

On other grounds, the gospel does not impress us as being the work of an eye-witness of the events it describes. ... The First evangelist gives us the impression of relying on the observation of others, and indeed, on earlier documentary sources. The mention of other sources leads us to ask a question as to the material on which the evangelist had to rely. It is obvious at a glance that his mainstay was the gospel of Mark, practically in the form in which we have it to-day.

The question of the authorship of the First Gospel is of considerably greater significance than it is often accorded in the literature about this Gospel. It impacts with the entire question of the authority with which we view this book. Our attitude towards this book and its authority—and its divine inspiration—will be different if upon good grounds we see it as coming from the pen of the apostle, one of those men who were specifically promised by Christ that they would receive the aid of the Holy Spirit in their ministry (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13), than if the author were some "compiler", a man of "second rank within the church", who put the book together many years later.

It is a grievous error of the most wretched kind if the decision in this matter of

authorship is based upon the acceptance of a theory of Synoptic interrelationships: “Mark is first written and used in the writing of Matthew, and thus the author of this Gospel cannot be the apostle.” There are compelling grounds for seeing that Matthew was written **before** Mark and not afterwards; but even if one were to find this demonstration unconvincing, a view about Gospel sequence is not a valid reason for rejecting apostolic authorship.

As for the second ground mentioned above, primarily that of Mark’s “vivid details”: this is fully answered if we reflect upon the way in which Matthew writes a virtual précis of the events he describes, while Mark can be seen to write with a different purpose for a different audience, and is enlivening his narrative with a multitude of eyewitness details fresh in his mind from his recollections from frequently hearing Peter tell these stories. I will expand these questions much more fully later when I compare the style, content, and purpose of Matthew and Mark.

In his defence of the validity of apostolic authorship of the first Gospel, N B Stonehouse (1963: 23) mentions one other objection to Matthean authorship:

A rather different type of argument than the one which has just been under discussion has evidently, however, contributed far more decisively to the rejection of the apostolic authorship of Matthew. Stated in general terms this is the argument that a careful study of this Gospel will disclose historical and theological perspectives which are irreconcilable with what an eyewitness and hearer of Jesus in the days of his flesh would presumably have reported. In somewhat more specific terms, the argument has characteristically taken the form that there are distinctive tendencies in Matthew—whether legalistic, or ecclesiastical, or universalistic, or eschatological—which betray the fact that the evangelist has rather freely interpreted, that is, altered, his sources or has fashioned new material as he addressed the Church of his day.

The weight that one attributes to this objection will depend upon how much one believes that Jesus had actually taught the apostles while they were with him, how much understanding they came to have during this time, and how much notice we take of Luke 24:45, where we are told that after Christ’s Resurrection, “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

Indeed there were occasions during their time with Jesus, when he rebuked them for their dullness of understanding. Are we to understand that these men, to whom he committed the task of leading and guiding the infant church, remained with this same imperfect understanding after the Resurrection? That “a careful study of this Gospel will disclose historical and theological perspectives which are irreconcilable with what an

eyewitness and hearer of Jesus in the days of his flesh would presumably have reported”? That a shadowy, anonymous, later “compiler” of material for this Gospel would have worked these things out or come to see them after further years of reflection, whereas those appointed by Christ to be his witnesses, and taught by him, could not have had these “insights” by the time Matthew’s Gospel was published?

This ground for rejecting apostolic authorship is a very subjective and insubstantial one, and reveals more about the commentator than it does about the authorship of this Gospel.

If we accept Jesus’s own full Messianic awareness during the period of his earthly ministry, and that he came to earth to die on a cross, and he knew it, and that he was engaged in revealing this to his chosen apostles as they were able to receive it, so that by the time of his ascension they could understand these things; and that Jesus did indeed send the Holy Spirit to his apostles as he promised (John 14-16), and that in consequence the writing of the Gospels (and the rest of Scripture) is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who enabled the apostles to remember clearly the life and teaching of Jesus (John 14:26): then we do not find any substance in this kind of argument. And we have no reason for doubting that the apostle could write what we find in the First Gospel. But if we believe none of these things, but if, rather, we are looking upon the Gospel of Matthew as a purely human production, slightly different from but on a par with the histories written by Greek and Roman authors and their “Lives” of famous people, then we can regard this Gospel as the later work of an anonymous compiler—someone using a few documents from an earlier time on the basis of reflection, speculation, and a certain amount of wishful thinking.

This Gospel is a major book that helped shape the church, and through the church, helped shape the world. It was written by the apostle who was being prepared for the task by divine providence, both before and after his call to follow Jesus. Of all the apostles, he was the best equipped and the most able to fulfill this role and accomplish this task. This is where both evidence and logic point us. This is what the early church Fathers tell us. There is no objective data that would compel us to conclude otherwise.

I have cited at some length (above) those who reject Matthean authorship. But there are other commentators and theological writers who have examined the evidence and have come to the conclusion that the tradition of the early Fathers in this regard was well founded: the apostle Matthew was indeed the author.

I particularly warm to some of the comments on authorship by Albright & Mann (1971:CLXXVII-CLXXVIII):

Traditionally, this gospel was written by Matthew, the tax collector described in 9:9 and 10:3, and further identified with the Levi of Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27 (properly, as we shall see, ‘the Levite’) ... the main controversy has always centered around the identification of Matthew with Levi in our present texts. ... There is a simple solution to the difficulty and one which we believe has the merit of doing justice to all available facts. It is that Levi is not (as usually held) a personal name but the tribal designation of the man who was called by Jesus from his tax collecting. That is to say, the person under discussion is ‘Matthew the Levite’. ... Everything which we judge to be characteristic of this gospel—its conservatism, its interest in the traditional oral law, in lawyers and Pharisees, its traditional eschatology—all this fits admirably into the background of an author who was a Levite. ... If Matthew the Levite found a living as a tax collector for the political authorities—and his education would certainly fit him for such responsibility—then his rejection by his fellow Pharisees would follow inevitably. So too would inevitably follow carefully collected reminiscences of Jesus’ attitude to the Law and to those who made their living by oral interpretation of that Law.

On pages CLXXXIII and CLXXXIV, these authors set out ten features discernible in or about the First Gospel (including the tenth, that if the Gospel were not written in Matthew’s day by someone with training and background like Matthew’s, it would have to have been by someone “who would have had nothing apart from antiquarianism to inform him, if his work was written or compiled at the end of the first century”). The conclusion they then draw is:

The Levite Matthew fulfills the conditions for an author which we have outlined above far better than any other candidate known to us from the New Testament. That there is no certainty to this hypothesis, we readily concede. But it has the merit of taking Papias and those who cite him seriously, and of accepting historical and archeological evidence of chaotic conditions in Palestine between AD 60 and 75. It also saves us from the inherent absurdity of supposing that Palestinian Christians—Jewish Christians at that—would have based the first Palestinian gospel on a recent arrival from Rome. It is very doubtful whether in the thoroughly confused situation which must have immediately preceded the flights of Jewish Christians from Palestine [at the time of the Jewish War], there would have been time or encouragement for composition of a Palestinian gospel.

They then add further (same page), “We have already stated, in the earlier parts of this Introduction, that we do not find it necessary to accept the notion of dependence of Matthew on Mark.”

## CONCLUSION

If one decides (like Albright & Mann) to refuse to allow the issue of the authorship of Matthew to be decided upon the basis of a hypothesis of Synoptic relationships, and instead to judge exclusively upon the evidence, there are no valid grounds for doubting the unanimous testimony of the early church Fathers to Matthean authorship.

And all the cautions that Albright & Mann give, all the considerations that they raise, all the issues and factors that they point out that are to be taken into account, are fully satisfied if we recognize that the first Gospel was published by the apostle Matthew in about AD 60, and that into it he incorporated numbers of documents of varying length that he had previously written, and that had had a measure of independent circulation within the churches of that time.

## **CHAPTER THREE: EXPLAINING MARK'S GOSPEL**

### **3.1 MARK IN RELATION TO THE MAJOR SYNOPTICS**

3.1.1 Synoptic Interrelationships

3.1.2 Why Mark?

The nature and content of Mark's Gospel is a key to discerning its purpose.

### **3.2 MARK'S USE OF SOURCES**

Did Mark record all he knew from his sources? Was he ignorant? Selective? Why?

### **3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF MARK'S GOSPEL**

Surveying the scope of the Gospel - its "narrative arc".

### **3.4 MARK'S THEMES: (1) WHO JESUS IS**

3.4.1 Jesus is a Man

3.4.2 Jesus is a Man with Supernatural Power

3.4.3 Jesus is a Prophet

3.4.4 Jesus is the Messiah

3.4.5 Jesus is the Son of God

### **3.5 MARK'S THEMES: (2) CONFLICT AND CHOICE**

Conflict begins early, and is sustained throughout. The hearer faces a choice.

### **3.6 WHAT MARK DOES NOT CONTAIN**

Surveying the Gospel material absent in Mark.

### **3.7 THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF MARK'S GOSPEL**

What Mark includes and omits points to his purpose in writing.

### **3.8 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS CONCLUSION**

Mark is the *kerygma* Gospel for the use of preachers and evangelists.

### **3.9 THE CAPERNAUM CENTURION IN A PSEUDO-MARKAN VERSION**

3.9.1 The "Impossibility" Argument against Griesbach

3.9.2 Putting Abbott's Assertion to the Test

3.9.3 Pseudo-Markan Version of the Capernaum Centurion

3.9.4 A Markan Priority Hypothesis Explanation

3.9.5 Conclusion



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **EXPLAINING MARK'S GOSPEL**

This chapter examines Mark's Gospel to learn its nature and purpose, and explains why it was written

### **3.1 MARK IN RELATION TO THE MAJOR SYNOPTICS**

#### **3.1.1 Synoptic Interrelationships**

The second leg of the hypothesis I am proposing is that of Markan Dependence. This is the explanation that Mark's Gospel was the third of the Synoptics to be written, and that this Gospel is dependent upon both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which Mark used in his writing.

There are seven major hypotheses that have been proposed to explain Mark's relationship to the other two Synoptics. They are:

(a) The Complete Independence hypothesis: the Synoptic Gospels were written independently, and there is no literary relationship between them.

(b) The Successive Dependence hypothesis: the Synoptics were written in the order Matthew - Mark - Luke; that is, their order in the New Testament canon reflects also their order of writing.

(c) The Griesbach hypothesis: the two Major Synoptics were written before Mark, and then used by him (Markan Posteriority). There are scholars who support the idea that Luke was first written (see Chapter Ten), though most who hold a Markan Posteriority position would regard Matthew as first written. (Griesbach himself did not deal in detail with this question, but simply placed Mark after the other two.)

(d) The Two-Source hypothesis: Mark was first-written, and was then used by both Matthew and Luke (Markan Priority) and that Matthew and Luke also used another source, Q (no longer extant), for sections of Gospel material that these two have in common.

(e) The Farrer hypothesis: Mark was first-written (Markan Priority), but there is no Q—the material in common between Matthew and Luke is to be explained on the basis that Luke knew Matthew's Gospel.

(f) The Ur-Gospel hypothesis: in early times there existed an original Gospel, called an Ur-Gospel, now lost, which our canonical Gospels drew upon and eventually replaced.

(g) The Multiple-Sources hypothesis (with a number of variants): there were several other sources in addition to those we now know about, and there would have been various kinds of interaction between them—the factors leading to our Synoptics were complex .

Thus between them these various hypotheses place Mark as respectively first-written, as second-written, and as third-written. To which of these does the evidence point? I set out the Synoptic data in Chapter Four, and examine the Markan Priority view in Chapter Five, the Markan Posteriority (Griesbach) position in Chapter Six, and the others in Chapter Ten. But the purpose of this chapter is to take a careful look at the Gospel of Mark itself, to see what light can be thrown upon the evaluation of these hypotheses from this Gospel itself.

As we read it, there are numerous questions that come to mind.

If Mark were first-written, why does it leave out so much of Christ's life and teaching?—bearing in mind that on this hypothesis it was the only Gospel then in existence. Does it set down everything that Mark knew? And indeed we must ask the same question even more sharply if Mark were second- or third-written, using Matthew and Luke: having thus such a great deal of other material in front of him, why would Mark leave out so much?

This question must be asked—and answered—by advocates of each school of thought. And an explanation is called for not only for the pericopes that Mark does not include, but for what he does have that the others do not: mostly a host of small details, and expansive comments added into his stories. Then we will need to note also his theological perspective, which at times can be seen to be different from that of the other Synoptics. Therefore at an early point in our consideration of the entire field of Synoptic interrelationships—and particularly in regard to the Synoptic view that I am advocating—we need to examine what this Gospel itself is like, and consider the question: Why Mark?

### **3.1.2 Why Mark?**

The first question, then, to consider is: If Matthew and Luke already existed in the church, why on earth would anyone want to produce a Gospel such as we see Mark to be? As Styler famously said (1962: 231), "Given Matthew, it is hard to see why Mark was needed."

It is a serious objection to the view that puts Mark third for a critic to say that if Matthew and Luke already existed, writing Mark would be totally pointless. This is indeed a major objection that confronts any Markan Posteriority proponent.

But really, this objection is that, in the opinion of the objector, the proponent of a hypothesis has failed to think of a satisfactory reason for something happening. First of all, I would point out that our failure to understand **why** something happened does not in itself demonstrate that it **did not** happen. Whether or not Griesbach or Farmer—or I—can point to a convincing explanation of what we assert Mark did, nonetheless Mark still may have done it, even if for reasons not now apparent. The possibility that Markan Posteriority is actually the fact of the matter ought not to stand or fall according to our ability to light upon what would have led to its writing so many centuries ago.

However, let us now enquire into this matter further. The first thing to do, when seeking to understand why something was made as it was, is to investigate, analyze, “What is it designed to do? What is its purpose?” It is a fair guess that when you can see what it is designed to do, you will see why it was made.

What will be true in general of things around us will be true also of why books are written. Including the Gospel of Mark.

So then: What do we see when we look at this Gospel? What is it seeking to do that is different from the other Gospels?

Three things will stand out from a thoughtful consideration of what Mark contains:

Firstly, that it only contains the central part of the story of Christ found in the others. No stories of events before John the Baptist came and introduced the ministry of Jesus. And only a very brief summary of the Resurrection appearances, if you accept the longer ending of Mark—and none at all, if you hold that Mark ends at 16:8 . (Now whyever would these be left out? For full discussion of alternatives, see §7.03.)

Secondly, what else is left out? The answer is: Most of the teaching of Jesus. No Sermon of the Mount or Sermon on the Plain, no Mission Charge, only a few parables (four out of a total of thirty-two in Matthew and Luke between them—but including one that is unique to Mark), none of Luke’s central teaching section. And, further (as I say), if the Gospel ends at 16:8, no Resurrection appearances—only the briefest of references (16:5-7) to the “young man” who brought the women the message of the risen Christ, and told the disciples to meet him in Galilee.

Thirdly, the readily verifiable fact (Chapter Four, below, gives the actual figures) that in the pericopes that Mark does contain in common with the Major Synoptics, this Gospel is almost invariably the longest: indeed, that in every instance it contains more information than we can glean from Matthew and Luke **put together!**

Why was such a Gospel as Mark ever written? That is, Why was Mark’s Gospel written, and why does it have the form that it does, with what it contains and what it

omits? A moment's thoughtful reflection here will bring us to recognize that, while this has been posed as an objection to the Markan Posteriority viewpoint by its critics, it is actually an issue that any Synoptic hypothesis needs must address.

The kernel of the problem that requires explanation is two-fold:

(a) The extent to which Mark lacks a very substantial amount of important material that is found in the Major Synoptics, so that while there is rather little in Mark that is not also included in either Matthew or Luke (or both), there are many sections of Matthew and of Luke that have no parallel in Mark; and

(b) the fact that while on the one hand Mark is by far the shortest Gospel (661 verses compared with 1067 in Matthew and 1148 in Luke); yet on the other hand what he does cover he records at much greater length and in much more detail than do Matthew and Luke.

The proponents of the Markan Priority hypothesis consider that this question is easily answered on the basis of their theory but that it poses a problem for the theory of Markan Posteriority—if Matthew and Luke were already in the hands of the church, whyever would a Gospel like Mark be written? And if someone **were** going to write a third Gospel with Matthew and Luke in front of him (as the Markan Posteriority position claims that Mark has done), then whyever would he omit so much material of such great interest and value? This, indeed, is a question to which a convincing answer must be given if the Markan Dependence hypothesis (a version of Markan Posteriority) is to have any real credibility. But then, so also must an explanation of these matters be given for Markan Priority, and for other hypotheses that are put forward.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the nature of Mark's Gospel and from this to consider the reason for its being written, in terms of its own inner rationale: What does it reveal about itself? If an answer can be found to this question, we will then be able to ask what light this throws upon the matter of its relationship to the other two Synoptics.

In making this investigation we must operate on the working assumption that Mark—and indeed the other Synoptists also—each accomplished what he set out to do. We have no grounds for thinking that Mark, or any of them, failed in what they intended, so that they produced a document that did not fulfil the purpose that they each had in view. Such a supposition would be completely gratuitous. It follows then that it is a legitimate exercise to seek to ascertain the purpose of the Synoptists by examining what each author in fact did in handling the Jesus-traditions that he had. As it proceeds, this investigation will face the question of the nature of the relationship between the Synoptics as this affects their source materials, but initially we can explore a Gospel with

any presuppositions about this matter set firmly on one side, accepting that the author received the tradition of the church in some form and assessing how he handled what he received.

There is a limit to how far this investigation can legitimately be taken. David Wenham (1972: 10) alerts us concerning this with the well-founded warning that

it is none the less salutary to be reminded that it will not always be possible for us to read the writers' minds in retrospect; and we shall be wise to speculate on questions of motive and situation only after we have reached conclusions on less subjective grounds. As H. Palmer says, "What we would do if we were the evangelists is just irrelevant. What they would do can be discovered only by inspecting what they did". [N. H. Palmer, *The Logic of Gospel Criticism*, Macmillan, London, 1968, 121.]

As we inspect what Mark actually did when he wrote his Gospel, we can hope to gain some measure of insight into his purpose in writing.

### 3.2 MARK'S USE OF SOURCES

A fundamental factor in the situation is how much of the Jesus-tradition Mark knew when he wrote his Gospel. What is the explanation for the considerable amount of this tradition that is lacking in Mark? There are only three possible explanations of this circumstance:

1. That Mark did not know any of the material that he omits; i.e. the reason for the omission is Mark's ignorance;
2. That Mark did know the material that he omits, and left it out by accident; i.e. the reason for the omission is Mark's carelessness;
3. That Mark did know this material, but decided against the use of some of the material that he knew; i.e. the reason for the omission is Mark's deliberate choice.

The first of these possible explanations appears to be held by a number of scholars. Thus Wright (1896: xi) affirms, "We may lay down this as a golden rule, that if a section is not found in an Evangelist, the presumption is that he was not acquainted with it." However, Wright immediately qualifies this: "Of course our rule is not absolute; it must be applied (like other rules) with discretion and with full allowance for the evidence in each case." It seems though that some scholars would apply this "golden rule" to Mark. Thus Martin writes, in his discussion (1972: 113) of Mark's teaching, "We see how Mark has arranged what small amount of didactic material he had at his disposal ..."; and subsequently, concerning Mk 1:12-13 he states (128), "Mark knows no explicit detail of the Temptation story such as Matthew and Luke record in full."

One of the most influential attacks on the hypotheses that Mark used Matthew's and/or Luke's Gospels was made by F H Woods in 1890 in his essay "The Origin and Mutual Relation of the Synoptic Gospels", in which one of the points he makes is (66f.),

We cannot reasonably account for the remarkable omissions which St. Mark must continually have made, such as the Birth and Childhood of our Lord, the details of the Temptation, the Sermon on the Mount, the full ministerial directions to the Apostles or the Seventy, and above all the accounts of our Lord's appearances after His Resurrection. All these are topics which would have become of increasing interest and importance as the Church grew; and it is extremely unlikely that we should find them in the earlier Gospel, and not in the later.

This argument indicates the assumption that if Mark had known these things he would have included them, so that the absence of this material from Mark demonstrates that he could not have known Matthew's or Luke's Gospels. This argument has been repeated by scholar after scholar (see Chapter Five). And similar reasoning lies behind Streeter's well-known judgement (1924: 158) that "only a lunatic" would leave out such material if he had Matthew's Gospel in front of him.

We ought to note what this line of reasoning implies. Firstly, it is grounded upon a particular scholar's ability (or inability) to conjecture why a writer such as Mark may have chosen to omit material such as Woods mentions: as he puts it, "We cannot reasonably account for the remarkable omissions which St. Mark must continually have made..." This argument is saying in effect, "Because I cannot think of a reason why a Gospel writer should do something, therefore he cannot have done it." Thus the measure of the critic's ability nineteen centuries later to reconstruct a situation is made determinative as to whether or not something happened in the first century. This is a very subjective argument, if indeed it is reasonable to describe it as an argument at all.

Secondly, if we were to accept this line of argument, it would have repercussions beyond the initial question of Mark's knowledge of the Jesus-tradition. It would in particular rule out the possibility that John was written after Matthew and Luke (and that John was aware of them), for he also omits most of these things, and many others as well. But who would assert that the date of John vis-à-vis Matthew and Luke should be settled on such a basis?

Thirdly, if indeed Mark's Gospel contains nothing else because Mark knew nothing else, then this Gospel is a fortuitous, haphazard collection of pericopes: the incidents of Jesus's life that Mark *happened* to learn about (whether from the preaching of Peter or from other sources). If that is the case, then the question of the purpose of Mark's

Gospel is solved at this point: Mark's purpose was to record all that he knew of the life and teaching of Jesus, and he did so, and all that our investigation will disclose is what traditions Mark had happened to hear about.

But this viewpoint would not command very widespread agreement.

In 1896, Gould asked (xiif.), "Is there any evidence that Mark's Gospel was in part a compilation?", and proceeded to assemble evidence to show the wide extent of Mark's knowledge of the Jesus-traditions. Gould accepts the tradition of Peter standing behind Mark, but he takes it as beyond question that Mark also drew upon other sources. He shows (xii) from Mark's treatment of the parables that he must have been familiar with a much larger collection, probably in the same source as that from which Matthew drew his parables, and he applies this also to Mark 13, reckoning the source of sections such as these as being the *Logia* to which Papias referred. From this point in his Introduction onwards, Gould writes virtually as if Mark had access to as much as Matthew and Luke had, and left out a great deal of material by a deliberate policy of exclusion (see xiii to xv). He says in particular,

Mark has a way of his own of handling his material. Whatever may be his reason, the fact is, that he dwells on the active life of our Lord, the period from the beginning of the Galilean ministry to the close of his natural life. The introduction to this career, including the ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism and the temptation, he narrates with characteristic brevity. But it is not brevity for the sake of brevity; it comes from a careful exclusion of everything not bearing directly on his purpose. The work of John the Baptist is introduced as the beginning of the glad tidings about Jesus Christ, and the material is selected which bears on this special purpose. The baptism is told as the inauguration of Christ into his office, and only the baptism, the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven are narrated. And the temptation is merely noted in passing. All of these things have a value of their own, but they are evidently regarded by the writer as introductory to his theme, the active ministry of Jesus, and are abbreviated accordingly.

It is worthy of note that Gould, though as solidly committed to Markan Priority as Woods or Streeter (Gould begins his Preface, v, with the statement that he writes his commentary specifically from this point of view), is firmly of the opinion that what is omitted in Mark is not due to Mark's ignorance of what he does not include but rather "it comes from a careful exclusion of everything not bearing directly on his purpose" in writing.

It would in fact be true to say that the majority of scholars appear to hold the opinion (where they have referred to the matter) that "Mark knew more than he recorded". If we

may take this point, then, as well founded, it follows that Mark's omission of material was either intentional (as Gould believes) or happened by accident.

It is difficult to exclude entirely the possibility that Mark had no particular reason for omitting something that he knew, but left it out by inadvertence, perhaps because he just did not happen to think of it at the time of writing. If such were indeed the fact of the matter then in the nature of the case it is something that it is impossible to prove or disprove, because logical argument does not enable us to establish an instance of bad memory.

However, if the material in question is extensive enough and important enough (and this is certainly the situation with the teaching of Jesus that Mark's Gospel lacks), then it is very difficult to accept that the omission of *all* of this material was a sheer accident on Mark's part.

We are brought then to the entirely reasonable proposition (which has been accepted by adherents of all schools of thought on Gospel interrelationships) that, for reasons consequent upon his purpose in writing his Gospel, Mark has chosen the material that he incorporates into his Gospel from the wider range of Jesus-traditions that was available to him, and has deliberately decided against the inclusion of a number of lengthy sections of Jesus's teaching that have been included by one or both of the authors of the other two Synoptic Gospels.

Thus Evans (1968: 54) says,

What is involved in this particular selection of teaching by Mark? For while the view that Mark has here arranged all the teaching he was aware of cannot be disproved, it is, in the light of the evidence of the other gospels and of indications elsewhere in the New Testament of a strong catechetical interest, highly unlikely. Mark has presumably chosen to reproduce from a wider stock that particular teaching which served his purpose in writing.

In his commentary on Mark, Nineham writes (1963: 34),

Being familiar with a large number of separate stories about our Lord, St. Mark selected those which were specially relevant to the circumstances of his particular community, and he arranged and presented them so as to bring out the truths about Our Lord's life and work which he felt it most vital for his fellow-members in the community to grasp.

A similar comment is made by Moule (1962: 55):

When, therefore, John Mark (for example) sharpened his reed pen and dipped it in the ink to write, he had already behind him a considerable tradition of Christian speaking and possibly writing, by Peter and many others,—recognized patterns of argument and exhortation, of defence and attack, of instruction and challenge—from among which he might select his narrative material and his sayings.



The more extensive comments of Trocmé on this point (1963: 39, 43-45, 85) deserve our attention:

If we think of tradition as an abundant source which fed all catechetical teaching and from which preaching drew part of its content, it becomes likely that the author of Mark knew many more sayings of Jesus of the three types in question than he used. His ignorance is particularly improbable when it comes to the pronouncements and sayings on the subject of the Law and of discipline, given the highly moral character the catechism always possessed, if we are to rely on appearances. It must therefore be supposed that the Evangelist made a choice among the sayings of Jesus known to him. As Matthew and Luke made no similar choice, one is led to ask what the significance of Mark's choice may have been. ...

Mark certainly used Palestinian traditions formed at a very early date for the few parables he records. ... Our view is rather that these parables were known to Mark separately or, at most, that he had access to a general collection of them from which he made a strict selection. However this may be, it is striking that Mark should contain so few parables. It is most unlikely that he could have known only so few as ten, since Jesus often taught in parables and the early community based its moral teaching on the parables of our Lord. Whatever the form in which the tradition came to the author of Mark it must be supposed that he made a choice among all the *meshalim* known to him. We shall be enquiring later into the reasons for this selection, which is surprising in a man who must surely have had the greatest respect for all the teaching of Jesus. ...

The "sayings of Jesus" used by Mark were handed on to him separately. ... The Evangelist's work consisted partly of arranging this heterogeneous material. ... It is clear that the author of Mark made a certain selection among the 'sayings of Jesus' handed on to him by tradition. ... Towards [certain] kinds of saying deriving from tradition the Evangelist's attitude is one of reserve and he retails only a small number in his Gospel. This can be seen in the case of the scholastic discussions, the *logia*, the prophetic and apocalyptic utterances, the "canonical" pronouncements, perhaps the passages where the risen Christ speaks of himself, and certainly the parables. The points made [above] ... are particularly important because they imply an active attitude on the part of the author of Mark to tradition, which was after all his only source for the words of Jesus. ...

[Mark's] appeal is made by three means: by choosing, among the material offered by tradition, the parts that would best serve his purpose; by adding to this a certain number of popular tales concerning John the Baptist and above all Jesus; and by placing the whole in an artificial framework designed to bring out its ecclesiological significance.

Some of the comments quoted above reveal the view of their respective authors that Mark is the first Gospel written, whereas this of course is the issue under investigation in the present study; at this stage we are able to note the solid support that is given for the conclusion that Mark's Gospel does not reveal all the Jesus-traditions that Mark knew, but that he chose what he put into his Gospel from the wider range of material of which he was aware.

In the traditional view of authorship, the author of the Second Gospel was John Mark, a young man whose home was the house where the church met (Acts 12:12ff.), a companion and associate of Barnabas, Paul and Peter (Acts 12:25; 13:5; 13:13; 15:37-39; Philemon 24; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13).

On the usual definition of *parable*, there are four in Mark: the Parables of The Sower (4:3-9), The Growing Seed (4:26-29), The Mustard Seed (4:30-32), and The Wicked Farmers (12:1-12). Using a wider definition of "parable", Trocmé, in the above quotation, finds ten parables in Mark; but on any definition he has far fewer than Matthew or Luke.

It would be very difficult to establish a case that such a person as this John Mark was, for example, acquainted with only four (or ten) of the parables of Jesus out of the thirty-two that the Synoptics jointly contain (while in fact Mark tells us that Jesus customarily taught in parables—Mk 4:33-34). Or that Mark was completely ignorant of the Sermon on the Mount and of all the rest of the teaching that he omits.

And if the authorship of this Gospel is attributed not to John Mark but to a later writer in the church, then it will be more likely, not less, that such a person would know a greater amount of Jesus's teaching than is contained in the Second Gospel.

Moreover, Mark constantly reveals a knowledge of events, sayings and circumstances far wider than those he actually records, referring in passing to this event or that, recording extracts from a set of sayings, or a few examples of various teachings. Evans states the matter thus (1968: 48f.):

What is puzzling is that the sketch is not really filled out like that of the thaumaturge, and what for want of a better word we call the 'teaching' of Jesus is limited in scope, and occupies a subordinate place in a narrative of mighty works. Mark may underline the activity of Jesus as preacher and teacher, but it is difficult to discover from his Gospel what exactly the preaching and teaching can have been. Thus Jesus is said (1:14-15) to proclaim in Galilee the gospel of God and to summon men to 'believe in' the gospel (a use of 'believe' without parallel in the New Testament), which gospel is later coupled with himself as that for which men are to be ready to forsake all possessions and to lay down their lives. But what this gospel is is not specified, except that it involves the near approach of the rule

of God. He is then said to teach in synagogues with such authority as to be distinguished from the scribes, but no specimen is given of this teaching, and it is exemplified rather by exorcism. He is said to speak the word to the crowds (2:2), but no content is given to this word, and what follows is the healing of the paralytic.

Again when an enormous mixed crowd gathers from all quarters of Palestine (3:7ff.) he is said to speak the word to them in many parables as they were able to hear, and not to speak to them apart from parables, but all that is given is the somewhat meagre collection of parables in 4:1-23, which are in any case to be made intelligible only to disciples. Similarly when the Twelve are sent out on mission they are given elaborate instructions as to their behaviour, but nothing is said of their message, except that it is a preaching of repentance; and when they report back what they had done and said, the reader knows that the former means exorcism and healing, but he has no inkling of what the latter might have been. Both the gospel and the teaching of Jesus seem to be assumed. What then is the teaching which is recorded, and what purpose is it intended to serve in relation to the whole book and to the gospel in Mark's own day?

Widen Evans's reference to teaching, in his last sentence, to include *all* that Mark has recorded, and this question is the one to which we now direct our attention; for if indeed Mark's Gospel represents a meaningful selection made from the whole range of tradition known to Mark, then examining what he has chosen to include will throw light upon his purposes in writing.

### 3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF MARK'S GOSPEL

It is helpful now to consider, in overview, what Mark includes in his Gospel:

John appears suddenly in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and proclaiming the coming of the Mightier One. Jesus appears suddenly and is baptized by John, and the Voice from Heaven testifies, "You are my beloved Son".

Jesus begins preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the rule of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." He calls four fishermen to follow him, and they do. He teaches with authority. He demonstrates his powers over the unclean spirit in the man in the Capernaum synagogue, and the people are amazed. On this and subsequent occasions (1:24; 1:34; 3:11; 5:7) the unclean spirits declare that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the Son of God, and he silences them and will not accept their testimony.

He demonstrates his power over illnesses of various kinds (Simon's mother-in-law,

the sick at nightfall). After a time alone praying, Jesus sets out on a tour through Galilee preaching and casting out demons. He demonstrates his power over leprosy (which causes such a furore that he can no longer enter a town openly). He demonstrates his power to forgive sin in curing the man with paralysis: leading to the stirrings of opposition from scribes who ask, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Thus at this early stage Mark is confronting his readers with the necessity to think through their attitude to Jesus. The story raises this syllogism: “Only God can forgive sins; Jesus forgave sins; Therefore Jesus is God.” But the scribes did not accept the second proposition; their response was, rather: “Jesus is not God; Jesus claims to forgive sins (which only God can do); Therefore Jesus is a fraud and a blasphemer.” But if that is the case, the scribes have to face the question, How does he have power over illness and demons? (Their answer to this is recorded by Mark a chapter further on.) The response of the crowd, however, is less complex: “They were all amazed and glorified God”.

The healing of the paralyzed man is the first of a series of conflict stories that now continue.

Jesus sees Levi engaged in his work as a tax collector and calls him to follow. Levi responds and, as Jesus sits at table in his house with many other tax collectors and sinners, the scribes of the Pharisees query the company he keeps. Next, Jesus is queried because he and his disciples are not fasting while others are. This is followed by two stories about conflict with the Pharisees over Sabbath observance: when the disciples pluck grain in the fields, and when Jesus heals the man with the withered hand in the synagogue. Each of these is a “pronouncement story”: in each case the opposition leads to pronouncements by Jesus that clarify the issues in question. Mark is thus introducing his readers to the inevitability of conflict—and choice—whenever Jesus confronts men. And Mark is giving them Jesus's answer to those who opposed him.

In thus moving quickly into the conflict stories, Mark omits material that occurs in Matthew and Luke at this stage. This includes the Sermon on the Mount *in toto*, the miraculous catch of fishes, and the healing of two blind men and a dumb demoniac (Mt. 9:27-34—these are “routine” healings not involving conflict, or pronouncements by Jesus, and are covered by Mark's general references to Jesus's healing ministry in Galilee—e.g. Mk 3:10, “For he had healed many”—while Matthew's final comment about Jesus casting out demons by the prince of demons, Mark is about to take up later in another context and cover fully).

This series of conflict stories climaxes in the conference of the Pharisees with the Herodians (3:6) that results in the unlikely alliance of religious scrupulosity and political

expediency in planning to destroy Jesus. Thus at this early stage Mark records the rejection of Jesus by the hierarchy.

Jesus now withdraws from the towns, followed by multitudes whom he heals and teaches. He appoints the Twelve to be with him from that time, and (subsequently) to be sent out to preach and to cast out demons. Then he goes home to Capernaum and encounters further opposition: from his family and/or friends (the Greek is ambiguous) who say that he has gone mad, and from the scribes from Jerusalem who explain his power as deriving from the Prince of Demons. Mark records Jesus's answer to this (though incorporating only some of the material that Matthew and Luke include at this point), and follows this immediately with the visit of Jesus's mother and brothers and his pronouncement that "whoever does the will of God" is his true family.

Mark next records that Jesus taught the crowd many things in parables. And, of "many such parables" (4:33), Mark relates three, all connected with seeds growing. The first is the Parable of the Sower, which is the key to all parables (4:13) and for which Jesus gives the interpretation. The same seed falls on very different kinds of soil: this explains the varied response to Jesus's ministry, the opposition he encounters, and the necessity for the hearer responding to the Word. Moreover it warns the hearers that "tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word" (4:17). But a lamp is not lit to be hidden (4:21), and the kingdom of God is seed that *will* grow and produce a harvest (4:26-29). Mark's unique parable, added at this point, is an addendum to the Parable of the Sower: although response to the Word is varied, and although for a time the response may be hidden, nonetheless the harvest is certain. And although the seed may be small, the kingdom will grow up like the mustard seed, "and becomes the greatest of all shrubs" (4:30-32). Mark's trilogy of seed parables shows that Jesus's word shall triumph over all opposition, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, and shall be fruitful.

Mark's next sections show Jesus's power over the unclean spirit in Legion—the story shows his demon-possession to have been a particularly serious case—followed by Jesus's power over an uncontrollable hemorrhage and then over death itself. After this his tour of Galilee brings him to his own country: where he is met with cynicism and unbelief. He continues his tour "among the villages, teaching", and he briefly exhorts the Twelve and sends them out two by two to preach that men should repent, to cast out demons, and to heal. Jesus's fame has reached Herod's ears, and many are the assessments given of Jesus. Herod's troubled conscience leads him to conclude "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised", and this is followed by the vivid story of the circumstances of John's beheading: doubtless intended by Mark to be proleptic of the fate that lies ahead of Jesus.

Then the Twelve return to Jesus, and he seeks to take them aside to a deserted place to rest; but the crowds gather and Jesus teaches them. This account leads into two miracle stories that show Jesus's power over creation (the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and Jesus walking on the sea) and a summary section about healings of sick people.

Another conflict story follows about the ceremonial washing of hands, introducing Jesus's pronouncements about "the tradition of the elders", and the nature of defilement. He journeys to the region of Tyre and Sidon, where he seeks to have a period in seclusion (7:24), and where he cures the Syrophenician's daughter. He heals a deaf man with a speech impediment, and again multiplies food to feed four thousand; which leads into a discussion of the leaven of the Pharisees and the two miracles of food multiplication.

In Bethsaida he heals a blind man, and travels on to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Here Jesus asks for the assessment of his disciples concerning who he really is. Peter proclaims, "You are the Christ". This marks a transition point in Jesus's ministry to his disciples. Hitherto his aim has been to bring them to a realization of who he is. Henceforth his purpose is to help them to see why he came. From this time "he began to teach them" (8:31) of his suffering, death, and resurrection, and to explain to them the full meaning and the cost of following him (8:34-38).

Shortly afterwards some measure of his divine glory shines through in the Transfiguration, when the Voice out of cloud testifies, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." Jesus and the three apostles with him come down the mountain, discussing the meaning of the coming of Elijah, and then Jesus cures the demon-possessed boy whom his disciples could not cure.

Jesus now passes through Galilee, seeking to prevent anyone knowing his whereabouts, "for he was teaching his disciples" (9:31). He again explains about his forthcoming death and resurrection: but they can only squabble over which of them is the greatest, and he uses a child to point a lesson in humility. Then they express their concern about another person who is speaking in Jesus's name, and Jesus points out that "He who is not against us is for us" and proceeds into a discussion about causing little ones to sin and about the seriousness of sin.

At this point Matthew and (particularly) Luke place a large number of parables and other teaching, and also the healing of a cripple on the Sabbath and various other incidents. Mark records none of this (save only two verses about salt: 9:49-50), and passes straight to the controversy with the Pharisees over divorce, followed by Jesus blessing the children, and challenging the rich young man concerning discipleship. The

third prediction of the passion is followed by the request from James and John for places of honour in the kingdom, and Jesus's teaching that he came to serve and to give his life a ransom for many, and thus also must it be amongst them.

They journey on towards Jerusalem and at Jericho Bartimaeus calls Jesus "Son of David", and his blindness is cured. Then Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a colt, an implied claim to be the one of whom the prophet Zechariah wrote: requiring the Jews to consider again their attitude to him. But, as has also been the case in so many ways hitherto, the gesture is not explicit; it is a sign that can be recognized by the godly who are expecting the Messiah, and its meaning will be overlooked by the unthinking. The crowds shout with enthusiasm; but it is not clear how much they understand.

Perhaps this "vagueness" and "uncertainty" is best exemplified by Jesus's choice of the term "son of man" for self-description. Jesus's use of this term runs through all the Gospels and through every postulated source into which they may be subdivided. Volumes have been written on the meaning of the term, but there would be general agreement on one point: it was ambiguous. Jesus's use of the term could hardly be said by his hearers to constitute a claim to be the Messiah, but it was a term that could be interpreted with Messianic overtones. Thus the hearer's own (perhaps changing and growing) assessment of the person of Jesus would structure his understanding of the term.

Similarly in each level of Jesus' ministry he avoids making claims for himself, and refuses to give any sign for the purpose of authenticating his deeds or words (cf. 8:11-12) or to give a clear answer to those who demand an explanation of his authority (cf. 11:27-33). Those who in faith seek for the truth shall perceive and understand, but not "those outside"—the spiritually heedless and thoughtless and uncaring (cf. 4:10-20, 33-34).

Thus begins the final week in Jerusalem. For the first three days Jesus engages in daily teaching in the temple. Mark records none of this except the confrontations and disputes: the cleansing of the temple; the question about authority, leading into the parable of the wicked farmers; the questions concerning paying tax to Caesar, the resurrection and the great commandment; and Jesus's question about David's son, leading into his denunciation of the scribes. Also recorded is the cursing of the fig tree and the significance of the widow's gift. This period ends with the apocalyptic discourse, where Mark has much that is also included in Matthew (and to a lesser extent, Luke) concerning the coming of the Son of Man with great power and glory, and concludes with something of a summary of what he has not given in detail (13:33-37).

From here on, Mark records the Synoptic tradition quite fully: the conspiracy, the anointing at Bethany, the betrayal, preparation for the Passover, Jesus's word about the

traitor, the bread and the cup, Gethsemane, Jesus arrested and on trial, Peter's denial, Jesus before Pilate, condemned, mocked, crucified, dead and buried. Then Mark states the fact of the resurrection, and his Gospel concludes; or, if we accept the longer ending, ends with a very short summary of the appearances.

### **3.4 MARK'S THEMES: (1) WHO JESUS IS**

#### **3.4.1 Jesus is a Man**

Mark's presentation of his material constantly confronts the reader from the very beginning with the question of who Jesus is. In his Gospel he shows how the crowds (1:27), the scribes (2:7), the disciples (4:41), the people of Jesus's own town (6:2), and the king himself (6:14) have to face this question. Even when not explicitly mentioned, this wondering and puzzling about him is implicit in the frequent response of amazement that Mark describes. This reaches its climax in the question that the high priest asks Jesus at the trial (14:61).

What answers is Mark providing?

First of all, Mark is showing quite clearly that Jesus is a man, a human being.

Throughout his Gospel Mark portrays Jesus as fully human. He grew worn out from the pressures of his ministry and needed to sleep (4:38); he sought for a rest from these pressures (6:31). He needed to eat, and managing to do this became a problem at times (3:20; 6:31). His hunger is mentioned (11:12). On occasions he could become exasperated at the obtuseness of the disciples (4:13; 8:21; 10:14) or filled with anger and sadness because of the hardness of heart of his opponents (3:5)—or his disciples (10:14). He needed to take precautions to avoid being crushed by the crowd (3:9, 4:1). He could be surprised and saddened by unbelief (6:6); he responded with love and concern to others (8:2; 10:14; 10:21; 14:6; etc). And he felt the full impact of the cross (14:33-42).

#### **3.4.2 Jesus is a Man with Supernatural Power**

Progressively, however, Mark shows us that Jesus is more than an ordinary man. And Mark's stories are selected to demonstrate Jesus's power: over the world of nature; over unclean spirits, over fever, deafness, dumbness, blindness, hemorrhaging, paralysis, leprosy, deformity, and over death itself. On four occasions Mark refers in general terms to Jesus's ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons (1:32-34; 1:39; 3:7-12; 6:53-56), and on thirteen occasions he records the details of a healing. In most cases Mark has chosen to record only one example of each kind of healing; the



exceptions are that he records two cases of Jesus curing blindness (8:22-26, the man at Bethsaida, which Mark alone gives; and 10:46-52, Bartimaeus at Jericho) and four cases of casting out a spirit (1:21-28, the man in the Capernaum synagogue; 5:1-20, Legion and the herd of swine; 7:24-30, the Syrophenician's daughter; and 9:14-29, the boy with the dumb and deaf spirit).

Each of these cases exhibits special or unusual features that make it distinctive. Mark's stories contain more detail (sometimes much more) than their parallels in Matthew and/or Luke and are told in a much more vivid and dramatic way: comments that also apply to Mark's five stories of other miracles (4:35-41, stilling the storm; 6:30-44, feeding 5,000; 6:45-52, walking on the sea; 8:1-10, feeding 4,000; 11:20-26, the fig tree withering). With the possible exception of the fig tree withering, all Mark's miracle stories are told in such a way as to raise the question, "Who is this that does such deeds?" Mark is concerned to confront the reader with this question—and to provide the evidence that will lead him to reach a conclusion for himself.

All of what Mark records testifies to Jesus possessing some kind of supernatural power. The scribes attribute this to Beelzebul (Satan), but the response of Jesus shows how illogical this is (3:22-30). Mark's readers and hearers will therefore be forced to consider the alternative: that Jesus's power comes from God. But this conclusion amounts to recognition and acceptance of the fact that the divine endorsement has thus been placed upon Jesus's words and deeds, for God would not grant his divine power to one who was a blasphemer (2:7) and lawbreaker (3:2-4), as Jesus was accused of being. Initially, the reader/hearer is left by Mark to see and ponder for himself the significance of this.

### **3.4.3 Jesus is a Prophet**

Jesus teaches with an authority that astounds the crowds (1:22); Mark's account portrays him as constantly engaged in teaching and in performing a wide range of miracles, some of which are recorded in detail while others are mentioned in summarizing passages (1:34; 1:39; 3:10; 6:56). These were the hallmarks of prophets of old. In 6:4 Jesus uses a proverb concerning himself that refers to himself as a prophet. By the time Herod hears of Jesus, popular opinion has decided (6:14-15) that Jesus is John the baptizer raised from the dead, or maybe Elijah (a prophet who performed miracles and taught authoritatively and challenged the regime of his day); or at least a prophet like the prophets of old.

There were thus varieties of opinion about the details, but Jesus was recognized by

all as being a prophet. A little further on in Mark's account he records that Jesus asks his disciples (8:27), "Who do men say that I am?" and they repeat the popular opinion, "[Some say] John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." By this stage, then, Jesus has been identified with John the Baptist or Elijah (whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament) or certainly he is a prophet of **some** kind; and thus Mark has brought his readers this far in their understanding of the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

#### 3.4.4 Jesus is the Messiah

Meanwhile the disciples themselves have been challenged to find an answer to the question they have asked, "Who is this man?" (4:41). They have been chosen to be with Jesus (3:14); they have been sent out with his authority to teach and with his power to heal (6:7-13). Jesus had sought unsuccessfully to spend time with them on their own, after their return from their Mission (6:30-32), but the persistence of the crowd in following him prevented that (6:33-34). So he led them out of the territory of Israel into the area of Caesarea Philippi (8:27ff.) and there he was able to ask them concerning the popular opinion about himself, and then, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter responds, "You are the Christ". That is, Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah, God's Chosen and Anointed One foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. This means more, much more, than merely a prophet. This is the One for whom all Israel waited. This is the One who was to fulfill the purposes of God as the Scriptures foretold. It is to be noted that in Mark this is the **first time** (apart from Mark's programmic title for his book, 1:1) that this word *Messiah* (*Christ*) has been used.

Contrast Matthew, in which the word has occurred six times before Matthew's account of Peter's confession (including 11:2, in which Matthew refers to John hearing "about the deeds of the Christ"); and also contrast Luke, in which the word has occurred four times prior to Peter's confession. Matthew and Luke both reveal very early in their Gospels an acceptance of this designation as applying to Jesus, and they presume a similar acceptance of it on the part of their readers; Mark, in contrast, does not read back such an acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah into the record of events prior to Peter's confession. This was the time when Peter (and, presumably, the disciples as a whole) were led to the point of recognizing that Jesus was the Messiah; this then is the place where Mark first reveals it to his readers. There is no indication that Mark has assumed earlier that his readers already accept such a view of Jesus; but now that they have been presented with a record of the evidence that led the disciples to this conclusion,

perhaps the readers can be encouraged, by the record of that confession of faith, to share in it.

Significantly, Peter's confession is followed by two teachings from Jesus:

(a) He charged them to tell no one about it (8:30);

(b) And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things (8:31).

The implication here is that Jesus does not want this truth concerning himself to be indiscriminately publicly proclaimed; he himself had not stated it openly, and now that they have come to recognize and accept it, they must accept also this same restraint. In keeping with this policy, Mark continues to be very restrained in his own use of this designation for Jesus. There is in fact really only one place where he uses it of Jesus before the Trial Before the High Priest: in Mark 10:41, "Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ", a saying of Jesus that may be taken as prophetic of the disciples' future ministry. (In Mk 12:35 Jesus uses the term with its Old Testament connotation in, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?" And in Mk 13:21-22, in the apocalyptic discourse, Jesus warns his disciples concerning those who will say "Look, here is the Christ", and concerning the false Christs who will arise.)

Finally in Mk 14:61f. the high priest—presumably having heard accounts of who Jesus was believed by his disciples to be—asks him pointblank, "Are you the Christ the Son of the Blessed?" and Jesus replies, "I am". In the only other occurrence of the word "Christ" in Mark, the title is thrown at Jesus on the cross in mockery by his enemies (15:32).

After Easter this title is regularly used of Jesus: the word occurs twenty-five or more times in Acts (the texts vary in relation to some occurrences), approximately 450 times in the Epistles (most if not all of these occurrences would have antedated the writing of Mark's Gospel), and eight times in Revelation; but Mark does not anachronistically read this then-common usage back into the period of which he writes, when it was *not* common usage for Jesus. Matthew and Luke similarly allow themselves a very limited use of the term *Christ* for Jesus and thus to a considerable extent they follow a policy closely similar to Mark's, but they are willing, as we have noted above, to accept the use of this designation for Jesus, to use it themselves editorially (Mt 1:1; 1:16; 1:17; 1:18), and to record its use by participants in the narrative (Lk 2:11; 2:26); presuming that this designation for Jesus is one that their readers will accept.

John's Gospel has no direct parallel to Peter's confession, and the designation "Christ" is used for Jesus in John's first chapter both editorially (1:17) and by a participant in the narrative (Andrew, 1:41).

Once the disciples acknowledged Jesus's messiahship, we note that “he began to teach them” of his coming passion, death and resurrection; that is, what kind of Messiah he was, and what his messiahship meant. Popular expectation of the Messiah looked for a conquering leader to bring military and political victory to Israel. Jesus had before him the formidable task of re-educating the understanding of his disciples in this matter. At times we are told that they failed to understand (Mk 8:31-33; 9:32) and Luke informs us that after the resurrection the lesson still needed to be repeated—they had thought he was the one to redeem Israel, but now (i.e., after the crucifixion) they refer to him only as a prophet (24:19-21); Jesus explains again the nature of his messiahship (24:46), but their question on the eve of the Ascension (Acts 1:6) suggests that their previous attitudes still persisted. It is likely that here we have the key to why Jesus's messiahship was to be kept secret by the disciples: if this was the measure of *their* understanding of what it meant, we can envisage the misunderstanding of Jesus's mission by friend and enemy alike if he had publicly claimed or accepted the designation “Messiah” during the course of his ministry.

### 3.4.5 Jesus is the Son of God

There is one other designation for Jesus that is significant in Mark: Son of God. Martin (1972: 99) considers this concept to be substantially more important in Mark than that of Messiah: “At the opposite end of the scale of interest the appellation ‘Son of God’ carries a much more central significance in this Gospel.” Without being persuaded by his low estimation of the importance of “Messiah/Christ” in Mark, we can agree with his assessment of the significance of “Son of God”. It is surprising therefore to find the two designations being regarded by some scholars as identical; thus Trocmé for example says (1963: 148),

As for the title υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, used seven or eight times by Mark, it comes closer to the Evangelist's central ideas. ... But this title ... is still for Mark simply a sort of less hermetic variant of the word Χριστός.

The problem here is that the post-Easter church applied both titles, *Messiah (Christ)* and *Son of God*, to Jesus without distinction, for both were recognized as describing him, and they appear to be used without any specific emphasis on shades of difference of meaning. Thus in Acts 8:20-22, “And in the synagogues immediately [Saul] proclaimed Jesus, saying, ‘He is the Son of God’. ... But Saul ... confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.”

Both titles are often applied to Jesus together in the Epistles. Such an application of the title “Son of God” to Jesus is an ascription of deity to him, and part of the overall doctrine of the Trinity. But this doctrine itself was not fully developed within the pages of the New Testament and was unknown in Old Testament times, though occasionally anticipated in passages which we can now, with hindsight, interpret from a trinitarian perspective (e.g. Isaiah 9:6; 42:1; 48:16b).

In consequence it needs to be emphasized that when the people of God were looking for the coming of the Messiah they were **not** expecting that that Messiah would be divine, the Son of God. The nation called God “Father” (Isaiah 64:8) and Israel was God's son (Exodus 4:22f.; Hosea 11:1: “Out of Egypt I called my son”) and this concept is seen fulfilled in a special and unique sense in Jesus (in Mt 2:15 this verse is applied to Jesus).

The son of King David will be the son of God (2 Samuel 7:14)—but that this refers initially to the descendants of David in the kingly line and not directly to Jesus is shown by the words that follow: “When he commits iniquity ...” The original context for Psalm 2 was the coronation of the Davidic king: “I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. ... You are my son, today I have begotten you” (vv.6,7), but in the New Testament this is applied to Jesus (both 2 Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 2:7 are applied to Jesus in Hebrews 1:5; and Psalm 2:7 also in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 5:5).

But in the time of Jesus's ministry people had no concept that the divine Son of God would come upon earth.

Thus for them to recognize Jesus as Messiah is **not** the same thing as recognizing him as Son of God. That Jesus is not only Messiah but also Son of God is an understanding to which it would be expected that people would come only gradually. Moreover, the meaning of the term is not self-evidently clear: what would a person in the time of Jesus's earthly life have thought it to mean? What would Mark's audience have made of the term? John 1:34 tells us that John the Baptist bore witness that Jesus is the Son of God; Nathanael accepts that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:49); would John's hearers, and Nathanael, have understood by this what the early church later came to accept it to mean?

Now, Mark's Gospel treats this term “Son of God” (or “Son”, absolutely) in a very significant way. This can best be seen if we compare the passages in the Synoptics in which it occurs:

**MATTHEW****MARK****LUKE**

1:1 The beginning of  
the gospel of Jesus  
Christ, Son of God.

1:32 The child to be born  
will be called holy,  
the Son of God.

2:15 Out of Egypt have I  
called my Son.

3:17 This is my beloved  
Son, with whom  
I am well pleased.

1:11 You are my beloved  
Son; with you  
I am well pleased.

3:22 You are my beloved  
Son; with you  
I am well pleased.

4:3 If you are the Son  
of God ...

4:3 If you are the Son  
of God ...

4:6 If you are the Son  
of God ...

4:9 If you are the Son  
of God ...

1:24 You are the  
Holy One of God.

4:34 You are the  
Holy One of God.

1:34 and cast  
out many demons  
  
and he would not permit  
the demons to speak,  
because they knew  
him.

4:41 and  
demons also came out  
of many crying, "You  
are the Son of God."  
But he rebuked them  
and would not allow  
them to speak,  
because they knew  
that he was the Christ.

3:11 You are the Son of God

8:29 O Son of God	5:7 Jesus, Son of the Most High God	8:28 Jesus, Son of the Most High God
11:27 and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.		10:22 and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
14:33 Truly you are the Son of God	6:51 they were utterly astounded	
16:16 You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.	8:29 You are the Christ.	9:20 The Christ of God.
17:5 This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.	9:7 This is my beloved Son; listen to him.	9:35 This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him.
21:37 he sent his son to them	12:6 a beloved son—he sent him	20:13 I will send my beloved son
24:36 nor the Son	13:32 nor the Son	
26:63 Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God then?	14:61 Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?	22:67 If you are the Christ, tell us.
26:64 Jesus said to him, to them, “You have said so.”	14:62 And Jesus said, “I am.”	22:70 Are you the Son of God, And he said “You say that I am.”
27:54 Truly, this was the Son of God!	15:39 Truly this man was the Son of God!	23:47 Certainly this man was innocent!

Of the Matthean and Lukan references to Jesus as the Son of God (or the Son, absolutely), Mark parallels these: Two occasions when the Voice of God acknowledges him as Son (at the Baptism and the Transfiguration); two occasions when demons call him “Son of God” and are immediately silenced (3:11 and 5:7; cf. also 1:24 and 1:34); two occasions when Jesus refers to himself as the Son (one of them by implication in a parable); and two occasions when the term appears on the lips of men (the high priest’s question and the centurion’s affirmation). Mark also uses the term in his programmic title (if we accept the longer reading, 1:1).

In the other instances the tradition that occurs in Matthew and Luke is either absent in Mark, or abbreviated, or has a different wording. Thus the Declaration at the baptism is immediately followed by the Temptation which in Matthew and Luke centres around an iterated “If you are the Son of God ...” in which the truth of the Father’s Declaration is called in question by Satan; but Mark gives a greatly shortened version of the Temptation that omits this. The worshipful response of the disciples to Jesus walking to them across the water in the storm, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Mt 14:33), is paralleled in Mark (6:51) by, “And they were utterly astounded.” Peter’s Confession “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16) appears only as “You are the Christ” (Mk 8:29). The other passages in which the term occurs in Matthew and Luke are absent in Mark.

Now, from the Markan Priority perspective the absence from Mark of any particular occurrence of the term “Son of God” can easily be explained on the basis that the occurrence in question was not known to Mark: it is an editorial comment, it was found in Q or the Synoptist’s special source, and thus was not accessible to Mark. An explanation along these lines is less convincing for Mt 14:33/Mk 6:51: why would Matthew want to *insert* such a saying at *this* point (i.e., prior to Peter’s Confession) if it were not in his source? A similar problem exists with Peter’s Confession. Where did Matthew get the words “the Son of the living God” to insert at 16:16? Are we compelled to conclude that they derive from the later church, which had invented them, so that they are unauthentic?

Moreover, the number of instances where the term “Son (of God)” is absent in Mark should give us pause. Can it be that Mark knew of *none* of them in the church tradition of which he was aware? If Peter’s “the Son of the living God” is authentic, how could Mark fail to be aware of it?! Now, if we recognize that it is reasonable to believe that Mark may well have known of one or more of these occurrences of the term, then we are brought to conclude that the absence of that term from his account at that point is the



result of **choice** not **ignorance**, and we must consider the question of a policy on Mark's part.

The Voice of the Father speaks at Jesus's baptism, but how many heard this testimony? Mark records it, and passes on without comment; but in Matthew and Luke, this issue becomes the crux of Jesus's controversy with the devil in the Temptation narrative ("If you **are** the Son of God ..."). Subsequently, demons speak, and are silenced. And how much credence can we place in the comments of a demon? The Voice of the Father speaks again on the Mount of Transfiguration, heard only by Peter, James, and John; and again Mark records it, and passes on without comment. Neither the reference to the "beloved son" in the parable nor Jesus's "nor the Son" in the Apocalyptic Discourse is fully clear in the nature of its identificatory reference to the person of Jesus, and in any case they both come at the end, in Passion Week.

If we look at the whole of Mark's Gospel, and what Mark is seeking to achieve by what he includes, we can recognize that his purpose is to reveal who Jesus **is** through the record of what he **did**. Jesus is seen progressively as a man, as more than a man, as the possessor of power from God, as a prophet, and then as the Messiah. But Mark's ultimate purpose is to lead his readers beyond even this. As he arouses in his readers the question "Who is this man?", he gives enigmatic hints about the ultimate answer, but—just as Jesus himself did—he leaves people to weigh and meditate on the evidence and reach the conclusion for themselves.

The brief mention of the Voice from Heaven, the quickly-silenced testimony of demons (shown as being part of the response evinced from them by the mere presence of Jesus) are all aspects of the evidence. So are other things.

Mark begins his narrative (after his title, 1:1) with an Old Testament citation that also occurs in Matthew and Luke but in a later context (Mt 11:10//Lk 7:27), prefixing this to the quotation from Isaiah with which Matthew and Luke begin the pericope about John the Baptist. The result is the juxtaposition, unique to Mark, of "I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way", and, "Prepare the way of the Lord". The "messenger" is clearly John the Baptist. The one for whom he prepares the way is Jesus. But in Mark's juxtaposed verses, the one whose way is to be prepared is: the Lord. Thus there is an implication (nothing more, but clearer in Mark than in Matthew and Luke) of the identification of "Jesus" and "the Lord".

A similar implication arises in the healing of the paralyzed man. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?", question the scribes. Jesus claims to forgive sins, and to authenticate this by the man's visible healing. The implied term in this syllogism is that God would not

grant him the power to perform this miracle if it were to be used to support a blasphemous statement; this is something that the people would accept. But the logic of the situation, if followed through to the end, leads to the identification of “Jesus” with “God”.

Again the question of Jesus’s identity arises with the ambiguous but thought-provoking statement, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mk 2:28).

Then in Mk 5:19-20 Mark records that Jesus charged the healed man to tell his family circle and friends “how much the Lord has done for you”, and the man began to proclaim “how much Jesus had done for him”. Again the wording and the juxtaposition sets up the implication (nothing more) of the identification of “Jesus” and “Lord”—and “Lord” in this context has the fuller meaning “God” (cf. Lk 8:39).

On Palm Sunday Jesus’s words in all three Synoptics are, “The Lord has need of it/them” (Mt 21:3//Mk 11:3//Lk 19:31). Now in Matthew and Luke “Lord” here could refer to Jesus, or could mean God in the sense, “The animal is needed for something connected with God’s service.” In Mark alone however it is followed by “and will send it back here immediately”, which identifies “the Lord” with Jesus.

Thus in Mark’s Gospel up to Jesus’s Trial, we have the progressive revelation of who Jesus is, leading to the acceptance of him by the disciples as Messiah, followed by the repeated teaching by Jesus about what this will mean. But **no human being** has used the term “Son of God” in reference to Jesus, though there are several hints in the record that raise the implication of the divinity of Jesus. The climax comes in the events of the crucifixion.

The high priest asks pointblank, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed [i.e., the Son of God]?”, and Jesus gives an equally straightforward answer, “I am” (compare the periphrastic wording of the answers in the Matthean and Lukan parallels—see the Table set out above). He is thereupon condemned to death for blasphemy. At his death the centurion says, “Truly this man was the Son of God”—a confession of faith defective to the extent that it uses the past tense “was”. But then comes Easter Sunday and the news (16:6), “Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen.”

Mark has reached his goal. His purpose is to reveal the person of Jesus. The title of his book (1:1) gives something of a program of where he intends to go: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God”. Thereafter, assuming initially nothing on the part of the reader, he progressively leads to a higher and higher view of the person of Jesus, until the high priest asks the crucial question that goes to the very heart of the matter. Without hesitation or equivocation Jesus replies “I am”. He is thereupon rejected

as Messiah and Son of God by the high priest of Israel and his associates, but affirmed as Son of God by an unnamed nonentity, a Gentile and a member of the occupying Roman forces. Finally the story of Jesus climaxes in the resurrection.

This is (if one wishes to use the term) the “Messianic Secret” in Mark: the fulness of the revelation of who Jesus is. Writing in the light of and from the perspective of the post-Easter faith of the church, Mark carefully avoids allowing that perspective to intrude too early into his account. Rather, he shows Jesus as gradually allowing people to recognize more and more of who he was, and he leads his readers along the same path. Thus he curtails the Temptation narrative when Jesus vindicates his Sonship before Satan, omits early references to Jesus as Son of God, and uses only the first part of Peter’s Confession because to record Peter saying at that point “the Son of the living God” would be premature in relation to where Mark has by that time brought his readers.

### **3.5 MARK’S THEMES: (2) CONFLICT AND CHOICE**

From a very early point in Mark’s Gospel (the beginning of Chapter 2), Jesus is shown encountering opposition: concerning his claim to forgive sin, his willingness to eat with tax collectors and sinners, his disciples’ (and his own) failure to fast when others did, his disciples’ plucking grain on the Sabbath, and his healing on the Sabbath. This culminates in the Pharisees conferring with the Herodians to plan “how to destroy him” (3:6). We see, next, that he encounters opposition from his own family who want to seize him because he is mad (3:21) and who come seeking him (3:31-35). The scribes now brand him as an emissary of Satan, whose deeds are performed by Satan’s power (3:22). The people of “his own country” do not believe in him (6:1-6). When his disciples omit the ritual washing before eating, he is challenged again by the Pharisees and scribes (7:1-23). They argue with him, demanding a sign (8:11-12), and he warns his disciples against them (8:13-22).

In an endeavour to trap him, various groups press him with test questions about divorce (10:2), about his authority (11:28), about paying tax to Caesar (12:13-15), and about resurrection (12:18-23). Again he warns about the scribes (12:38-40). His enemies are seeking how to accomplish his death (14:1-2), when Judas provides them with a way (14:10-11). And then Jesus is duly arrested (14:43-49), tried, condemned, and crucified.

Mark builds up a picture of who Jesus is, and shows what he is doing in the world, and demonstrates how Jesus’s presence confronts man with a moral dilemma and

forces him to a choice: he is **for** Jesus, or **against** him. The whole thrust of Mark's Gospel, and the manner of its arrangement and presentation, is aimed at facing the reader with the same choice, and thus bringing him to a point of decision and response. The final scenes are quite ironic in this regard; all the influential groups within Jewry combine their skills in an endeavour to trap Jesus in his words and procure his downfall, which they accomplish with the assistance of a traitor from the inner circle, and their final judgement is that he is a blasphemer (14:64); while his executioner, a Roman centurion, is led to exclaim "Truly this man was the Son of God" (15:39).

The opposition to Jesus is crowned with success and he is (they think) destroyed; but he does not remain dead and in the empty tomb the news is proclaimed, "He has risen, he is not here ... you will see him, as he told you" (16:6-7).

### 3.6 WHAT MARK DOES NOT CONTAIN

After this survey of what Mark contains, and his major themes, it is now appropriate to consider what Mark does not contain; that is to say, what part of the Synoptic tradition we would **not** have if Mark were the only one of the Synoptics to come down to us.

What we would lack could be briefly stated as follows:

1. All of the birth and infancy stories, including the genealogies.
2. All of John's teaching (apart from the fact of his call to repentance, and half of his testimony to the Mightier Coming One).
3. All of the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, and Lukan equivalents.
4. Approximately half of Jesus's Charge to the Twelve in Matthew, and Lukan equivalents.
5. Approximately half of the Beelzebul Controversy as Matthew gives it.
6. Five out of the seven parables of Matthew's Chapter of Parables (Chapter 13).
7. All of the travel narrative of Luke, including a great deal of parabolic and general teaching, some with Matthean equivalents.
8. Most of the Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees.
9. Approximately two-thirds of the Apocalyptic Discourse as Matthew gives it.
10. All of the appearances of the risen Christ (or just a brief summary, if the longer ending is accepted).
11. Apart from those already covered above, a considerable number of other parables given on various occasions. (Of thirty-two parables recorded in the Synoptics, Mark gives four.)

12. Ten miracles of healing (two blind men, a dumb demoniac, the centurion's servant, raising the widow's son, a blind and dumb demoniac, a crippled woman, a man with dropsy, ten lepers, the blind and the lame in the temple on Palm Sunday, the severed ear) and two other miracles (the coin in the fish's mouth, the miraculous catch of fish).

13. Sundry other teachings and short sayings (e.g., the sinning brother).

14. A number of incidents, some of which are independent and some attached to pericopes that **are** found in Mark (to name the main ones, the Temptations, the Baptist's question and Jesus's testimony to John, the ministering women, Zacchaeus, Jesus before Herod, the death of Judas, on the way to the cross, the two thieves on the cross, the guard at the tomb, and the false report of the theft of Jesus's body).

These incidents and teachings not recorded could be further analyzed as:

(a) Happenings prior to the baptism of Jesus, and after his rising from the tomb;

(b) A number of miracles, all of which are paralleled in Mark by miracles of the same general kind;

(c) A number of incidents that either (or, both) are paralleled in Mark by incidents of a similar general kind, and/or that do not in themselves add greatly to an overall picture of the person and work of Jesus;

(d) Most significantly, the greater part of the Synoptic record of the teaching of Jesus.

The earlier question—What would we have and what would we be without, if of the Synoptics we had only Mark?—could be answered by this summary:

If we had only Mark, we would have the story of Jesus from his baptism to his resurrection, including detailed stories of each kind of miracle he performed and (usually) elucidation of its significance and the response it evinced, and a detailed account of Jesus's predictions of his Passion and also of the Passion events themselves. In addition we would have a very small record of his sayings and teachings, almost all of these being (a) connected with conflict situations and/or (b) incidents in which people were confronted with the necessity of deciding their response to him and/or (c) discussions of the various responses to his word, challenges to a right response, and warnings about a wrong response (including eschatological teaching).

On the other hand, if we had only Mark we would be without the infancy and post-resurrection narratives, a number of miracles and other incidents that in themselves add little to the picture of the person of Jesus that is given in Mark, and in particular we would be without the substantial bulk of the sayings and teachings of Jesus.

### 3.7 THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF MARK'S GOSPEL

To what conclusion, then, are we led by this survey of and assessment of what Mark's Gospel does and does not contain? Initially, it invites comparison with the message that was proclaimed by the early church in its evangelism.

In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles we are able to find considerable evidence concerning the content of this message which the early church preached to those outside its ranks. The most significant and detailed consideration of this continues to be Dodd's *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936). He distinguishes the *kerygma*, the apostolic presentation of the Christian message to outsiders, from the *didache*, the teaching within the church for those who are Christians. Next he analyzes the speeches of Acts and Paul's statement of the *kerygma* in his epistles, and draws attention to the common elements in them and the overall pattern of the apostolic *kerygma* that is presented.

This pattern may best be seen in Peter's speech in Acts 10:36-43 where (notwithstanding that Peter was interrupted before concluding what he had to say—10:44) all the elements are included. F F Bruce (1951: 224) says of this speech,

The summary of Peter's address (10:36-43) gives the apostolic Kerygma in a nutshell. ... The scope of the Kerygma, as outlined here and elsewhere, corresponds to that of Mk.

Dodd (1936: 56) says of Acts 10:36-43,

The passage is therefore offered explicitly as a form of apostolic preaching. ... We may perhaps take it that the speech before Cornelius represents the form of *kerygma* used by the primitive church in its earliest approaches to a wider public.

And this *kerygma* corresponds exactly with Mark's Gospel. Dodd spends several pages (104-117) showing this correspondence, from which we may note:

We can trace in the Gospel according to Mark a connecting thread running through much of the narrative, which has some similarity to the brief summary of the Story of Jesus in Acts 10 and 13, and may be regarded as an expanded form of what we may call the historical section of the *kerygma* (104). ... Mark therefore conceived himself as writing a form of *kerygma*, and that his Gospel is in fact a rendering of the Apostolic preaching will become clear from an analysis of the book itself (106).

Dodd then gives his analysis of Mark in relation to the *kerygma*, concluding (117),

Mark then proceeded, according to the formula of the *kerygma* in 1 Cor 15, to record how Christ was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. But unfortunately only a fragment of his resurrection narrative has survived; enough, however, to show what the climax of the Gospel was. The story of the saving facts is complete.

He next adds (for he accepts Markan priority) that

the scheme of Gospel writing laid down by Mark became the model on which the other canonical Gospels were composed. We discern, however, in Matthew and Luke a certain departure from the original perspective and emphasis of the *kerygma*. ... Matthew is, in fact, no longer in the pure sense a "Gospel". It combines *kerygma* with *didache*, and if we regard the book as a whole, the element of *didache* predominates. ... In Luke the change is more subtle. ... But again it represents a certain modification of the original perspective. (117, 118, 121, 122, 123).

That is to say, Mark may be recognized as "pure" *kerygma*, while Matthew and Luke are combinations of *kerygma* and *didache*.

C F D Moule has drawn attention to the fact that in his Gospel Mark has given a vibrant presentation of the *kerygma* (as distinct from the *didache*) of the early church, for proclamation to the "outsider":

Mark is the apostolic *kerygma*—Old Testament evidence and all—built up into a vivid, narrative form" (1962: 92).

Then what of Mark? The most significant fact about it, for the present enquiry, is simply its contents, which are not only within the framework of the *kerygma*, but are themselves in the nature of *kerygma*, and *kerygma* is primarily the 'propaedeutic' for the outsider ... it is the *preaching* that is primarily the content of Mark: the *kerygma* for unbelievers. (1967: 105.)

Let us then recognize the nature of Mark: it is the detailed presentation of the *kerygma* of the early church, "the *kerygma* for unbelievers", as Moule calls it. It "proclaims the gospel, peace by Jesus the Messiah—he is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36), and it progressively unfolds the picture of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, and shows how the prophets bear witness to him, so that the reader may "repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15), for "everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43).

Why are the various contents of Mark included in his Gospel? Because they are part of the *kerygma*. Even the lengthy teaching sections of Mark—the parables of chapter 4, and the apocalypse of chapter 13—are related to aspects of the *kerygma*: the question of response to the message, and the promise of Jesus's return in glory as Judge.

Why are other parts of the Synoptic tradition not included in Mark? Because they are not part of the *kerygma* (or else are already represented in Mark by similar material).

Mark's fundamental method of procedure was to include every story from Matthew and Luke about what Jesus did, especially if both the Major Synoptics contained it.

However, if Matthew and Luke contain different stories of the same kind (e.g., the call of the first disciples) or variant accounts of the same event (e.g., the rejection at Nazareth) he would include one and ignore the other. The only narratives included by both Matthew and Luke and lacking in Mark are:

- The Temptation (but Mark gives a summary);
- The Centurion's Servant Healed,
- The (Blind and) Dumb Demoniac Healed, and
- John the Baptist's Question and Jesus's Response.

All the other material common to Matthew and Luke and omitted by Mark consists of shorter sayings and longer blocks of teaching by Jesus. And (except for some selected teaching sections concerned with redemption or eschatology) it was not Mark's purpose to include Jesus's teaching.

The reason for the curtailment of the Temptation narrative has been suggested above, §3.4; the reason for the omission of the Centurion's Servant Healed and the double pericope about John the Baptist's Question will be discussed in Chapter Nine, when we look at the framework of, and sequence of pericopes in, Mark's Gospel.

The very short story of the man with a dumb spirit (Mt 12:22-23//Lk 11:14) is superfluous because Mark gives the very long story of the healing of a boy with a dumb spirit (9:14-29). It is as if Mark chose to include from Matthew and Luke one story of each major class of healing performed by Jesus—fever, deafness, dumbness, blindness, hemorrhage, paralysis, leprosy, deformity, raising of the dead, four exorcisms of very different kinds—with a further story of his own about a blind man (8:22-26), and four general summaries referring to Jesus's other miracles of healing, seventeen descriptions of healings altogether.

This careful and detailed enquiry into the contents of Mark has brought us to the point of recognizing that Mark's use of his sources (whatever they were), what his Gospel contains and does not contain, his themes of who Jesus is, and conflict and choice, and a comparison with the preaching of the early church, all point to his Gospel being a record of the church's *kerygma*.

It is important to see the significance of this. The conclusion we have reached concerning Mark's purpose, from an examination of the material that he has chosen to include, and its arrangement and wording, is that that purpose was not to write for the church at all. That is, not, as it were, for the church's *internal use*. He has produced a book for the church's *external use*. He has put a source-book for the church's *kerygma* into the hands of the church's evangelists.



When the church proclaimed, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ” and the interested outsider answered, “Who is he, that I should believe in him?”, the Christians needed to be able to give a clear and accurate answer. Many of those who were preaching the message of Jesus Christ would not themselves have known or heard him in the flesh. Large numbers of the Christians who were witnessing and preaching would be only semi-literate or quite illiterate. How could they respond when asked this question?

Mark perceived this need, and wrote to meet it. This study has led us to see that he went through the Jesus-traditions to which he had access and drew from them the material that expressed the *kerygma* of the church and that Christians could use to answer the questions about Jesus that would be asked by outsiders and new converts.

### 3.8 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS CONCLUSION FOR SYNOPTIC HYPOTHESES

This investigation has been conducted from a neutral stance in relation to Synoptic hypotheses. The conclusion does not clearly select one hypothesis and eliminate another. It is for example completely compatible with Markan Priority—it could be said: “Mark, in accordance with his purpose (as shown above), went through the sources available to him, selected what he considered appropriate to that purpose, and wrote his Gospel. It was later used by Matthew and Luke as the nucleus of the Gospels that they were writing for the church and into which they each inserted their *didache* material.”

However, it will be of particular interest to assess our conclusion as to the purpose of Mark with regard to its implications for the Markan Dependence hypothesis, because one of the major objections to that theory is that if Matthew and Luke already existed there would be no point in writing a Gospel like Mark.

What follows is an examination of how the writing of Mark could be explained, given the existence of Matthew and Luke. This in no sense **proves** or could prove Markan Dependence; it is not even an argument for that view. It is an attempt to assess the strength of the case that can be made to justify the writing of Mark as the third Gospel.

We start then with the existence of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. These are Gospels written for and used in the churches—Matthew primarily for the Jewish church and Luke for Gentile Christians, though the boundaries of their use can be expected to have been flexible. These Gospels, together with oral tradition, were being drawn upon for the proclamation of the *kerygma* and the instruction of converts. But as the church spreads and advances, John Mark perceives the need for a specific preaching tool for use by those who are seeking to win outsiders to Jesus Christ.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke contain the needed *kerygma* material, but they

contain a great deal of other material as well. Moreover, each has relevant pericopes that the other does not. To make copies of **both** Gospels is a lengthy and expensive business. To make a copy even of one is to copy more than is required for the *kerygma*. What is needed is a book containing the *kerygma*, extracted from both Matthew and Luke. This will be considerably cheaper to produce, and considerably easier to use.

Barclay (1975: 25) examines the cost of books in the early Christian centuries, concluding “So a properly scribed copy of the four gospels would cost the equivalent of a craftsman’s wages for about six weeks.” On the basis of Barclay’s figures, a copy of Mark’s Gospel would cost the equivalent of just over a week’s wages for a craftsman—still a substantial financial commitment, but considerably less than a copy of Matthew plus Luke (a combined length of approximately three and a half times that of Mark), which would work out at four to five weeks’ wages. To consider the significance of these figures, take the average weekly wage today and multiply it by one-and-a-fifth to get today’s equivalent of the cost of a copy of Mark’s Gospel and by four-and-a-quarter to get the approximate cost of a copy of Matthew plus Luke.

There is therefore a clear motive available for the production of Mark’s Gospel when the others were in existence: to provide a special-purpose Gospel containing in clear consecutive fashion the *kerygma* of the church, extracted from Matthew and Luke, for use in evangelism. This answers the Irrelevancy Argument against Markan Dependence, advanced by Styler (1961) and so many others (see §6.4).

Another major argument put forward—and regarded as decisive by Markan Priorists—is that no author writing after the Majors would omit the material that Mark’s Gospel leaves out. For example, in discussing this (1957: 352-354) F C Grant wrote, concerning the idea that Mark drew the material for his Gospel from Matthew and Luke,

Furthermore, what purpose can be alleged for such an abridgement? Why should anyone wish to substitute Mark’s brief narrative, truncated at both ends, for the fuller narratives of Matthew and Luke?

Implied here is the assumption that if Mark wrote third, he must be intending to **replace** the other Synoptics with his account—and why would any writer want to offer such a truncated version as a replacement for such good material as is found in the others? And Streeter (1924: 158) said “only a lunatic would leave out” of his Gospel such material as “Matthew’s account of the Infancy, the Sermon on the Mount, and practically all the parables”. As Mark was clearly not a lunatic, it was obvious (Streeter concluded) that Mark’s Gospel could not be third-written. But again, this is an objection that only has any point on the assumption Mark was written to replace the others.

Mark was not aiming to produce a Gospel to replace Matthew and Luke or to compete with them in any way, but to meet a specific need of a kind that **they** were not designed to meet. He therefore omitted the birth stories and the teaching that was primarily intended for Christians or was of limited usefulness for evangelistic preaching—this, as we know, formed no part of the church’s proclamation to outsiders. Frequently, for the same reason, he gives a shortened version of teaching that he does include, sometimes summarizing what he omits.

Mark’s omission of the resurrection appearances is puzzling, for the resurrection was the climax of the *kerygma*—but this omission is a puzzle on any Synoptic hypothesis. It is in fact **less** perplexing on the Markan Dependence hypothesis because on this view if Mark left out the details of the resurrection stories deliberately he at least knew that they were accessible in Matthew and Luke, whereas on the Markan Priority hypothesis whatever Mark left out was **not elsewhere available at all**. This is a point worth careful noting, for the absence from Mark of a detailed resurrection account is sometimes regarded by advocates of Markan Priority as being a problem for the Markan Dependence view and is referred to by them in such a way as to imply that it poses no problem at all on the Markan Priority hypothesis. (For example, in the argumentation by F H Woods in his remarkably effective article, referred to in §3.2 of this chapter.)

This examination of Mark’s Gospel shows that this attitude is mistaken. Mark is not producing an “expurgated” edition of Matthew and Luke—he is producing a book containing the church’s message to outsiders; and all the treasures of the teaching of Jesus and the other material from Matthew and Luke that he did not utilize remain available to the church in those Gospels. This answers the Expurgatory Argument sometimes advanced against Markan Dependence (see also §6.4).

But Mark’s Gospel is not a simple series of extracts from other books. It is a real work of authorship in its own right, for which the other Gospels are sources. First of all, it is a careful and skilful blending of the stories of Matthew and Luke, taking advantage of the narratives about Jesus that each of them offers, to the extent that Mark judged them appropriate for his purposes. Thus many of the details given in Mark are combined from the accounts of Matthew and Luke. Mark’s obvious preference, in telling a story, is to make his account as full and rich in detail as he can, and much of this is explained by the thesis that he conflated Matthew and Luke. It is not true to say that he used **every** detail that he found in his sources (details can be found in Matthew or Luke that are absent from Mark) but these are somewhat uncommon and mostly he conflates what he finds in these two sources.

Moreover, Mark's Gospel is a great treasury of additional information that is found in neither Matthew nor Luke. Therefore, clearly, these two Gospels were not his **only** sources. While using the stories of Matthew and Luke as his guide and framework (and he recounts very few stories that he did not find in them), he also incorporated into his telling of these stories a whole host of additional details drawn from his own knowledge of the Jesus-traditions. Some of this may be from his personal knowledge (e.g., the youth who fled naked, 14:51-52). Most of it would consist of eyewitness detail that he heard when he listened to eyewitness recountings of these stories. Mark is known to have been a companion and associate of Barnabas, Paul and Peter. Paul was not an eyewitness of the events of the life of Jesus; Barnabas is not recorded as having been an eyewitness. But Peter most certainly was.

There is an early, persistent, and widespread tradition that links Peter with Mark and the writing of the Second Gospel. Some scholars have been inclined to dismiss this testimony of the church Fathers. Now, the tradition may possibly have exaggerated the extent of Peter's link with what Mark wrote, but it is difficult to see how the tradition arose at all if there was no link of any kind.

Papias tells us (Eusebius, Book 3. 39.15-16; Maier, 1999: 129-130):

Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote down accurately, but not in order, all that he remembered of the things said and done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, a follower of Peter. Peter used to teach as the occasion demanded, without giving systematic arrangement to the Lord's sayings, so that Mark did not err in writing down some things just as he recalled them. For he had one overriding purpose: to omit nothing that he had heard and to make no false statements in his account.

Papias is very clear: Mark wrote down what he heard from Peter. One question, though, does spring to mind: If Mark was also drawing upon the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, why does Papias not mention this?

A moment's thought will enable us to recognize that there were two possible reasons: that he did not know, or that he did not care.

If one familiar with the preaching of Peter and with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were to read Mark, what would it more likely remind him of? I believe that, in both content and language, it would be the preaching of Peter! Mark is simply recording his account of the common gospel of Christians. And the language Mark uses and the wealth of small points of detail he gives would make the reader think more of the preaching of Peter than of the other two accounts. Unless Mark were able to come up to Papias and

say, “In writing this, I made use of Matthew and Luke”, such a piece of information would not be self-evident upon reading Mark’s Gospel.

But, further, even if Papias did know that for his writing Mark had indeed made extensive use of Matthew and Luke as well as his knowledge of Peter’s preaching, why would he necessarily mention the former? From what we know of him he would most likely consider it of no consequence—he simply would not care. For Papias valued above all the “living voice”. He tells us (Eusebius, 3.39.4-5; Maier, 1999: 127):

Whenever anyone came who had been a follower of the elders, I asked about their words: what Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord, were still saying. For I did not think that information from books would help me as much as the word of a living, surviving voice.

When we read Papias’s opinions comparing “information from books” with the profit that came from “the word of a living, surviving voice”, it is really no surprise that what he records about Mark is this writer’s association with, and recollection of the ministry of, the apostle Peter, and that he says nothing (except perhaps a comment about the question of “order”) in relation to other Gospels. Papias’s comment by no means, therefore, excludes the possibility of Mark being produced later than other written Gospels.

To reflect a moment further upon this question of “order”: Papias mentions this matter twice in this paragraph. He says, firstly, that Mark “wrote down accurately, but not in order, all that he remembered”. Papias adds, secondly, that “Peter used to teach as the occasion demanded, without giving systematic arrangement to the Lord’s sayings, so that Mark did not err in writing down some things just as he recalled them.”

Peter did not—did not attempt to—put his stories about Jesus into any sort of orderly arrangement, but taught about them just as circumstances, the need of the moment, indicated. So Mark received no awareness of a structure, an order, from his source Peter. But things do (of course!) occur in an “order” in Mark’s Gospel.

In his translation and notes on Eusebius’s *Church History*, A C McGiffert notes (1979: 173) that Lightfoot supposes the mention of a “lack of order” implies the existence of another written Gospel, exhibiting a different order, with which Papias compares it. McGiffert goes on to mention several scholars who believe this other Gospel to be that of Matthew. If one were to compare the first section of Matthew that gives a coverage of the events in the life of Christ with the first chapters of Mark, one of the most significant features that will impact upon the reader is their divergences in order when recording the same pericopes. However, in differing from Matthew, Mark is not following here an

“order” of his own (for he has no specific knowledge himself in this matter). What we do find, upon checking, is that the opening chapters of Mark are following **exactly** the sequence of pericopes in Luke!

I will show (in Chapter Nine) that Mark’s Gospel is in fact assembled on a very simple structure: not having an “order” of his own, and wishing to avoid the large “teaching” sections in the Major Synoptics, Mark follows Luke’s order of pericopes to 6:14 and Matthew’s order thereafter (inserting, into each of these two parts, four sections derived from the other Synoptic Gospel that he is not following at the time).

Further information about the testimony of the early church Fathers is set out in §6.2.

We have in fact a thoroughly reasonable basis, from this external testimony, for holding that the source of the abundance of extra detail with which Mark enlivened his Gospel was his recollection of how Peter told these same tales that he (Mark) was now drawing from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. That is, many of the eyewitness touches of Peter’s preaching ended up in Mark’s Gospel—Mark would have remembered these eyewitness details from Peter. For convenience I will on occasion refer to Mark’s third source as P, i.e. Mark’s private source, primarily Peter’s preaching. And it was from using the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as sources that Mark drew the framework and order of pericopes in what he wrote.

There is another aspect of Mark’s Gospel very likely reflecting his association with Peter: Mark’s Gospel portrays Jesus as a man among men. Mark will be more effective in gaining the attention of people and leading them to see more fully who Jesus is if he starts by making it clear that Jesus was (and always continued to be) fully man. Furthermore, Mark’s message of what Jesus could do for a person is heightened and exemplified if the disciples are not painted as supermen, spiritual giants, but shown to be—as in fact they were—ordinary people, often puzzled and bewildered, frequently bumble-footed and liable to get things wrong and make mistakes, but people who were becoming increasingly aware of the real nature of the master they were following.

Moreover, the contrast between what the disciples **had been** and what they **became** (and were known to be at the time when Mark wrote) was itself part of the message: this is what Jesus can do in the life of any person who follows him. Quite apart from the fact that Mark’s portrayal can be recognized as accurate in its picture of the disciples, it is the more useful way of describing them in the context of evangelistic preaching. In similar fashion, Mark’s approach to doctrine is simple and down to earth.

And further, it is likely beyond any real question of doubt that the vocabulary and manner of speech used by Peter is reflected in Mark’s Gospel.

To consider this matter further. An important feature of Mark to be noted is his exceedingly colloquial Greek. To Streeter must go the credit, I believe, for first clearly spelling out exactly the nature and extent of this Markan trait. Earlier writers (and not a few since Streeter's time) tend simply to dismiss Mark's style as "bad Greek". Streeter's penetrating observation (1924: 163) is,

But the difference between the style of Mark and of the other two is not merely that they both write better Greek. It is the difference which always exists between the spoken and the written language.

Similarly Vincent Taylor comments (1952: 52),

Mark's Gospel is written in a relatively simple and popular form of Greek which has striking affinities with the spoken language of everyday life as it is revealed to us in the papyri and inscriptions.

Cranfield (1959: 20) also has noted this point:

The style of the Gospel is unpretentious and close to the everyday spoken Greek of the time, making up for its lack of the elegance of literary Greek by its simplicity and directness.

It needs to be noted that the spoken and written forms of a language are distinctively different. A full recognition of this has only come about in recent times: in fact, since (and through) the invention of the tape recorder and the development of linguistic science. The present viewpoint is summed up by Palmer (1971: 3), in his chapter "Linguistic Background", in these words:

What is agreed by almost all linguists is that the spoken and written languages should be kept apart in analysis, that for the purpose of linguistic analysis indeed they are essentially two different languages.

Speech normally consists of paratactic constructions, while writing consists of some paratactic constructions and a predominance of subordinating constructions. There are definite reasons for this: subordinating constructions allow for greater precision in conveying information by facilitating the transmission of the relationships between the different segments or "bits" of information. But this can result in a complexity of structure, with the consequence that the meaning may perhaps be seen clearly only if the sentence is written down, where it can be reread if necessary.

On the other hand, speech is uttered in sense units of about half a dozen words or so, these units being strung together like beads on a string and the relationship between them being conveyed by such specific speech characteristics as stress, intonation, juncture, and emphasis (for which the linguistic term is *suprasegmentals*) or by means of

using additional words to state explicitly what the relationships are. Such short sense units are characteristic of speech because they represent what is called the “span of structural attention” for speaker and hearer. Longer units are more difficult for the hearer to grasp as a thought unit, and indeed are also more difficult for the speaker to formulate.

Gleason (1969: 358) points out that in attempting to speak in longer sense units the speaker may change his grammatical construction

in the middle of sentences in ways that suggest, on careful examination, that the speaker has lost track of what he started to say. Usually, however, any stretch of six or seven words is consistent within itself structurally. The difficulty appears only when longer sequences are considered—sequences beyond the span of structural attention of either the speaker or the hearer.

Thus, in speech, Gleason continues (359),

patterns of clause connection are generally simple. From the viewpoint of literary standards they are usually monotonous. *And* is used very heavily. Connectors of greater range, like *nevertheless*, *moreover*, *alternatively*, are very rare. ... This fact is probably associated with the lack of long-span integration in structure.

We will be readily able to correlate these comments with features of Mark’s Gospel.

But why does the Greek of Mark’s Gospel have this character? Streeter decides (1924: 163) that it is “most probably that his Gospel, like Paul’s Epistles, was taken down from rapid dictation by word of mouth.” But there is another possible explanation for this Markan feature that Streeter has identified.

If Mark was indeed producing a source-book for preachers, it would need to be in the kind of language that they used. More than likely, Mark’s Gospel was not intended just to be **read** so much as **heard**: his stories would be learnt off by heart, as the vehicle of the Jesus-traditions, and then retold by the Christians as opportunity offered. Their detailed form, packed with interest, full of the redundancies and repetitions that are not only **characteristic of** spoken language but that are in large measure **needed by** spoken language, are much more suited for storytelling than the drier factual approach of Luke or the (frequently) brief-notes-only version of a pericope in Matthew.

A precise, polished tale told in well-turned phrases and with hardly an unnecessary word may be the better version for circulation in written form. Streeter (1924: 163) says, for instance, that “Matthew and Luke use the more succinct and carefully chosen language of one who writes and then revises an article for publication”. Fair comment.



But that is hardly the best idiom for use in attracting a crowd on the streets of Rome. For that, you need an account composed in the vernacular of your intended audience.

Mark's Gospel is. It speaks in their language.

This then provides an explanation for all the colloquialisms of every kind that have been documented in Mark's Gospel. They may or may not have represented the typical speech of Mark himself. But whether they did or no, these features would be an asset in Mark's Gospel when stories from it were used in outreach that was aimed at interesting outsiders in the message of Jesus Christ.

It is readily possible to envisage the situation in which Mark's Gospel could be used to best advantage. Professional storytellers were common, and popular, in the first century. Christians joined their ranks, and told the stories of Jesus.

They could stand in some convenient place where they would hope to attract a crowd—maybe near the entrance to the marketplace—and begin their tale. They must launch into their story quickly to gain an audience. They must arouse and maintain a sense of urgency to hold their audience. They must create interest, paint a vivid picture that captures the imagination, awaken an emotional response amongst the listeners, tell a tale of conflict, good against evil, and maintain suspense throughout the telling: or their hearers would wander off home with the shopping. The requirements are rather different from those for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, who had as it were a captive audience for the instruction they gave. But if Mark's tale flagged in interest it lost its audience.

These requirements of course are universal for storytelling. They are the ingredients of any good novel or gripping drama. They are explicitly built into our television serials so that the viewers will tune in again for the next episode. And they are richly present in Mark's stories. When we examine in detail how he tells a story (look, say, at the Gadarene Demoniac, or Jairus's Daughter and the Hemorrhaging Woman, or the Demon-possessed Lad), we can recognize what an absolutely superb storyteller Mark is.

This does not deny the historicity of the accounts in his Gospel. On the contrary: he had the greatest drama of all time to relate and had no need to embellish the facts, but only to recount them on the basis of his Gospel sources and the additional eyewitness information to which he had access.

Nor is it to deny the theological purpose of his Gospel. On the contrary: the story was only the vehicle and was quite valueless apart from the truth that it told and the message it conveyed and the Saviour it described. Mark's stories were included in his Gospel for specific theological reasons, and he exercised his skill upon them to serve, as we have seen, specific theological purposes.

But these things are true also of Matthew and Luke. What distinguishes Mark's account is how he achieves these purposes through the telling of a captivating story.

Thus an awareness of all these factors that I have outlined—from the purpose of Mark's Gospel as deduced from examining its contents, then the testimony of the early church Fathers to Mark's link with Peter, and to the sequence of the writing of the Synoptics and the date of Mark, plus the way in which Mark adjusted his sources Matthew and Luke to colloquial speech (the way in which Peter would have presented his teaching)—goes a long way towards covering objections that some people have raised, under the impression that these things may not be compatible with a Markan Posteriority view. But to the contrary: they are all factors that are completely in concord with and very supportive of the Markan Dependence hypothesis that I am proposing.

This then is how Mark's Gospel can be explained from the perspective of Markan Dependence. Such an explanation does not **establish** the case for this hypothesis. But it does show that a case can be made out for Markan Dependence that explains the data, answers the objections, accords with what is known of the situation in the early church, and has the virtue of being totally credible.

### 3.9 THE CAPERNAUM CENTURION IN A PSEUDO-MARKAN VERSION

#### 3.9.1 The “Impossibility” Argument against Griesbach

In the ongoing debate about the interrelationship between the Synoptic Gospels, there is one argument that surfaces periodically, is affirmed by one group of scholars and denied by another, and has never, it would appear, actually been put to the test.

I refer to the “impossibility” argument. This argument goes back to the article on “The Gospels” by E A Abbott in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1879. His rebuttal of the Griesbach view of Markan conflation was then enthusiastically adopted by others, and treated as a settled, unshakeable fact. It is cited by Farmer (1964: 75). It has been reaffirmed by many others, including in the review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem* by Mitton (1965: 3). It is put forward again by David Hill (1972: 28), who says of it, “The judgement of E A Abbott ... still stands”, and he then quotes Abbott's assertion.

Abbott's pronouncement reads (1879: 791) as follows:

It can be proved by *reductio ad absurdum* that Mark did not copy from Matthew and Luke. For suppose that he did so copy, it follows that he must not only have constructed a narrative based upon two others, borrowing here a piece from Matthew and here a piece from Luke, but that he must have deliberately determined to insert, and must have adopted

his narrative so as to insert, every word that was common to Matthew and Luke. The difficulty of doing this is enormous, and will be patent to anyone who will try to perform a similar feat himself. To embody the whole of even one document in a narrative of one's own, without copying it *verbatim*, and to do this in a free and natural manner, requires no little care. But to take two documents, to put them side by side and analyse their common matter, and then to write a narrative, graphic, abrupt, and in all respects the opposite of artificial, which shall contain every phrase and word that is common to both—this would be a *tour de force* even for a skilful forger of these days, and may be dismissed as an impossibility for the writer of the Second Gospel.

This sounds like a convincing reason why the idea of Markan dependence upon Matthew and Luke cannot be taken seriously. This assertion has been influential in turning not a few scholars away from the Griesbach hypothesis.

For if Abbott is right, that what it proposed—i.e., Mark had woven together the accounts of Matthew and Luke—could not be done, so that it is in fact **not** readily possible to achieve a text such as Mark contains by conflating the forms of the pericopes found in Matthew and Luke, then this will surely stop the Griesbach hypothesis dead in its tracks. It is rather pointless pursuing other lines of argument in relation to this hypothesis if in fact it is impossible for the text of Mark to have been derived from the other two Synoptics.

On the other hand, if Abbott is wrong, and such a conflating can be achieved fairly simply, then this ought to be noted, and one argument in the armoury of opponents of the Griesbach hypothesis will have been disarmed.

Abbott exaggerates the degree of correspondence between Mark and the others: Mark does not indeed include “every phrase and word that is common to both”; but the thrust of Abbott's argument is clear.

The force of the argument was defused somewhat by Sanders—he quotes Abbott, and then comments (1969: 270),

It must be pointed out, however, that Abbott's statement of the case is not quite accurate. If Mark had conflated Matthew and Luke, he would not have had to analyze their common matter and labor to include it. He could simply have copied first one then the other, thereby automatically including what was common to them, excluding any chance that they would agree together against him, and also creating agreements with each of them against the other. Whether one attributes conflation to Matthew or to Mark, the matter will be difficult, but not so nearly impossible as Abbott thought.

Numerous scholars have drawn attention to parallels where interweaving and

conflation of the kind postulated for Mark is known to have occurred. See for example the discussion by Dungan (1970: 91ff): Dungan refers particularly to Tatian's *Diatessaron* and *The Gospel of Peter*, in which Gospel sources were interwoven. Then Longstaff (1977) also examined Tatian, as well as the work of Roger of Hovedon, who wrote a life of Becket combining a work entitled *Passio Sancti Thomae* and the chronicle written by Benedict of Peterborough (which was itself a combination of a life of Becket by John of Salisbury and the *Passio Sancti Thomae*). Dungan and Longstaff see these parallels as providing collateral evidence in support of the belief that Mark could have produced his text from Matthew and Luke as sources.

Tuckett (1983: 41ff) examines Longstaff's analysis and points out that his parallels are inexact:

In any one given pericope, Tatian's specific aim was (probably) to include every detail of his sources. ... The author must have gone through the gospel texts, taking words from each gospel and piecing them together with great care and fidelity to form a new narrative. ... However, in the case of Tatian, such a comparison of sources is not surprising. It is in fact demanded by his overall aim. If he was trying to include every detail of his sources, then he must have carefully compared his sources and been eclectic in his choice of words within any one sentence.

But, Tuckett notes, "Tatian's method is different from that of ... Mark on the Griesbach Hypothesis." In regard to the second parallel, Tuckett adds (1983: 44, 46) that

Benedict's use of his sources is clearly either to copy verbatim, or to omit large accounts, or to abbreviate drastically. ... The situation is not very different with Roger, for, in most cases, he uses his sources like Benedict, copying them out verbatim. ... Thus, in all, there is not much evidence that either Benedict or Roger carefully compared their sources and wove them together in an intricate way. Rather, they copied one source at a time, often very exactly. ... There is nothing comparable to the Dura fragment of Tatian, or to Mark on the Griesbach Hypothesis; that hypothesis has to assume (for Mark) an almost continuous process of 'careful comparison', taking one word from here, one from there, and weaving them together. Moreover, there must have been a large number of very small changes in wording etc., which is quite different from the combination of strict copying and very free re-writing (if it is not dependence on a totally different source) which characterises the conflation process in the chronicles of Benedict and Roger.

It is therefore very dubious how much of a contribution is made by these (alleged) parallels to the resolution of Abbott's claim that the Gospel of Mark could not have been derived from those of the other two Synoptists.

It needs, moreover, to be noted that every Synoptic theory that postulates literary interdependence between the Synoptics accepts that conflation has occurred. Thus on the Augustinian view of Successive Dependence, Luke has conflated Matthew and Mark and on the Two-Document/Four-Document hypothesis Matthew has conflated Mark, Q, and M, while Luke has conflated Mark, Q and L (cf. Streeter, 1924: 201ff., 246ff.).

Now this establishes that **any** theory of literacy interdependence requires belief in the occurrence of **some** kind of conflation. But it still does not provide any kind of direct answer to Abbott's dogmatic assertion that the production of the text of Mark's Gospel from Matthew and Luke "may be dismissed as an impossibility for the writer of the Second Gospel". The issue still continues unresolved. There are those who still believe Abbott's assertion that even a "skilful literary forger" would have trouble producing a Mark out of a Matthew and Luke. So Mark could not have done it because it was impossible to do. So Griesbach was wrong.

Now, I make no claim to be a skilful literary forger. But actually this "impossible" exercise is something that I was doing every weekday of my life for a period of several years.

I was appointed a member of the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board in Australia. There were nine of us altogether on the Board, and it was our task, amongst us, to undertake the classification (and, on occasion, censorship) of every film and television program coming into Australia. Most of these were straightforward, and only one or two censors were allocated to view them. There were also, of course, quite a number that were border-line for classification categories—usually at least one every day—and more members (up to all nine of us) were then allocated to view them and make a decision.

For this work we sat at desks in a darkened theatrette, with table lamps on and notepads in front of us, and made extensive notes of everything that took place on screen that had a bearing on the decision to be made about the particular classification, and recorded the time into the film when that scene or event took place (in case we needed a second viewing of that part of the film). For each film or program, the members who had viewed it met together and discussed what we had viewed, using the extensive notes we had made, and came to a decision. Then one of those members who had seen the particular program or film (we took it in turns) was required to write up a detailed report on that viewing and the classification decision. This report was not like minutes of a meeting. It embodied the notes that each Board member had written about it, interweaving their comments. This report was then confirmed by all those members who had viewed it as embodying the views of the Board. Those reports had a lot in common with

what Griesbach said Mark had done. Each day of our working lives we were all engaged in doing something very like what Abbott says cannot readily be done.

So I decided to attempt a Mark-like treatment of a story from Matthew and Luke. I acknowledge that this conflation takes a little thought, a little care—just like my Board member reports—but I would hardly say that it can't be done. Here then I describe my approach to creating a Markan version of a pericope.

### 3.9.2 Putting Abbott's Assertion to the Test

The way forward, it seems to me, is to put ourselves into the position that (on the Greisbach hypothesis) the author of our Second Gospel faced: to take a pericope common to Matthew and Luke, and see whether it is possible to conflate the two versions so as to produce the sort of account that on this hypothesis Mark is postulated to have done.

From the material common to Matthew and Luke, the most appropriate for our purpose would be a piece of narrative. I had a choice of three: the pericopes of the Temptation, the Capernaum Centurion, and the Enquiry of John to Jesus. Of these, the one that seems to me closest to the typical pericope of the Triple Tradition is that of the Capernaum Centurion (Mt 8:5-13//Lk 7:1-10), so this is what I have chosen—a pericope that Mark's plan for using the Major Synoptics took him past, as described in Chapter Nine.

I shall therefore seek to produce a "Markan Version" of this story by conflating the Matthean and Lukan accounts, using Mark's approach to the handling of his sources.

When Mark compared the two accounts he would find three elements of the story at variance:

(a) in Matthew the centurion comes to Jesus in person while in Luke he sends elders of the Jews with a message;

(b) in Matthew Jesus offers to come to heal him and immediately the centurion asks Jesus only to say the word, while in Luke the first message that the centurion sends is to ask that Jesus come to him and only subsequently does he request, in a second message, that Jesus but say the word to heal his slave;

(c) Matthew uses the word "servant" (παῖς) throughout, where Luke prefers the word "slave" (δούλος), though using "servant" (παῖς) in 7:7.

Mark's policy is as far as possible to reconcile differences between Matthew and Luke. The first of the above three differences offers no simple opportunity for reconciliation, so Mark will follow Luke as it is the longer and more detailed account. The second

difference is easily resolved: by transferring the request to come to the centurion's house from being spoken by the centurion himself to being spoken by the elders.

As for the third difference: as Mark is going to draw most heavily upon Luke (for the reason just mentioned), he will adopt the word “slave” throughout, including in the one place where Matthew and Luke agree in using “servant”. (Roman society was used to slaves as servants; this word will meet with a receptive response from Mark's hearers.)

Mark will not use all that he finds in Matthew and Luke. He will omit from Luke “for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue”—this has no relevancy to his hearers in Rome, and Mark not infrequently omits things of this kind. Further, he will omit Matthew 8:11-12, part of the pronouncement to which in Matthew the story leads. Mark often omits or apocopates the pronouncements of Jesus similar to this with which Matthew's pericopes end. Thus Mark will end the pericope where Luke does, and consequently will use Luke's (not Matthew's) form of the ending.

Moreover, Mark will use the historic present at certain points in the story, will introduce constructions with καί, and will add in εὐθύς to heighten the sense of immediacy and urgency. It is probable that Mark will also change the use of “Lord” by Matthew (8:8) and Luke (7:6), most likely to “Teacher”. He will add into the story other details of which he is aware (perhaps—if this were the case—that the slave's name was Marcellus and that he was the father of Urbanus, who was a member of the church in Rome in Mark's day).

Mark will also record the crowd's amazement at this “healing at a distance” and their comments about it, and the consequence of the miracle. More than likely he would change some of Luke's vocabulary—perhaps Luke's “who was sick and at the point of death” (κακῶς ἔχων ἤμελλεν τελευτᾶν) to his own more colloquial term for “at the point of death”, ἐσχάτως ἔχει (cf Mark 5:23); perhaps also Luke's word for “heal”, διασώζω (Luke 7:3), which is not a word Mark ever employs—he may change this to σώζω, or more probably to θεραπεύω (the word Matthew uses in 8:7) or possibly ἰάσθαι (used in this pericope by both Matthew and Luke—Matthew 8:8b; 8:13b; Luke 7:7b).

Then Mark will blend the two accounts together, conflating those places where they run parallel.

Thus a Markan version of this pericope would come out something like this:

### 3.9.3 Pseudo-Markan Version of the Capernaum Centurion

<sup>1</sup>And he entered Capernaum and there was a centurion there having a slave who was dear to him and who is paralysed and at the point of death (ἐσχάτως ἔχει). <sup>2</sup>And when he heard about Jesus immediately he calls to him the elders of the Jews and

sends them to Jesus. <sup>3</sup>And finding Jesus the elders besought him earnestly that he would come and heal the slave, saying, <sup>4</sup>“He is worthy to have you to do this for him.” And he says to them, “I will come and heal him,” and he goes with them. <sup>5</sup>But when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him saying to him, <sup>6</sup>“Teacher, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; <sup>7</sup>therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only say the word, and my slave will be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to one man, ‘Go’, and he goes; and to another, ‘Come’, and he comes; and to my slave, ‘Do this’, and he does it.” <sup>9</sup>When therefore Jesus heard these things that he said, he marveled at him and turned and said to the multitude of those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.” <sup>10</sup>And when those who had been sent returned to the house they found the slave healed. <sup>11</sup>And all the people were amazed and they questioned amongst themselves saying, “How has such power been given to men?” And the report of this spread throughout Galilee. <sup>12</sup>Now the name of the slave was Marcellus, the father of Urbanus.

### 3.9.4 A Markan Priority Hypothesis Explanation

Once such a version existed it would then be possible to explain the accounts on the basis of Markan Priority as follows:

Ÿ The use in Matthew and Luke of the iterated preposition (in a compound verb, and then repeated in the prepositional phrase that follows) is a favourite idiom of Mark's that Matthew and Luke have here taken over—see Mt 8:5; Lk 7:1, 6.

Ÿ Luke has followed Mark's account for the most part, but Matthew has abbreviated it by means of the device of having the centurion come to Jesus in person.

Ÿ Luke has improved Mark's colloquial language, altering his ἐσχάτως ἔχει into better Greek.

Ÿ Both Matthew and Luke show more reverence for Jesus by altering Mark's “Teacher” to “Lord”. Their other agreement against Mark, “servant” for “slave” in Mt 8:8//Lk 7:7 is a minor agreement of no particular significance.

Ÿ On occasion Matthew has chosen to take one detail and Luke another where Mark contains redundancies. Thus in Mark's “And he says to them, ‘I will come and heal him,’ and he goes with them”, Matthew takes “And he said to him, ‘I will come and heal him’”, while Luke takes “And Jesus went with them”; Matthew takes “When Jesus heard him” and Luke “When Jesus heard this” from Mark's “When therefore Jesus heard these things that he said”; similarly for “...to the multitude of those who followed him”.



Y There are a number of details in Mark that both Matthew and Luke have chosen to omit.

Y Mark has “with no one in Israel have I found such faith” and Luke (7:9) has “not even in Israel...”, and the textual evidence for Matthew (8:10) is divided between the two—the correct text for Matthew is as in Mark, but some manuscripts have assimilated this to be the wording of Luke.

As there *is* no Markan version of this pericope, these explanations are of course completely invalid: but the pseudo-Markan version shows how such a pericope could have been produced by Mark from the other two and if it had been written in this kind of way it would possess characteristics identical with those of genuine Markan pericopes, and would exhibit the same kind of similarities and differences as are found between the three Gospels in the Triple Tradition. And it would then be possible to account for all these features from the perspective of Markan Priority along the lines of the explanations that I have just offered.

My pseudo-Markan version has kept pretty close to each one of his sources where that source is unparalleled in the other source (which mostly applies to Luke, as a number of points in Luke are without Matthean parallels, whereas most of Matthew occurs also in Luke).

Mark may well alter further the language of his sources, adapting it more closely to his own style and vocabulary. He may also add-in other details of which he has independent knowledge. Changes of these kinds would not affect the point under consideration: it is not the places where Mark *differed from* Matthew and Luke but where Mark was seen to “contain every phrase and word that is common to both” that Abbott considered constituted “an impossibility for the writer of the Second Gospel”.

### 3.9.5 Conclusion

This small exercise has produced a conflation of the pericope of the Capernaum Centurion that exhibits characteristics observable in the Markan versions of other pericopes that are found also in Matthew and Luke. Writing it did not require much time at all—and such a conflation of Matthew and Luke would have taken Mark himself even less, as **we** would need to identify Markan characteristics and specifically build them in, whereas this would be for Mark the automatic expression of his own style and purpose in writing.

This pseudo-Markan version of the Capernaum Centurion pericope does not prove very much. It does not prove the Griesbach hypothesis. But it does eliminate one argument from the armoury of those who argue against the Griesbach hypothesis, for it

does **disprove** once and for all Abbott's pronouncement that it takes a skilful forger to combine Matthew and Luke, and that Mark would not have been capable of doing this.

For any moderately competent writer could produce a Markan pericope out of a Matthew and a Luke (plus some extra details from his own independent knowledge). This can be tested very simply. The detailed extension of The Temptation narrative and the pericope of John's message to Jesus remain only in the Matthean and Lukan versions at the moment. Perhaps someone may now like to try his hand at producing a pseudo-Markan version of one of these.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FLESHING OUT THE FACTS AND FIGURES**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

### **4.2 MATERIAL IN MARK NOT FOUND IN MATTHEW OR LUKE**

4.2.1 Verses Unique to Mark

4.2.2 Shorter Details Unique to Mark

4.2.3 Correspondence between Mark's Words and those of Matthew and Luke

Table 1: Percentages of Identical Words in the Synoptics

Table 2: Overall Synoptic Word Comparisons

Table 3: Words in Mark Identical with Words in Matthew and Luke

4.2.4 Markan Material Lacking in Matthew

4.2.5 Markan Material Lacking in Luke

4.2.6 Mark's "And he said to them ..."

4.2.7 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

### **4.3 COMPARATIVE SYNOPTIC STATISTICS**

4.3.1 Verses in the Synoptic Gospels

4.3.2 Verses Unique to Matthew

4.3.3 Verses Unique to Luke

4.3.4 Verses in Matthew and Mark (but not in Luke)

4.3.5 Verses in Luke and Mark (but not in Matthew)

4.3.6 Common and Unique Material in the Synoptics

4.3.7 Average Verse Length

4.3.8 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

### **4.4 COMPARISON OF PERICOPES AND THE WORDS OF JESUS**

4.4.1 Mark's Healing Stories

4.4.2 Mark's Other Miracle Stories

4.4.3 Pericope Length and the Words of Jesus

4.4.4 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

### **4.5 LUKE'S TIME AND PLACE NOTES**

4.5.1 The Data

4.5.2 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

### **4.6 ASSESSMENT: WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF THE FACTS?**

4.6.1 Assessing Synoptic Statistics

4.6.2 Accounting for Mark's Gospel

4.6.3 Accounting for the Major Synoptics

4.6.4 Looking at Mark's Healing Stories, and the Words of Jesus

4.6.5 Luke's Orderly Ways

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FLESHING OUT THE FACTS AND FIGURES

This chapter sets out a great deal of data about the Synoptic Gospels, and considers its significance

*It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.*

Sherlock Holmes, *Scandal in Bohemia*.

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Most of the discussion so far has been at the level of generalities, the “big picture”. But to get a valid grasp of the situation of Synoptic similarities and differences, it is necessary to look carefully at the detail: at verses, at individual words. That is what this chapter is doing. It is concerned with the facts and figures about the Synoptics, with lots of data, with statistics.

In his *Chapters From My Autobiography*, Mark Twain quoted Benjamin Disraeli’s comment, “There are three kinds of lies—lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

And I think this report is near the mark, too: “Over 83% of statistics figures are simply invented. Including this one.”

So it is important to have good grounds for knowing the statistics are accurate and reliable before using them. That is what this chapter is for.

An example of this kind of thing: Scholars’ discussions of the Synoptic Problem frequently cite statistics about the Gospels and almost as frequently differ in the statistics that they use. Thus for example Griesbach stated (1978: 108) that Mark contains 24 verses that are unique to it, whereas Hendriksen (1973: 6) cites 31 such verses, while Streeter puts the figure at 32 verses (1924: 195) and Albright & Mann (1971: XL) at 50 verses, and Swete (1913: lxiif.) gives it as 80 verses. Where other writers refer to the matter, they tend to take over a figure from an earlier writer whose data they accept. (I would guess that the most common figure cited is 50 to 56.)

It is so often said something like, “There is very little in Mark that is distinctive. Almost everything he says is also in Matthew or Luke or—more probably—in both. And this fact points to Mark having been written first; and then Matthew and Luke took over what he said, for what we find is just the situation you would expect to find in those circumstances.”

This statistic is flung about without much evidence given in support. But is it true? This chapter sets out the facts that **are** facts, and these will surprise most people.

New comparative and statistical tools have become available in the last five or six decades from which much information relevant to our present purpose can be gleaned. The most useful of these, as information sources for this chapter, have been: *Greek Synopsis of the Gospels* by de Solages (1959); Honoré's article "A Statistical Study of the Synoptic Problem" (1968); Farmer's *Synopticon* (1969); Morgenthauer's two books *Synoptic Statistics* (1971, in German, *Statistische Synopse*) and *Statistics of New Testament Words* (1958, 1972, 1982, in German, *Statistik Des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes*). While mainly basing this chapter on these "Synoptic statisticians", I have supplemented this information in some areas in this chapter from my own research.

Mark does not have a large number of complete pericopes that are unparalleled in the other two Synoptics. But this is a very imprecise measure for such information. If one looks at all the unique material in Mark—his *sondergut*—it will be seen that it cannot be so easily dismissed. Then in addition to the wealth of Mark's extra detail, there is the question of all the places that the Synoptics give pretty much the same information but use quite different words for doing it. These are also places where Matthew and Luke did not simply "take over" Mark's material for their own Gospel, as the Markan Priority-view advocates tend to put it.

Is this information significant? First of all, the information is set out here. Next, I assess its significance. Then I consider, What would this indicate to a neutral observer about the direction of literary copying amongst the Synoptists?

This chapter examines the data of the Synoptics and what can be known of the background circumstances of their writing, in order to provide an agreed basis of fact upon which further assessment and interpretation can proceed in the following chapters.

## 4.2 MATERIAL IN MARK NOT FOUND IN MATTHEW OR LUKE

### 4.2.1 Verses Unique To Mark

Listed here is the material in Mark of the size of approximately half a verse in length or greater that is not paralleled in Matthew or Luke. [Square brackets indicate words in Mark that are not unique to Mark but that are included here to clarify the context.]

DETAILS	REF	NO.
Mark's Title	1:1	1
The time is fulfilled ... believe in the gospel	1:15	½
immediately ... and Andrew, with James and John	1:29	½
and the whole city was gathered together about the door	1:33	1
Simon seeks and finds Jesus	1:36-37	2

Jesus sternly charged the leper to be silent	1:43	1
the leper talked freely about his cleansing	1:45	½
Jesus returned home, and crowds filled the room	2:1-2	2
a paralytic carried by four others	2:3	½
immediately perceiving in his spirit that in themselves, etc	2:8	½
He went out again beside the sea and taught the crowds	2:13	1
for there were many who followed him	2:15	½
when they saw he was eating with sinners and tax collectors	2:16	½
Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting	2:18	½
As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast	2:19	½
The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath	2:27	1
... with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart	3:5	½
And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him ...	3:9	1
And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him they fell down	3:11	1
to be with him and to be sent out to preach	3:14	½
whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder	3:17	½
Jesus's family think that he is beside himself	3:19-21	2½
And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem [said]	3:22	½
And he called them to him and said to them in parables, etc.	3:23	1
for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit"	3:30	1
and looking around on those who sat about him	3:34	½
and in his teaching he said to them, "Listen!"	4:2-3	½
lest they should turn again and be forgiven	4:12	½
Do you not understand this parable? How then will you		
understand all the parables?	4:13	1
and the desire for other things enter in and	4:19	½
If any man has ears to hear, let him hear	4:23	1
and still more will be given to you	4:24	½
Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly	4:26-29	4
with many such ... [he spoke] as they were able to bear it	4:33	½
but privately to his own disciples he explained everything	4:34	½
On that day, when evening had come, he said to them	4:35	½
And leaving the crowd, they took him with them ... just as		
he was. And other boats were with him	4:36	1
in the stern [asleep] on the cushion ... "Teacher, do you		
not care if [we perish]?"	4:38	½

no one could bind him any more, even with a chain	5:3	½
and no one had the strength to subdue him	5:4	½
Night and day he was always crying out and bruising himself	5:5	1
and how he has had mercy on you	5:19	½
[to proclaim] in the Decapolis ... and all men marveled	5:20	½
he crossed again in a boat to the other side, a great [crowd]		
gathered about him; and he was beside the sea	5:21	½
woman who had suffered much under many physicians	5:26	1
She had heard the reports about Jesus ... [came] in the crowd	5:27	½
she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease	5:29	½
and he looked around to see who had done it	5:32	1
and when he had entered [he said] to them, "Why do you		
make a tumult ...?"	5:39	½
he took the child's father and mother and those who were		
with him and [went in] where the child was	5:40	½
he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I		
say to you, [arise]"	5:41	½
and ... she walked (she was twelve years of age)	5:42	½
except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and		
healed them. And he marveled	6:5-6	1
and began to send them out two by two	6:7	½
[and preached] that men should repent. And they cast out		
many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick	6:12-13	1
Herod and John the Baptist	6:14-29	5
Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest awhile; etc.	6:31	1
Now many saw them going, and knew them ... and got there		
ahead of them	6:33	½
because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he		
began to teach them many things	6:34	½
And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred		
denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" And		
he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go		
and see." And when they had found out, [they said]	6:37-38	1
in groups, by hundreds and by fifties	6:40	½
for they all saw him, and were [terrified]	6:50	½

for they did not understand about the loaves, but their		
hearts were hardened	6:52	1
and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the		
boat, immediately	6:53-54	½
[bring the sick] on their pallets to any place where they heard he was.		
And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or country, they		
laid the sick in the market places	6:55-56	1½
Eating with unwashed hands	7:2-4	3
Rejecting the commandment of God	7:9	1
which you hand on. And many such things you do	7:13	½
And when he had entered the house, and left the people	7:17	½
[into] a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters,		
not his heart, but ... Thus he declared all foods clean.	7:18-19	1
coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, [slander,]		
pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within	7:22-23	1
And he entered a house, and would not have anyone know it;		
yet he could not be hid	7:24	½
Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth. And		
she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter	7:26	1
And she went home, and found the child lying in bed, and		
the demon gone	7:30	1
The Healing of a Deaf Mute	7:31-37	7
In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered,		
and they had nothing to eat	8:1	½
and some of them have come a long way	8:3	½
And they had a few small fish; and having blessed them he		
commanded that these also should be set before them	8:7	1
And he sighed deeply in his spirit ... and getting into		
the boat again, [he departed] to the other side	8:12-13	1
and they had only one loaf with them in the boat	8:14	½
... or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having		
eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?	8:15	1
They said to him, "Twelve." [baskets] full of broken		
pieces ... and they said to him, "Seven."	8:19	1
The Healing of a Blind Man in Bethsaida	8:22-26	5



But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked [Peter]	8:33	½
in this adulterous and sinful generation	8:38	½
intensely [white], as no fuller on earth could bleach them	9:3	½
So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the		
rising from the dead meant	9:10	1
and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should		
suffer many things and be treated with contempt?	9:12	½
[when they came to] the disciples, they saw a great [crowd]		
about them, and scribes arguing with them. And immedi-		
ately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly		
amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him. And he		
asked them, "What are you discussing with them?"	9:14-16	3
it dashes him down; and [he foams] and grinds his teeth and		
becomes rigid	9:18	½
and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the		
mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had		
this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often		
cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him;		
but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."		
And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible		
to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child		
cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when		
[Jesus] saw that a crowd came running together, [he rebuked		
the unclean spirit,] saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I		
command you, come out of him, and never enter him again."		
And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, [it came out.]		
and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He		
is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up,		
and he arose. And when he had entered the house ...	9:20-28	8
This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer	9:29	½
They went on from there, and passed through [Galilee]. And he would		
not have anyone know it; for he was teaching his disciples	9:30-31	1
and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you		
discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on		
the way they had discussed with one another	9:33-34	1½

And he sat down and called the Twelve; and he said to them,		
“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”	9:35	1
for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able		
soon after to speak evil of me	9:39	½
because you bear the name of Christ, etc.	9:41	1
And if your [foot] causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to		
enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell	9:45	1
where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched	9:48	1
Concerning salt	9:49-50	2
And in the house the disciples asked him again, etc.	10:10-12	2
But when [Jesus] saw it he was indignant	10:14	½
And he took them in his arms and blessed them	10:16	½
And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and		
knelt before him	10:17	½
And Jesus looking upon him loved him	10:21	½
And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them		
again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!”	10:24	1
now [in this time], houses and brothers and sisters and mothers		
and children and lands, with persecutions,	10:30	½
and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed,		
and those who followed were afraid	10:32	½
or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?	10:38	½
and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be		
baptized	10:39	½
And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; rise, he is calling you.” And throwing off his mantle		
he sprang up and came to Jesus	10:49-50	1½
tied at the door out in the open street	11:4	½
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming!	11:10	½
and went into the temple; and when he had looked round at		
everything, as it was already late, [he went out to Bethany] with the twelve	11:11	½
[And seeing] in the distance [a fig tree] in leaf, [he went] to see if he		
could find anything on it. When he came to it, [he found nothing but leaves,] for it was not the season for figs	11:13	½

[May no] one [ever] eat [fruit from you again].” And his disciples heard it.	11:14	½
And they came to Jerusalem	11:15	½
And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple	11:16	1
And he taught ... for all the nations	11:17	½
And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered [and said] to him, “Master, look! [The fig tree] which you cursed has withered.”	11:20-21	2
and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, [it will be done] for him. Therefore I tell you	11:23-24	½
and whenever you stand praying, [forgive,] if you have anything against anyone; so that [your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you] your trespasses	11:25	½
and so with many others, some they beat and some they killed	12:5	½
[And one of the] scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well	12:28	½
Jesus answered, “The first is, Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one ...”	12:29	1
The scribe’s response	12:32-34	3
and the great throng heard him gladly. And in his teaching ...	12:37-38	½
And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched how the multitude [put] their money [into the treasury]. Many rich people put in large sums.	12:41	1
[And he] called his disciples to him, and [said] to them “... those who are contributing to the treasury”	12:43	½
opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked	13:3	½
But take heed; [I have told you] all things [beforehand] when the master of the house will [come], in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.	13:35-37	2½
[ointment] of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask ... “[Why] was the ointment thus [wasted]?”	14:3-4	½

[sold for] more than three hundred denarii ... And they		
reproached her	14:5	½
and whenever you will, you can do good to them	14:7	½
She has done what she could	14:8	½
And [the disciples] set out and [went] into the city	14:16	½
[prayed] that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from		
him. And he said, "Abba, [Father,] all things are		
[possible] to you; remove [this cup from me]."	14:35-36	1
and they did not know what to answer him	14:40	½
The Young Man Who Fled in the Night	14:51-52	2
and their witness did not agree	14:56	½
And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying,		
"We heard him [say] ... I will [build] another, not made		
with hands." Yet not even so did their testimony agree.	14:57-59	2½
And some began [to spit] on him, and to cover [his face] ...		
And the guards received him with blows.	14:65	½
one of the [maids] of the high priest [came]; and seeing Peter		
warming himself, she looked at him	14:66-67	½
and the whole council held a consultation	15:1	½
And [Pilate] again asked [him], "Have you no answer to make?"	15:3	½
And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in		
the insurrection, there was a man [called Barabbas]. And		
the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he		
usually did for them.	15:7-8	1½
And it was the third hour when they crucified him.	15:25	1
[the mother of James] the younger and of Joses, and Salome,		
who, when he was [in Galilee, followed him,] and		
ministered to him; and also many other women who		
came up with him to Jerusalem.	15:40-41	1
And [when evening] had come, since it was the day of		
Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath	15:42	1
And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the		
centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead.		
And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead	15:44-45	1½
And when [the Sabbath] was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary		

the mother of James, and Salome bought [spices];		
so that they might go and anoint him.	16:1	1
And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone		
for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, [they]		
saw that [the stone was rolled] back, for it was very large.	16:3-4	2
[And they went out] and fled [from the tomb]; for trembling		
and astonishment had come upon them; and they said		
nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.	16:8	1
TOTAL of verses unique to Mark:		155

This equivalent of 155 verses represents 23.5% of the 661 verses in Mark's Gospel.

#### 4.2.2 Shorter Details Unique to Mark

Some of the more noteworthy of the shorter details found only in Mark are:

- 1:13 and he was with the wild beasts
- 1:20 with the hired servants
- 1:35 and there he prayed
- 1:41 Moved with pity
- 2:3 carried by four men
- 2:9 take up your pallet
- 2:14 the son of Alphaeus
- 2:23 as they made their way
- 2:25 when he was in need
- 2:26 when Abiathar was high priest
- 3:6 with the Herodians
- 4:1 Again he began to teach
- 4:10 And when he was alone
- 4:39 "Peace! Be still!"
- 5:6 from afar
- 5:13 about two thousand
- 5:34 and be healed of your disease
- 6:14 The king
- 6:17 because he had married her
- 6:23 even half of my kingdom
- 6:26 he did not want to break his word to her
- 6:30 and taught

6:39 by companies upon the green [grass]  
 6:40 in groups, by hundreds and fifties  
 6:47 and he was [alone] on the land  
 8:15 and the leaven of Herod  
 8:27 on the way  
 8:32 And he said this plainly  
 8:35 and for the gospel's [sake]  
 9:28 into the house  
 9:36 taking him in his arms  
 10:19 Do not defraud  
 10:20 "Teacher ..."  
 10:21 looking upon him, loved him,  
 10:29 and for the sake of the gospel  
 10:46 Bartimaeus ... the son of Timaeus  
 10:52 on the way  
 11:17 for all the nations  
 11:25 And whenever you stand praying  
 12:12 so they left him and went away  
 12:27 you are quite wrong  
 12:42 which make a penny  
 14:6 "Let her alone ..."  
 14:36 "Abba ..."  
 14:72 [the cock crowed] a second time  
 15:21 the father of Alexander and Rufus  
 15:24 what each should take  
 15:43 [Joseph] took courage and

#### 4.2.3 Correspondence between Mark's Words and those of Matthew and Luke

After allowing for all Mark's small details such as those of §4.2.2, which are too short to be included in the list of verses given in §4.2.1, the proportion of unique material in Mark (§4.2.1+§4.2.2) would amount to over 25%. That is to say, more than 25% of the actual content of Mark's Gospel is not also found in either Matthew or Luke. So far as I am aware, there are no precise statistics available for this information.

Morgenthaler's statistics are not able to assist with this information, as he has not analyzed his material along these lines. He does give (1971: 165) a figure of 1,033 words as unique to Mark (*sondergut* words), but in assigning words to this category (33-

65) he does not treat as *sondergut* many that are in Mark and not paralleled elsewhere.

However, Farmer's *Synopticon* allows the reader to see accurately which words in one Gospel are paralleled in another. The *Synopticon* sets out the Greek text of all three Synoptic Gospels, with the identical words ("Complete verbatim agreement") marked in distinctive colours and cognate words ("Significant but incomplete agreement") underlined in the same colours (blue, agreement between all three Synoptics; orange-yellow, agreement between Matthew and Mark; red, agreement between Matthew and Luke; green, agreement between Mark and Luke). Words unique to a particular Synoptic Gospel (no correspondence with another at all) are not marked in colour.

In Mk 1:35-38 the *Synopticon* shows that there are 34 words in Mark that do not occur in Matthew or Luke, whereas Morgenthaler does not list even one word from this passage in his Markan *sondergut*. Mk 2:1-12 contains quite a bit of unparalleled material (see 2:1-2; "carried by four men", 2:3; etc.—the *Synopticon* shows 76 words in this passage unparalleled in either Matthew or Luke), and again Morgenthaler lists this passage as containing no unique material. Mk 3:1-6 contains 25 words unparalleled in the other Synoptics, and here Morgenthaler lists 3 words as unique (these are in verse 3:4c). Mk 3:13-19 contains 39 unparalleled words (including "those whom he desired", "to be with him and to be sent out to preach", "whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder"), but Morgenthaler shows this passage as containing no *sondergut*.

It is difficult to perceive what has been Morgenthaler's operating principle in deciding what constituted unique material in Mark; in any case, his figures do not provide any assistance in ascertaining how many words Mark contains that are not to be found in the Major Synoptics—Morgenthaler has understated this figure. But Honoré and de Solages give figures that can assist in this—see further, below.

Morgenthaler's figures show how many words are identical between Matthew and Mark, and between Mark and Luke. Morgenthaler lists, arranged in order of percentage of identical words in the two Gospels, the pericopes that Mark and Matthew have in common (239-241), and those that Mark and Luke have in common (241-243). He also gives the number of words in Mark's Gospel, and the words in the corresponding passages of Matthew and Luke, and the extent to which Matthew and Luke use words identical with Mark's (68, 163, 166).

However, a more accurate comparison of the material is available in Farmer's *Synopticon*. A perusal of the *Synopticon* text of Mark's Gospel discloses that the average number of words per page that are neither marked in nor underlined in colour is well in excess of 25%. (See also Table 3, below.)

**TABLE 1: PERCENTAGES OF IDENTICAL WORDS IN THE SYNOPTICS**

The following Table sets out Mark's Gospel, with the percentages of identical words in Matthew and Mark, and Mark and Luke. In the Table, there are seven columns of numerical information. The first two columns give percentages for Matthew and Luke, the next three give numbers of words for Mark, Matthew and Luke, and the last two give percentages for Markan words in Matthew and Luke. These figures have the following meaning:

The figures in Column 3 are the number of words in Mark for each pericope in sequence; the figures in Columns 4 and 5 are, respectively, the numbers of words in Matthew and Luke that are identical with words in Mark for that pericope: that is, Column 4 gives the number of words that Mark and Matthew have in common, and Column 5 gives the number of words that Mark and Luke have in common. These figures are the basis for the two sets of percentage columns.

Columns 1 and 2 give the percentages of the words in Matthew and Luke in each pericope that are identical with words in Mark. That is, these columns give the percentage that the number of identical words in Matthew and Luke (Columns 4 and 5) represents of the **total number of words** that Matthew and Luke respectively have employed for that pericope. Thus for example, in Mk 4:10-12 Luke's parallel for this pericope has 18 words identical with Mark (Column 5), which is 50% (Column 2) of the total number of words for this pericope in Luke (for Luke's version of this pericope contains 36 words).

Columns 6 and 7 give the percentages that these words identical in Mark and the other Gospels represent of the **total number of words** that Mark has employed for that pericope. Thus for example, in Mk 4:10-12 Luke's parallel for this pericope has 18 words identical with Mark (Column 5), and this is 35% (Column 7) of the total number of words for this pericope in Mark (for Mark's version of this pericope contains 52 words).

The first five columns of this Table are compiled from the Synoptic statistics given by Morgenthauer. The figures in the last two columns are not given by Morgenthauer but are the percentages of Columns 4 and 5, respectively, to Column 3.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark	Pericope	% of	% of	Mark	Wrds the same		% of Mark in	
		Matt	Luke	Total	Matt	Luke	Matt	Luke
1:1-6	The Baptist	51%	55%	96	48	26	50%	27%
1:7-8	John's Messianic Preaching	45%	63%	30	14	21	47%	70%
1:9-11	The Baptism of Jesus	46%	51%	53	27	22	51%	42%
1:12-13	The Temptation	43%	35%	30	9	8	30%	27%



1:14-15	First Galilee Preaching	29%	50%	35	7	6	20%	17%
1:16-20	Call of First Disciples	61%	—	82	54	—	66%	—
1:21-22	In Capernaum Synagogue	62%	44%	31	18	13	58%	42%
1:23-28	In Capernaum Synagogue	—	50%	92	—	46	—	50%
1:29-31	Peter's Mother-in-law	47%	45%	44	14	17	32%	39%
1:32-34	Sick Healed at Nightfall	39%	29%	46	7	12	15%	26%
1:35-38	Jesus Prays Alone	—	15%	48	—	7	—	15%
1:39	First Preaching Tour	7%	63%	15	2	5	13%	33%
1:40-44	Cleansing of a Leper	60%	49%	69	37	36	54%	52%
1:45E	Leper Spreads the News	—	4%	29	—	1	—	3%
2:1-12	Healing of a Paralytic	62%	33%	196	71	71	36%	36%
2:13-17	Call of Matthew/Levi	73%	48%	109	61	45	56%	41%
2:18-22	Question About Fasting	69%	55%	129	72	71	56%	55%
2:23-28E	Plucking Grain on Sabbath	55%	57%	108	51	52	47%	48%
3:1-6	Man with Withered Hand	59%	30%	94	37	34	39%	36%
3:7-12	Healing the Multitudes	48%	26%	103	19	19	18%	18%
3:13-19	Choosing of the Twelve	19%	33%	90	13	25	14%	28%
3:20-21	Madness Accusation	—	—	28	—	—	—	—
3:22	Beelzebul Accusation	33%	57%	21	6	8	29%	38%
3:23-30	Beelzebul Controversy	38%	20%	120	40	16	33%	13%
3:31-35E	Jesus's True Family	50%	44%	83	45	24	54%	29%
4:1-9	Parable of the Sower	60%	51%	151	79	46	52%	30%
4:10-12	The Reason For Parables	22%	50%	52	10	18	19%	35%
4:13-20	Interpreting the Sower	42%	36%	146	54	39	37%	27%
4:21-25	Five Sayings	75%	40%	76	18	27	24%	36%
4:26-29	Parable of Growing Seed	—	—	60	—	—	—	—
4:30-32	Parable of Mustard Seed	34%	33%	57	17	13	30%	23%
4:33-34	Jesus's Use of Parables	27%	—	25	4	—	16%	—
4:35-41E	Stilling of the Storm	35%	36%	120	30	34	25%	28%
5:1-21	The Healing of Legion	38%	40%	346	55	124	16%	36%
5:22-43E	Jairus/Woman of Faith	36%	37%	353	49	97	14%	27%
6:1-6a	Rejection At Nazareth	55%	—	126	59	—	47%	—
6:6b-13	Sending Out the Twelve	29%	31%	106	33	28	31%	26%
6:14-16	Herod's View of Jesus	35%	34%	54	12	18	22%	33%
6:17	Imprisonment of John	79%	18%	24	15	6	63%	25%
6:18-29	The Death of John	53%	—	224	62	—	28%	—

6:30-44	Five Thousand Are Fed	52%	31%	236	87	51	37%	22%
6:45-52	Walking on the Water	53%	—	139	63	—	45%	—
6:53-56E	Healings at Gennesaret	66%	—	72	29	—	40%	—
7:1-23	Traditions of Men	56%	—	359	132	—	37%	—
7:24-30	Syrophenician Woman	22%	—	130	23	—	18%	—
7:31	By The Sea of Galilee	33%	—	20	6	—	30%	—
7:32-37E	Healing of Deaf Mute	—	—	94	—	—	—	—
8:1-10	Four Thousand Are Fed	54%	—	146	70	—	48%	—
8:11-13	Pharisees Seek a Sign	34%	21%	47	12	7	26%	15%
8:14-15	Leaven of the Pharisees	40%	19%	31	9	5	29%	16%
8:16-21	Jesus Explains	32%	—	74	21	—	28%	—
8:22-26	Healing of Blind Man	—	—	80	—	—	—	—
8:27-30	Peter's Confession	51%	39%	75	39	26	52%	35%
8:31	First Passion Prediction	44%	76%	30	14	19	47%	63%
8:32-33	Peter's Rebuke	60%	—	39	24	—	62%	—
8:34-9:1	Discipleship Conditions	70%	74%	135	82	78	61%	58%
9:2-8	The Transfiguration	63%	30%	121	76	43	63%	36%
9:9-10	Descending the Mountain	58%	15%	36	14	4	39%	11%
9:11-13	The Coming of Elijah	34%	—	52	22	—	42%	—
9:14-29	Healing the Epileptic	35%	34%	270	39	37	14%	14%
9:30-32	Second Passion Prediction	43%	33%	47	13	18	28%	38%
9:33-37	Lesson About The Child	43%	48%	85	23	24	27%	28%
9:38-41	The Stranger Exorcizing	50%	66%	77	12	25	16%	32%
9:42	On Causing Stumbling	59%	45%	27	17	10	63%	37%
9:43-48	The Seriousness of Sin	49%	—	95	35	—	37%	—
9:49-50E	Concerning Salt	75%	69%	25	6	9	24%	36%
10:1-12	Marriage and Divorce	53%	—	147	80	—	54%	—
10:13-16	Blessing the Children	53%	77%	64	34	44	53%	69%
10:17-22	The Rich Young Man	43%	71%	110	50	65	45%	59%
10:23-27	Riches and Discipleship	53%	69%	91	34	37	37%	41%
10:28-31	Leaving and Receiving	63%	63%	80	38	35	48%	44%
10:32-34	Third Passion Prediction	56%	40%	73	30	17	41%	23%
10:35-40	Zebedee's Sons' Request	54%	—	112	51	—	46%	—
10:41-45	Exercising Lordship	81%	19%	79	59	13	75%	16%
10:46-52E	Healing of Bartimaeus	34%	49%	123	27	53	22%	43%
11:1-10	Entry into Jerusalem	48%	36%	164	63	60	38%	37%

11:11	Jesus In The Temple	28%	—	21	7	—	33%	—
11:12-14	Cursing of the Fig Tree	45%	—	55	17	—	31%	—
11:15-17	Cleansing of the Temple	82%	84%	65	37	21	57%	32%
11:18-19	Conspiracy Against Jesus	—	25%	32	—	9	—	28%
11:20-25	The Fig Tree Withers	34%	—	101	26	—	26%	—
11:26	[Omitted in critical text]							
11:27-33E	Question On Authority	66%	58%	125	76	68	61%	54%
12:1-11	Parable of the Farmers	44%	46%	161	77	71	48%	44%
12:12	Attempt to Arrest Him	32%	46%	20	10	12	50%	60%
12:13-17	Question On Tribute	50%	44%	106	58	46	55%	43%
12:18-27	Question On Resurrection	55%	50%	169	90	85	53%	50%
12:28-31	The Great Commandment	30%	—	78	24	—	31%	—
12:32-34	The Scribe's Reply	19%	20%	75	3	3	4%	4%
12:35-37a	Question Re David's Son	50%	62%	56	31	29	55%	52%
12:37b-40	Scribes & Pharisees Woe	14%	72%	51	5	34	10%	67%
12:41-44E	The Widow's Gift	—	55%	75	—	32	—	43%
13:1-4	Destruction of Temple	39%	44%	75	28	20	37%	27%
13:5-8	Signs Before the End	72%	52%	57	47	37	82%	65%
13:9-13	Persecutions Foretold	47%	25%	97	23	22	24%	23%
13:14-20	The Desolating Sacrilege	70%	27%	115	81	25	70%	22%
13:21-23	False Christs & Prophets	71%	—	37	24	—	65%	—
13:24-27	The Son of Man Coming	53%	27%	71	49	18	69%	25%
13:28-29	Parable of the Fig Tree	92%	49%	37	33	19	89%	51%
13:30-32	The Time of the Coming	80%	89%	49	40	24	82%	49%
13:33-37E	Exhortation to Watch	64%	—	65	7	—	11%	—
14:1-2	Jesus's Death Sought	21%	46%	34	15	11	44%	32%
14:3-9	Anointing in Bethany	57%	—	124	62	—	50%	—
14:10-11	The Betrayal By Judas	34%	25%	30	12	11	40%	37%
14:12-16	Passover Preparations	54%	51%	99	33	48	33%	48%
14:17-21	The Betrayal Foretold	74%	28%	84	59	16	70%	19%
14:22-25	The Last Supper	68%	43%	69	54	29	78%	42%
14:26	To The Mount of Olives	100%	35%	8	8	6	100%	75%
14:27-28	Resurrection Foretold	63%	—	27	22	—	81%	—
14:29-31	Peter's Denial Foretold	62%	31%	52	32	10	62%	19%
14:32-42	Gethsemane	55%	23%	181	107	16	59%	9%
14:43-50	The Arrest of Jesus	59%	26%	122	84	32	69%	26%

14:51-52	The Young Man Who Fleed	—	—	19	—	—	—	—
14:53-54	Peter Follows Jesus	49%	10%	43	19	3	44%	7%
14:55-61a	Jesus Before Sanhedrin	56%	—	89	31	—	35%	—
14:61b-64	High Priest's Question	51%	20%	67	41	15	61%	22%
14:65	Illtreatment of Jesus	19%	15%	23	4	4	17%	17%
14:66-72E	Peter's Denial	44%	29%	125	51	33	41%	26%
15:1	Delivered to Pilate	25%	13%	23	7	4	30%	17%
15:2-5	The Trial Before Pilate	40%	74%	48	24	14	50%	29%
15:6-15	Barabbas or Jesus	37%	20%	124	45	21	36%	17%
15:16-20a	The Soldiers' Mockery	42%	—	63	33	—	52%	—
15:20b-21	The Road to Golgotha	40%	47%	25	8	9	32%	36%
15:22-32	The Crucifixion	52%	27%	134	80	31	60%	23%
15:33	Darkness Over the Land	69%	53%	13	9	10	69%	77%
15:34-36	"My God, my God, why?"	43%	—	53	27	—	51%	—
15:37-41	The Death of Jesus	40%	27%	82	34	16	41%	20%
15:42-47E	The Burial of Jesus	32%	23%	101	25	23	25%	23%
16:1-8	The Women At the Tomb	21%	21%	137	28	23	20%	17%
TOTALS:		49.4%	39.7%	11078	4230	2675	38.2%	24.1%

When Columns 1 and 2 are viewed from the Markan Priority perspective, they provide the answer to the question: What percentages of the words in Matthew and Luke respectively were taken over unchanged from Mark? From the Markan Dependence perspective this question would be, What percentages of the words in Matthew and Luke respectively were taken over from those Gospels by Mark?

When Columns 6 and 7 are viewed from the Markan Priority perspective, they provide the answer to the question: What percentages of the words of Mark were taken over unchanged by Matthew and Luke respectively? From the Markan Dependence perspective this question would be: What percentages of the words of Mark were taken over by Mark from Matthew and Luke respectively?

**TABLE 2: OVERALL SYNOPTIC WORD COMPARISONS**  
(Summarizing Table 1)

DETAILS	MARK	MATT	LUKE
Number of pericopes in common: Mark with		118	96
Number with 75% or more words in common:		8	4
Number with 50% or more words in common:		60	30

Total Words in each Gospel:	11078	18278	19404
Words identical with Mark's words:		4230	2675
% identical with Mark in whole of Matthew, Luke		23.1%	13.8%
Total Words in passages parallel with Mark:		8555	6737
% of words in parallels that are identical with Mark		49.4%	39.7%
% of Mark's actual words used by Matthew, Luke		38.2%	24.1%

**TABLE 3: WORDS IN MARK IDENTICAL WITH MATT AND LUKE**

Morgenthaler does not give a figure for words in Mark that are identical in **both** Matthew and Luke. Honoré (1968: 98) gives this figure as 1852 and de Solages (1959: 1041) gives it as 1818—they have made slightly differing assessments concerning “equivalence”. I have averaged these two figures to arrive at 1835 as the figure for words identical in all three Synoptics. When used with the figures in Table 2 for Mark (11078) shown for “Total Words in each Gospel” and “Words Identical with Mark’s Words”, this gives the following:

	MARK	MATT	LUKE
Words identical in Matthew, Mark and Luke	1835	1835	1835
Words identical in Matthew and Mark only		2395	2395
Words identical in Mark and Luke only	<u>840</u>		<u>840</u>
Total Identical Words	5070	4230	2675
=====			
Total Markan Words <b>also</b> in Matthew or Luke	5070	45.8%	
Total Markan Words <b>not</b> in Matthew or Luke	<u>6008</u>	<u>54.2%</u>	
Total Words in Mark	11078	100%	
=====			
	MATT	LUKE	
Mark's words not in Matthew or Luke	6008	6008	
Mark's words not in Matthew (but in Luke)		<u>840</u>	
Total of Mark's words <b>not</b> in Matthew		6848	
Mark's words not in Luke (but in Matthew)	<u>2395</u>		
Total of Mark's words <b>not</b> in Luke	8403		
=====			
Total Markan Words <b>not</b> in Matthew	6848	61.8%	
Total Markan Words <b>not</b> in Luke	<u>8403</u>	<u>75.8%</u>	
Total Words in Mark	11078	100%	
=====			

Slightly differing word counts by different researchers reflect small differences in the Greek text used and differences of judgement concerning parallels and equivalence. As noted above, this Table supplements Morgenthaler's statistics with an average figure (for words identical in all three Synoptics) calculated from Honoré's and de Solages's statistics. Such differences and such mixing of figures do not significantly affect the outcome, and these Tables allow us to see the extent to which the Synoptic Gospels use (or do not use) identical words.

#### **4.2.4 Markan Material Lacking in Matthew**

The Markan material lacking in Matthew consists of all the material unique to Mark (as in §4.2.1 and §4.2.2) together with what is found only in Mark and Luke. This material is:

##### **(a) Complete Pericopes**

- 1:23-28      Exorcism in Capernaum Synagogue
- 1:35-38      Jesus Prays Alone
- 4:21-25      Five Sayings [Matthew has somewhat similar sayings in other contexts]
- 6:30          The Return of the Twelve
- 9:38-40      The Stranger Exorcizing
- 12:41-44     The Widow's Gift

##### **(b) Significant Parts of Pericopes**

There are a number of pericopes that are told by Matthew in abbreviated form and at more length by both Mark and Luke, so that a very substantial amount of their material is lacking in Matthew and in common between Mark and Luke.

The most noteworthy of these are:

- 2:1-12          The Healing of the Paralytic
- 3:1-6          The Healing of the Withered Hand
- 5:1-20          The Healing of Legion
- 5:21-43E      Jairus's Daughter and A Woman of Faith
- 6:14-16       Herod Perplexed About Jesus

##### **(c) Smaller Sections**

- 1:45          The Leper Spreads the News
- 2:26          [not lawful for] any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to
- 3:2          [they] watched him to see whether he would [heal]
- 3:3          And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here."
- 3:4          Is it [lawful on the Sabbath to do good] or to do harm, to save life or to [kill]?

- 3:7-8 [Jesus withdrew] with his disciples and a great multitude [followed him] from ... Tyre and Sidon.
- 3:32 Your mother and your brothers are outside to see you. [If Mt 12:47 spurious]
- 6:11-12 "as a testimony against them"; the departure and ministry of the Twelve.
- 9:32 The disciples did not understand and were afraid to ask him.
- 9:37 receiving the one who sent me
- 10:52 Your faith has made you well.
- 11:2 [a colt] on which no one has ever sat.
- 11:18 Conspiracy to Destroy Jesus
- 12:3 sent him away empty-handed
- 12:40 who devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation. [If Mt 23:14 is rejected as spurious]
- 14:13-15 A man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him ... and he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready.
- 15:43 Description of Joseph

#### **(d) Words and Phrases**

There are a great many other agreements of Mark and Luke where Matthew is lacking, particularly agreements of words and phrases. These, too numerous to list here, may be found in Farmer's *Synopticon*, the sections of the Synoptic text marked green.

#### **(e) From Luke's Perspective**

The above information is given from Luke's perspective in §4.3.5.

### **4.2.5 Markan Material Lacking in Luke**

The Markan material lacking in Luke consists of all the material unique to Mark (as in §4.2.1 and §4.2.2) together with what is found only in Mark and Matthew. This material:

#### **(a) Complete Pericopes**

- 4:33-34 Jesus's Use of Parables
- 6:17-29 The Death of John the Baptist
- 6:45-52 Walking on the Water
- 6:53-56E Healings at Gennesaret
- 7:1-23 Traditions of Men
- 7:24-30 The Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter
- 7:31 By the Sea of Galilee
- 8:1-10 Four Thousand Are Fed

- 8:14-21      Leaven of the Pharisees [Lk 12:1 is a parallel, in a different context, to the first part of this pericope]
- 9:9-13      The Coming of Elijah
- 9:42-48      On the Seriousness of Sin. [Lk 17:1-2 is a parallel, in a different context, to the first part of this pericope]
- 10:1-10      On Marriage and Divorce
- 10:35-41      The Request of the Sons of Zebedee
- 11:11      Jesus In The Temple
- 11:12-14      The Cursing of the Fig Tree
- 11:20-25      The Withering of the Fig Tree
- 14:26-28      On the Way to the Mount of Olives [Lk 22:39 parallels the first part of this pericope]
- 15:16-20      The Mocking by the Soldiers

#### **(b) Pericopes for which a Different Account is Used**

Five Markan pericopes are not paralleled in Luke, but Luke has, in a different context, another account with some points of similarity. These five pericopes are:

- 1:16-20 [Lk 5:1-11]      Call of the First Disciples
- 6:1-6      [Lk 4:16-30]      Rejection at Nazareth
- 10:42-45 [Lk 22:25-27]      Exercising Lordship
- 12:28-31 [Lk 10:25-28]      The Great Commandment
- 14:3-9      [Lk 7:36-50]      The Anointing at Bethany

#### **(c) Significant Parts of Pericopes**

There are a number of pericopes that Mark has in common with both Matthew and Luke in which some significant part of the material occurs in both Matthew and Mark and is lacking in Luke. The most noteworthy of these are:

- 1:5-6      Crowds come to John; his food and clothing.
- 3:33-34      “Who is my mother and my brothers?” And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!”
- 4:1-2      He [was] beside the sea. And a very large [crowd] gathered about him, so that he got into a boat ... And he taught them many things in parables.
- 4:5-6      ground where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root [it withered away].
- 5:23      “Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may live.”
- 5:28      “If I touch even his garments I shall be made well.”



- 8:32-33 Peter's Rebuke of Jesus and Jesus's Reply.
- 9:28 The disciples' question concerning their failure to exorcize.
- 9:41 The one who gives a cup of water will not lose his reward.
- 10:31 The first last and the last first. [Lk 13:30 is a parallel, in a different context, to this saying]
- 11:15b and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables  
of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.
- 13 The Apocalyptic Discourse [see especially 13:10, 18, 19b-24, 27, 32-37E].
- 14:22-25 The Last Supper [If Lk 22:19b-20 is to be rejected as spurious]
- 14:33-34 [Jesus] took with him Peter, James and John; asked them to watch.
- 14:39-42 Jesus's second and third prayers
- 14:49b-50 for the Scriptures to be fulfilled; and they all forsook him and fled.
- 14:55-61a Jesus Before the Sanhedrin
- 15:3-5 On trial before Pilate
- 15:34-36 "My God, my God, why?"

#### (d) Words and Phrases

There are a great many other agreements of Matthew and Mark where Luke is lacking, particularly agreements of words and phrases. These are too numerous to list here, and may be found in Farmer's *Synopticon*, the sections of the Synoptic text marked orange-yellow.

#### (e) From Matthew's Perspective

The above information is given from Matthew's perspective in §4.3.4.

#### 4.2.6 Mark's "And he said to them ..."

On some occasions Matthew and/or Luke contain continuous words of Jesus whereas Mark interrupts the flow of what Jesus said with "And he said". Instances:

MATTHEW		MARK		LUKE
12:8	-	2:27	And he said to them	6:5 And he said to them
13:9	-	4:9	And he said	8:8 As he said this, he called out
13:18	-	4:13	And he said to them	8:11 -
[5:15 -]		4:21	And he said to them	8:16 -
[7:2 -]		4:24	And he said to them	8:18 -
-		4:26	And he said	-
10:11	-	6:10	And he said to them	9:4 -
[15:3] -		7:9	And he said to them	- -
16:28	-	9:1	And he said to them	9:27 -

This expression also occurs in Matthew and Luke as well when introducing a new unit of teaching, e.g.:

13:31	Another parable he	4:30	And he said	13:18	he said therefore
	put before them, saying				
13:33	He told them another parable	-		13:20	And again he said

In Mk 7:20 the words “And he said” are used for the resumption of the quoting of Jesus after an editorial aside by the author, commenting on what Jesus had just been quoted as saying, “Thus he declared all foods clean.” Mark then adds the words “And he said” to indicate clearly the difference between what are the words of the author of the Gospel and what are being quoted of Jesus’s words. This may well be the key to understanding the insertion of these words in the other places in Mark. In several of such places, what follows Mark’s “And he said (to them)” could otherwise be taken by a listener as a comment by someone else (the author of the Gospel, or perhaps an exhortation by the person reading or reciting it). Such a misunderstanding would be impossible for a person **reading** the Gospel himself, or if not impossible, at least unlikely. These iterated “and he said” interjections are suggestive of what is done by **someone speaking**, to indicate that **he is still continuing with quoting someone else**. If so, they accord with the suggestion (§3.8) that Mark’s Gospel was intended as a tool for oral use. If not this, then it is less easy to see why they should occur in these places in Mark, in the **middle** of a section quoting words spoken by Jesus.

There are numerous discourses recorded in Mark (e.g., Mk 13:5-37E) where there is no insertion of “and he said”; but the suggestion offered here does indicate a way of accounting for the insertion when it **does** occur.

#### 4.2.7 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

The content of Mark's Gospel for which there is no direct parallel in either Matthew or Luke is in excess of 25%. This figure is higher than that given by other writers because they have listed only complete verses and/or they have left out some of this material from their assessment on the basis of some subjective judgement (e.g., Streeter 1924: 195, when listing “The passages of Mark which are absent from both Matthew and Luke ... total, 32 verses”, says, “N.B. These lists do not include odd verses which add nothing material to the sense”). Some of this unique material represents repetition of ideas expressed elsewhere in the context, or could be described as “purely verbal expansion” (Streeter’s term, 1924: 158); but there would be very little (if any) of it that could not be said to be fulfilling some function in Mark’s narrative.

Consideration needs also to be given to the material in Mark paralleled in one other Synoptic only, because on the Markan Priority hypothesis all this material was before both Matthew and Luke in Mark's Gospel, and was rejected by one or other of them for inclusion in his own Gospel.

When one examines the wording of those places that **are** parallel in the Synoptic Gospels, it is found that although they may be closely similar in **content** they can differ quite extensively in **wording** (§4.2.3), so that (Table 3) more than half (54.2%) of Mark's actual words do not occur in either Matthew or Luke. Moreover (Table 2), Matthew's parallel passages contain only 38.2% (that is, less than two words in five) of what is in Mark, and Luke's parallel passages contain only 24.1% (that is, less than one quarter) of the actual words that occur in Mark. That is to say, if Matthew and Luke have used Mark as their source, then in those passages for which Mark is their source, Matthew has ignored or altered 3 out of every 5 of Mark's words, and Luke has ignored or altered 3 out of every 4 of Mark's words.

4.3 COMPARATIVE SYNOPTIC STATISTICS

4.3.1 Verses in the Synoptic Gospels

The number of verses in the Synoptic Gospels (after allowing for those rejected as spurious in modern critical editions) is as follows:

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
TOTAL VERSES	1071	678	1151
REJECTED	<u>4</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>
NETT	1067	661	1148
REJECTED:	17:21	7:16	17:36
	18:11	9:44,46	22:19b-20
	21:44	11:26	23:17
	23:14	15:28	
		16:9-20	

“Total” is that obtained by taking the last verse number of each chapter and adding these figures together. “Rejected” refers to the number of verses for each Gospel rejected as not authentic by modern critical editions of the Gospels. “Nett” thus gives the number of verses usually accepted as authentic for each Gospel. The verses in each Gospel usually rejected as not authentic are then listed. (These frequently-cited figures are given here without prejudice to the separate question of whether textual evidence justifies a verdict in favour of the rejection of any of these verses.)

### 4.3.2 Verses Unique to Matthew

Matthew's *sondergut* consists of 485 verses, or 45.5% of the Gospel. The basis of inclusion here has been the judgement (admittedly on a few occasions of a subjective nature) that the material in question could not reasonably be held to be derived directly and exclusively from what appears in either of the other Synoptic Gospels, so that either its source is Matthew himself or it has come from some other source to which Matthew had access. On some occasions the *sondergut* material consists of several verses or part verses scattered through a pericope, and the total number of such verses has been given for *sondergut* in that pericope, rather than listing each separately. This comprises:

MATERIAL	MATTHEW	NO.
Matthean Infancy Narrative	1 and 2	48
John's message of repentance	3:2	1
Those he saw coming to him	3:7	½
Baptism of Jesus	3:13-15	2½
First Galilee Preaching	4:12-17	4
First Preaching Tour	4:23-25	2½
Sermon on the Mount	5, 6, 7	77
Cleansing of a Leper	8:1	1
The Healing of the Centurion's Servant	8:5-13	3
The Sick at Nightfall (prophecy)	8:17	1
Sayings to Would-be Disciples	8:18-22	1
Healing of the Gadarene Demoniacs	8:28-34	1
The crossing to his own city	9:1	1
Such authority given to men	9:8	½
"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"	9:13	½
And the report of this went through all that district	9:26	1
Two Blind Men Healed	9:27-31	5
Dumb Demoniac Healed	9:32-34	3
The Mission Charge	9:35-10:16	6
The Fate of the Disciples	10:17-25	9
Exhortation to Fearless Confession	10:26-33	1½
Divisions within Households	10:34-36	1½
Conditions of Discipleship	10:37-39	3
Conclusion of the Discourse	10:40-11:1	4
John hearing about Christ in prison	11:2	½

Jesus's Testimony Concerning John	11:7-19	4
Woe to Cities of Galilee	11:20-24	2
Comfort for the Burdened	11:28-30E	3
Plucking Grain on the Sabbath	12:5-7	3
Healing of the Withered Hand	12:9-14	2
Fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy	12:17-21	5
Beelzebul Accusation	12:22-24	1
Beelzebul Controversy	12:25-37	5
Seeking for Signs	12:38-42	1½
So shall it be also with this evil generation	12:45	½
That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat	13:1	½
Fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy	13:14-15	2
Blessedness of the Disciples	13:16-17	2
The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds	13:24-30	7
Fulfillment of what the prophet spoke	13:35	1
The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds Interpreted	13:36-43	8
The Parables of the Treasure and the Pearl	13:44-46	3
The Parable of the Net	13:47-50	4
The Parable of the Householder	13:51-52	2
And when Jesus had finished these parables	13:53	½
Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:13-21	1
Walking on the Water	14:22-33	5½
Traditions of Men: What Defiles a Man	15:1-20	3½
Healing the Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter	15:21-28	5
The Healing of Many	15:29-31	3
The Pharisees Seek A Sign	16:1-4	3
The Leaven of the Pharisees	16:5-12	2
Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi	16:13-23	5
And then he will repay every man for what he has done	16:27	½
The Transfiguration	17:1-8	3
The disciples understood that he referred to John	17:13	1
The Healing of the Epileptic Boy	17:14-20	1½
Payment of the Temple Tax	17:24-27	4
The Lesson about the Child	18:1-5	2½
The inevitability of causes of stumbling	18:7	1

The Parable of the Lost Sheep	18:10-14	4
On Reproving One's Brother	18:15-20	6
On Reconciliation	18:21-22	2
The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant	18:23-35	13
On Marriage and Divorce	19:1-12	4
The Rich Young Man	19:16-30	1½
The Parable of the Vineyard Labourers	20:1-16	16
Mother of Sons of Zebedee's Request	20:20-21	1
Fulfilment of what the prophet spoke	21:4-5	2
Jesus in the Temple	21:10-17	5
When the disciples saw it, they marveled	21:20	½
The Parable of the Two Sons	21:28-32	5
The Parable of the Wicked Farmers	21:33-46E	2
The Parable of the Marriage Feast	22:1-14	14
Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how	22:15	½
The astonishment of the crowd at his teaching	22:33	1
The Great Commandment	22:34-40	2
The Question About David's Son	22:41-46E	2½
Woes Against Scribes and Pharisees	23:1-36	24
Eschatological Discourse	24:4-25:46E	55
The Conspiracy to Kill Jesus	26:1-5	1
Judas betrays Jesus for thirty pieces of silver	26:15	1
Judas's question and Jesus's answer	26:25	1
Jesus's repeated prayer	26:42-44	1
"Friend, why are you here?" Then they came up	26:50	½
Jesus's rebuke for using the sword	26:52-54	3
I adjure you by the living God	26:63	½
The Death of Judas	27:3-10	8
The message from Pilate's wife	27:19	1
Pilate's repeated question; choice of Barabbas	27:21	½
Pilate washes his hands; the crowds' reply	27:24-25	2
Jesus Mocked By the Soldiers	27:27-31	1
He trusts in God ... he said, "I am the Son of God"	27:43	1
Earthquake, and bodies of the saints raised	27:51-54	3
and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee	27:56	½
The Guard at the Tomb	27:62-66E	5

The Empty Tomb	28:1-8	3½
Jesus Appears to the Women	28:9-10	2
The Report of the Guard	28:11-15	5
The Great Commission	28:16-20E	5
TOTAL of Matthew's <i>sondergut</i> :	485 (=45.5% of 1067 vv.)	

As there is no direct parallel for this material in Luke, so no part of Luke can have been derived from it.

### 4.3.3 Verses Unique to Luke

Luke's *sondergut*, consisting of 686 verses, or about 60% of that Gospel, comprises:

MATERIAL	LUKE	NO.
Lukan Infancy Narrative	1 and 2	132
The fivefold date	3:1-2	2
Quotation from Isaiah	3:5-6	2
John's Sociological Preaching	3:10-14	5
The questioning of the people	3:15	1
Summary of John's preaching	3:18	1
John's imprisonment	3:19-20	2
Genealogy of Jesus	3:23-38E	16
The devil's boast	4:6-7	1
The devil's departure	4:13	1
First Galilee preaching	4:14-15	2
Rejection at Nazareth	4:16-30	12
high fever ... they besought him ... and he stood over her and rebuked [the fever]	4:38-39	½
The Sick at Nightfall	4:40-41	1
A Preaching Tour	4:44E	1
Call of the First Disciples	5:1-11	11
The arrival of the leper	5:12	½
The aftermath of healing the leper	5:15-16	1½
No one desires new wine after old	5:39	1
The scribes' and Pharisees' fury	6:11	½
A night of prayer; choosing apostles	6:12-13	1
The Beatitudes	6:20-23	1
The Woes	6:24-26	3

Do good, bless those who curse you	6:27-28	1
Lending and receiving again	6:34-35	2
Do not condemn; forgive and give	6:37-38	1
The centurion's emissage to Jesus	7:3-7	4
The Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain	7:11-17	7
John's question asked; Jesus's healings	7:20-21	2
Comment on Jesus's reply to John	7:29-30	2
Anointed by the Woman who was a Sinner	7:36-50E	2
The Ministering Women	8:1-3	3
That those who enter may see the light	8:16	½
Description of the demoniac	8:27	½
The fear of the people of the Gerasenes	8:37	½
Re the woman touching Jesus	8:45-47	1
"... but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.	9:9	½
Now it happened that as he was praying alone, [the disciples] were with him	9:18	½
The Transfiguration	9:28-36	4
The explanation about the child and the demon	9:38-39	1
Astonishment at the majesty of God	9:43	1
Second Passion Prediction	9:44-45	1
But when Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts	9:47	½
for he who is least among you all is the one who is great	9:48	½
The Samaritan Villagers	9:51-56	6
and as they were going along the road, a man	9:57	½
Sayings to Would-be Disciples	9:60-62E	2½
Sending out the Seventy	10:1	1
Instruction to the Seventy	10:5-11	4
Hearing or rejecting	10:16	1
Return of the Seventy	10:17-20	4
Then turning to the disciples he said privately	10:23	½
The Lawyer's Question	10:25-28	4
The Parable of the Good Samaritan	10:29-37	9
Mary and Martha	10:38-42E	5
Jesus Teaches the Lord's Prayer	11:1-4	4
The Friend at Midnight	11:5-8	4



An egg or a scorpion?	11:12	1
The Beelzebul Controversy	11:14-23	3½
Concerning Light	11:33-36	2½
Discourse against Pharisees	11:37-54E	9
Exhortation to Fearless Confession	12:1-9	2
The Holy Spirit's help	12:11-12	1½
The Parable of the Rich Fool	12:13-21	9
If you cannot do that, why worry about the rest?	12:26	1
Your Father's good pleasure	12:32	1
Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with [a treasure] ... that does not fail	12:33	½
Watchfulness and faithfulness	12:35-46	5
The Servant's Wages	12:47-48	2
Divisions in Households	12:49-56	6
And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?	12:57	1
The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree	13:1-9	9
The Healing of the Crippled Woman	13:10-17	8
Comparison of the Kingdom of God	13:20	1
Exclusion From the Kingdom	13:22-30	9
Herod the Fox	13:31-33	3
The Healing of a Man With Dropsy	14:1-6	6
The Parable About Humility	14:7-14	8
The Parable of the Great Supper	14:15-24	10
The Conditions of Discipleship	14:25-35E	11
The Parable of the Lost Sheep	15:1-7	7
The Parable of the Lost Coin	15:8-10	3
The Parable of the Prodigal Son	15:11-32E	13
The Parable of the Unjust Steward	16:1-13	13
The Pharisees Reproved	16:14-15	2
Concerning the Law	16:16-17	2
Concerning Divorce	16:18	1
The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus	16:19-31E	13
Causing Stumbling	17:1-2	2
On Forgiveness	17:3-4	2
On Faith	17:5-6	2

On Unprofitable Servants	17:7-10	4
The Healing of Ten Lepers	17:11-19	9
On the Coming of the Kingdom of God	17:20-21	2
The Day of the Son of Man	17:22-37E	11
The Parable of the Unjust Judge	18:1-8	8
The Parable of the Pharisee and Taxcollector	18:9-14	6
Third Passion Prediction	18:31-34	1½
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus	18:35-43E	2
Zacchaeus	19:1-10	10
The Parable of the Pounds	19:11-27	17
The Entry Into Jerusalem	19:28-39	3
Prediction of the Destruction of Jerusalem	19:39-44	6
One day, as he was teaching the people [in the temple] and preaching the gospel	20:1	½
The Parable of the Wicked Farmers	20:9-19	2½
The Question Re Tribute to Caesar	20:20-26	1½
The Question Re the Resurrection	20:27-40	5
Woes Against the Pharisees	20:45	1
The Predictions of Jesus	21:8-24	6
The Coming of the Son of Man	21:25-28	2½
Take heed and watch!	21:34-46	3
Jesus's Ministry in Jerusalem	21:37-38E	2
The Betrayal By Judas	22:3-6	1
The Passover	22:7-23	5
Arrangements with Peter and John	22:8-9	2
Jesus's desire; the first cup	22:15-17	3
The hand of the betrayer on the table	22:21	1
Questioning one another who it was	22:23	1
Greatness; and Jesus's promise	22:27-30	4
Warning and exhortation to Peter	22:31-33	3
The Two Swords	22:35-38	4
Prayer in Gethsemane	22:39-42	2
The Agony in the Garden	22:43-44	2
The Arrest of Jesus	22:47-53	3½
Before the Sanhedrin; Peter's Denial	22:54-71E	3½
Before Pilate	23:1-5	3

To Herod and back again	23:6-16	11
Pilate's sentence	23:18-25	1½
The Road to Golgotha	23:26-32	6
The Crucifixion	23:33-43	7
The Death on the Cross	23:44-49	2
The Burial	23:50-56E	2
The Empty Tomb	24:1-12	5
The Appearances	24:13-53E	41
TOTAL of Luke's <i>sondergut</i> :	686 (=60.2% of 1148 vv.)	

As there is no direct parallel for this material in Matthew, so no part of it can have been derived from Matthew.

#### 4.3.4 Verses in Matthew and Mark (But Not Luke)

With the above must be considered the material that Matthew shares with Mark but not with Luke, for no part of Luke is derived from it. This material consists of 187 verses, or 17.5% of Matthew, comprising:

MATERIAL	MATTHEW	NO.
John's food and clothing	3:4	1
John's baptism	3:5-6	1½
John's arrest	4:12	½
Jesus's message	4:17	1
The Call of the First Disciples	4:18-22	5
Jesus went throughout Galilee, healing	4:23	½
The ruler's request	9:18	½
The woman's thought	9:21	1
The crowd put outside	9:25	½
A cup of cold water to drink	10:42	1
The command not to make him known	12:16	1
Entering a strong man's house	12:29	½
Forgiveness for sin and blasphemy	12:31	½
Who are my mother and my brothers?	12:48-49	2
Jesus gets into a boat and sits there	13:1-2	1½
No depth of soil, no root; scorched	13:5-6	1
Some sixtyfold, some thirty	13:8	½
Some sixtyfold, some thirty	13:23	½
Smallest of seeds to greatest of shrubs	13:32	½

Jesus's Use of Parables	13:34	1
Rejection At Nazareth	13:53-58	6
That is why these powers are at work in him	14:2	½
The Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	10
To a lonely place by boat; crowds come on foot	14:13	½
Going ashore and seeing a great throng, he had compassion on them	14:14	½
Jesus walks on the water	14:22-27	6
The wind ceases	14:32	1
Healings at Gennesaret	14:34-36	3
The Traditions of Men	15:1-20	16½
Healing the Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter	15:21-28	3
The Feeding of the Four Thousand	15:32-39	8
The Pharisees Seek a Sign	16:1-4	1
The Leaven of the Pharisees	16:5-12	6
Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi	16:13-23	2½
The Coming of Elijah	17:9-13	4½
Often in the fire, often in the water	17:15	½
The disciples' private question	17:19	1
On the Seriousness of Sin	18:8-9	2
Marriage and Divorce	19:1-9	9
Jesus lays hands on the children	19:15	1
The first last and the last first	19:30	1
Jesus going up to Jerusalem	20:17	1
The Sons of Zebedee's Request	20:20-28	9
Jesus in Jerusalem	21:10-17	2
The Cursing of the Fig Tree	21:18-22	5
I will tell you by what authority ...	21:24	½
Set a hedge around it and dug a winepress	21:33	½
This was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in our eyes	21:42	½
Then the Pharisees seek to entangle him in his talk	22:15	½
Jesus answers them; they bring him a coin	22:18-19	½
The Sadducees' ignorance	22:29	1
The Great Commandment	22:34-40	7

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples		
came to him privately, saying, "Tell us ..."	24:3	½
But he who endures to the end will be saved	24:13	1
Worldwide preaching of the gospel	24:14	1
The Desolating Sacrilege	24:15-22	6
False Christs and false prophets	24:23-28	3
After the tribulation of those days	24:29	½
The angels will gather his elect	24:31	1
Of that day and hour, no one knows	24:36	1
To arrest Jesus by stealth	26:4	½
The chief priests' caution	26:5	1
The Anointing at Bethany	26:6-13	8
The Betrayal Foretold	26:21-24	3
The Last Supper	26:26-29	1
The Way to Gethsemane: Peter's Denial Foretold	26:30-35	4½
In Gethsemane	26:36-46	7
The Betrayal	26:47-56	5
Where the scribes and elders had gathered ... [Peter		
followed] as far as the courtyard of the high priest	26:57-58	½
Testimony of the false witnesses; the judgement	26:59-68	8
The accusations of the chief priests	27:12-14	3
Jesus of Barabbas?	27:15-22	2½
The Soldiers' Mockery	27:27-31	5
They offered him wine; he would not drink it	27:34	1
Jesus derided on the Cross	27:39-42	3
The Death of Jesus	27:46-49	4
The women at the Cross	27:56	<u>1</u>
TOTAL		204½
Less: Adjustment		<u>17½</u>
NET TOTAL of Matt & Mark (But Not Luke)		187 (=17.5% of 1067 vv.)

Concerning the above Adjustment: Some of the above passages, while of such significance that they merit inclusion, are a little less than a verse or half-verse in size (as the case may be), so that the total is slightly overstated. Thus this adjustment removes the discrepancy that would otherwise occur, and reduces the Total to a more accurate figure.

### 4.3.5 Verses in Luke and Mark (but not Matthew)

Similarly, the material must be considered that Luke shares with Mark but not with Matthew, for no part of Matthew is derived from it. This material consists of 54 verses, or 4.5% of Luke, comprising:

<b>MATERIAL</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>NO.</b>
The Exorcism in the Capernaum Synagogue	4:31-37	7
Jesus Prays Alone	4:42-43	2
The circumstances of the paralytic's healing	5:17-19	2
The questioning of the scribes and Pharisees	5:21	½
The healed man takes up his bed, etc.	5:25-26	½
[they] watched him to see whether he would [heal] and he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come ... here."	6:7 6:8	½ ½
Jesus's question	6:9	½
Jesus Heals the Multitudes	6:17-19	2
Five Sayings	8:16-18	1½
Confrontation with Legion	8:27-31	3
The reaction of the people	8:35-39	4
Jairus's request	8:40-42	1
Jesus's question; the woman comes forward	8:45-47	1½
Report of the girl's death; Jesus responds	8:49-52	2½
After she is raised	8:55-56	2
"A testimony"; departure of the Twelve	9:5-6	1
Views about Jesus; Herod's comment	9:8-9	1½
The return of the Twelve	9:10	½
and [he] spoke to them of the kingdom of God	9:11	½
"Are we to go and buy food ...?"	9:13	½
"Sit down in companies"; they did so	9:14	½
The Healing of the Epileptic Boy	9:37-43	1
The Stranger Exorcizing	9:49-50	2
For they perceived that he had told this parable against them	12:12	½
The comparison of the kingdom of God	13:18	1
The colt's owners' enquiry	19:33-34	2
Conspiracy against Jesus	19:47-48	2

A servant came for some of the [fruit] of the

vineyard; they sent him away empty-handed

20:10  $\frac{1}{2}$

Woes against the Pharisees

20:45-47E  $1\frac{1}{2}$

The Widow's Gift

21:1-4 4

Persecution predicted

21:12-17 3

Preparation for the Passover

22:7-13  $\frac{1}{2}$

Concerning Joseph of Arimathea

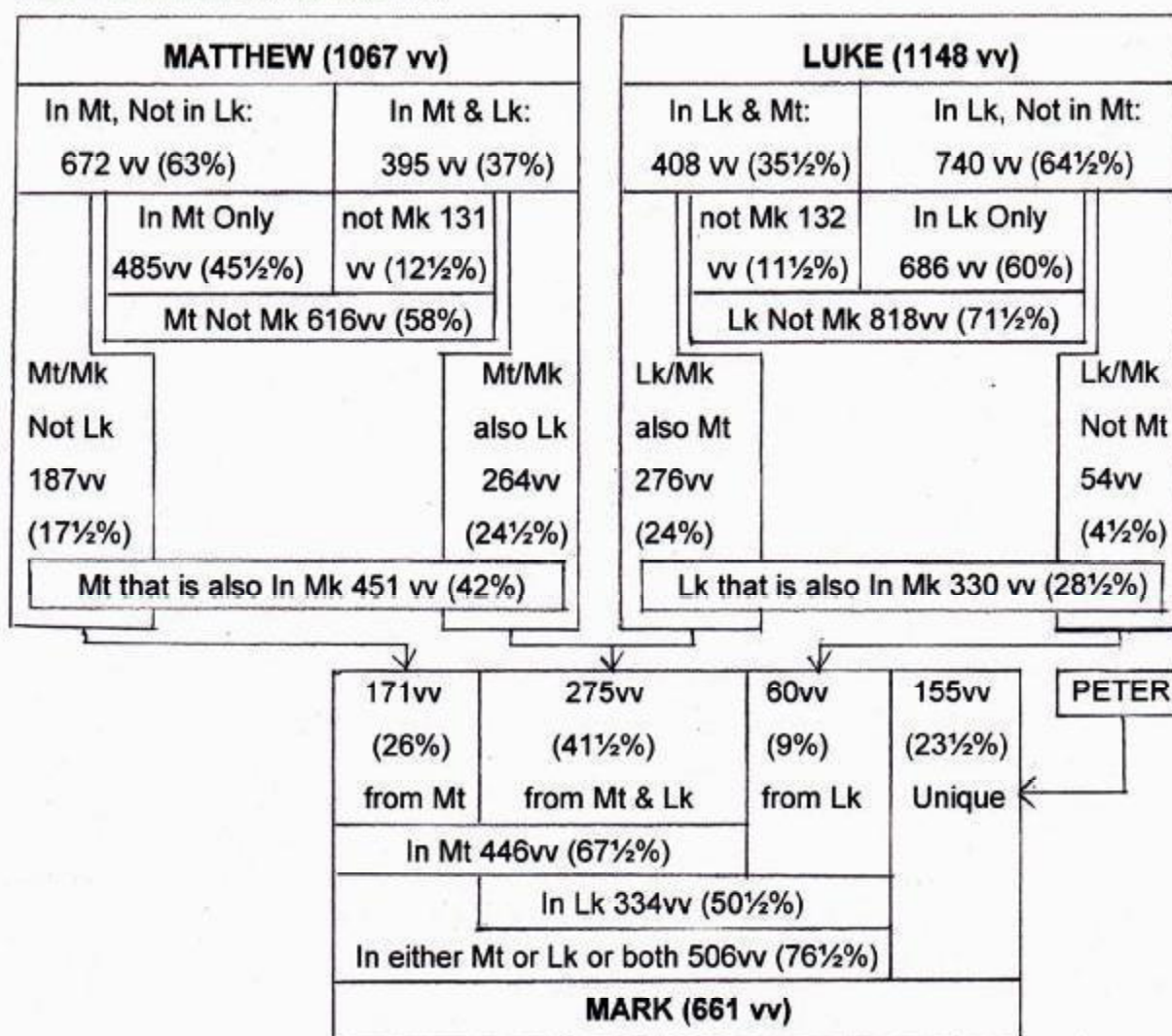
23:50-51  $\frac{1}{2}$

TOTAL of Luke and Mark (But Not Matthew)

54 (=4.5% of 1148 vv.)

#### 4.3.6 Common and Unique Material in the Synoptics

The following is a diagrammatic summary of unique verses and of the extent of correspondence of content of verses in the Gospels, derived from my own count of verses that are or are not equivalent in the Synoptics. The statistical and other data from which these figures are derived has been set out above. Verses are regarded as equivalent where it is reasonable to decide that what is contained in one Gospel could have been derived from another.



### 4.3.7 Average Verse Length

DETAILS	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Verses	1,067	661	1,148
Words (de Solages, 1959: 1049)	18,518	11,090	19,587
Average verse length	14.26 words	16.78 words	14.06 words
Words (Morgenthaller, 1971: 89)	18,298	11,078	19,448
Average verse length	14.15 words	16.76 words	16.94 words

NOTE: Morgenthaller and de Solages give different figures for the number of words in the Gospels due to minor differences in the text used, and thus in the word count. The statistics of Morgenthaller are the ones adopted in this study.

### 4.3.8 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

This data allows us to know the extent to which, on verse count, the Synoptic Gospels are and are not parallel in content to each other (*parallel* being defined as sufficiently equivalent that it is reasonable to consider that material in one or two Gospels could be the source for the material in one or both of the others). It is also possible to see the average word length of verses in the three Synoptic Gospels.

## 4.4 COMPARISON OF PERICOPES AND THE WORDS OF JESUS

### 4.4.1 Mark's Healing Stories

In the following Table, Peri indicates the Pericope Number in Aland's *Synopsis* [sometimes the following pericope in his Synopsis is also included in what is given here]; REF is the passage reference in Mark; TYPE is the type of miracle recorded; and the NO. OF WORDS gives the wordcount based on Morgenthaller, with some adjustment where he divides the pericopes differently. Types of miracles are designated thus:

B Blind	F Fever	L Leper	R Raising dead
D Deaf mute	G General	N Nature	S Supply
E Exorcism	H Hemorrhage	P Paralysis	W Withered hand

No.	Peri	REF	Type	Details of the Disease Healed	NO. OF WORDS		
					Mark	Matt	Luke
1.	35	1:21-28	E	exorcism of unclean spirit	123	29	119
2.	37	1:29-31	F	fever (Peter's mother-in-law)	44	30	38
3.	38	1:32-34	G	crowds of sick, demon-possessed	46	36	52

[Mark omits "You are the Son of God" and "he was the Christ"]



4.	40 1:39	G	casting out demons	15	27	8
	[Mark omits the detailed program of Jesus's ministry, and mentions only the preaching and casting out of demons]					
5.	42 1:40-45	L	a leper	98	62	98
	[Mark omits "But he withdrew [to the wilderness] and prayed"]					
6.	43 2:1-12	P	a paralyzed man	196	126	213
	[Mark has no parallel for the unique introduction, Lk 5:17 (36 words); without this, Mark is longer than Luke by 20 words]					
4.	47 3:1-6	W	a man with a withered hand	94	90	115
8.	48 3:10-12	G	many diseases and unclean spirits	41	12	22
9.	137 5:1-20	E	exorcism of unclean spirit (Legion)	325	135	293
10.	138 5:21-34	H	a woman with a hemorrhage	223	85	166
11.	138 5:35-43	R	a dead girl	151	53	114
12.	148 6:53-56	G	the sick	72	44	-
13.	151 7:24-30	E	exorcism of unclean spirit (a girl)	130	139	-
	[Mark omits the disciples' request to send the woman away and Jesus's words "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"]					
14.	152 7:31-37	D	deaf mute	114	63	-
15.	156 8:22-26	B	blind man of Bethsaida	80	-	-
16.	163 9:14-29	E	boy possessed by dumb spirit	270	133	124
17.	264 10:46-52	B	blind Bartimaeus	<u>123</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>108</u>
	Triple Tradition			1450	868	1366
	Mt/Mk Double Tradition			317	247	-
	Mk/Lk Double Tradition			123	-	119
	Mark's <i>sondergut</i>			<u>80</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL WORDS IN MARK'S HEALING STORIES				1970	1115	1485

#### 4.4.2 Mark's Other Miracle Stories

1.	136 4:35-41	N	stilling the storm	120	85	94
2.	145 6:30-44	S	feeding five thousand	236	168	164
3.	147 6:45-52	N	walking on the sea	139	120	-
4.	153 8:1-10	S	feeding four thousand	146	129	-
5.	272 11:12-14		the figtree cursed and			
	275 11:20-26	N	the figtree withering	<u>156</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL WORDS IN MARK'S OTHER MIRACLE STORIES				797	600	258

### 4.4.3 Pericope Length and the Words of Jesus

Morgenthaler divides Mark's Gospel up into 128 pericopes (33-68), which he gives with their parallels in the Major Synoptics. He analyzes the words of all three Synoptics into three categories: when Jesus speaks a *logion* (which Morgenthaler designates by L); other words of Jesus in direct speech (discourse/conversation, designated W); and accompanying text (designated B). Thus L and W together give all that Jesus said, while B indicates accompanying narrative (including what others said).

A generalization can be made about the relationship between the length of Jesus's sayings in the three Synoptics, and about narrative in the three Synoptics:

1. In general, in Mark's pericopes, his narrative material is longer than the parallels in either Matthew or Luke.

2. In general, in every account of Jesus's sayings, Mark's record is shorter than either Matthew's or Luke's.

There are numbers of pericopes that are approximately the same size in Mark and one or both of the other Synoptics. In some particular instances Mark's narrative will be shorter or his record of the words of Jesus will be longer than those in the other Synoptics; but on these occasions it is usually possible to recognize that some special circumstance is operable in the particular pericope in question. (Thus for example, in the short pericope of The Healing of the Leper [Mt 8:1-4//Mk 1:40-45//Lk 5:12-16], Mt 8:1 and Lk 5:12a contain different settings for this healing, and Mark gives his account without commencing with any setting for it. Without including these introductions, which are not paralleled in Mark, Mark's narrative is longer than Luke's, and much longer than Matthew's.)

This difference between the Gospels is illustrated by the overall figures, drawn from Morgenthaler's statistics (1971: 89; the reference numbers given below under "Details" are to the sections of his material from which they are drawn):

DETAILS	(REF.#)	MARK		MATTHEW		LUKE	
		B	W+L	B	W+L	B	W+L
Triple Tradition	(1.1/1.2)	6,909	4,169	5,096	3,459	4,243	2,494
Mark Doublets	(1.3)			19	109		12
Additional	(1.3)				68		30
Matthew/Luke (Q)	(2.1/2.2)			364	3,497	411	3,252
"Q" Doublets	(2.3)			29	61		11
Additional	(2.3)						108
<i>sondergut</i>	(Mt: 4.1; Lk: 4.2)			2,102	3,704	5,167	3,919
				7,610	10,898	9,821	9,826

Less: Double counting			139	71	130	69
TOTALS	6,909	4,169	7,471	10,827	9,691	9,757
Transfer of B material	-	6,909	-	7,471	-	9,691
GRAND TOTAL		11,078		18,298		19,448
=====						
% of Words of Jesus and of						
other words in each Gospel	62.37%	34.53%	40.83%	59.17%	49.83%	50.17%
	[other]	[Jesus]	[other]	[Jesus]	[other]	[Jesus]

#### 4.4.4 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study

This data allows it to be seen that in his miracle narratives Mark is almost always the longest account, and in those instances where Mark is not longer a specific reason for this can be noted in some particular element in Matthew or Luke which is not in Mark's account. The exception is the pericope of the Healing of the Withered Hand, where Luke is longer than Mark in each part of the story. Overall, Mark can be seen to be longer in these accounts than the other two Synoptics.

The figures for pericope length and the division between words of Jesus and other material throw interesting light on the differences between these three Gospels. In round figures, one-third of Mark's Gospel consists of the words of Jesus, and two-thirds consists of other words (narrative, editorial/redactional comment, and the words of others); whereas for Matthew the figures are respectively 60% and 40% (that is, six out of ten of the words of Matthew's Gospel are the words of Jesus); and for Luke the figures are 50% each.

### 4.5 LUKE'S TIME AND PLACE NOTES

#### 4.5.1 The Data

Luke contains numerous notes of time or place; these occur much more frequently in his Gospel than in Matthew. These may be noted (initial numbers for pericope titles are the pericope numbers in Aland's *Synopsis*):

#### 2, 3, 4, 7. Birth Narratives

Mt 1:18; 2:1-19	Lk 1:5-2:4
1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been ...	5. In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife ... 8. Now while he was serving as priest

2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king ...

9. When they had heard the king they went their way

13. Now when they had departed an angel of the Lord appeared

19 But when Herod died, behold an angel of the Lord appeared

## 9. Circumcision and Purification:

Mt 2:23

before God when his division was on duty ...

24. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself ...

26. In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth ...

39. In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah

56. And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

54. Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered ...

59. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child ...

2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. 2. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. 4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David ... 6. And while they were there the time came for her to be delivered.

Lk 2:21-38

21. And at the end of eight days ...

22. And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem ...

24. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus ...

38. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God ...

23. But when he heard ...  
he went and dwelt in a  
city called Nazareth

39. And when they had performed everything  
according to the law of the Lord, they returned  
into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.

## 12. The Boy Jesus in the Temple:

Lk 2:41-46

41. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every  
year at the feast of the Passover. 42. And  
when he was twelve years old, they went up  
according to custom ...  
45. and when they did not find him ...  
46. After three days they found him ...  
48. And when they saw him they were astonished

## 13. The Beginning of Jesus's Ministry

Mt 3:1-2

1. In those days  
  
came  
John the Baptist preaching  
in the wilderness of Judea,  
2. "Repent ..."

Lk 3:1-3

1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of  
Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor  
of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee,  
and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region  
of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias  
tetrarch of Abilene, 2. in the high-priesthood  
of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came  
to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness,  
3. and he went into all the region about the  
Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance ...

## 19. The Age of Jesus

Lk 3:23

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about  
thirty years of age ...

## 20. The Temptation

Mt 4:1-2

1. Then Jesus  
was led up by the Spirit  
into the wilderness ...  
2. and he fasted forty days  
and forty nights ...

Lk 4:1-2

1. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned  
from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit  
2. for forty days in the wilderness, tempted ...

**30. Galilee Preaching**

Mt 4:12

Now when he heard that  
John had been arrested, he  
withdrew into Galilee.

Lk 4:14

And Jesus  
returned in the power of the Spirit  
into Galilee.

**33. Rejection at Nazareth**

Mt 13:54

And coming to his own  
country he taught them in  
their synagogue ...

Lk 4:16

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been  
brought up; and he went to the synagogue,  
as his custom was, on the sabbath day ...

**35. In the Synagogue at Capernaum**

Lk 4:31

And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee.  
And he was teaching them on the Sabbath ...

**34. Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law**

Mt 8:14

And when Jesus  
entered Peter's house ...

Lk 4:38

And he arose and left the synagogue and  
entered Simon's house ...

**38. Healing of the Sick at Nightfall**

Mt 8:16

That evening ...

Lk 4:40

Now when the sun was setting ...

**39. Jesus Prays Alone**

Lk 4:42

And when it was day he departed and went  
to a lonely place

**40. A Preaching Tour**

Mt 4:23

And he went about all Galilee,  
teaching in their synagogues  
and preaching ...

Lk 4:44

And he was preaching in  
the synagogues of Judea.

**41. The Miraculous Catch of Fish**

Lk 5:1

While the people pressed upon him to hear the  
word of God, he was standing by the lake of  
Gennesaret.

**42. The Healing of a Leper**

Mt 8:1

When he came down from the  
mountain great crowds followed him ...

Lk 5:12

While he was in one of the cities,  
there came a man ...

**43. The Healing of the Paralytic**

Mt 9:1

And getting into a boat, he crossed  
over and came to his own city.

Lk 5:17

On one of those days, as he was teaching ...

**44. The Call of Matthew/Levi**

Mt 9:9

As Jesus passed on from there ...

Lk 5:27

After this he went out ...

**46. Plucking Grain on the Sabbath**

Mt 12:1

At that time ...

Lk 6:1

On a sabbath (or, On the second sabbath  
after the first) ...

**47. The Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand**

Mt 12:9

And he went on from there ...

Lk 6:6

On another sabbath ...

**49. The Choosing of the Twelve**

Mt 10:1

And he called to him his  
twelve disciples ...

Lk 6:12-13

12. In these days he went out to the mountain  
to pray; and all night he continued in prayer  
to God. 13. And when it was day, he called his  
disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he  
named apostles ...

**74. The Great Sermon**

Mt 5:1

Seeing the crowds, he went  
up on the mountain ...

Lk 6:17

And he came down with them and stood on a level  
place, with a great crowd of his disciples ...

**85. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant**

Mt 8:5

Lk 7:1

As he entered Capernaum ...

After he had ended all his sayings in the  
hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

**86. The Raising of the Widow's Son**

Lk 7:11

Soon afterward [or, Next day] he went to a city called Nain

**115. The Ministering Women**

Lk 8:1

Soon afterward he went on through cities and  
villages, preaching ...

**122. The Teaching in Parables**

Mt 13:1-3

Lk 8:4

1. That same day Jesus went out  
of the house and sat beside the  
sea. And great crowds gathered  
about him, so that he got into  
boat and sat there; and the  
whole crowd stood on the beach.

And when a great crowd came together, and  
people from town after town came to him,

3. And he told them many  
things in parables ...

he said  
in a parable ...

**135. Jesus's True Family**

Mt 12:46

Lk 8:19

While he was still speaking to  
the people, behold his mother ...

Then  
his mother ...

**136. Stilling the Storm**

Mt 8:18, 23

Lk 8:22

18. Now when Jesus saw great  
crowds around him, he gave  
orders to go over to the other  
side. ... 23. And when he got  
into the boat, his disciples  
followed him.

One day  
  
he got  
into a boat with his disciples, and he said to  
them, "Let go across to the other side of the  
lake." So they set out ...



**134. The Healing of Legion**

Mt 8:28

And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes ...

Lk 8:26

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee ...

**138. The Raising of Jairus's Daughter**

Mt 9:18

While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in

Lk 8:40-49

40. Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler ... 49. While he was still speaking, a man ...

**143. Herod's Perplexity Concerning Jesus**

Mt 14:1

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus ...

Lk 9:7

Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done, and he was perplexed ...

**145. The Return of the Apostles**

Lk 9:10a

On their return the apostles told him what they had done.

**146. The Feeding of the Five Thousand**

Mt 14:13-15

13. Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. 15. When it was evening ...

Lk 9:10b-12

9:10b. And he took them and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. 12. Now the day began to wear away ...

**158. Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi**

Mt 16:13

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples ...

Lk 9:18

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him; and he asked them ...

**161. The Transfiguration**

Mt 17:1

And after six days ...

Lk 9:28

Now about eight days after these sayings ...

**163. The Healing of the Epileptic Boy**

Mt 17:9, 14

9. And as they were coming  
down the mountain ...

14. And when they came to the crowd ...

Lk 9:37

On the next day, when they had come  
down from the mountain,

a great crowd met him.

**164. The Second Passion Prediction**

Mt 17:22

And as they were gathering in  
Galilee, Jesus said to them ...

Lk 9:43b

But while they are all marvelling at every-  
thing he did, he said to his disciples ...

**166. The Dispute about Greatness**

Mt 18:1

At that time the disciples  
came to Jesus saying, "Who is  
the greatest in the kingdom ...?"

Lk 9:46

And an argument arose among them  
as to which of them was  
the greatest.

**174. The Decision to Go to Jerusalem**

Mt 19:1

Now when Jesus had finished  
these sayings, he went away  
from Galilee ...

Lk 9:51

When the days drew near for him to be  
received up, he set his face to go  
to Jerusalem.

**176. On Following Jesus**

Mt 8:19

And a scribe came up and  
said to him ...

Lk 9:57

As they were going along the road, a man  
said to him ...

**174. The Mission of the Seventy**

Lk 10:1

After this the Lord appointed seventy others ...

**180. The Return of the Seventy**

Lk 10:17

The seventy returned with joy, saying ...

**181. Jesus's Thanksgiving**

Mt 11:25

At that time Jesus declared ...

Lk 10:21

In that same hour he rejoiced ...

**184. Mary and Martha**

Lk 10:38

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village, and a woman named Martha ...

**185. Jesus Teaches the Lord's Prayer**

Lk 11:1

He was praying in a certain place ...

**188. The Beelzebul Controversy**

Mt 12:22

Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him ...

Lk 11:14

Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb ...

**190. True Blessedness**

Lk 11:27

As he said this, a woman in the crowd ...

**191. The Sign of Jonah**

Mt 12:38

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him ...

Lk 11:29

When the crowds were increasing, he began to say ...

**194. The Pharisee's Invitation to Dine**

Lk 11:37

While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him ...

**195. The Leaven of the Pharisees**

Mt 16:5-6

5. When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread.

6. Jesus said to them ...

Lk 12:1

In the meantime, when so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, he began to say to his disciples first ...

**205. Interpreting the Times**

Mt 16:1-2

Lk 12:54

1. And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked ... 2. He answered them ...

He also said to the multitudes ...

**204. Repentance or Destruction**

Lk 13:1

There were some present at that very time ...

**208. The Healing of the Crippled Woman**

Lk 13:10-17

10. Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

14. As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame ...

**211. Exclusion from the Kingdom**

Lk 13:22

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.

**212. A Warning against Herod**

Lk 13:31

At that very hour some Pharisees came ...

**214. The Healing of the Man with Dropsy**

Lk 14:1

One sabbath when he went to dine ...

**216. The Parable of the Great Supper**

Lk 14:15

When one of those who sat at table with him heard this, he said to him ...

**214. The Conditions of Discipleship**

Lk 14:25

Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them ...

**219. The Parables of the Three Lost Things**

Lk 15:1

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.

**229. Warnings Against Offences**

Lk 17:1

And he said to his disciples ...

**233. The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers**

Lk 17:11

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along ...

**234. On The Coming of the Kingdom of God**

Lk 17:20

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom  
of God was coming, he answered them ...

**236. The Parable of the Unjust Judge**

Lk 18:1

And he told them a parable ...

**237. The Pharisee and the Publican**

Lk 18:9

He also told this parable to some ...

**253. Jesus Blesses the Children**

Mt 19:13

Then children were brought to  
him that he might lay his ...

Lk 18:15

Now they were bringing even infants to  
him that he might touch them ...

**262. The Third Passion Prediction**

Mt 20:17

And as Jesus was going up to  
Jerusalem, he took the twelve  
disciples aside, and on the  
way, he said to them ...

Lk 18:31

And taking the twelve,  
  
he said to them ...

**264. The Healing of Bartimaeus**

Mt 20:29

And as they went out of Jericho ...

Lk 18:35

As he drew near to Jericho ...

**265. Zacchaeus**

Lk 19:1

He entered Jericho and was passing through ...

**266. The Parable of the Pounds**

Lk 19:11

As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem ...

**269. The Triumphal Entry**

Mt 21:1

Lk 19:28

And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage ...

And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage ...

**270. Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem**

Lk 19:41

And when he drew near and saw the city ...

**274. The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire** Lk 19:47

And he was teaching daily in the temple.

**276. The Question about Authority**

Mt 21:23

Lk 20:1

And when he entered the temple ...

One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel ...

**284. Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees**

Mt 23:1

Lk 20:45

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples ...

And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples ...

**301. The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem**

Lk 21:37-38

34. And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. 38. And in the morning ...

**305. The Conspiracy to Kill Jesus**

Mt 26:1-2

Lk 22:1

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming ...

Now the feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover.

**308. Preparation for the Passover**

Mt 26:17

Now on the first day of  
Unleavened Bread ...

Lk 22:7

Then came the day of  
Unleavened Bread, on which the  
passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

**330. Gethsemane**

Mt 26:36

Then Jesus went with them  
to a place called Gethsemane ...

Lk 22:39

And he came out, and went, as was his  
custom, to the Mount of Olives ...

**331. Jesus Arrested**

Mt 26:47

While he was still speaking ...

Lk 22:47

While he was still speaking ...

**344. The Death of Jesus**

Mt 27:45

Now from the sixth hour ...

Lk 23:44

It was now about the sixth hour ...

**350. The Burial of Jesus**

Lk 23:54-56

54. It was the day of Preparation, and the  
sabbath was beginning.

56. On the sabbath they rested according to the  
commandment.

**352. The Women at the Tomb**

Mt 28:1

Now after the sabbath,  
toward the dawn of the  
first day of the week ...

Lk 24:1

But on the first day of the week, at early  
dawn, they went to the tomb ...

**355. The Journey to Emmaus**

Lk 24:13

That very day two of them were going ...

**356. Jesus Appears to his Disciples**

Lk 24:36

As they were saying this, Jesus himself ...

**365. The Ascension**

Lk 24:44-51

44. Then he said to them ...

51. While he blessed them, he parted from them  
and was carried up into heaven.

**4.5.2 The Significance of this Data for our Present Study**

For most pericopes, Luke commences with a link of time, place or circumstance to what has gone before. In many cases however he does not give any information or gives only a vague or generalized comment:

5:12 While he was in one of the cities ...

5:17 On one of those days as he was teaching ...

6:1 On a Sabbath

6:6 On another Sabbath

7:11 Soon afterward

8:1 Soon afterward

8:4 And when a great crowd came together

8:22 One day

9:18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone

20:1 One day

Furthermore, Luke frequently adds into his narrative details of the age of one of the key figures, or some other descriptive or identificatory comment (that the rich man was a ruler, that the child was an only son or daughter, how serious the illness had been, etc.). Oftentimes when a pericope is paralleled in Mark, this information is not in Mark, and therefore *ipso facto* must have a non-Markan origin.

**4.6 ASSESSMENT: WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF THE FACTS?****4.6.1 Assessing Synoptic Statistics**

Author after author has blithely written of how little material there is in Mark that is not found also in Matthew and/or Luke. And, in the opinion of a host of scholars, material not just “paralleled” but—by implication—“incorporated” (and therein lies quite a difference).

For instances of this implication, see: Allen (1907: xiii), “Almost the entire substance of the second Gospel has been transferred to the first”; Fenton (1963: 12), “What Matthew has done, in fact, is to produce a second and enlarged edition of Mark”; Hill



(1972: 30), “That ... author [Matthew] took over almost the whole of Mark (about nine-tenths)”; Kümmel (1973: 106), “Mt has basically reworked the Markan account by means of detailed modifications”; the NIV Study Bible (1985: 1437), “A mathematical comparison shows that 91 percent of Mark’s Gospel is contained in Matthew, while 53 percent of Mark is found in Luke.”

But those who speak now of most of Mark being taken over or transferred into Matthew are simply echoing the erroneous guesses of the past without updating those guesses with the accurate statistics provided for us by the Synoptic statisticians.

In §4.2.1, I have set out all the material equal to or greater than about half a verse in length for which there is no equivalent in Matthew or Luke. This totals to 23.5% of the length of Mark.

Then in §4.2.2 is to be found the most important of—though by no means all of—the extra detail that Mark has placed in the stories he tells. I have listed 48 of these “extras”. Not many of them are very important (though a few of them could be judged significant), but the point is, if we are assessing what part of the total Gospel record is in Mark alone, this material is part of that. When we add these “extras” to the 23.5% of §4.2.1, it takes the total of material in Mark that is not paralleled in either Matthew or Luke to rather more than 25% of Mark’s Gospel.

When we examine Mark’s unique material (§4.2.1 and §4.2.2) we see that this is exactly what an eyewitness of these events such as Peter would be likely to include in his account when telling these stories, and exactly what Mark would remember accurately, and would include in his Gospel—and this, as we have seen, is exactly what Papias said he did.

It should be noted moreover concerning this fact that the amount of Markan *sondergut*—material unique to Mark and not paralleled in either Matthew or Luke—is rather more than 25% of Mark: **this** information has not just “come to light” as the result of any recent research: it has always been there for the looking. But more than two-thirds of Mark’s *sondergut* has been disregarded by those scholars who, on the basis of their inaccurate methodology, have stated instead that Mark only has about 50 to 56 verses (i.e., about 8% of the Gospel) that are not in the other Synoptics.

In §4.2.3, Table 1 shows that the total number of words in Mark is 11,078, and of these, 4230 words, or 38.2% of the words found in Mark’s Gospel are identical in Matthew’s Gospel. Thus it can be seen that 61.8% of Mark’s words are not also found in Matthew.

Now, some of Mark’s words are not identical with Matthew because those words are

in Markan content that Matthew lacks completely, i.e. they are the words of Mark's *sondergut* (the 25% of Mark's material not paralleled in Matthew or Luke). But in addition there is material in Mark that is found in Luke but not in Matthew (this is listed in §4.2.4), and that of course is why these Markan words are not also found in Matthew. I estimate, from this listing, that this is equivalent to around 5% of Mark. So with the 25% Markan *sondergut*, this adds up to about 30% of Mark not paralleled in Matthew, which indeed would be why those Markan words were not identical with any words in Matthew.

If then 61.8% of Mark's wording is not identical with Matthew, while 30% of Mark's content is not in Matthew at all, then the balance of 31.8% of Mark's non-identical wording is in pericopes which **are** parallel in content with Matthew. That is to say, 31.8% of the total of Mark's wording is where Mark and Matthew have the **same** content (tell the same story) but use **different** wording to do so.

The significance of this should not be overlooked. It is, that 31.8% of the **content** of what Mark's Gospel contains is found also in Matthew, but using **different words**.

This data will be described in different ways by the advocates of the two competing hypotheses. Those adhering to Markan Priority will say that Matthew omitted 30% of Mark's content, took over 38.2% of Mark's actual wording, but (for various reasons) changed the other 31.8% of the words he found in Mark. That is to say, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, in passages where Matthew and Mark are parallel in content, almost a third of Mark's wording has been altered in Matthew. Reasons given include: to improve Mark's grammar, because Mark is too hard on the disciples, and so forth.

Advocates of Markan Dependence will see it differently. They will explain that Mark has in front of him the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but also in his memory he holds the recollections of Peter telling these same stories. On 38.2% of occasions the words he uses in telling the story are words that also occur in Matthew, but in regard to 31.8% of words, he chooses instead of Matthew's words the words that he remembers from Peter. Plus, of course, of the 30% that was not in Matthew he got 25% from Peter (because it is Markan *sodergut*) and 5% from Peter and/or Luke (because also found in that Gospel).

Somewhat similarly for Luke. Luke has only 2675 identical words with Mark (§4.2.3, Table 1), i.e. 24.1%, so that 75.9% of Markan words are not identical. When allowance is made for Luke for the equivalent factors mentioned above for Matthew (Mark's *sondergut* of 25% of his Gospel, and Markan content in Matthew but not in Luke, as described in §4.2.5, estimated as 29%), I calculate that Markan content not in Luke is 54% (the 25% plus the 29%). Thus Mark's words and Luke's which are different but in

similar contents, would be 21.9% (this non-identical total of 75.9% words minus the 54% of words in the Markan content that is not found in Luke). That is, Luke's words have been altered from Mark's (or vice versa) on 21.9% of occasions.

I will not swear to the absolute accuracy of my estimates, above (5% for Matthew and 29% for Luke)—they depend for instance on how one treats similar but different pericopes in Mark and Luke. But, these apart, the figures come from the Synoptic statisticians, and when added together they are realistic, and not wildly inaccurate. What they tell us is that in sections of identical content, where Mark and Matthew, and Mark and Luke, are recounting the same pericope, Matthew has altered Mark's wording (or vice versa) for almost one third (31.8%) of Mark's words, and the same for Luke for more than a fifth (21.9%) of Mark's words.

#### 4.6.2 Accounting for Mark's Gospel

How then do we account, overall, for Mark?

The order of the pericopes in Mark is (as shown in Chapter Nine) that of Luke down to 6:14, and thereafter is that of Matthew (for Peter, as Papias said, had no "order" in what he taught—he was totally an *ad hoc* preacher). Possibly the structure of the pericopes owes something to Matthew and Luke also (though, possibly not). The vocabulary of Mark is (Table 2) 38.2% that of Matthew and 24.1% that of Luke (or Peter also may have used those same words, so that, at least it is possible to say, in those words there is a concurrence of the vocabulary of Peter with that of Matthew and Luke).

But that is only part of the story. For, according to the statistics 61.8% of Mark's vocabulary is not identical with Matthew, and 75.9% is not identical with Luke. This includes Mark's *sondergut* of 25%—content (ranging from complete pericopes to a host of minor eyewitness detail) that is not found in either of Matthew or Luke. And this Markan vocabulary is vigorous, down-to-earth vocabulary, the vocabulary of the oral, colloquial language of the day, the Greek of Peter and of Mark himself, the spoken language of Peter's sermon rather than the written language of Matthew and Luke. And this is true not of the vocabulary only, but of Mark's grammatical constructions, the whole way he expresses himself.

What Mark has done with the accounts in front of him (Matthew and Luke) is to dress them in the language and thought forms of the recollections of Peter, as preached in his ministry. I submit this as the one, single, completely sufficient, explanation of the wording differences of Mark with Matthew and Luke.

In the next chapter I consider the alternative explanations for the language

differences (in the same pericopes) between Mark and Matthew, and between Mark and Luke.

To anticipate a little, I aim to show that those other “explanations” are not backed by any facts or even by the probabilities of logic, and are founded upon unsupported speculation. But to the contrary: the view I have put forward is not unsupported. Papias and the other early church Fathers tell us that Mark’s Gospel goes back to the preaching of Peter. There are no grounds at all for saying that the Fathers did not know what they were talking about.

In particular, this is based on a recognition of the difference between spoken and written language, as pointed out by the experts in linguistics Palmer and Gleason whose comments I discussed in §3.8. Palmer (1971: 3) said:

What is agreed by almost all linguists is that the spoken and written languages should be kept apart in analysis, that for the purpose of linguistic analysis indeed they are essentially two different languages.

Gleason (1969: 358-359) points out that in attempting to speak in longer sense units the speaker may change his grammatical construction

in the middle of sentences in ways that suggest, on careful examination, that the speaker has lost track of what he started to say. Usually, however, any stretch of six or seven words is consistent within itself structurally. The difficulty appears only when longer sequences are considered—sequences beyond the span of structural attention of either the speaker or the hearer. ... [Thus in speech,] patterns of clause connection are generally simple. From the viewpoint of literary standards they are usually monotonous. *And* is used very heavily. Connectors of greater range, like *nevertheless*, *moreover*, *alternatively*, are very rare. ... This fact is probably associated with the lack of long-span integration in structure.

We will be readily able to correlate these comments with features of Mark’s Gospel. Indeed, it seems to me, after considering all this evidence, that if anyone in (say) AD 66, familiar with both the preaching of Peter and the writings of Matthew and Luke, were to hear Mark’s Gospel read out aloud, and were asked to comment, he would have said decisively, “Ah yes, Mark’s Gospel is just what we heard from Peter!”

#### 4.6.3 Accounting for the Major Synoptics

Let us note what Matthew contains that Luke does not: the Matthean *sondergut* (§4.3.2: 485 verses, which is 45.5% of his Gospel), together with what he has in common with Mark (§4.3.4: 187 verses, 17.5% of his Gospel), totaling 672 verses, 63% of his Gospel.

And Luke's contents that Matthew lacks: the Lukan *sondergut* (§4.3.3: 686 verses, 60% of his Gospel), together with what Mark has in common with his Gospel (§4.3.5: 54 verses, 4.5% of his Gospel), totaling 740 verses, 64.5% of his Gospel.

Thus Matthew has 63% of his Gospel *not* in common with Luke, so there is 37% that is. And Luke has 64.5% of his Gospel *not* in common with Matthew, so there is 35.5% that is. That is to say, each of the two Major Synoptics has somewhat more than a third of their contents in common—and potentially from a common source (and this is the issue currently under investigation).

Now the material in common with Mark could have come from Mark (thus say the Markan Priorists), and the bit the Major Synoptics have in common with each other but not found in Mark could have come from the postulated Q (so say the advocates of this source); and yet others (the Farrer hypothesis advocates and the Two-Gospel school of thought) say that the explanation is that Luke used the completed Gospel of Matthew. My contention is that the explanation most fully in accord with the data is that this material (to the extent to which the examination of the evidence indicates that it does have a common source) consists of material written by Matthew and in circulation in the form of separate notes or documents during the period from the time of Christ on earth to c. AD 60.

#### 4.6.4 Looking at Mark's Healing Stories, and the Words of Jesus

First of all let us consider the words used by each Gospel in telling the healing stories about Jesus (§4.4.1). In these in the Triple Tradition, Mark uses 1450 words, Luke slightly fewer, 1366 words, and Matthew many fewer, 868 words. Then additionally there is one such healing story that Matthew does not include, and four of them are not in Luke. We can note Luke's interest in healings: in recounting these, he uses here almost as many words as Mark (for every 17 words Mark uses, Luke uses 16). And yet he lacks four healing stories that are in Mark, three of which are also in Matthew. If Luke were using Mark as source (Markan Priority hypothesis) or Matthew as source (Two-Gospel hypothesis), why would Luke, with this clear interest in the healing aspect of Jesus's ministry, have omitted these? My suggestion: these healings were not found in those documents he collected in preparation for his Gospel.

It is interesting to note, in contrast, that in telling the two other miracle stories that he has in common with Mark, Luke uses about the same number of words as Matthew but far fewer than Mark (Stilling the Storm, 94 compared with Mark's 120; Feeding Five Thousand, 164 compared with Mark's 236).

Something else to note from the statistics (§4.4.3): of the words of Mark in the Triple Tradition (11,078), the percentage that are words of Jesus is 34.63%; whereas in Matthew (18,298 words) the figure is 59.17% and in Luke (19,448 words) 50.17%. In round numbers, in Mark less than four words in ten are words of Jesus; in Luke the figure is five words in ten; in Matthew six words out of ten are words of Jesus.

This is consistent with an overall generalization: Mark is less interested than the other two Synoptics in recording what Jesus said (though he very frequently refers to the fact of Jesus teaching). If Mark were the first Gospel written, this is very surprising—because of his background generally and in particular his association with the apostle Peter he would certainly be familiar with a great deal more of Jesus’s teaching (see §3.7): why would he record so little of it? The most persuasive answer is: because he was producing a Gospel to be used in preaching the *kerygma* in evangelistic outreach, and he knew that Christians in the churches already had access to the *didache* of Jesus in those churches (§3.8). It was no part of his purpose to repeat it.

#### 4.6.5 Luke’s Orderly Ways

Luke tells us that he is writing an “orderly” (καθελξης) account (see Chapter Two, §2.4.1). In what way is it orderly?

In §4.5.1 it is possible to see the extent to which Luke has recorded details of the time, place, and sequence of the events he narrates. We can note from this data how, throughout his Gospel, Luke shows a constant concern with these questions. We can recognize the way in which virtually every separate incident he records is linked with the previous one by some note of time and place transition. And where he cannot ascertain this information, he says so: for example, 5:12, “While he was in one of the cities”; 5:17, “On one of those days”; 13:10, “Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath”.

Thus the evidence in Luke’s Gospel itself indicates to us that he *intended* to write in chronological order to the extent to which, in his investigations, he was able to discover what that order was. It is still a matter open for further investigation and discussion whether he has fully succeeded in this. There are for instance a few places where I think Matthew’s order is clearly to be preferred.

For example, Matthew records the call of Matthew Levi, follows it with Jesus’s comments about fasting and new wine into old wineskins, and then says (Mt 9:18), “While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him”—and recounts the story of Jairus. Luke’s introduction to the story of Jairus is (Lk

8:40), “Now when Jesus returned [from his visit to the territory of the Gerasenes], the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus ...”

Whereas Luke’s account of the call of Matthew Levi, and Jesus’s comments about fasting and new wine into old wineskins is in Lk 5:27-39, and is then followed with “Plucking Grain on the Sabbath” (paralleling Mt 12:1-8). Totally different arrangement. If Luke had had access to Matthew’s account, with his “while he was thus speaking” tying together the two pericopes that Luke gives so far apart, I think it highly likely that Luke could have arranged them differently in his Gospel. I take it that this comment by Matthew is an editorial addition inserted when he was compiling his finished Gospel, and was information not available to Luke. Hence the lack of any specific situation when Luke is introducing Jairus. Which jells strongly with the explanation that Luke included this information whenever he could find it, and did not invent it when he could not.

From an examination of all the data it may be seen:

1. That, indeed, Luke is particularly interested in details of time, place and circumstance for his pericopes, and in their relation to other pericopes.

2. That he has aimed at arranging his pericopes in chronological order so far as he could ascertain from his enquiries what this was. This would confirm that his intention (see 1:3) was to narrate his story in chronological order.

3. That where he had little information about the setting of a pericope he did not invent it but mentioned whatever he knew; e.g. that the event had occurred on a Sabbath, or simply “Soon afterward” or even just, “One day ...”.

It has been said by some that Luke is **not** interested in questions of place and circumstance (e.g., Ellis 1966: 7; Marshall 1970: 65-66 and 1978: 43, 364; Kümmel 1973: 137; Fitzmeyer 1981: Vol 1 771), and in support of this has been cited the fact that he does not mention that Peter’s confession took place at Caesarea Philippi, which Mark **does** mention (Mk 8:27//Lk 9:18)—as so also does Matthew (16:13). It needs to be noted that such a deduction is predicated upon the acceptance of Mark as a source for Luke; whereas an examination of the whole of Luke’s Gospel (whether paralleled in Matthew or Mark or not, and thus irrespective of any particular theory of Synoptic relationship) shows that Luke **does indeed** have an interest in such matters.

This issue therefore is relevant to the occasions when Mark, or Matthew, has more information of this kind in a given pericope than does Luke in his parallel to it. As we can see just how Luke records this information when he has it, the most valid explanation therefore of the fact that “Caesarea Philippi” is not found in Luke is that this information

was not in his sources. And, therefore, that he was not using as sources either Mark or our Matthew (seeing that in both these Gospels Caesarea Philippi *is* mentioned).

So, in summary it could be said: there is good reason for taking καθεξῆς in 1:3 to be a statement of Luke's plan and intention to give a ***chronological*** account so far as he could.

In this there is thus a good explanation of the basic difference in order between Matthew and Luke. Certain pericopes had been linked together into pericope clusters at some stage during the period prior to AD 60, and this for reasons for which we have no information. Still joined in these clusters, they became incorporated into both Major Synoptics. But in greatly varying contexts. For Matthew was arranging material on the basis of "like with like", within a general chronological framework, whereas Luke had the expressed intention of writing a chronological account, and indeed did so to the extent that his material and his personal enquiries made possible.

In any future discussion of Synoptic issues, the data now available to us should be taken into account. I trust this chapter will provide some further assistance in this regard.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE MARKAN PRIORITY EXPLANATION**

### **5.1 IMPLICATIONS OF A HYPOTHESIS**

### **5.2 FROM STORR TO STREETER AND BEYOND**

### **5.3 THE CASE FOR THE MARKAN PRIORITY VIEW**

#### **5.3.1 Argument from Similarities**

1. The Argument from Common Content
2. The Argument from Common Language
3. The Argument from Common Order

#### **5.3.2 Argument from Improvements**

4. The Argument from Use of the Historic Present
5. The Argument from Reduction of Redundancies
6. The Argument from Quoted Aramaic Words
7. The Argument from Use of Semitisms
8. The Argument from Improved Literary Style

#### **5.3.3 Argument from Doctrinal Modifications**

9. The Argument from Increased Reverence for Jesus
10. The Argument from Increased Respect for the Disciples
11. The Argument from Increased Doctrinal Sophistication

#### **5.3.4 Argument from Patristic Evidence**

12. The Argument from Papias Putting Mark First
13. The Argument from The Petrine Origin of Mark

#### **5.3.5 Argument from Statistics**

14. The Argument from Statistics

#### **5.3.6 Argument from Direction Indicators**

15. The Argument from Additions in Matthew
16. The Argument from Doublets
17. Mistakes Made by Matthew and/or Luke in Using Mark
18. Mistakes in Mark Corrected by Matthew and/or Luke
19. The Use of Old Testament Passages Indicating that Mark is Prior
20. The Freshness and Circumstantial Character of Mark

#### **5.3.7 Argument from Coherence**

21. The Argument from Coherence of Explanation

## **5.4 SYNOPTIC SCHOLARSHIP IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

5.4.1 On the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century

5.4.2 The Synoptics Conference Report

5.4.3 The Farrer Explanation from Britain

5.4.3 Three-Theory Interaction

5.4.5 Textual-Critical Criteria

5.4.6 The Other Perspectives on the Evidence

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE MARKAN PRIORITY EXPLANATION**

This chapter investigates the arguments advanced for Markan Priority and provides the refutation to all of them

#### **5.1 IMPLICATIONS OF A HYPOTHESIS**

The vast majority of New Testament scholars are of the opinion that Mark's Gospel was written first, and was the primary source upon which Matthew and Luke drew for their material. In this dissertation I have been putting forth an alternative explanation, and outlining the grounds upon which it is based. But scholars consider they have good reason for their conclusion that Mark was first-written. It is necessary, then, to consider carefully the arguments that over the years have led them to their Markan Priority viewpoint, and to assess the validity of these arguments.

I have identified twenty-one such arguments or reasons or grounds put forward as a basis for Markan Priority, and in this chapter I examine them all. Now, down the decades these arguments have been assessed by quite a significant number of scholars before me, and have been refuted convincingly: yet it is a wonder to behold how often these convincing and conclusive refutations are overlooked, and the old discredited arguments continue to be advanced in recent years as if they had never been answered.

One major reason for this continued dominance of Markan Priority is, as many modern scholars will acknowledge, not because these arguments are strong and problem-free, but because they (or some of them) are considered to make better sense than any alternative. Now, in this dissertation I present an alternative that, I submit, is a far better and more encompassing explanation of the data before us than Markan Priority. But what is to be said about the traditional case for Markan Priority? That is what this chapter will discuss.

And an assessment of the strength of the case for Markan Priority is certainly important. When we are persuaded of the priority of Mark, and its use by Matthew and Luke, this affects a great many other areas of our thinking about the Gospels and the New Testament generally. That is because the view that one accepts of the explanation of the Synoptic Problem (and the relationship of the Synoptics to John's Gospel) affects how one approaches the reading of the Gospels and how at many points one interprets them.

The Markan Priority hypothesis is used as a starting point for much modern study of the Synoptic Gospels and comment upon them (especially in form criticism and

redaction criticism). What is happening here is that much modern *interpretation* of these Gospels is being significantly affected by a *hypothesis* about how they are related to each other. Now, if that hypothesis is justified, then it is reasonable to start from it in looking at the Gospels. But if it should happen that that hypothesis is mistaken, then interpretation that is based upon it will be astray.

Indeed, questions of authorship, date, the place of writing, the audience for whom a Gospel was written, the purpose of writing, the perspective of the author on various things he mentions, as well as numbers of these questions of interpretation, are all affected by a person's view of Synoptic relationships.

Moreover, the relationship between Gospels and Epistles is also connected with this issue. If, because Matthew followed Mark, his Gospel is to be dated late, then that Gospel was written after most of the Epistles and represents a later stage of church tradition than they do. This in its turn affects the interpretation of some of the contents of Matthew vis-à-vis the Epistles (e.g., re Jesus's references to "the church").

Thus from every point of view affecting interpretation—the purpose of the Gospel, the audience for whom it was written, the attitude to be taken to the material in it that differs from (or is absent in) the other Gospels and so on and so on—Matthew is a different book if it is based upon Mark from what it is if it is Mark's source; and similarly for Mark and Luke.

Thus time spent in the consideration of Synoptic interrelationships is not time wasted but is, to quite a considerable extent, foundational to the study of the Synoptics themselves because of the way in which, in practice, our view of the Synoptic Problem provides the spectacles through which we view the Synoptic Gospels themselves.

I find this comment significant:

It has not been easy for students who cherish conservative views of the inspiration and authority of Scripture to know how to relate their convictions to the conclusions which have been announced with an air of certainty by so many Source Critics. It has been a matter of deep surprise to discover that [numbers of conservative scholars] have apparently accepted many of the findings of certain critics as though their case had been proved. But to demand the priority of Mark and the reality of Q, and to deny the Apostolic authorship of the First and Fourth Gospels, are points which conservative scholars cannot allow to go unchallenged. ... I shall be satisfied if I have been able to show that the advocates of the Four Document Hypothesis can by no means claim a fool-proof system. I shall be more than satisfied if I have been able to show that old-fashioned Conservatives still have solid grounds for their faith in the authority and inspiration of the Gospels.

These are the words of the Principal of Moore Theological College when I was a

student there, Canon (later Archbishop) Marcus Loane, in the Preface to his booklet *A Brief Survey of the Synoptic Problem* (1945: 4). The first of his comments sums up his own concern at the dominance of the Markan Priority viewpoint in Synoptic scholarship, and its consequences, and his second comment sets out the result of his own study in this field, which he has summarized in his booklet. His booklet, and his teaching, presented the details of Streeter's Four-Document hypothesis, analyzed the case for and against it, and looked at alternative approaches. As a result, we students left College well aware of the majority view in Synoptic scholarship, but aware also of its weaknesses and limitations, and of the fact that it was only an unproven hypothesis that should not structure all our thinking about Synoptic relationships, and that it was not the only possible valid explanation of the data. For this careful and balanced approach to an introduction to the Synoptic Problem, I have always been very grateful.

So then, aware of its significance, I shall now consider the case for Markan Priority.

To commence with, a bit of “background briefing”, which gives a concise history of the development of the Markan Priority hypothesis. Then an examination of the arguments used to support it, the reasons why scholars have come to accept it. In particular I point to the major studies that, over the years, have refuted these arguments one after the other, and then ask: Which of them (if any) has any real substance today? (Then later, in Chapter Seven, I am going to describe the seventeen impossible things that it is also necessary to be willing to believe if one would like to embrace the Markan Priority hypothesis.)

## 5.2 FROM STORR TO STREETER AND BEYOND

The first modern-day assessment of the interrelationship between the Synoptics was that of Henry Owen in England in 1764, who put forward the view that Mark had drawn upon the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (that is, Markan Posteriority). The same explanation was advanced by J J Griesbach in Germany in 1774, and elaborated further by him in 1776. (For details, §1.2.2.)

In 1786 the Markan Priority hypothesis was first proposed by Storr in Germany. It was expounded and developed by Wilke (1838), Weisse (1838), Holtzmann (1863), and others, and given a solid foundation in Britain by Abbott, Woods, Rushbrooke, and Sanday and the members of his Oxford Seminar (see §1.2.3).

It is beyond question that this Oxford Seminar of William Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford University, was the main influence in the establishing of Markan Priority as the British view on the Synoptic Problem.

One of the members of this Seminar was B H Streeter, who in 1924 set out what became the classic case for the Markan Priority position. In his presentation of what he entitles “The Fundamental Solution”, he says (151-152; and also 159-162):

I will now present a summary statement of the main facts and considerations which show the dependence of Matthew and Luke upon Mark. Familiar as these are to scholars, they are frequently conceived of in a way which tends to obscure some of the remoter issues dependent on them. They can most conveniently be presented under five main heads.

Streeter's five positive arguments (which he thus calls “heads”) were followed by two negative arguments. These seven—the arguments which won the day for the Markan Priority hypothesis—are:

1. The extent of common subject matter in Matthew-Mark and Mark-Luke.
2. The extent of common words in Matthew-Mark and Mark-Luke.
3. In order of incidents, Mark always agrees with Matthew, with Luke, or with both.
4. Mark's more primitive character indicates that this Gospel was prior to Matthew and Luke.
5. The distribution of Markan material in Matthew and Luke points to these authors having used Mark.
6. The material lacking in Mark is inexplicable if Mark was using Matthew (and/or Luke).
7. Other theories display eccentric views about evidence.

The sections of Gospel material found in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark (and which thus cannot have been sourced from him) are attributed to what Streeter designates “the document Q” (182-191), which, he says, “was a document of very early date and represents a peculiarly authentic tradition (191). For the material specific to Matthew he postulates the document “M” (231) and for Luke, “L” (232). Thus he presents not merely a “Two Document Hypothesis”, but, further, postulates (235) his “‘Four Document Hypothesis’ which from the the standpoint of historical probability seems to have far more to commend it”. His proposal of a “Four Document Hypothesis” has not commanded widespread support, though it is still common to find M and L used as designations for the material peculiar to Matthew and Luke respectively (without carrying the implication that these are necessarily thought of as two documents). But his arguments for Markan Priority established this hypothesis on a firm foundation.

This hypothesis of Markan Priority (with Q, and perhaps M and L) has not, however, gone unchallenged. In particular Dom John Chapman compared Matthew with Mark and came to the firm conclusion that Mark drew upon Matthew rather than vice versa. His

book *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, supporting the “Successive Dependence” hypothesis (i.e., Matthew-Mark-Luke as the order of writing and dependence), occupied him for the last eight years of his life and was published posthumously in 1936.

Fifteen years after the publication of Chapman’s book—in 1951—Cambridge University Press published B C Butler’s discussion of the Synoptic Problem, *The Originality of St Matthew*, subtitled “A Critique of The Two-Document Hypothesis”. Butler takes the same basic view as did Chapman, and follows a somewhat similar line of argumentation for it.

The work of Chapman and Butler demonstrated that Streeter’s first three arguments only established the literary interdependence of the three Synoptics, not the particular form of that interdependence, and that they were therefore not arguments for Markan Priority as such. These supporters of Successive Dependence (see §1.2.4) contend that the facts to which Streeter refers are completely compatible with their view of the priority of Matthew, and the supporters of Markan Posteriority affirm that this data more specifically supports their position than that of Markan Priority (see Chapter Six). In fact, these “arguments” are only effective as against the Complete Independence viewpoint (see Chapter Ten, below), but they are no argument against Markan Dependence, presented in this dissertation.

Then Butler also showed that Streeter’s fifth “head” is not in fact an argument for Markan Priority at all, but an explanation of a feature of the Synoptics on the basis of the belief in Markan Priority.

These books nibbled away very effectively at the Streeter arguments that Matthew used Mark. In his important treatment of the case for Markan Priority, Styler acknowledged the validity of Butler’s rebuttal, but (1962: 228-232) was able to develop a further four arguments, and to give an incisive restatement of one of Streeter’s negative arguments. These four additional reasons given by Styler can be summarized thus:

1. Matthew clarifies what is obscure in Mark.
2. Matthew misunderstands Mark, but thereby shows that he knows Mark.
3. The freshness and circumstantial nature of Mark indicates priority.
4. Matthew’s additions tell heavily against his priority.

Styler’s incisive restatement of the first of Streeter’s negative arguments (231) reads:

The point may be put like this: given Mk, it is easy to see why Matt. was written; given Matt., it is hard to see why Mk was needed.

The implications of Streeter’s fourth argument were painstakingly examined by E P Sanders in his *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (1969). Sanders shows in

meticulous detail that the presuppositions upon which Streeter's fourth argument is based are without foundation and in fact unjustified. His conclusion (276-279), from an examination of the Synoptic data that has been relied on for this argument, shows that it is inconclusive in support for **any** Synoptic hypothesis and certainly does not favour the Markan Priority hypothesis over any other.

Streeter's first negative argument (including Styler's restatement of it) is fully answered if any reasonable explanation can be tendered for why Mark should write after the writing of either or both of Matthew and Luke: and such an explanation can most certainly be provided (see my Chapter Three, especially §3.8). Streeter's second negative argument is in fact no argument whatsoever, but, rather, reveals his unwillingness to give openminded consideration to other views that had already been propounded by his day. (Farmer demonstrated this in 1964 in considerable detail.)

Thus by 1969 scholarly consideration of Streeter's arguments had shown that at most they built a solid case against the Complete Independence position, but that they were not valid for establishing a case for Markan Priority as against Successive Dependence or Markan Posteriority.

At the 1970 Pittsburgh Festival on the Gospels Joseph Fitzmyer presented a paper on "The Priority of Mark and the 'Q' Source in Luke", since published with the other Conference Papers in *Jesus and Man's Hope* (Vol. 1, 1970: 131ff.). This paper aimed to give a detailed reassessment of the arguments for Markan Priority and Q in the light of developments since Streeter's time.

Fitzmyer found two initial arguments for the Two-Source hypothesis in its "appeal" (that is, he drew it to participants' attention that as "a simple statement of fact" the Two-Source view has appealed to the "majority of twentieth-century scholars"), and "usefulness" (the Two-Source hypothesis has proven to be a useful "springboard" for further New Testament research).

Fitzmyer set out objections to the Griesbach (Markan Posteriority) position, and then put the case for the Markan Priority position. Farmer has answered Fitzmyer's objections to the Griesbach position and also replied in detail to Fitzmyer's case for vindicating Streeter's main arguments (in *New Synoptic Studies*, 1983: 501-523). In fact it could be said that Fitzmyer does not add anything of substance to or go much beyond Streeter.

More recent Markan Priority advocates Frans Neirynck and Christopher Tuckett have taken a different line. Their emphasis is less upon generalizations and selective presentation of evidence in the Streeter vein and more upon the detailed consideration of the actual wording of the Synoptics. Tuckett's main concern is with the **coherence** of the alternative explanations offered for the Synoptic data.



In the twenty-first century, Markan Priority continues to have its warm advocates, together with those who feel they are able to take it as a given. Thus for example in his *Pillar Commentary* on Mark's Gospel (2002) Edwards is content to acknowledge (2) that

The theory of Markan priority, although not uncontested, continues to be held by a majority of scholars today, the present author included.

Then Edwards recognizes (*ibid.*) that the question of Synoptic relationships “poses one of the most difficult problems in the history of ideas” that nonetheless “cannot be rehearsed in this commentary.” Thus he does not discuss this issue further but adds,

The most that can be done in the present volume with respect to Markan priority is to draw attention to the significant number of passages where Mark reasonably can be supposed to precede, and to have influenced, the other Synoptic Gospels, and Matthew in particular.

Similarly in his *New International Greek Testament Commentary on Matthew* (2005), John Nolland writes (5),

This commentary proceeds on the general assumption that Matthew had available the Gospel of Mark, or something much like it, and that he shared a considerable body of additional common source material with Luke.

Among more detailed advocates of Markan Priority this century we may note writers in these volumes:

(a) *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem*, edited by David Black and David Beck, the published presentation (2001) of the papers from the April 2000 Conference of New Testament scholars held at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary;

(b) *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* by Mark Goodacre (2001), which advocates the Farrer-Goulder view (see Chapter Ten, §10.42) that Luke knew and used Matthew as well as Mark;

(c) *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, edited by Robert Thomas (2002), includes contributions from three advocates setting out respectively the Two-/Four- Source View, the Two-Gospel View, and the Independence View, with responses in each case from the other two advocates;

(d) *Two Gospels From One* by Matthew Williams (2006), who demonstrates that (12) “Text-critical criteria clearly and consistently support Marcan priority and Matthean posteriority”.

It is to be noted that two of these publications, (a) and (c), have also included expositions that opposed Markan Priority. A further two books this century that reject the Markan Priority hypothesis are:

(e) *Why Four Gospels?* by David Alan Black (2001), expounding and developing Bernard Orchard's Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis, which identifies Mark as third-written;

(f) *One Gospel From Two* by David Peabody et al. (2002), a detailed exposition of the Two-Gospel case for Mark using Matthew and Luke.

These will each be discussed at the appropriate place in this and subsequent chapters. In particular, I will be noting in this chapter (in §5.3) the arguments now regarded in these books as the strongest for the Markan Priority position.

Here are the twenty-one arguments that have been advanced to support Markan Priority. In each case I commence with my summary of the argument, drawn from the writings of that argument's advocates, and I then give my examination and assessment of each one.

### 5.3 THE CASE FOR THE MARKAN PRIORITY VIEW

#### 5.3.1 Argument from Similarities

1. The Argument from Common Content
2. The Argument from Common Language
3. The Argument from Common Order

#### The General Argument:

"To a very considerable degree, the three Synoptic Gospels contain the same material, frequently written in the same language, with the blocks of material following one another in an order of arrangement that is to a large extent the same for all three (and Mark and at least one of Matthew and Luke are always in agreement in sequence). This indicates that Mark was written first and used by the others." (Streeter, 1924: 151, 159-162; Stonehouse, 1963: 57-77; Martin, 1975: 140; Barclay, 1975: 87-88; Kümmel, 1975: 57-61.)

#### Response:

This data certainly provides evidence for the conclusion that:

(a) There is **some** kind of written or literary interrelationship amongst the Synoptics, or between some of them, whereby one or two made use of either or both of the others; and

(b) In **some** sense, Mark is the middle link between the other two Synoptics.

Moreover, there is no doubt that the evidence is completely in accord with, and is explained by, the hypothesis of Markan Priority. But on the other hand it is completely incorrect to think that Markan Priority is the **only** hypothesis that will explain the

evidence. In fact, the evidence is consistent with **all four** of the major theories of literary interrelationship, and the numerous variations on these that have been proposed. Certainly these are not arguments **for** Markan Priority as **against** Markan Dependence, because these arguments equally support the Markan Dependence hypothesis. Indeed (as I shall set out in detail in Chapter Nine), the evidence from pericope order gives much stronger support to Markan Dependence; for Markan Priority must depend upon coincidence to account for the fact that it never happens that both Matthew and Luke desert Mark's order at the same point.

As I explain more fully later in this chapter, most (though not all) scholars who hold Markan Priority now accept that these first three arguments—as arguments for Markan Priority in distinction from other hypotheses—have been refuted effectively, originally by Chapman and Butler, and more recently by Farmer and his colleagues. Indeed, in Chapter Six I am going to lay claim to these arguments as providing evidence in support of Markan Dependence.

### 5.3.2 Argument from Improvements

4. The Argument from Use of the Historic Present
5. The Argument from Reduction of Redundancies
6. The Argument from Quoted Aramaic Words
7. The Argument from Use of Semitisms
8. The Argument from Improved Literary Style

#### The General Argument:

“Mark's Gospel is marked by a roughness of style and grammar, including awkward and ungrammatical sentences, and the frequent use of colloquial terms and words that belonged to vulgar speech, and of Aramaic words and Semitisms. Furthermore, Mark abounds in repetitions and redundancies. Sometimes when these various features are found in Mark they also occur in Matthew or Luke, but whenever there is a difference between Mark and one of the others, that other has the better Greek. That is to say, the Greek of Matthew and Luke, overall, is in all these respects better than that of Mark. It would be contrary to all analogy that well-written documents should be revised so as to produce a cruder one. Thus these features found in Mark indicate that his Gospel is the most primitive and (given that the existence of a literary relationship has been established) that it was used by Matthew and Luke. Thus Matthew and Luke have in large measure changed the colloquial or Semitic text of Mark into better Greek, and

done so in the same or similar ways, though on some occasions only one or the other of them make an improvement.” (Streeter, 1924: 152, 162-164; Martin, 1975: 140-141; Metzger, 1965: 81; Kümmel, 1975: 60; Guthrie, 1965: 126-127; Barclay, 1975: 88-89.)

#### 4. The Argument from Use of the Historic Present

This Argument is presented by Barclay (1975: 88) in these terms:

There are in Mark 151 examples of the historic present. Matthew retains only 21 of them, and Luke retains only one single instance. Matthew and Luke make more literary Mark's vivid colloquial style.

(The data has been set out and considered in Hawkins, 1909: 143-149; Sanders, 1969: 242-246; Guthrie, 1965: 126-127; Tuckett, 1983: 22-25.)

#### Response

It is misleading to imply that the use of the Historic Present is either poor Greek or an exclusively Markan feature. Hawkins (1909: 213) notes that there are 337 occurrences in the Septuagint, 232 of which occur in the four books 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, with the others spread thinly over the balance of the Old Testament. By comparison we may note that the New Testament occurrence of the Historic Present is: Matthew, 93; Mark, 151; Luke, 11; John, 162; Acts, 13. It is also frequent in Josephus and in the papyri. (These details are from Hawkins 1909: 143-149 and 213—he does not cite statistics for the other books of the New Testament.)

Now, the data given by Hawkins all indicates that some writers had a preference for using the Historic Present, and some had a tendency to avoid it, while some would use it from time to time in what they judged to be appropriate contexts (this comes out clearly from its occasional use in some Old Testament books in the Septuagint, where there is no question of borrowing from other Old Testament books). Moreover, some writers accept it in one context and reject it in another: thus Matthew uses it 15 times in parables and 78 other times; Luke uses it 5 times in parables and 6 other times; Mark uses it 151 times but never in a parable. (Hawkins 1909: 148-149) Matthew uses it 23 times when Mark does not (Sanders 1969: 242-246) and on a further 21 occasions Matthew agrees with Mark in using it.

Certain conclusions may reasonably be drawn:

The Historic Present is a colloquialism, more common in informal speech or writing than in more formal, literary works. In itself, use of the Historic Present is not evidence of an early document nor is its avoidance evidence of a later document. If one were to apply frequency of occurrence as a criterion of earliness to the occurrence of this idiom

in the Septuagint, the New Testament, the writings of Josephus, and the papyri, one would end up with totally ludicrous results. For example, Sanders (1969: 253) cites Cadbury's note (*The Making of Luke-Acts*, 174) that "Josephus frequently changed a past tense in 1 Maccabees to a historic present." This exactly parallels what is being postulated for Mark if he used Matthew and Luke, and it shows that this view is completely reasonable in the light of the use of the Historic Present in the first century. It is as logical to contend that use of the Historic Present shows Mark to be prior to Matthew and Luke, and thus to be their source, as to say that because Josephus has the Historic Present where 1 Maccabees has a past tense Josephus must be the source of 1 Maccabees.

The evidence simply does not support the contention that Matthew and Luke set out to improve Mark by changing the Historic Present. Matthew frequently (21 times—approximately 27% of his non-parable usage) contains the Historic Present at the same point as Mark has it; slightly more frequently (23 times—approximately 29.5% of his non-parable usage) Matthew has the Historic Present where Mark does not. Then Matthew has this idiom 15 times in parables, to Mark's nil usage. On the remaining occasions when Matthew uses the idiom, there is no Markan parallel. Luke has one use of the Historic Present paralleling Mark (Lk 8:49), and also uses it 5 times in parables (Mark, nil) and on 5 other occasions without direct Markan parallels, together with 13 times in Acts. It is inconsistent with the facts and unsustainable to assert that Matthew and Luke constantly correct Mark's use of the Historic Present in view of their own use of this idiom, as shown.

The data shows no clear correlation with any idea of sources, seeing that (on any source theory) sometimes the author retains the idiom from his source, sometimes he alters it, and sometimes he introduces it when his source does not have it.

On any theory of Synoptic relationships, Mark was free to use or not use the Historic Present on each occasion when the option arose, and that he did not always do so establishes only that while this was a usage he favoured, nonetheless it was a usage he was willing to employ or to refuse, as he chose. He was no more compelled to use it on all possible occasions than was the Septuagint translator of 1 Samuel (who also favoured the Historic Present). Each Synoptic author (independent of whether or not it was in his sources) used or changed the Historic Present according to his own judgement, on each occasion, as to what was appropriate.

## 5. The Argument from Reduction of Redundancies

“Mark's style is marked by repetition, and the habit of saying things twice. In such cases it not infrequently happens that Matthew retains one expression and Luke the other. On the Markan Priority hypothesis, this is due to Luke or Matthew, so to speak, tidying up the repetitions and redundancies in Mark.” (Hawkins, 1909: 125-126; Streeter, 1924: 163-164; Stonehouse, 1963: 81; Barclay, 1975: 89.)

### Response

Now, irrespective of the question of Synoptic interrelationships, it must be acknowledged that Mark **has** written his Gospel in this way. Therefore we must accept that Mark has something of a tendency towards being prolix. What is under consideration is

(a) whether this points to Markan Priority, on the basis of its being only (or better) explained upon the hypothesis that Mark wrote in this way entirely using his own material; or else

(b) whether, granted a tendency to fullness on Mark's part, it is possible that Mark, if writing third, would have been willing to include in his Gospel similar expressions taken from both Matthew and Luke where these each had analogous but not in fact identical wording.

A tendency to expansiveness of style, through redundancy or greater detail, is not an indicator of priority or posteriority in sequence, or earliness or lateness in date (as Sanders has demonstrated, 1969: 183-189; 269-271); it is an idiosyncrasy of a particular writer's own style.

That is to say, this feature does not point to Markan Priority, seeing that exactly the same kind of phenomenon would result if Mark were using Matthew and Luke and conflating them when they had similar expressions or points of detail in a given pericope. Thus there is no argument here supporting Markan Priority.

## 6. The Argument from Quoted Aramaic Words

“On eight occasions Mark preserves the original Aramaic words used by Jesus. Of these Luke has none, while Matthew contains only one, the name Golgotha (27:33), and in addition he substitutes the Hebrew words for the Aramaic in the cry from the cross, ‘Eloi, Eloi ...’ (Mt 27:46//Mk 15:34//Psalm 22:1). The priority of Mark is supported by the fact that this Gospel contains these Aramaic words, because the Synoptic evidence is more readily accountable on the supposition that they are original with Mark and were later omitted by Matthew and Luke, rather than that they are Markan additions, for Aramaic words would be more likely to be omitted from, rather than added to, an existing

source.” (Hawkins, 1909: 130; Streeter, 1924: 164; Guthrie, 1965: 127; Stonehouse, 1963: 82.)

## Response

The eight Aramaic expressions that occur in Mark are found in: 3:17; 5:41; 7:11; 7:34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22; 15:34—though not all of these are “the words of Jesus”, as Streeter has said they were.

It is noteworthy that:

(a) Mark always gives the Greek interpretation of the Aramaic expressions he uses—he does *not* presume that his readers will know them. Thus the expressions are introduced not because the readers are familiar with them, but for effect—that is, as part of Mark's art as a storyteller, to add extra vividness and verisimilitude to the story. This remains true wherever Mark is placed in the chain of Synoptic interrelationships.

(b) Mark does not only do this with Aramaic expressions: in 5:9 he gives a Latin word and its explanation in reporting what the demon-possessed man said: “My name is Legion, for we are many.” (This is paralleled in Luke 8:30.)

(c) John's Gospel similarly contains eight instances of expression-plus-translation (on eleven occasions); in: 1:38; 1:41 [= 4:24]; 1:42; 5:2; 9:7; 11:16 [= 20:24 and 21:2]; 19:13; 20:16. If the logic that makes Mark a primitive Gospel because of its use of Aramaic expressions is applied also to John, then that Gospel will need to be granted to share priority with Mark among the Gospels, since it similarly includes eight Aramaic words. (I do not know anyone who argues for the priority of John on this basis.)

(d) Matthew contains seven Hebrew/Aramaic expressions, two which are parallel with Mark (Matt 27:33//Mark 15:22; and Matt 27:46//Mark 15:34), and five others, one of which is translated (1:23, “Emmanuel”), with the remainder being left untranslated: 1:21 (where the point is that Jesus=Joshua=Saviour); 5:22 (“Raca”); 16:17 (“Bar-Jona”); 27:6 (“korbanan”). The fact that Matthew uses such words without giving their Greek interpretation weighs more heavily for Matthew's closer connection with the Aramaic origins of Christianity than does Mark's use of Aramaic words with their unfailing translation accompanying them.

(e) Parallels to Mark's (and John's) use of expression-plus-translation can also be found in the book of Acts, which we can note in: 1:19; 4:36; 9:36; 13:6-8. Another instance is the untranslated Aramaic expression in 1 Corinthians 16:22, “Marana tha” (“Our Lord, come”).

This survey of the data shows that Mark used Aramaic words as part of his storytelling technique, for additional impact and interest, helping to increase the vividness of his

account with these little details (as also with the multitude of other minor details which he similarly added). This explanation remains valid upon any hypothesis of Synoptic origins otherwise arrived at. It is a real leap of creative imagination to assert that this feature of Mark indicates that his Gospel is prior to Matthew.

## **7. The Argument from Use of Semitisms**

The argument can be stated thus:

“Semitic colouring in a Gospel narrative usually indicates a fairly early tradition. A scribe would not invent his own ‘Aramaisms’ (that is to say, the tradition did not tend to become more Semitic). There is a positive relationship between Semitisms and the antiquity of tradition. The one indicates the other. The natural tendency over time was to improve the Greek so that Semitisms that offended against good Greek would frequently be changed. Mark contains more such Semitisms than Matthew or Luke. This indicates the priority of Mark. That is to say: Matthew and Luke have frequently altered the popular and semitically-coloured text of Mark to better Greek in the same or in different ways.” (See the support that is given to this view which is listed by Sanders 1969: 190-209; 232-233.)

## **Response**

Sanders identified and investigated all the Semitisms to which scholars were referring. His study shows that this argument presumes either that the tendency of the tradition was to become less Semitic and to be written in better Greek (and he shows that this is in fact not always what happens) or that Matthew and Luke had the redactional tendency to avoid Semitisms while Mark had no redactional tendency to add them (233). But it is as valid to argue that Mark changed Matthew's Greek to his preferred style, or in order to reflect Peter's use of such Semitisms in his preaching, as that Matthew changed it the other way. We seem to be dealing here with the personal preferences of an author rather than a decisive proof of relative antiquity. (Sanders, 1969: 250.)

Moreover, the evidence concerning Semiticisms in general indicates that Matthew has the highest level of Semitisms in the New Testament, followed by Luke; Mark has only about 55% as many, proportionately, as in Matthew. It is thus very difficult to argue that Matthew and Luke had the redactional tendency of avoiding Semitisms. (Sanders, 254-255.)

Some of the apparent Semitisms of the New Testament may be, rather, the result of the influence of the Septuagint. It seems quite clear that some people did write Greek in



imitation of the Septuagint. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that Hebraisms in the Gospel tradition that may be paralleled more or less extensively in the Septuagint prove nothing about the antiquity of the traditions in which they occur. (Sanders, 1969: 199-202.)

A further complication is the possibility that Greek flavored with Semitisms may indicate not Aramaic sources but only the use of Jewish Greek. Some scholars are arguing on strictly linguistic grounds that biblical Greek is distinguishable from ordinary *koiné*, largely because of direct and indirect Semitic influences on it. (Sanders, 1969: 204f.)

There are good grounds to accept that the Greek in which John Mark was raised was, in Nigel Turner's phrase (1964: 45), "a living dialect of Jewish Greek", and, further, that Mark would have been directly influenced by the language of the Septuagint, the standard Bible of the early church. In addition, he had a noticeable preference, as Sanders's study shows, for writing in vernacular Greek, regularly using an abundance of colloquial constructions and expressions.

If then this was the dialect of Greek that Mark was ordinarily accustomed to use, we may reasonably expect that he would have written his Gospel in it irrespective of when he wrote or what sources he used. In other words, Mark's use of Matthew and Luke (if Mark drew his material from them) would **not** have resulted in such a transformation of his normal style that the absence of such a transformation can be argued as a proof of Markan Priority.

And of course, if indeed Mark was basing his writing upon the preaching of Peter, what we are seeing in his Gospel may be, simply, more a reflection of Peter's preaching than of Mark's distinctive style.

## 8. The Argument from Improved Literary Style

"Mark's Gospel is frequently characterized by poor style: the use of slang expressions and of words condemned by the Greek grammarians, the occurrence of Latinisms and redundant double negatives, unusual words, difficult constructions, and harsh syntax. It is inconceivable that Mark would revise an earlier Gospel or Gospels so as to deliberately introduce poor grammar or replace good literary Greek with colloquialisms and infelicities of expression. It is not merely conceivable but highly probable that Matthew and Luke, finding these elements in the Gospel in front of them, would take the opportunity of improving the Greek in that Gospel." (Allen, 1907: xix-xxx; Hawkins, 1909: 141f.; Streeter, 1924: 162-164; Barclay, 1975: 88; Guthrie, 1965: 126-127; Metzger, 1965: 81.)

## Response

In the form in which it can be expressed, this argument sounds very convincing. Who indeed would revise a document so as to make it ungrammatical? On what grounds could we deny that the better wording would be the later wording? So, given the existence of a literary interrelationship between Mark and the other two Synoptics, this factor shows which direction it operated. Yet this argument is based on presuppositions that are not examined and that if examined can be seen to be incapable of bearing the weight placed upon them. In particular:

The first presupposition is that, if Mark is writing second or third, he is engaged in “revising” the earlier Gospel or Gospels. There is absolutely no necessity, either upon the Successive Dependence or Markan Dependence views, to believe that Mark had any such purpose. He is using one or both of the other Gospels as a source upon which to draw. And to an extent that he himself decided, he altered the wording in the material taken from his source(s) in line with what he saw as his purpose in writing, and (inevitably) in accordance with his own habitual way of using Greek.

But the more probable explanation is that in this particular Mark was reflecting the “slang expressions” etc. (read “colloquial language”) of his third source, Peter.

The second presupposition is that in Matthew and Luke we **do** have better Greek than in Mark, so that they consistently “correct” Mark's “errors”. The impression frequently given in the stating of this argument is that Mark is often insensitive to good Greek style and vocabulary, and that Matthew and Luke, who **are** sensitive to such matters, make the requisite alterations to Mark whenever they come across this “poor Greek” in using Mark's Gospel as their source.

The facts of the case are rather different from the impression that this presentation creates. It is simply not accurate to state that Matthew and Luke have “better Greek” whenever Mark has “poor Greek”. This generalization is a tendentious distortion of the evidence. Matthew and Luke (and other New Testament writings) will be found to contain most of the types of “poor Greek” that is detected in Mark. Now, Matthew and Luke do not contain **as many instances** of this “poor Greek” as Mark, so that to that extent it is legitimate to make the generalization that they write “better Greek”, but this quite misses the point. They cannot be regarded as being opposed to the type of Greek usages in question if they are willing upon occasion to take over these usages from Mark (upon the presuppositions of the Markan Priority view) and if also **they themselves** introduce some of them into their Gospels without finding them in Mark—as indeed is the case.

We can thus see that it is not a case of wrong Greek being corrected, but of personal

preference, so that sometimes the Synoptists use these words or ways of writing and sometimes they do not, and Mark has a greater preference for them or likelihood of using them than the others. Thus it is not a matter of black and white, a case of right and wrong Greek, but a question of **degree** of usage of various idioms.

The third presupposition is that (to some extent anyway) Mark's Greek actually is "poor Greek". This categorization of Mark's style begs the whole question. Mark's Gospel is in fact written in the Greek that was regularly spoken by the people of his day. Streeter was more accurate (1924: 163) in his description of it as **spoken Greek** in contradistinction to the written or literary Greek of Matthew and Luke; I have earlier discussed quite fully (in §3.8) the recognized difference between spoken and written language. Mark wrote in very colloquial Greek and the Major Synoptists wrote in Greek that was a little more formal.

### Summary and Assessment of Arguments 4-8

Considered all in all, the data shows conclusively that Mark has a different style from that of the other two Synoptists, and there is scope for examining more fully what may be the significance of those differences. In particular they show a preference on Mark's part for a less formal, more colloquial way of writing—that is, as Streeter himself noted, for a spoken rather than a literary style.

All of the so-called "improvements" in Matthew and Luke over Mark are ultimately related to his difference in style of expression. The foregoing "Argument from Improvements" is based, as we have seen, upon the assumption that a later document must be couched in "better" Greek than an earlier document, especially if the two stand in some kind of literary relationship. But this is a prejudicial misstatement of the position. Once the real nature of the stylistic difference between the Synoptics is recognized, and once the role of Peter's preaching as Mark's third source is taken into account also, the question at issue can be rephrased thus: "Is it possible that a more colloquial, more vernacular, document is earlier, or is later, than a more formal, more literary document?"

And the answer is: It could be either. After examining these issues at some length, Sanders states firmly (1969: 253, 255):

It is not intrinsically more likely that Matthew and Luke avoided the vernacular than that Mark courted it. ... It certainly suited Mark's redactional style to write vernacular Greek more than it did the style of Matthew and Luke, but we cannot thereby prove Mark to be the earliest of the Gospels.

The Markan Dependence view sees Mark as replacing the somewhat more academic

literary language of his predecessors with starker, more abrupt and more striking “street talk”. His Gospel is written to speak the language of his audience and to jolt them and get their attention. And also as part of this conscious and deliberate transformation process Mark was inserting into Matthew and Luke that host of minor (usually insignificant) detail that is so much a recognized feature of his Gospel.

A very significant number of the differences between Mark on the one hand and Matthew and Luke on the other can be seen to be exactly this kind of situation: that is, as Mark having in front of him the more literary language of Matthew and Luke, and changing it to the format of the spoken word:

• choosing the more down-to-earth colloquial word alternative;

• changing the longer and more subordinating grammatical construction of the written language to the simpler paratactic format that is customary in speech.

What was Mark’s source for this? The tradition of the early church Fathers explains the answer: Mark’s knowledge of the preaching of Peter. In the vast majority of the places where we can see Mark departing from the wording and structure of Matthew or Luke, we can hear the voice of Peter. This, in fact, is what we would deduce from the testimony of the Fathers. And of course it is from Peter that Mark has received all his small additions (that look so much like eye-witness details—because they are!).

I cannot totally exclude the possibility that on occasion Mark himself is the source of various such changes that he makes to the particular wording or structure of Matthew or Luke—yes, this may well be the case. But if and where it is so, Mark has made such modifications using exactly the same vernacular style so that there is a large measure of consistency in his procedure.

Why would he do such a thing? We can recognize two reasons.

The first is because of his initial, immediate audience. Again, the church Fathers fill the gap in our knowledge about this. We are told that Mark was responding to requests from those who had heard Peter’s preaching. So it was Peter’s preaching that is the hallmark of Mark’s style.

But there would be a second and wider audience for his Gospel: those preachers of the new faith who wanted—and needed—an economical copy of the *kerygma* they were to preach, drawn from the accounts in Matthew and Luke but cast in the everyday colloquial speech of those they were seeking to reach. That is, a “preacher’s Gospel” for missionary and evangelistic work.

Thus the Argument from Improvements is without substance. In fact, it is quite misconceived. The way in which this argument is framed indeed makes it appear logical

and reasonable. When one penetrates behind the form of words to the actual substance of the argument, one finds that it lacks any real basis.

In reality, it is grounded upon assumptions that are totally subjective and quite out of touch with the actualities of the real world. Whenever the youth speaker chooses to speak in the style and language of his church youth group, or the Sunday School teacher breaks down the Bible story to the level of understanding of young children, or the preacher explains a theological concept in terms appropriate to his congregation, they will produce (in relation to questions of grammar, vocabulary, and literary style) something that stands in the same relation to their sources as does Mark to Matthew and Luke. To accept the Argument from Improvements would be to reject out of hand without reason (and certainly without arguing the case) the possibility that Mark may have intended to do something along exactly these lines, as discussed in Chapter Three, §3.8.

### 5.3.3 Argument from Doctrinal Modifications

- 9. The Argument from Increased Reverence for Jesus
- 10. The Argument from Increased Respect for the Disciples
- 11. The Argument from Increased Doctrinal Sophistication

#### The General Argument

There is, the argument goes, a considerable body of evidence in Mark to indicate that this Gospel is primitive, and thus earlier than the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This evidence thus offers strong support for the Markan Priority hypothesis.

### 9. The Argument from Increased Reverence for Jesus

Hawkins (1909: 117-121) lists 26 “passages seeming (a) to limit the power of Jesus Christ, or (b) to be otherwise derogatory to, or unworthy of, Him”. These include such passages as Mark 1:32-34 which records that the people brought to Jesus *all* who were sick and Jesus healed *many*, whereas in Mt 8:16 (Lk 4:40) they brought to him *many* and he healed them *all*. In Mark, Jesus is almost never referred to as Lord; in Matthew and Luke this is common. In Mark, Jesus is at times unable to perform miracles (6:5), uses “means” in performing a miracle (7:32-37; 8:22-26), and sighs as if the miracle is making tremendous demands upon him (8:12). Moreover, in Mark a miracle may be gradual or in stages (8:22-26; 11:20), whereas in Matthew (and Luke), Jesus’s miracles are always instantaneous, and complete. In Mark, the language sometimes suggests that there were things that Jesus wanted to do and could not carry out; this suggestion is

removed in the other Synoptists. Mark alone refers to Jesus as being angry, and portrays him with a full range of human feelings and emotions. “Matthew and Luke are much less willing than Mark to show Jesus in the grip of strong emotion” (Barclay, 1975: 91).

## Response

There are a number of occasions when the evidence has not been fairly presented and the conclusion that is drawn does not follow at all, and is not valid. For example, the contrast made between Jesus healing *many*, and Jesus healing *all* has ignored Mk 1:33, which gives the total group from whom Jesus healed *many* (it was “the whole city” and not the total number who were sick: the others were not healed because *they were not ill*). In other passages the idea that Matthew and/or Luke has a wording that shows a greater reverence for Jesus than that of Mark hardly appears justified upon a comparison of the Synoptics, and this higher degree of reverence must be conceded to lie in the mind of the beholder.

But there are other passages that do (or, may) exhibit the characteristics asserted of them. Granted for the sake of discussion that all this is so, on what basis is it possible to say that this demonstrates the priority of Mark?

This “demonstration” of Markan Priority is based upon the assumption that the wording in Matthew and/or Luke is “due to an increasing feeling of reverence for the person of Christ” (Allen 1907: xxxi), which is seen as pointing to the primitiveness of Mark’s Gospel, and to Matthew and Luke having altered it in writing their own. This assumption is unsupported by the presentation of any evidence.

It is equally possible that the difference in perspective about the person of Jesus (to the extent that it can be shown to exist between Mark and the other Synoptists) is a consequence of Mark’s own purpose in writing—his intention of showing Jesus to be a *genuine man*—and of a deliberate desire to recapture the feeling of questioning uncertainty that existed, during the period of which Mark writes, about who (and what) Jesus really was, and thus to avoid the anachronism of reading back into the days of Jesus’s earthly ministry the insights of the church’s post-Easter faith. I have discussed this at length in Chapter Three, §3.4.

The question of Mark’s purpose in writing requires careful consideration, but it can be noted here that the “greater reverence for the person of Jesus” in Matthew and Luke, to the extent to which it does exist (and this seems to be considerably exaggerated by some writers) can quite easily have co-existed with the desire of a different author—Mark—to show Jesus as a man, and to present him as he was seen by his contemporaries during the time of his earthly ministry.

The assumption that a document showing a “greater reverence for Jesus” than that found in another document must be later than that other document remains an **assumption** unsupported by evidence, and moreover an assumption that makes no allowance for difference of theological perspective and purpose in writing between different Gospel writers.

## 10. The Argument from Increased Respect for the Disciples

Hawkins (1909: 121-122) lists seven Markan “Passages seeming to disparage the attainments or character of the Apostles”, and a further nine are given by Allen (1907: xxxiif.), to which another is added by Metzger (1965: 81). The 17 Markan passages to which these authors refer are: Hawkins, 4:13; 4:38; 5:31; 6:51; 8:17-18; 9:38; 10:35; Allen, 4:30; 8:29; 9:5; 9:19; 9:13; 9:32; 9:33-34; 9:35; 14:40; Metzger, 14:71.

### Response

Again (as we saw also for Argument 9, above) the Synoptic data is not always fairly presented by exponents of this view. In particular, they regularly fail to mention that, if this explanation is adopted, then Matthew and Luke must be seen as completely inconsistent in the matter. There are many passages in which Matthew or Luke or both have recorded material which is hardly to the credit of the Twelve, and this evidence must be taken into consideration in deciding whether the Synoptic data as a whole establishes that Matthew and Luke are following a policy of altering Mark so as not to speak disparagingly of the Apostles. It is certainly relevant also that there exist quite a few passages which could be employed, on the basis of the same arguments that are used to establish that the disciples are being favoured, to show that Mark is softening or suppressing unfavourable Matthean reference to the disciples.

The following passages could be read as illustrative of Matthew’s or Luke’s willingness to record stories or saying that are in rebuke of or unfavorable to the disciples, or could be seen to disparage their attainments or character: Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 15:16-17; 16:8-12; 16:21-23; 17:16-20; 18:1-3; 19:25-27; 20:20-28; 26:31-35; 26:36-45; 26:56; 26:69-75; Luke 8:25; 9:40-41; 9:45; 9:46-48; 9:49-50; 9:54-55; 18:26-28; 18:31-34; 22:24; 22:31-34; 22:38; 22:39-46; 22:56-62; 24:25; 24:38-41.

But even if granting the basic proposition of this argument, that Matthew and Luke show overall a more respectful attitude to the disciples than Mark, the question remains, How is this clear evidence that Mark was first and was used by Matthew and Luke?

Barclay, who earlier (1975: 89-90) had set out this Argument from Increased Respect, shows (1975: 122) that it may not be the only explanation for the data: Mark may have

had his own reasons for his “less reverential” treatment of Peter and the other Apostles.

Barclay's comments here are well justified. This argument for Markan Priority is predicated entirely upon the supposition that a less reverential attitude to the apostles would be found in an earlier document, and a more reverential attitude in a later document—as Barclay put it earlier (1975: 90), “Mark, the argument is, is telling the story simply and naturally, writing in the days before reverential conventions had got into the church; Matthew and Luke are writing in a day when the apostles had become the legendary princes of the church.”

First of all it must be pointed out that there is **no evidence** from any study of comparative data upon which such an argument can be founded; this progressive increase in “reverentialness” is an **assumption** of the proponents of this argument, who regard it as self-evident that such a heightening of reverence over time is more probable than any alternative. An assumption about something is not evidence that it is so or even that it is probable.

Secondly, it is assumed that it is an attitude in the church as a whole (as distinct from an attitude on the part of an author, or a purpose by the author in relation to this matter) that determines how reverential a given Gospel will be. This, together with the first assumption, means that the attitude of the church as a whole became more reverential over time, and that this attitude at a given point in time was accurately reflected in a Gospel written at that point in time. This assumption is unrealistic—it allows no room for the possibility that one author may differ from another in the degree of “reverentialness” in his attitude or the possibility that he may have his own reasons for the degree of “reverentialness” that he wishes to introduce into his Gospel.

Thirdly, it is contradictory of all that we know of early church history to believe that by the time Mark wrote (the earliest date for which, on the standard view, would be about AD 65, about the time of the death of Peter), there would **not** be the kind of respect for the apostles supposedly found in Matthew and Luke and supposedly not found in Mark. In other words, if Mark wrote in AD 65 or later, that he is not reflecting the respect for the apostles that was then to be found in the church. Therefore if the argument is to have any validity at all, the date for the writing of Mark will have to be brought forward into the very early years of the Christian church. And even then its validity would remain highly questionable. Rather (as I explain more fully in §3.8), Mark's presentation of the disciples as they were before the Resurrection and Pentecost contrasts sharply with what his readers know of them at the time he wrote, and underlines dramatically the difference that faith in the risen Jesus brings about in a person.

Fourthly, it is not in fact our experience of documents outside the New Testament



(whether in the early church or today; whether in the field of religion or any other field) that they can be ranked chronologically according to degree of respect shown towards Christ, or the apostles, or important people about whom they write (as the case may be). Thus it is not realistic to expect that this could be done this with the Synoptic Gospels.

### 11. The Argument from Increased Doctrinal Sophistication

Hawkins (1909: 122-125) lists seventeen Markan “Passages which might cause offence or difficulty”, and Allen (1907: xxxiv) cites numbers of alterations that were made to Mark, in his judgement, for doctrinal reasons. Numerous other authors have also written about the alterations that they believe Matthew and Luke have made to the text of Mark when drawing upon it as a source, alterations which reflect an increased doctrinal sophistication.

#### Response

Examination of these passages shows that most of them do not actually provide evidence to support the contention of increased doctrinal sophistication, but that even if it could be established that such a difference exists between Mark and the others, this does not establish or even support Markan Priority because, on this argument, Matthew and Luke would have modified their source in this direction ***whatever that source had been***. Thus this does not point specifically to Mark as the source. The “argument” is really an ***explanation*** of the Synoptic data offered from the perspective of Markan Priority.

#### Summary and Assessment of Arguments 9-11

All these “arguments” provide a reasonable (although not the only) basis upon which certain features of the Synoptics could be explained if ***on other grounds*** the Markan Priority theory had been demonstrated. They do not in themselves provide evidence to support that theory, nor do they offer any evidence that precludes the alternative explanation.

This is that the features of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke represent attitudes that those Synoptists men brought to their writing, while Mark on the other hand could have had an independent attitude that expressed itself in a different treatment of Jesus in recording his earthly life, in a less reverential attitude to the disciples, and in a simpler theological approach. And, with a different attitude in this way, Mark could be contemporaneous with Matthew and Luke, or writing before them, or writing after them. The correlation between his attitude and his priority to Matthew and Luke has not been established.

### 5.3.4 Argument from Patristic Evidence

#### 12. The Argument from Papias Putting Mark First

In his comments upon the writings of Matthew and Mark, Papias mentions Mark first and at greater length, and then adds a short comment about *ta logia* written by Matthew. It has been urged by some scholars that Papias's comment is referring to the writing of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and that the order Mark-Matthew that he gives provides support for the view that Mark was written first. Why otherwise should he mention Mark first?

This interpretation of Papias has been taken further by Gundry (1982: 613-614), who analyzes the report in Eusebius 3.39.15-16 concerning what Papias recorded of what the Elder said concerning Mark and Matthew. Gundry then (620) summarizes this in the conclusion "That the elder makes Matthew write after Mark and in view of Mark".

#### Response:

Gundry's argument depends totally upon the significance of οὐν, *therefore*, in Eusebius 3.39.16. His interpretation of οὐν is far from obvious and far from certain, and is a very tenuous thread from which to hang such a conclusion as Gundry does.

And even if we were to go the whole way with Gundry and accept that Papias was conveying, and was intending to convey, that our canonical Mark was written before our canonical Matthew, we then have just one testimony from the early Fathers to this sequence, and it is indeed a lone voice in advocating that order of writing. All other patristic testimony (commencing with that of Clement of Alexandria, who stated he was recording specifically what he was told by the early Elders who were before him) places Matthew's writing earlier than that of Mark.

#### 13. The Argument from the Petrine Origin of Mark

Stoldt points out (1980, 185) that belief in "the Petrine origin of the second Gospel" was the "cornerstone of their source theory" for the early exponents of Markan Priority (for the full argument, see his chapter 11, "Proof from Petrine Origin").

#### Response

This belief in "Petrine origin" is based on the statements of Papias, together with those of the later Fathers who wrote along the same lines. Some scholars reject the evidence of Papias as worthless, and take the other Fathers to be simply echoing Papias. Griesbach himself was rather dismissive of the patristic testimony about Peter's relationship to Mark's Gospel, but he acknowledged (1978: 134) that Peter could have been a third source (with Matthew and Luke) for Mark's Gospel:

This one thing can perhaps be conceded, namely that Mark received from Peter the circumstantial details with which he enriched throughout the narratives of Luke and Matthew, although even this is not quite certain, for they could also be derived from another source.

Farmer holds a similar position to Griesbach, acknowledging the possible role of Peter as a source for Mark's Gospel.

Thus we may state the point at issue: There is no doubt whatsoever that the patristic testimony that Peter's preaching was a source for Mark's writing is totally consistent with the Markan Priority hypothesis. But there is good reason from the Markan Dependence perspective for recognizing the existence, for Mark, of a third source, Peter alongside Matthew and Luke. When the patristic testimony attributes a role to Peter as source for Mark in writing his Gospel; it does not require that Peter was Mark's **sole** source so as to exclude the possibility that he had also known and used the earlier Gospels of Matthew and Luke as well.

The recognition of the role of Peter behind Mark does not conflict with Markan Dependence. On the contrary: throughout this entire dissertation I contend very strongly for this recognition of Peter as the third source for Mark, because the evidence of the language and purpose and occasion and rationale of Mark's Gospel points to the role of Peter. This is discussed in particular in §3.8.

Our conclusion then must be that if indeed Peter's preaching is reflected in Mark's Gospel, this is completely consistent with **both** the Markan Priority and Markan Dependence hypotheses, and favours neither against the other. But from the perspective of Markan Dependence, a great many of the features of Mark's Gospel are more easily explained when the influence of Peter's preaching on Mark is recognized.

### 5.3.5 Argument from Statistics

#### 14. The Argument from Statistics

A new type of argument for Markan Priority emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, which utilizes modern statistical method and (in recent decades) enlists the support of computer-aided research. This argument may be presented, in summary, as: "A statistical analysis of the Synoptic data supports the view that Mark's Gospel was used as a source by Matthew and Luke."

The three most thorough statistical analyses of the Synoptic data are those of de Solages (1959 and 1973), Honoré (1968) and Morgenthaler (1971).

De Solages was answered in careful detail in the perceptive comments of Farmer

(1964: 197-198). Honoré's research was published in *Novum Testamentum* in 1968. Honoré's methodology has been considered by David Wenham (1972: 17), who points to fundamental weaknesses in Honoré's presentation. In particular, Honoré's work proceeds from some assumptions about what an author would and would not do in using other writings as his sources. These assumptions are demonstrably inapplicable in the case of the Synoptic Gospels, and therefore his conclusions about order of writing and dependence are invalid.

Morgenthaler's *Synoptic Statistics (Statistische Synopse)* (1971) also uses statistical analysis of the Synoptic Gospels as a basis for resolving the Synoptic Problem, and also concludes that such statistical analysis supports Markan priority. Morgenthaler's work has been carefully and quite fully reviewed and analyzed by Farmer (1973). In his assessment, Farmer shows that Morgenthaler has not found any support in his statistical analysis for his preference for the Markan Priority theory over that of Griesbach.

## **Response**

There are two characteristics in common between the approach of the three researchers, de Solages, Honoré and Morgenthaler, though these characteristics may be true of them to slightly differing extents: firstly, they have not fully understood the arguments of Griesbach's position in their rejection of it, and secondly, what their statistics have shown is that Mark is in some sense (which ultimately the statistical approach cannot further clarify) the middle term between Matthew and Luke. Having rejected the Markan Dependence explanation from their consideration (and certainly being unaware of how it accounts for the data), they then find that Markan Priority is the best explanation of that data. But severe methodological weaknesses totally vitiate their conclusion. They have not produced any basis for judging the Markan Priority Hypothesis to be a better explanation of the data than Markan Dependence.

In Chapter Four I have made extensive use of the statistics compiled by these Synoptic Statisticians, and as we examine the figures set out there, we can see that not only do these statistics lend no support at all to the theory of Markan Priority, but they give a solid foundation for many of the conclusions that I reach in this dissertation.

### **5.3.6 Argument from Direction Indicators**

#### **The General Argument**

At most, the foregoing arguments yield probabilities (as Gospel scholars acknowledge). Synoptic scholars have been seeking therefore a line of argument that is non-reversible, independent of subjective judgement, demonstrable in easily understandable

terms—a line of argument, that is, that relates to factors in the text of the Synoptics that can give a clear indication of the direction in which copying has occurred. There are six arguments sometimes suggested as providing definite direction indicators of this sort:

15. The Argument from Additions in Matthew
16. The Argument from Doublets
17. Mistakes Made by Matthew and/or Luke in Using Mark
18. Mistakes in Mark Corrected by Matthew and/or Luke
19. The Use of Old Testament Passages Indicating That Mark is Prior
20. The Freshness and Circumstantial Character of Mark

### 15. The Argument from Additions in Matthew

Styler (1962: 232) comments,

There are also some narrative additions in Matt. which seem to stem from later apologetic, or even from the stock of legendary accretions which are evident in the apocryphal Gospels. ... The judgement that Matt.'s narratives are late, and sometimes close to the legendary, must be given full weight.

The essence of this argument is that a significant part of Matthew's unique material consists of “legendary accretions” that by their nature indicate a late date. As they are not found in Mark, therefore Mark must be earlier than Matthew. This thus indicates the direction of copying between Matthew and Mark.

### Response

This argument from what is omitted in Mark and inserted in Matthew is very precarious even on its own terms. It must assume that Mark remained unaware of any of the material in question, because if he had known of this material and had omitted it from his Gospel as the result of a deliberate act of selection, then he could have chosen to act that way whether he knew of it from tradition in the early church or from reading it in Matthew. In other words, its absence from Mark might tell us something about what Mark had in mind in making his choice of material, but ***it would tell us nothing*** about whether he knew Matthew or not.

But the basic suppositions of the argument cannot be so quickly accepted as self-evident. The argument is in fact rooted in subjective scepticism. It flows from an opinion that certain material in Matthew is “later apologetic, or even from the stock of legendary accretions”. Even if, as an alternative, one were to hold instead the opinion that Matthean elements could be, say, “early apologetic”, this argument for Markan Priority is undercut. And if one accepts the miraculous and supernatural element in the Gospels as

a part of the authentic Jesus-tradition that goes back to the actual lifetime of Jesus himself, then this “argument” no longer exists. Thus the “argument” flows from a **theological attitude** towards material in the Synoptic texts rather than from the material itself.

One could just as easily (and with as little objective justification) decide that certain elements in Mark's unique material should be categorized as “later apologetic” or “legendary accretions” and then this Gospel be designated “late” and on this basis assigned to a time after the writing of Matthew. Such views—whichever way they go—are **subjective opinions**. But such opinions have no validity as arguments for a hypothesis. The opinions of Styler (and any who follow a similar line) about the “later apologetic” or “legendary” nature of some of Matthew's unique material offer no argument in support of Markan Priority.

## 16. The Argument from Doublets

The argument from doublets takes this form: “Passages that occur in Matthew and/or Luke in material that is paralleled in Mark and that then occur a second time in passages that do not have a Markan parallel show that they have two sources, one of which is Mark and the other Q, and this in turn points to the priority of Mark and the Two-Source hypothesis.”

Stoldt comments (1980: 173), “Since the time of Christian Herman Weisse, the proof from doublets has constituted the main proof for the two-source theory.”

## Response

This argument has been convincingly refuted by Stoldt in his examination of the “Proof from Doublets” (his Chapter Ten—see especially 173-174, 179, 182, 184), where he shows that what can be elicited from the argument from doublets depends in considerable measure upon how one draws the definition for a doublet. Stoldt provides examples where advocates proceed in such a way that “doublets which support the Two-Source theory are explained by the Two-Source theory, and doublets which do not are explained away.” Stoldt's assessment is (184) “that the proof from doublets does not stand the test”.

The argument from doublets does not support the Two- Source Hypothesis. If one knew **on other grounds** that Mark was the source for Matthew and Luke, one could proceed to explain that “doublets” could be included as one of the “indications for the Q source” (to quote Neiryneck 1984). But then if one knew on other grounds that Mark was third, not first (i.e., Markan Dependence), then the “doublets” would be easily accommodated on that view. Thus as they fit in readily with either hypothesis, doublets do not

constitute an argument for the Two-Source view.

### 17. Mistakes Made by Matthew and/or Luke in Using Mark

Styler (1962: 228-229) has written,

In some passages Mark is suggestive but obscure, and Matt.'s parallel looks like an attempt to leave the reader with an edifying message; but we are left with the suspicion that Matt. has not penetrated to the real sense.

### Response

Styler examines a number of passages that he identifies as places where Matthew has made mistakes of various kinds. For Styler, the explanation of Matthew's account in such pericopes is to be found in Matthew's misunderstandings of Mark, his errors, and his forgetfulness. Styler clearly considers that Matthew is quite a dimwit: not only does Matthew repeatedly misunderstand Mark (228), not only does his handling of Mark's account of John's fate call forth Styler's comment "But this must be an error" (229), but Matthew wants (for some reason that Styler does not explain) to prevent it being known that he is familiar with Mark's version of the story and he cannot even manage this successfully—"at 14:9 Matt. betrays the fact that he really knows the full version by slipping in the statement that 'the king' was sorry" (229).

And to cap it all Matthew is so incompetent an author that when "Mark quite properly finishes the story, and then resumes his main narrative with a jump, Matt., failing to remember that it was a 'retrospect', makes a smooth transition to the narrative which follows" (229): Matthew cannot remember he has been telling a flashback even though "Mark quite properly finishes the story, and then resumes his main narrative" and he—Matthew—***has Mark's narrative right in front of him as his source!***

Mark has a connected, coherent context for his stories of 1:21-39—together they comprise "A memorable day in Capernaum", all taking place within a twenty-four hour period. This is what Matthew has done with these Markan stories:

	MARK	MATTHEW
Jesus goes to Capernaum	1:21a	4:13
Jesus enters the synagogue on the Sabbath	1:21b	omitted
Astonishment at his teaching with authority	1:22	7:28-29
Jesus heals the demoniac in the synagogue	1:23-28	omitted
Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law	1:29-31	8:14-15
Jesus heals the sick at nightfall	1:32-34	8:16-17
Jesus prays alone	1:35-38	omitted

Jesus begins his first preaching tour of Galilee                      1:39                      4:23

Mark's next story (1:40-45E, Jesus cleanses a leper) is given by Matthew at 8:1-4, and the following Markan story (2:1-12, Jesus heals a paralytic) he places at 9:1-8. Styler does not notice (or if he does, he does not mention) that ***all these pericopes are paralleled in Luke in exactly the same sequence*** so that all that is found in Mark is accounted for completely by the Markan Dependence explanation: "Mark here followed Luke for what he included".

Rather, the logical order and coherence of Mark's first chapter shows (according to Styler's argument) that ***Mark's*** is the original account, and that it is Matthew who has split this up and spread the component pericopes around in other contexts. Yet the orderliness of the Sermon on the Mount is seen (by others) as an argument for the fact that Matthew's account is secondary to Luke, who has much of this material scattered in smaller fragments. That is, when Matthew is fragmented and disorderly in comparison with Mark, this indicates that Matthew is secondary to Mark; and when Matthew is more orderly and more tightly-knit than Luke, this indicates that Matthew is secondary to Luke!

Thus, no matter which one is fragmented and which one is orderly – whatever the data – it can be interpreted in the way that will support your presuppositions.

### 18. Mistakes in Mark Corrected by Matthew and/or Luke

To summarize this line of argument: "On several occasions Mark makes mistakes that are corrected in Matthew and/or Luke. This indicates that Mark's Gospel was first and was used by Matthew and Luke." (Hawkins, 1909: 122; Allen, 1907: xxxv, "changes made for the sake of greater accuracy"; Styler, 1962: 228-229)

### Response

To consider the implications of these last two arguments: When Mark is wrong and Matthew and Luke do not contain the mistake, this proves Markan Priority. But when Matthew or Luke is wrong, and Mark does not contain the mistake, this proves Markan Priority. When Mark has a better structure and context than Matthew or Luke, this proves Markan Priority. And then when Matthew or Luke has a better structure or context than Mark, this proves Markan Priority.

What sort of an argument is that? Can there be ***any*** situation affecting Mark—where this Gospel is better or worse or more correct or less correct than the others—that could indicate that Mark could be other than prior? This approach to establishing a direction-of-copying from the "direction indicators" of the Synoptic Gospels shows traces of a "heads I win, tails you lose" philosophy. Where are the objective criteria upon the basis of which



it can be said that this characteristic or that feature indicates priority or posteriority?

The whole concept of mistakes that are being corrected or introduced appears, like beauty, to lie in the eye of the beholder. As we have seen in considering the issues, other factors are involved that provide a more probable explanation than these arguments presume. In the one case where a genuine problem does exist (Mark's Abiathar comment; 2:26), the Markan Priority hypothesis does not resolve it: if Matthew and Luke had encountered the comment in Mark and considered it to be wrong, they could have altered the wording in very simple fashion to make what they judged to be the correction needed; total excision of the whole remark was not requisite. Moreover, there is no reason why Mark could not have inserted this comment into his text if he wrote *after* Matthew and Luke. Thus there is no support in this whole line of argument for the Markan Priority Hypothesis.

### **19. The Use of Old Testament Passages Indicating that Mark is Prior**

The argument asserts that the form of Old Testament quotations in the Synoptics points to Markan priority. Concerning Matthew, Hawkins (1909: 154) says,

It has often been noticed that the quotations which are introduced by the Evangelist himself agree much less closely with the LXX than those which occur in the course of the common narrative.

Hawkins follows this with a series of tables classifying the Matthean quotations and comparing Matthew's wording with the Septuagint, setting out the evidence for this statement, from which he draws this cautious conclusion (156):

This is a very broad distinction, and such as suggests *prima facie* that we have before us the work of more than one author or editor.

That is, that the "common narrative" quotations and the other quotations in Matthew come from different authors/editors. The argument is summed up thus by Wenham (1972: 12):

[It] depends on observations about the use of the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel, and in particular on the observation that those quotations which Matthew has in common with Mark are distinct from his quotations in all other parts of his Gospel. Whereas the quotations in Matthew's Q and M material are sometimes close to the LXX, sometimes not very close, and sometimes quite remote from it, the Marcan quotations stand out as being consistently close to the Septuagintal form. Not surprisingly the distinctiveness of this particular group of quotations has been taken to be an indication of Matthew's use of Mark.

## Response

The danger with a generalization that sums up all the instances of a category (here, Old Testament citations in the Synoptics) is that it can so easily oversimplify a situation to the point where distinguishing features of differing aspects of that situation can be ignored, and thus their significance overlooked.

Gundry has published a very detailed study of *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel*; his examination shows (1975: 147-150) that the foregoing generalization is **too** general. Rather, the data must more accurately be stated thus: Mark does not parallel any of Matthew's editorially-inserted quotations or "formula quotations" (with the single exception of Mk 1:2-3); where he does parallel Matthew in giving an Old Testament quotation, that quotation is spoken by one of the participants in the narrative and is integral to the narrative and therefore normally could not be omitted without losing something of (often, the whole of) the point being made by the pericope.

The data is readily explicable from the Markan Dependence perspective. Mark, writing for a predominantly Gentile audience, is not as greatly concerned as Matthew with the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy as such; therefore he does not take over any of these quotations from Matthew, with one exception (1:2-3), which he places as the introduction to his entire Gospel. The only Old Testament quotations he uses are those that are integral to pericopes that he plans to include and that come into his text **as part of** that particular pericope, and spoken by the participants in that pericope.

Thus this apparently unidirectional argument supporting Markan Priority turns out upon more careful examination to be considerably less than conclusive. Markan Dependence can equally well account for the data, and in some respects—it may be thought—can in fact account for it better. Actually, the special features of his sole editorially-inserted quotation (1:2-3) constitute strong evidence for Markan Dependence—see Chapter Seven, §7.17 (a).

## 20. Freshness and Circumstantial Character of Mark

Styler (1962: 230) has written,

Of all the arguments for the priority of Mark, the strongest is that based on the freshness and circumstantial character of his narrative.

As illustrative of the features to which he refers, Styler cites only "touches that might well come almost directly from an eyewitness, e.g. the cushion in the boat, Mk 4:38; and the Aramaic words and phrases, of which Mark preserves more than Matthew." The multitude of small details unique to Mark are presumably the "touches" to which Styler

refers.

### Response

Styler is inclined to see the source of these “eyewitness ... touches” that are the spring of “the freshness and circumstantial character of his narrative”, in the explanation that “tradition connects his Gospel with St Peter” (1962: 230). But Markan Dependence says that Mark must have had **three** sources, not just Matthew and Luke, and the third one would be Peter, and this accounts for this phenomenon completely. (This was discussed fully above, in §3.8.) So, if the aspects of Mark to which Styler refers have indeed come from Peter, and Mark has **combined what he learnt from Peter with what he read in Matthew and Luke**, all the data is explicable. Thus the data is completely compatible with a Markan Dependence explanation.

### 5.3.7 Argument from Coherence

#### 21. The Argument from Coherence of Explanation

Tuckett (1983: 12-13) writes,

Any source hypothesis can in fact be proposed. ... What then is required, if the hypothesis is to be made credible, is a presentation of the reasons why the later writers made the changes they are alleged to have done. The application of a ‘criterion of coherence’ would then demand that these reasons form a reasonably coherent whole: they must be rational, consistent with each other and also consistent with the facts as they are. ... Any proposed source hypothesis must then give a reasonably coherent and self-consistent set of reasons why these changes occurred in the way that the hypothesis claims if the theory is to be seriously considered. The extent to which an hypothesis gives a coherent, consistent picture of the total redactional activity of each evangelist will then be a measure of its viability.

Tuckett assesses the Griesbach Hypothesis and the Two-Document Hypothesis by this criterion to see which of them is shown by it to be the more satisfactory theory. His conclusion is summarized thus (1983: 187):

Insofar as the Two-Document Hypothesis can often apparently give a more coherent and consistent set of explanations of why the later changes were made (i.e. by Matthew and Luke on the Two-Document Hypothesis), that hypothesis is to be preferred.

Tuckett's contention is valid. No hypothesis can legitimately claim the support of scholars unless it meets the tests he proposes. His judgement in this regard is perceptive and irrefutable when he says (7),

Study of the history of research may help one to recognize where the strengths and

weaknesses of different hypotheses have been felt to lie, but one must in the end examine the text itself to see which is the best explanation of the source question.

Therefore this is the one argument that is capable of providing a sound basis for belief in Markan Priority. But Tuckett has not succeeded in showing that it does in fact do so. In the passages he selects, the Markan Dependence hypothesis can give a better explanation than can Markan Priority. And there are multitudes of other passages that, when considered by this criterion, point to Markan Dependence as giving the more coherent explanation.

So then, let this be indeed the test by which alternative theories are judged. Chapter Eleven, below, presents a detailed examination of the various issues Tuckett raises in putting his case against the Griesbach hypothesis. He is convinced that Markan Priority passes the test. I would contend firmly that it fails it: rather, Markan Dependence is by far the more coherent explanation.

## **5.4 SYNOPTIC SCHOLARSHIP IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

### **5.4.1 On the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century**

These, then, are the arguments that established the Markan Priority hypothesis. These are the grounds upon which this hypothesis came to dominate the field of Gospel studies, and to be presented in almost every twentieth-century New Testament Introduction. These are the reasons why thoughtful scholars concluded that Markan Priority was the most likely explanation of the relationship between the Synoptics—and indeed why many of these people came to assert with such confidence that this was the one assured result of New Testament scholarship.

But what about now? How do things stand in the twenty-first century? Is it still the case that most scholars, most academics, most pastors and teachers, most students and church members, and most anybody who has an opinion, hold firmly to Markan Priority this century?

Writing in his *History of the Synoptic Problem* (1999), David Dungan sums up how things stand at the threshold of the new century (390):

In conclusion, it would seem that we live in the ironic situation where confidence in Markan priority rises to ever new heights despite the fact that, after forty-five years of steady criticism, knowledgeable defenders of the hypothesis have been forced to abandon one basic argument after another, to the point where there are, at present, no formal arguments left that will justify it and the compositional arguments are just as questionable. It has rightly earned the sobriquet “the Teflon hypothesis.”

The books mentioned at the beginning of this chapter provide a characteristic cross-section of twenty-first century opinion on this issue. Two of these specifically present the Markan Priority position vis-à-vis alternative options. One of these books comes from Britain, the rest from U.S.A. Together they are pretty representative of today's views.

#### 5.4.2 The Synoptics Conference Report

Black & Beck's *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem* (2001) is the report on the Synoptic Problem from the 2000 Conference at the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and contains papers from several adherents of Markan Priority. The first of these papers, by Craig Blomberg, is an introduction to the Synoptic Problem, and is subtitled "Where Do We Stand At The Start Of A New Century?" He notes (20):

Despite the alternatives ... , the vast majority of the introductions and surveys of the Gospels or of the life of Christ, and the major commentaries on each of the Synoptics, along with studies more focused on individual themes or passages within those Gospels, all presuppose that Matthew and Luke each used Mark.

Blomberg then proceeds to list what he describes as "the nine most important reasons for this", reasons that he had set out in fuller detail in his *Jesus and the Gospels*. We shall now consider each of these "most important reasons" in turn. As we do, we will immediately have a strong sense of *déjà vu*: these arguments have already been met (and answered) earlier in this chapter. Thus a brief response to each of Blomberg's points (as he set them out in Black and Beck 2001: 20) will suffice.

The **first** reason advanced is, "Mark frequently contains vivid touches, possibly the product of eyewitness testimony, that Matthew and Luke omit."

**Response:** If we take note of the testimony of Papias and the other Fathers, and recognize that Mark had **three** sources, not just two, and take into account the role of the preaching of Peter, then this is exactly what we would expect. This is strong evidence in support of Markan Dependence, not Markan Priority, as explained in full in §3.8.

**Second**, "Matthew and Luke often seem to smooth out Mark's rougher grammar."

**Response:** While Mark was engaged in making use of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, he had ringing in his ears the words and expressions he had so often heard from Peter when the apostle recounted these same tales—and Peter's preaching is reflected in Mark's manner of writing. Moreover, this is entirely appropriate, as this Gospel had as one of its primary aims to be a "handbook for preachers" to continue doing exactly what Peter had been doing: telling the story of Jesus to those outside the Christian family, to bring them to faith. This Gospel is intended to be spoken aloud; it is written in the vern-

acular of the many who would hear it preached. Mark's "rougher grammar" proves, upon careful examination, to reflect the difference between the informal spoken form of a language and its more formal literary equivalent. This distinction (between the two forms of a language, and between the language in Mark on the one hand and Matthew and Luke on the other) has been recognized for years. Again, this is covered in detail in §3.8.

**Third**, "Matthew and Luke often omit potentially misleading details in Mark."

**Response:** we have examined these "errors" or "problems", and have found that they tend to evaporate under inspection. There is no way that points raised under this head turn out to be "direction indicators" as to which direction Synoptic copying ran. See in particular the discussions under §5.3.3 and §5.3.6, above.

**Fourth**, "Mark is the shortest of the Synoptics, yet within individual pericopae he is consistently longer than Matthew or Luke, an unlikely result of later abbreviation."

**Response:** Augustine once called Mark the "abbreviator" of Matthew, and so when some readers note that Mark's pericopes are indeed consistently *longer* than Matthew's, they tend to say, "so this description of the Gospel of Mark is factually wrong" and then jump to the conclusion that in some way this disproves the possibility that Mark could have written after (and made use of) Matthew. As if Mark's only reason for writing would have been to shorten Matthew's tales. Again, we see that the explanation of Mark's longer stories is (a) he had *three* sources, not just two, so his stories regularly contain more detail than is to be found in Matthew and Luke *combined*, since some additional details are drawn from Peter's preaching; (b) he is invigorating his Gospel with a multitude of little asides and extras that bring it to life for a spoken presentation; and (c) he adds, further, the repetitions and redundancies that are characteristic of speech when compared with a literary writing—because people think in shorter word-spans when listening than when reading. They can't go back and "re-listen", and thus need clarificatory "extras" added in to aid their understanding. A fuller discussion is in §3.8.

**Fifth**, "Less than 10% of Mark is nonparalleled; why would Mark have written at all if longer, fuller treatments were already available and he had so little new to say?"

**Response:** This "argument" commences with an erroneous assertion: for Mark's *sondergut* (set out in Chapter Four) is really something more than 25% of Mark (not 10%,) not being found in either Matthew or Luke. One can only arrive at a figure of 10% by looking briefly at the other 15% and claiming that it is not important, so it doesn't count—and then not counting it. Chapter Three has examined Mark in detail to show that this Gospel consists of the material of the *kerygma* of the early church, extracted from the mixed *kerygma-plus-didache* of the Major Synoptics so as to produce a special-

purpose Gospel for use in missionary and evangelistic preaching to outsiders. Mark frequently indicates a much wider knowledge of material than he includes (especially of Jesus's teaching), and he writes knowing that when an "outsider" becomes an "insider", they will be able to hear the *didache* in church from Matthew's and Luke's Gospels.

**Sixth**, "Comparatively, Matthew and Luke rarely differ from Mark in the same way at the same time, whereas Mark and Matthew much more frequently agree with each other against Luke, as do Luke and Mark against Matthew."

**Response:** There seems to be a complete failure of logic here in calling this a reason for believing in Markan Priority, especially as against the view that places Mark third. If Mark is utilizing both Major Synoptics, and is choosing for the moment to adhere more closely to Matthew and at another time to follow Luke more precisely, Blomberg's "sixthly" is **exactly** the result that one would logically find. And this pattern of procedure would also mean that, when the two Major Synoptics agreed, then by following one of them Mark would in fact be following both. And the fact that "Matthew and Luke rarely differ from Mark" is the inevitable result of his choice not to depart from them when they are in agreement. (Except, of course, that Mark includes 25% of additional material, as we have seen in Chapter Four).

**Seventh**, "Mark contains the highest incidence of Aramaisms among the Synoptics."

**Response:** Sanders considered the validity of this as an argument for Markan Priority in 1969, and showed that it had no substance. I discuss it in §5.3.2, Argument 6.

**Eighth**, "There seems to be no reason for Mark's omission of so much of Matthew and Luke that contains many of Jesus' most precious teachings, if Mark knew of them from a source."

**Response:** The clear implication from the form of this "reason" is that if Mark knew something he would have included it. This implication would indicate that (in the view of someone holding such a reason in all seriousness), he must think that the author of Mark's Gospel was some outsider with no real contact with the Christian community. If on the other hand the author of Mark's Gospel is identified with the John Mark referred to many times in the New Testament, then the idea that he knew no more than his Gospel contains is downright ludicrous.

When one thinks about this contention carefully, it is clear that whatever Mark omits, or includes, must be the result of **selection** not of **ignorance**. He did not include other things because they were outside the scope of his purpose, his focus. And his omissions make a great deal more sense if, in leaving things out, he knew that fellow-Christians would have access to them in the Major Synoptics; but if he were the first one to write,

and all that his readers would have is what (from amongst all that he knew) he included in his Gospel, then why did he omit so much?. This therefore is in fact a problem for the Markan Priority hypothesis.

But Mark's omission of so much of Matthew and Luke teachings makes perfect sense if Mark knew their teachings were already available to the Church, and he was using these Gospels as his sources, but for a very different purpose. Thus what he omits is a strong argument pointing to Mark being third-written, and accordingly it is included next chapter amongst the evidences for this hypothesis. Blomberg's contention as an argument supporting Markan Priority is completely refuted in §3.2, and in fact the data is to be recognized as strong evidence in support of Markan Dependence—see §6.3.7.

**Ninth**, “When one assumes Markan priority, coherent patterns of redactional emphases emerge in ways that are not true on alternative models.”

**Response:** This “reason” reminds me of the couple driving along the highway at high speed. When the wife attempts to point out to the driver that they are heading in the wrong direction, and to offer him the road map, he says to her, “Don’t bother me with that right now—we’re making great progress!” Gospel scholarship is making great progress “when one assumes Markan Priority”—so we must not put this in jeopardy! It’s very bad form to enquire: “But is it headed in the right direction?” What if this basic premiss is mistaken? Answer (to change the metaphor): Don’t rock the boat! But in this dissertation I am setting out some very cogent reasons to question Markan Priority, and to weigh an alternative. And as I do this, I can also say that equally “coherent patterns ... emerge” on the Progressive Publication of Matthew/Markan Dependence perspective, if we care to take note of them.

All Blomberg’s “most important reasons” closely correspond with those put forward during the twentieth century and discussed earlier, so that my brief responses above are a reminder of points already made in more detail thus far in this dissertation.

Blomberg’s conclusion (2001: 32) is:

Finally, as I mentioned above, the major weakness of the Griesbach theory to date is that its proponents have not demonstrated how Markan style and theology emerge more consistently and coherently on their hypothesis than on the alternatives. Until I see such a demonstration, I will remain unconvinced.

This does seem rather to downplay the work of others so far in this matter, particularly the labours of the members of the Two-Gospel school. Perhaps the explanation presented in this dissertation is also a step in the direction of providing what Blomberg requests.



In *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem*, Scot McKnight presents the essay on “A Generation Who Knew Not Streeter: The Case For Markan Priority”. He draws attention to the role of Sanday’s Oxford Seminar, and particular the work of perhaps its most well-known member, B H Streeter, in laying the foundation in Britain and the English-speaking world for acceptance of the Markan Priority hypothesis. He lists (2001: 75-77) Streeter’s first three arguments or “heads” (common content, order and words—see discussion above, §5.3), and says (77), “The most enduring and influential theory of how these phenomena ought to be explained is the Oxford hypothesis”, though he acknowledges that what these phenomena have established is simply (80) “that the Synoptics are related to one another”, and “there are various explanations of the three phenomena”. He wants a feature that “can adjudicate the matter”, and he finds it. “I begin right here with the sole logical solution to the Synoptic problem. The Oxford hypothesis is more probable because of the *linguistic phenomena*.”

McKnight is referring to the various linguistic features of the Synoptics, adding (83), “And the foundational argument for Markan priority is the linguistic argument; it is the **only** argument with probative and decisive force.” This argument is a development and expansion of Streeter’s fourth “head”, and McKnight sets out five aspects of this argument.

First he commends and draws upon (81) the “text-critical argument by M C Williams”, that is, “the argument from the most original reading”. McKnight gives three illustrative examples of the use of this argument, points (87) “about Mark’s grammar being ‘corrected’ by Matthew or Luke”. I have already drawn attention to the fact that Mark’s so-called “bad grammar” has more to do with his use of material drawn from the preaching of Peter and the inherent difference between spoken and written literary language. Williams gives his own exposition of his argument in the fourth of the collection of recent books we are considering, and I will discuss it there, §5.4.5 below.

Second, McKnight endorses Markan Priority and the Oxford hypothesis as (88) “more probable because of the *theological phenomena*.” Under this head he covers what we have already examined earlier in §5.3.3.

And thirdly he endorses Markan Priority because (89) “the coherency of the theory is an argument in its favor”—concerning which he adds, “This argument is really nothing more than an explanation that makes good sense of the data”. That is, McKnight is pointing to the “explanatory power” of Markan Priority in accounting for the observable data. I would dare to suggest that the scenario I have outlined in this dissertation is far more comprehensive in its explanation of the data, with far fewer unexplained problems and “loose ends” left dangling, than Markan Priority (with or without Q).

Next in this Conference report, Farmer presents a case for Luke using Matthew and then Mark using both his predecessors. Then in the final essay in the volume, Grant Osborne sums up the Conference. He notes (139) that “Literary dependence is mandated by the evidence; the only question is the direction of the flow.” He recaps the major arguments adduced for Markan Priority in the other papers, expresses himself unconvinced by the Two-Gospel view because of its belief that Luke used Matthew and also of several features not satisfactorily explained—particularly (142) that “it is difficult to explain the many omissions if Mark used both Matthew and Luke” and (143) the absence of any “credible reason why Mark was written” if Matthew and Luke already existed. Thus he concludes (150) with his assessment “that the evidence points clearly to the modified Streeter theory that Mark was first .”

#### 5.4.3 The Farrer Explanation from Britain

In *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (2001), Mark Goodacre looks at the Synoptic data and then (58) aims to show that “There are several ways in which Markan Priority explains this data better than does Markan Posteriority.” Goodacre considers the material Mark omits, and in assessing it he says (59) that “this data does not make sense on the assumption of Markan Posteriority.” Secondly he notes (59-60) the “little material that is present in Mark but absent in both Matthew and Luke”, deciding “It has to be said that Markan Priority seems more likely.” He notes (60) statements in Mark that are open to the interpretation that Jesus’s power was limited; he comments again (61) on what Mark fails to include; and remarks (62) that the “striking feature of Mark’s style” is that “Mark’s is the most blatantly colloquial, the most ‘oral’ in nature” of the Gospels and Mark’s love of adding-in “visual detail” and concludes that “it would be odd if the most ‘oral’ of the Synoptic Gospels turned out also to be the third Gospel”. Goodacre continues to develop some of these points for several pages more, canvassing several of the other arguments that I have discussed—and answered—earlier in this present chapter.

And then he finds his most convincing argument for Markan Priority (71-76) in his presentation of the idea of “editorial fatigue”, saying (76), “The most decisive indicator of Markan Priority is evidence of editorial fatigue in Matthew and Luke.” Goodacre recognizes the strength of patristic evidence for Matthean priority, but seeks to discount it.

One of Goodacre’s points is to compare Mark’s “harder readings” with Matthew and Luke (65-67), for the way in which they smooth his roughness and correct his errors

indicates they were subsequent to Mark. Thus when Matthew and/or Luke has something that (apparently) makes better sense than Mark's version, this points to Markan Priority. But also both Matthew and Luke suffer quite a bit from "editorial fatigue" and forget where they are and what they are copying from Mark: for (71-72) "editorial fatigue results in unconscious mistakes, small errors of detail that naturally arise in the course of constructing a narrative." When any of these occur, it indicates that they were (74) "working from a source", i.e., Mark. So when Mark has something that makes better sense than Matthew and/or Luke, this also points to Markan Priority. So whichever way it goes and whatever the data, the explanation is Markan Priority! "Heads you win, tails I lose."

Goodacre's presentation is lucid, with break-out summary boxes making clear what he is saying. But he has simply summarized (without developing) the arguments of last century for Markan Priority without seriously considering the extent to which they have been effectively answered. Goodacre himself advocates the Farrer-Goulder view (see Chapter Ten, §10.4.2): i.e., that Luke knew and used Matthew as well as Mark. It can be noted how, at the commencement of the twenty-first century, Goodacre's textbook for students (9) builds its case for Markan Priority upon almost the full spectrum of arguments discussed in this chapter.

#### 5.4.4 Three-Theory Interaction

The third book, *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Thomas: 2002), includes contributions from three advocates setting out respectively the Two-/Four-Source View, the Two-Gospel View, and the Independence View, with responses in each case from the other two contributors. In the first one, Grant Osborne and Matthew Williams commence by establishing the case for a literary relationship between the Synoptics, and then add (55),

Streeter's presentation of the evidence for Markan priority remains the 'classic statement'. Indeed, some scholars have said that no 'new' lines of evidence have been suggested since Streeter.

Osborne and Williams then revisit the majority of the Markan Priority arguments set out earlier in this chapter, and conclude this section of their presentation (42) with the judgement:

Proponents of Markan priority agree that no single argument of those presented earlier is conclusive; rather the cumulative effect constitutes the probability that the Two-Source Hypothesis is by far the best solution to the problem of synoptic relationships.

I am reminded of the bar-room eloquent who exclaimed, in clinching his case, "And if those arguments don't convince you, I have another that is just as good." The fact is,

0+0+0+0 still adds up to zero. Joining a string of unconvincing arguments together does not add up to having a convincing one. Indeed, Osborne and Williams by implication acknowledge this when they proceed to present their main case—a very detailed elaboration and application of Streeter’s “fourth head”—with these words (42):

Streeter’s fourth head of evidence—that Matthew and Luke improve Mark’s more primitive wording—holds great importance . The following discussion is quite extensive because here, *and only here*, is firm evidence that demonstrates Markan priority. [Their italics.]

Osborne and Williams then proceed to a discussion of Matthew/Mark textual differences, to which they apply text critical criteria because (48) “Streeter’s fourth head of evidence is, in fact, similar to many of the text-critical criteria. ... Thus, the following examination applies text-critical principles to the Gospel texts to determine priority.” One of these two authors—Williams—has developed this approach further and published four years later (2006) his own volume expounding it, so we will consider it in this connection (next, below).

Their method of accounting for differences between the Gospels includes invoking the authors’ creative genius in inventing material. Thus about a phrase in Christ’s teaching in Mt 23:5 they state (45), “Regardless of whether Matthew used Mark as a source, one must admit that Matthew invented the preceding phrase.” That is, they say, whether one places Mark first or last, this phrase of Christ’s teaching is Matthew’s invention (and we all must admit it). But I don’t admit any such thing: I would hold that Matthew includes this phrase (and the rest of his record of Christ’s teaching) because he heard Christ say it.

The other two views presented in this book I discuss later: the Two-Gospel view (next chapter) and the Independence view (Chapter Ten).

#### **5.4.5 Textual-Critical Criteria**

In *Two Gospels From One* (2006), Matthew Williams elaborates in detail his thesis, set out more briefly in *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Thomas, 2002), that (12) “Text-critical criteria clearly and consistently support Marcan priority and Matthean posteriority”. As in the earlier book, Williams commences (28) with an Introduction and Brief History, and then cites Streeter’s “five heads of evidence for Markan priority”, acknowledges that “heads” 1,2, 3, and 5 are not very persuasive and thereafter focuses on “The fourth head of evidence”, Streeter’s linguistic argument. This he develops and applies to the text of Matthew and Mark. If this sounds a bit familiar, it is: we have just discussed it, in §5.4.4 above—indeed, much of Williams’s material is

taken directly from this earlier book with only occasional minor verbal modifications (and without acknowledgement of source).

Williams surveys various assessments that scholars have made of linguistic differences between Matthew and Mark, including such things as (40) Fitzmeyer's essay "on the evidence for Marcan priority based on awkwardness in Mark's grammar", and considering "grammatical or stylistic improvements to Mark's text by Luke" (in "McKnight's analysis of Luke's redactions of Mark").

But Williams judges (41) that "more objective" criteria are needed "to determine chronological priority in the Synoptic Gospels. Are such criteria available?"

Then he reaches his primary thesis:

Because of the similarities between textual criticism and source criticism (both disciplines seek the prior text), text-critical criteria may be applied in an analysis of the gospel texts in order to determine priority.

He points out (42) how "Not only did scribes make unintentional errors, they often made intentional changes in the text they were copying." The copyists could be doing this for theological reasons at times, and/or because (43) they wanted "to 'improve' the sense of the text" they were copying.

Williams (citing Aland and Hurtado) gives consideration to examples of how "scribes have made significant changes to the text" (43), thereby "improving it by their own standards of correctness", and then he seeks to see where one Gospel author has made similar changes to another as if these writing behaviours are parallel, and he concludes Matthew has corrected Mark (because he has "better Greek"), which (Williams contends) clearly establishes Markan Priority upon an objective basis.

But making "intentional changes" is not the role of the scribe. Scribes making a copy of a document (any document) are in the nature of the case supposed to be reproducing that document word-for-word. That is their brief. To the extent that they do not do so, they are introducing errors of varying degrees of seriousness. The task of text-critical analysis is to identify what has occurred so as to arrive at a correct text. It is a total leap of faith—for which there is no evidence at all—to assume that Mark was committed in a similar way to the task of producing an exact copy of parts of Matthew (on the Markan Posteriority views) or Matthew of Mark (on Markan Priority). To judge how well one author has fulfilled this role of copying another author's work when this assumption has not first been established is totally illegitimate.

But why must we adopt, out of the blue as it were, this assumption that one Gospel author had as his purpose to produce an exact copy (with some modifications) of what

another writer had written? What sort of a picture do we get instead if we recognize (as Streeter and an army of other scholars has recognized) that the difference in language between Mark and the Major Synoptics is the difference between spoken and written language? And if we take note of the explanation of this Markan feature that we can find is given as long ago as the early church Fathers, who reported, “Mark wrote down what he heard Peter saying”? I have discussed this in more detail earlier, in §5.3.2.

Williams’s entire thesis is predicated upon a proposition that is unproven and indeed that is contrary to the evidence that we have: that if Mark was third, his aim and purpose would be to reproduce his material verbatim from Matthew and Luke. As this patently has not happened, then Williams insists we draw the conclusion that clearly Mark was not third.

Once we recognize that Williams’s premiss is quite invalid, the investigation of the extent to which Mark did what it was not his intention to do is irrelevant.

Williams, in writing of the lack of consensus on a solution to the Synoptic Problem, says (22) that

... the Synoptic Problem consists of having the finished product—three Synoptic Gospels—but only clues as to the exact history of how these three gospels were produced. Because of this lack of clarity regarding history, scholars have struggled to reach a consensus for the solution of the Synoptic Problem.

This would indeed appear to be a widely-held view. But in speaking of having “only clues as to the exact history”, resulting in a “lack of clarity”, it is rather surprising then to see the extent of the neglect of such “history information” as we do have. First, there would be Luke’s indication of his use of apostolic and other eye-witness sources. And then the comments of Papias and several other Fathers concerning the role of Peter’s preaching in providing the material for Mark. Together with the testimony of the Fathers that places Mark after Matthew (and in most cases, after Luke as well). These are, one might say, significant “clues from history”—but Williams himself focuses his investigation sufficiently narrowly so that they do not come into it, while scholars in general do not put them all together and ponder their purpose and their import.

Williams has added (44) this cautious explanation:

Although it is true that the methods of scribes and those of the Evangelists differed, it is here proposed that many of the types of changes made by scribes also might have been made by Matthew, if he were using the text of Mark as a source when he composed his gospel, or by Mark, if he were using the text of Matthew as a source.

He is confident, though (44, 46), that

The legitimacy of such detailed comparison is all but unanimously agreed upon in literature related to the Synoptic problem. ... Despite the minority opinion to the contrary, it is a worthwhile goal to analyze and compare pericope after pericope from the gospels of Matthew and Mark, using the criteria from textual criticism to determine evidence for priority. Such an analysis and comparison is, in essence, an analysis of Streeter's fourth head of evidence: Is the text-critical argument for the priority of Mark a valid argument?

Williams then proceeds to set out the "History of Textual Criticism" (Chapter 2), and "Examining Mark's Textual Apparatus" (Chapter 3), and applies his criteria in "Examining the Textual Difference Between Matthew and Mark" (Chapter 4). This application and extension of Streeter's "fourth head" will have wide appeal because of its offer of an "objective" basis upon which to assess the "direction" of dependence between two Synoptic Gospels: in the light of the observable difference, which Gospel can be seen to be correcting another?

It is to be hoped that Gospel scholars will give careful thought to the methodological basis of what Williams is doing in proposing this criterion. There is a fundamental premiss here that needs to be carefully considered. It is the belief that a later Gospel (whichever one) has as a major purpose in writing to correct an earlier one. On this basis it is then pronounced that Matthew does a much better job of correcting Mark than vice versa. Therefore the conclusion can be drawn: so Matthew must be subsequent to Mark—and must be using his Gospel. Again and again one will find the point made such as:

Matthew and Mark differ almost entirely in this verse ... Matthew's [wording] is much clearer than Mark's awkward [expression] ... This difference in wording resulted in a clearer and more precise text in that Matthew states exactly ... This precision eliminates the possible misunderstanding ... Thus, it is possible that this is an improvement by the later Christian community ... The wording of the question in Mark is obtuse and the more difficult reading ...

Now, this particular wording that I have set out has all been extracted from page 149 in relation to verses discussed there, but I am making the point that on **every** page of his discussion of this issue Williams is saying, similarly, that Matthew can be seen to be correcting Mark and improving this Gospel. And that Matthew's alterations can be recognized as being made for this very purpose.

There are several things wrong with this "text-critical" approach.

First of all, it is based on a completely invalid premiss. It's like the journal *Wind and Waves* giving this product review: "Though admittedly good-looking, and with acceptable carrying capacity, its front end will not cut cleanly through the water, its propulsive

method is slow and inefficient, it has poor mooring facilities, and it is going to leak.” While failing to note that the product reviewed was built to be an on-road motor vehicle, not a boat.

How can you judge how well a car performs as a boat when that was not its purpose? How can you judge how well one Gospel corrects or improves the other ***when that is not the purpose for which the second Gospel (whichever it was) was written?*** Such a thing is a completely gratuitous assumption unsubstantiated by any factual foundation but is derived from circular reasoning and starting with what you are supposed to be establishing. Once we recognize the different purpose for which each Gospel was written, this so-called “objective criterion” is seen for what it is: ludicrous.

Secondly: the purpose and point of textual criticism is to discern which textual variant contains errors and modifications, in order to arrive at a corrected text. Inherent then in this criterion, when applied to the Synoptics, is the concept that the Synoptic differences must actually be departures from an original text and we are trying to find out what that is. But the fact that (on this view) Matthew and Luke realized that Mark “needed fixing” shows that this view is just one step away from saying, “You can’t trust Mark’s Gospel because it is in need of correction and improvement.” This is completely incompatible with any concept of all three Synoptics being the product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that all three are the Word of God.

Thirdly, this criterion provides a basis upon which “additions” to Mark found in Matthew and Luke are to be identified as being inauthentic later inventions, maybe from the “church” that supposedly fathered that Gospel or directly from Matthew’s or Luke’s “creative imagination”. For many, many years I have been hearing this assumption from scholars and teachers who adhere to Markan Priority; now they have been given this “objective criterion” to undergird these opinions. This is just one step away from concluding that “Mark is the only Gospel you can trust.”

The second point and the third point are contradictory—the former says Mark cannot be trusted and the latter says only Mark can be trusted—yet both points are supported by Markan Priority advocates.

Fourthly, it implies that the writers of the later Gospels would have had an adversarial attitude to the earlier one, that when they had seen that earlier Gospel they would have been saying to themselves, “This is terrible—I must do something about this!”

Differences in the Gospels are so often differences of perspective, of emphasis, of points of view. They are not in conflict. They provide additional enriching insights that aid



our understanding. They are there for a purpose.

But the presence in the Synoptics of such differences does not mean that they cannot be harmonized. (I look at this question in particular in relation to Matthew and Luke in Chapter Eight, as these two Gospels contain not a few such issues.) I agree with Farrell (2002: 267) that what is needed in scholarship is “Harmonization not redactional hermeneutics”. I am not persuaded to his Independence View, but I am heartily in accord with him in his attitude and his view of the Gospels when he writes that “the Independence View emphasizes traditional harmonization based on inspiration. The Independence View is optimistic that the Gospels lend themselves to harmonization both historically and factually.” My view similarly recognizes harmonization—actually, I find that Mark has done quite a bit of this in relation to Matthew and Luke (see Chapter Eleven).

But many adherents of source theories do not find the concept of harmonization to be congenial. To treat the Gospel writers as being at loggerheads with each other, so that a later writer’s attitude is like “a scribal reaction against a predecessor’s words” (Niemelä, 2002: 107, writing against the Williams proposal) is ghastly. The text-critical criterion is not merely gratuitous, it is destructive of the attitude that we must have in coming to the Synoptic Gospels. It is building a completely unnecessary and wrong-headed dichotomy between a scholarly, academic approach to studying the Gospels, and our devotional use, where we submit ourselves to their teaching and their authority. It is not merely a quite invalid view. It is downright dangerous in its consequences.

#### **5.4.6 The Other Perspectives on the Evidence**

We can see that Markan Priority continues to attract strong support. But we should also note that alternative explanations continue to be advocated.

Two of the above-mentioned books, the Conference Report and the Three-Theory Interaction, also include expositions that opposed Markan Priority and expounded other theories. Additionally, two other recent books that reject the Markan Priority hypothesis are:

(e) *Why Four Gospels?* by David Alan Black (2001), expounding and developing Bernard Orchard’s Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis, which identifies Mark as third-written;

(f) *One Gospel From Two* by David Peabody et al. (2002), a detailed exposition of the Two-Gospel case for Mark using Matthew and Luke.

These two books, and other writings along these lines, will be considered in the discussion of Markan Dependence in the next chapter.

Several other books published this century should also be noted.

At the end of last century (1998) Birger Gerhardsson's *Memory and Manuscript* was issued afresh by Eerdmans (it was originally published in 1961 by C.W.K. Gleerup, Lund); and this was followed in 2001 by *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition* (Hendrikson). Gerhardsson stresses the importance of the oral tradition behind our Gospels. David Neville's assessment of order, in *Arguments from Order in Synoptic Source Criticism* (Mercer University Press, 1994), examines "How important and how reliable are arguments based on [the order of pericopes], and where might they lead?" Blomberg comments on this book (2001: 34), "[This is] (a)nother important study ... but in fact aligning itself with no one solution to the Synoptic Problem. ... What Neville does show is that the various arguments from the order of Matthew's and Luke's parallels do not consistently support Markan priority." In 2002 David Neville next published *Mark's Gospel: Prior or Posterior?* (Sheffield Academic Press).

Two other books published this century appeal to me as making a significant contribution to Gospel scholarship, but constrained by their authors' assumption of Markan Priority (and therefore I will discuss them here).

In 1998 Richard Bauckham was editor of the volume *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Eerdmans), which points out that "information flow was immediate and pervasive in the first-century world, that the gospels must have been authored for the entire church, instead of specialized 'communities'." Then in 2006 there came from his pen (or, computer) *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Eerdmans), which examines in some depth the evidence for the Gospels being based directly upon eyewitness testimony. The next year, 2007, saw the publication (from Crossway) of *Can We Trust the Gospels?* by Mark Roberts. These two books are both concerned with the nature of the Gospel genre.

Roberts devotes chapter 7 to a consideration of this question of genre. He says (83),

“What are the New Testament Gospels? ... To which genre should they be assigned? ... if we know the genre of the Gospels, this will help us to interpret them appropriately.” His conclusion (85) is that “the New Testament Gospels fit quite nicely within the genre of Hellenistic biography,” a genre which he has described to us. He cites (85) others who have reached this same conclusion: Ben Witherington in *New Testament History* (2001: 19-24) and Richard Burridge in *What Are The Gospels?* (2004). Roberts uses this categorization to account for the verbal differences found in the Synoptics, which he explains thus (88):

Moreover, we must remember that the Gospels give us what is technically called the *ipsissima vox* (‘his own voice’) of Jesus rather than the *ipsissima verba* (‘his own words’). Since it’s highly unlikely that Jesus did much teaching in Greek, the autographs of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not preserve his original words (except in a few cases). They do, however, authentically capture his voice.

Roberts then asks (91-92),

Is it possible to trust a biographical or historical writing that offers the *ipsissima vox* rather than the *ipsissima verba*? I believe it is. Of course, this depends on your evaluation of the overall trustworthiness of the writer and the sources at his or her disposal. I’ve already talked about the sources used by the evangelists and how they contribute to the historicity of the Gospels. ... The Gospel writers functioned in the mode of the biography and history writers of their day. This means they were permitted greater freedom in certain matters than would be granted to modern biographers and historians. Paraphrasing or rephrasing statements and speeches was acceptable, as was arranging events in thematic rather than chronological order. ... For example, the Gospels can faithfully represent the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus without reproducing his *ipsissima verba*. Minor variations of wording or a different ordering of events do not mean that we should discount the reliability of the Gospels as sources of genuine knowledge of Jesus.

I would comment: This is a reasonable view of the relationship between the words of Jesus as given in the Gospels and what Jesus himself actually said. In fact, it is the kind of explanation towards which one is pushed if one rejects (as does Roberts) ideas of late-date invention of words to put into the mouth of Jesus, and opts instead for the reli-

ability of the Gospel record. That is, we can hold that the Gospels as we have them represent substantially what Jesus said, allowing for the authors sometimes “paraphrasing or rephrasing statements and speeches” (to quote Roberts). However, I have been pointing out in this dissertation that we can have even greater confidence than this in the Synoptic record of Christ’s teachings.

In his book *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006), Richard Bauckham refines further the concept of the genre of the Gospels, presenting compelling evidence for recognizing that eyewitness testimony lies directly behind the Gospel records. He writes (479),

In this book I have followed Samuel Byrskog in arguing that the Gospels, though in some ways a very distinctive form of historiography, share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among the historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of first-hand experience of the events they recounted. Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he needed to recount, not least because usually some would have been simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from first-hand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).

In the life of Jesus, God has broken through into human history. This is a unique event, and it is therefore absurd to attempt to assess it or categorize it in terms of what would be otherwise familiar to us from ordinary human experience. Bauckham explains (500-501):

All too easily the attempt to connect what happened with the experience and understanding of our ordinary world makes for easy intelligibility at the cost of the uniqueness of the event and therefore also of its power to disclose. When the quest of the historical Jesus discounts what the witnesses claim in the interests of what is readily credible by the standards of historical analogy, that is, ordinary experience, it reduces revelation to the triviality of what we knew or could know anyway.

The witnesses told what they witnessed, but in doing so they recounted (503)

what they remembered, choosing what to include, shaping the narrative, and they would be likely to tell the story again and again in the form they themselves had given it.

Thus Bauckham has identified the genre of the Gospels as testimony (505-506):

The burden of this book is that the category of testimony is the one that does most justice to the Gospels both as history and as theology. As a form of historiography, testimony offers a unique access to historical reality that cannot be had without an element of trust in the credibility of the witness and what he or she has to report. ... Eyewitness testimony offers us insider knowledge from involved participants. It also offers us engaged interpretation, for in testimony fact and meaning coinhere, and witnesses who give testimony do so with the conviction of significance that requires to be told. Witnesses of truly significant events speak out of their own ongoing attempts to understand. ... Reading the Gospels as eyewitness testimony differs therefore from attempts at historical reconstruction behind the text. It takes the Gospels seriously as they are; it acknowledges the uniqueness of what we can know only in this testimonial form.

Bauckham identifies the author of the Second Gospel as the John Mark of the Acts and the Pauline letters, and accepts the testimony of Papias (and the other church Fathers) about the role of Peter behind this Gospel (205-221). Thus (210-211) Papias's comment (Eusebius *Church History* 3.39.4)

expresses a preference, following good historiographic practice, for reports as close as possible to those of the eyewitnesses themselves. ... In Mark's case, although Mark was not an eyewitness himself, he was reproducing Peter's testimony as Peter recited it. Papias portrays Mark as no more than a translator scrupulously accurate in reproducing Peter's oral testimony ... Short of a text actually written by an eyewitness, Mark's Gospel, as represented by Papias, would be as good a historical source as one could get in the period after all eyewitnesses had died [i.e., in the period late in the first century about which Papias was writing]. ... Throughout the passage the complementary roles of Peter and Mark are that Peter *remembered* and Mark *heard and wrote*.

Bauckham devotes chapters 7 and 9 to a focus on the role of Peter in relation to Mark and his Gospel.

I myself would not interpret Papias's comments about Peter and Mark to mean that (206) Peter "preferred to express himself in his native Aramaic and allow Mark to translate into more accurate and readable Greek." Rather, I see Mark's Greek as reflec-

ting the Greek of Peter's preaching. But I do indeed concur in seeing the witness of Peter as represented directly in the writing of Mark.

I also concur in Bauckham's recognition of the oral nature of Mark's Gospel. He suggests (233) either an oral background for Mark's text, or that

Mark composed the narrative in writing, making use of oral techniques because he was writing for oral performance of his text. In any case, it seems clear that the Gospel was indeed composed for oral performance, and that the oral structuring techniques would have assisted such oral performance and aural reception.

Similarly Bauckham holds that (29-30)

Luke received traditions directly from the eyewitnesses ... They are disciples who accompanied Jesus throughout his ministry (cf. Acts 1:21) and who were prominent teachers in the early church. They certainly include the Twelve (cf. Acts 6:4) but also others.

The eyewitness testimony that Luke referred to and that he collected as the basis of his Gospel was oral, the result of his personal interviews with eyewitnesses when these were possible. But it was not exclusively oral, as Bauckham explains (37-38):

[T]he language of tradition does not require that an account be handed on orally. It can refer to the writing of recollections. So, when Luke's preface claims that "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word handed on (*paredosan*) to us [the traditions of the events]" (Luke 1:2), the reference could be to or could include written accounts by the eyewitnesses.

Bauckham assumes Markan Priority and the Two-Source explanation of Synoptic relationships (42), and he rejects Matthew as the author of the First Gospel (98, 108-112, 131, 288, 302). He concedes a possible role for the apostle in the pre-history of the Gospel that came to bear his name (288-289):

The old suggestion that, among the Twelve, it would be Matthew the tax collector who would most likely, owing to his profession, be able to write, might after all be a sound guess and a clue to the perplexing question of the role he might have played somewhere among the sources of the Gospel of Matthew.

I would aver that we can accept the basic thesis which Bauckham has proposed, that

direct eyewitness testimony, oral and written, stands behind the Gospels as we have them. The consequence of this (as Bauckham shows) is that the Gospels stand at only one remove, or at the most at two, from the events they record. This underlines their claim to accuracy and authenticity in all they report. The fruit of Bauckham's scholarship in this regard is highly valuable.

But Bauckham filters his explanation through the grid of his acceptance of the Markan Priority view, and the various consequences that this implies. It is possible to refine his explanation further when we remove this filter, and when we see the role of the apostle Matthew both as active author of the First Gospel and also as the source of much of the material that his Gospel has in common with Luke (irrespective of whether it also occurs in Mark).

Clearly, the Markan Priority view still dominates the field in the twenty-first century, though many of its advocates show less confidence than when this view was declared to be "the one absolutely assured result of the study of the synoptic problem" (Styler 223). But, Markan Priority is still being advocated. It is appropriate now for us to ask: For what reasons? Upon what grounds? For we have seen in this chapter that all the so-called "arguments for Markan Priority" fail to deliver when subjected to thoughtful analysis and assessment.

But although individual arguments for Markan Priority may be recognized now as having rather little force, advocates still encourage us to recognize the cumulative power of their case when we put them all together and see the "big picture".

The Markan Priority hypothesis reminds me of a painting in a private art gallery exhibition that caused a kerfuffle in London about a century ago. The young up-and-coming artist who was exhibiting his work needed one more painting to hang in the exhibition, before the press and art critics were invited to a preview. He came up with it and put it on show. This particular painting attracted quite a bit of interest. There was nothing on it—it looked for all the world like a blank canvass.

A young reporter pointed to it and said to the artist, "I take it that this one isn't finished yet?" "Oh, no, it's finished all right." Puzzled, the reporter said, "What is it then?" "This one," said the artist, "depicts, as the title says, 'A Dramatic Moment in the Story of the

Children of Israel Crossing the Red Sea.” The reporter stared at the canvass thoughtfully and then ventured tentatively, “But where is the Red Sea?” “Driven right back by the mighty hand of the Lord,” the artist explained. “And where are the Children of Israel?” “Under the dynamic leadership of Moses, they have successfully made the crossing.” “And what about Pharaoh’s chariots?” “They are going to arrive on the scene any moment now.”

This painting attracted attention in the press, though reports were mixed. One art critic said, “A brilliant concept—it captures the moment wonderfully.” Another: “It pictures the calm before the storm. Sheer genius.” The praise of others was a bit more muted, though one paper headlined a brief review “Much Ado About Nothing.” Now, individually the artist’s answers each seem quite reasonable and can, I suppose, account for what we see (or don’t see)—but when we look at the “big picture”, there is nothing there! So we ought to consider the possibility of another explanation. (In this case: the artist just didn’t paint anything on the canvas.)

Similarly with the case for Markan Priority: when we look behind all the rhetoric, there is nothing there. So then: if arguments for Markan Priority are illusory, what alternative explanation do we have? That is the subject of the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER SIX: THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE EXPLANATION**

### **6.1 BACKGROUND**

6.1.1 Historical Development of the Hypothesis

6.1.2 Facing the Factors to be Considered

6.1.3 Other Markan Posteriority Hypotheses:

The Two-Gospel Hypothesis (2GH)

6.1.4 Other Markan Posteriority Hypotheses:

The Fourfold Gospel Hypothesis (4GH)

### **6.2 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

6.2.1 The Part Played by Peter's Preaching

6.2.2 Patristic Testimony to Authorship and Order of Writing

Mark's third source, Peter's preaching, accounts for many aspects of this Gospel.

### **6.3 INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

6.3.1 Similarity of Contents of the Synoptics

6.3.2 Similarity of Wording of the Synoptics

6.3.3 The Order of Pericopes in the Synoptics

6.3.4 The Argument from Conflation

6.3.5 The Argument from Mark's Shorter Accounts

6.3.6 The Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark

6.3.7 Mark's Inclusions and Omissions

6.3.8 The Integrity of the Text

6.3.9 Coherence and Purpose

### **6.4 THE CASE AGAINST MARKAN DEPENDENCE**

Many who have engaged in rebuttal of Griesbach have not really understood the hypothesis he presented. Markan Dependence is a form of Markan Posteriority; but an argument against Griesbach or Farmer is not necessarily an argument against it.

### **6.5 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

Markan Dependence provides a comprehensive explanation of all the Synoptic data, and objections to it can be given convincing answers.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE EXPLANATION

This chapter details the evidence for the Markan Dependence and answers the rebuttal brought against it

#### 6.1 BACKGROUND

##### 6.1.1 Historical Development of the Hypothesis

Markan Posteriority—the view that Mark was third-written and drew upon the Major Synoptics as sources in his writing—is an ancient explanation of Synoptic relationship, with a fascinating history, as set out in detail in Chapter One.

David Peabody (1983) has drawn attention to Augustine’s comment indicating that this early church Father had come to a change of mind. Initially he had held the view that the order of writing of these Gospels was Matthew-Mark-Luke, with each later writer using the work of his predecessor(s); but subsequently (Peabody explains) Augustine revised this view to hold instead that Mark had written after the other two Synoptics.

The first writer in modern times to address this issue was Henry Owen, who in 1764 set out a careful case for explaining the Synoptic relationship as Markan Posteriority.

Then in 1774 Johann Jakob Griesbach produced the first volume of a new critical text of the Greek New Testament, covering the Gospels, and he arranged the Gospels in the form of a Synopsis. This *Synopsis* placed parallel passages in Matthew, Mark and Luke in adjoining columns, which allowed their side-by-side comparison. This made possible, for the first time, a careful pericope-by-pericope and verse-by-verse study of the similarities and differences in sequence and content between the first three Gospels, and thus facilitated the investigation of their interrelationships and origins. Griesbach himself entered into a thorough examination of what his *Synopsis* revealed, and concluded that the evidence indicated that Mark wrote third and had used Matthew and Luke. The first outline of Griesbach’s Synoptic theory was published in 1783.

In 1786 G C Storr introduced the theory of Markan Priority, and vigorously rejected Griesbach’s hypothesis that placed Mark last amongst the Synoptics. Griesbach produced in 1789 a more detailed treatment of his viewpoint, *Commentatio*, reissued with additions in 1794, in which he also replied to Storr’s criticisms.

For a time the Griesbach hypothesis was the prevailing viewpoint amongst German New Testament scholars. In Britain it was supported by Samuel Davidson in 1882 in the

second edition of his *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*. But Markan Posteriority then fell into disfavour and desuetude, and the Markan Priority hypothesis came to prevail.

However, the Markan Priority hypothesis, while becoming dominant amongst New Testament scholars, was not without its critics. The publication of Butler's careful critique of it in 1951—see §5.2—caused waves in the scholarly world. Then in 1964 William Farmer produced his *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, in which he presented the case for reopening the discussion of the Synoptic Problem, and championed the Griesbach hypothesis of Markan Posteriority. Farmer's work, and that of his students and followers, who now term their position the "Two-Gospel" hypothesis, has indeed succeeded in reopening the Synoptic debate.

Farmer's position has been subjected to detailed challenge. The best-known systematic presentations of the case against the Griesbach hypothesis (Markan Posteriority) are: "Can the Griesbach Hypothesis be Falsified?" by C H Talbert and E V McKnight (1972), and "The Priority of Mark and the 'Q' Source in Luke" by Joseph A Fitzmyer (1970). The detailed comparison of the Markan Priority and Markan Posteriority perspectives in explaining general phenomena and particular passages in the Synoptics has been attempted with great care and thoroughness in C M Tuckett's *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis* (1983).

However, there are many cogent and indeed compelling arguments to support the case for Markan Dependence, a version of the Markan Posteriority view. And the various objections which have been raised against this latter view, especially in the "Two-Gospel" version, are either inapplicable to Markan Dependence, or else can be convincingly answered. I discuss them below.

### 6.1.2 Facing the Factors to be Considered

I have never believed in Markan Priority. I entered theological college without any firm opinion in the issue, and without any awareness that the relationship between the Gospels mattered all that much. I guess I was kind of an unfocused Independent Gospels adherent if I was anything.

In College I was taught about Markan Priority. But, as I related in the beginning of the previous chapter, our New Testament lecturer Marcus Loane (later to become Archbishop of Sydney) also made us very aware of the limitations and shortcomings of this theory. I was very impressed with reading John Chapman's *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, and I felt then (as I feel now) that his careful scholarship, with its devastating demolition of the Markan Priority case, did not receive the attention it deserved.

I have given quite a bit of my time to the study of this question down the years. I first published my thinking on the matter in 1977 in my *The Progressive Publication of Matthew—A New Explanation of Synoptic Origins* (Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Studies in Australia, Ridley College, Melbourne). I was at Farmer's Synoptic Conferences in Cambridge 1979 and Jerusalem 1984. I have been teaching about these matters in Theological and Bible Colleges over a period of more than 30 years now. And I still am.

I mention these things to underline the fact that I have been aware of the scholarly currents in this field for some considerable time. This is the context within which I have been assessing, evaluating, and refining my conclusions. I have every respect for the scholars with whom I take issue in this present treatment of the issues. I respect their integrity and academic standing and ability, and their personal faith and godliness. I simply cannot help coming to the conclusion that there are certain aspects of the available data that they have overlooked or given inadequate weight to in their thinking. In the previous chapter, I set out how this applied to the Markan Priority question.

The Synoptic relationship that I espouse, Markan Dependence, is a version of the view that Mark was written third and drew upon the other two Synoptics. But there are three other Markan Posteriority hypotheses, and it is wise, therefore, for me to clarify their similarities and differences. These other Markan Posteriority views are:

(a) Lukan Priority (the Jerusalem School). I consider this hypothesis in Chapter 1, §1.2.5, and Chapter Ten, §10.4.3.

(b) The Two-Gospel position (the Farmer school).

(c) The Fourfold Gospel viewpoint.

I will be at pains in particular to elucidate the common ground I share with both the Fourfold Gospel Hypothesis and the Two-Gospel school, for there is much in their respective positions with which I concur. But there are also significant areas of disagreement.

There are numbers of places where I have not found the Two-Gospel explanation at all convincing, and the data has led me to quite different conclusions (as this chapter explains). This will mean that (and I wish to make this point quite clearly) an argument against the Two-Gospel view is **not necessarily** an argument against Markan Dependence and the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis.

Similarly I wish to clarify the extent to which I agree and disagree with the Fourfold Gospel viewpoint.

I would invite the supporters of these other positions to consider the issues afresh, and to reflect further.

### 6.1.3 Other Markan Posteriority Hypotheses: the Two-Gospel Hypothesis (2GH)

In Farmer's revived version of the "Griesbach hypothesis" he has on occasion gone beyond Griesbach in that he (Farmer) derives Luke from Matthew. Farmer's specific form of the theory has therefore been designated by some writers as "the neo-Griesbach hypothesis", though this term does not appear to have been adopted very widely, and the name of Griesbach continues at times to be attached to the theory as held today, by some scholars who do not notice that nobody currently holds this theory in just the way Griesbach did.

The designation deliberately adopted by the Farmer school, "the Two-Gospel Hypothesis", is explained by Farmer (1983: xxxiv-xxxv),

The advantage of this way of referring to the view that Mark used both Matthew and Luke is that it makes clear that the basic Gospel tradition of the church can be traced back to two actual Gospels, Matthew and Luke, rather than two hypothetical documents, namely Ur-Marcus and "Q". ...

In order to grasp the full significance of the view that Luke used Matthew, and Mark used both Matthew and Luke, one must recognize that this way of understanding the relationship of the Gospels makes it possible to avoid all of the major hypothetical documents that have bedevilled critics for over a century—not merely "Q" and "Ur-Marcus", but "Proto-Luke", "Proto-Matthew", and a whole series of such hypothetical documents called for in an unending number of multiple-source hypotheses.

The Two-Gospel Hypothesis has been presented in detail by the Two-Gospel team in the 2002 publication *One Gospel from Two: Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke* (Peabody *et al.*)

Although there is a great deal of common ground between this viewpoint and Markan Dependence, there are also some specific areas of disagreement. It is important that these differences be clearly delineated. It is highly possible that numbers of scholars who are currently adherents of the Two-Gospel Hypothesis may feel persuaded by the case that I present in favour of an alternative position on these issues.

First, it should be noted that the Two-Gospel advocates wish to spell out clearly their relationship to the originators of the Markan Posteriority viewpoint, Henry Owen and J J Griesbach. They say explicitly (*ibid.*, 17, 18)

[W]e are unsatisfied when we are identified too closely with Griesbach's views because our views differ significantly from Griesbach on several critical points, some of which we will enumerate and discuss further below ... As contemporary advocates of the Two Gospel Hypothesis continue to discover, uncover, and recover evidence that the author of the

Gospel of Mark used the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as his main sources, they have moved a considerable distance beyond the methods and conclusions of Johann Jakob Griesbach and Henry Owen.

Fair enough, too. They are asking for their views in the twenty-first century to be examined and then to stand (or fall) according to what they say *now*, and not be judged by what other scholars said about the issue in the eighteenth century. I share this viewpoint with them, concerning my own presentation: it should not be labelled “the Griesbach view”, and treated as if I were merely echoing that German scholar.

How, then, and where do I differ from the Two-Gospel Hypothesis (2GH)? In numbers of minor ways, and in a multitude of questions of interpretation of the text of Mark and its relation to the Major Synoptics. But in particular, in these seven significant matters:

### 1. Luke’s Use of Matthew

The 2GH team begin (2002: 19) with the proposition,

In our view, following the composition of the Gospel of Matthew, the next stage was Luke’s use of Matthew to compose his gospel.

They continue to make the assertion (14): “The Griesbach hypothesis (Matthew was copied by Luke, and Mark conflated them both) ... ” But it is ***absolutely incorrect*** to claim that the Griesbach hypothesis includes the idea that Matthew was copied by Luke. See my clarification of what Griesbach actually did say in §1.2.2 above. In claiming that Luke used Matthew, they have certainly “moved beyond” Griesbach! So they should stop making such an assertion about Griesbach.

I completely reject the conclusion that Luke knew or used the finished, canonical Gospel of Matthew, and I devote Chapter Eight to an examination of the evidence against this idea. Rather, I trace the common material in Matthew and Luke to the use by both of them of early documents of Matthean origin—a very different explanation of the origin of the two Major Synoptic Gospels.

### 2. The Role of Peter’s Preaching

The 2GH team identify distinguishing features of Mark that are not to be found in Matthew and Luke, which they term (35) “the Markan Overlay”. They set out the examples of this “Overlay” on pages 38 to 45.

For the most part I am happy to accept the results of their research in this regard, but with the proviso that quite a good deal of what they include in this category looks to me as if it could be better explained as going back beyond Mark himself to the influence of Peter’s preaching. The tradition of the early church Fathers was that the preaching of Peter lay behind Mark’s Gospel, and there is every support for this tradition in the

wording of Mark's Gospel itself: in its language, its wording, its multitude of additional eyewitness detail added in. Markan Dependence points out that Mark depended upon **three** sources, not just two: Matthew, Luke, **and Peter**.

### 3. Mark's Breaking-Up of Matthew's Patterns

In the 2GH team's fifth argument for Markan posteriority, they say (20),

In several pericopae, Matthew presents well-organized argumentation, based upon the interpretation of Scripture. The parallels in Mark, on the other hand, are often fragmented, losing or obscuring the carefully structured logic of the Matthean text. Therefore, we see them as revisions of Matthew.

Firstly, this is not really an argument for Markan use of Matthew. It is totally reversible. The adherent of Markan Priority can easily say, "This is how Mark wrote it, and how Matthew found it, and (following his known policy of putting like with like, and imposing order upon his material), Matthew took Mark's jumble and brought order out of chaos." Indeed, when the 2GH team look at this feature from the two perspectives, they acknowledge (45) that when this sort of thing happens, "There is no clear a priori answer" as to which way their evidence points. But they say that "when the phenomenon occurs with regularity, that line of reasoning [sc. that Matthew improved Mark] becomes untenable." Therefore they conclude Mark used Matthew.

Secondly, on occasion what is found in Mark could be simply explained by Mark following the lead that he finds in Luke

Thirdly, and most importantly, the explanation is most likely not that Mark is simply being unthinkingly and wantonly iconoclastic of Matthew's careful structure, but that he is following Peter's treatment of this matter in his preaching.

This 2GH argument is along the lines: Mark found "a nice piece of writing in Matthew and messed it up something terrible", and so this proves that Mark is last. This is not my understanding of the situation, and I do **not** see here an argument favouring Markan Posteriority.

### 4. The Provenance and Purpose of Mark

The 2GH team's treatment of this issue (55-63) makes numbers of helpful points with which I can agree. But not with its main thrust. My presentation in Chapter Three sees a different provenance and purpose for Mark's Gospel that goes well beyond what 2GH asserts (which appears to me to be total speculation).

My alternative view is, I dare to suggest, much more firmly grounded in what is actually found in the Gospel of Mark itself.

## 5. Synoptic Dating

The 2GH team do not attempt to tie down the question of dating too tightly. They say of Mark's date (55), "We believe that this would have been no more than a few decades after the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in 65-68 CE." Then they say, concerning Luke (268), "Luke, clearly writing post 70 CE, focuses upon Jerusalem being surrounded by the Roman armies."

This dating puts the Synoptics much too late. I have assembled the evidence (§2.4.2) for a date of c. AD 60 for both Matthew and Luke, and c. AD 65 for Mark, and these are much better supported than the much later dates of the 2GH team.

## 6. Synoptic Authorship

The 2GH team do not specifically discuss who the Synoptic authors actually were, but some of their comments indicate that these authors are not thought to be the persons to whom the Gospels are traditionally ascribed. They do write at times as if they accept that the author of Mark's Gospel is the John Mark of the New Testament (e.g., 48), but then they say (35):

On the basis of our assessment of all the relevant evidence known to us, much of which is presented and discussed in this book, we have concluded that the author of Mark most probably composed his Gospel on the basis of the texts of Matthew and Luke. We, therefore, expect that the hand behind these integrated and interrelated features in Mark was most likely that of the author. Hence, we describe all of the categories of evidence that make up this network as *Markan*, intending to give credit for it to the author of this Gospel, whatever the name of that person might have been.

There are, similarly, references to the "authors" of Matthew and Luke. Thus for example (34):

Most critical scholars would agree that Matthew 4:23, 9:35 and 10:1 are the work of the author of Matthew.

They thus distance themselves from endorsement of the traditional authorship. I have explained my hypothesis of the Progressive Publication of Matthew from the perspective of acceptance of the testimony of church history in this matter. I have argued the case for the Matthean authorship of the First Gospel at some length (see §2.4.3), and I have found no reason to question the unanimous testimony of the early church in regard to Synoptic authorship.

## 7. Extensive and "Creative" Redaction of the Earlier Gospels

The 2GH team's explanations, in *Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke*, of Mark's treatment of the other Synoptics—and they of each other—frequently involves attributing



to the Gospel writers extensive and “creative” redaction of the other Gospels, in which we will see misunderstandings of them and unexplained additions to them (especially in relation to Mark’s extra comments). These frequently move beyond actual evidence into speculation that I find unnecessary. Two examples of such explanations:

The 2GH team note, 2002: 220:

Luke had already been puzzled by ... Mt 19:17. ... Accordingly he rewrote the entire exchange. ... In so doing, Luke obscured the true topic of the unit ...

The 2GH team also say, 2002: 174f.:

**Mk 7:18-23** Since Mark has taken the entire pericope to be a discourse on within and without, he revises Matthew’s text freely. ... The quotation from Isaiah, which helps to formulate the whole of Mt 15:1-20, makes it clear that the central issue is what proceeds from the heart, not what goes into it. Mark has missed the point. Mark also concludes his version of these saying of Jesus with the unparalleled note that “thus [Jesus] made all foods clean.” ... Mark may have found in ... Acts a warrant for the unique and extraordinary affirmation he places on the lips of Jesus here, “Thus he made all foods clean.” This is a far cry from the perspective found in Matthew.

In the view of the 2GH team, Mark here revises Matthew freely; Mark misses the point; Mark places a unique and extraordinary affirmation on the lips of Jesus; and his version of the pericope and its point is a far cry from Matthew.

My understanding of the situation is quite different: Mark has heard this story—and this explanation—told by Peter, and this knowledge is what guides his wording here. Matthew’s version is emphasizing Jewish aspects of the incident, while Mark is drawing attention to a consequence of real relevance in a Gentile context.

There are some aspects of the usual Two-Gospel exponents’ explanations of what (in their judgement) the Synoptic authors would have done by which I am not persuaded. For these features, I have differing explanations. In these matters I would not want my conclusions to become confused with the judgements of the Two-Gospel school. And as they do not ascribe to Peter’s preaching the large and influential role that is to be recognized from the Fathers, they do not see Peter as the source from which this additional information (and indeed, frequently, this very wording) has come. At this point the Markan Dependence hypothesis is different, and has more support from the evidence.

These then are the seven major areas of my disagreement with the view expressed by the 2GH team in their 2002 book, *Mark’s Use of Matthew and Luke*. We are in agreement, however, on one significant conclusion: Mark was third-written, and made use of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

#### 6.1.4 Other Markan Posteriority Hypotheses: the Fourfold Gospel Hypothesis (4GH)

An alternative exposition of the Markan Posteriority position is that advocated by adherents of the Fourfold Gospel Hypothesis, particularly Bernard Orchard, Harold Riley, and David Alan Black. The presentation of this view is readily accessible in Black's *Why Four Gospels?* (2001). It shares with the Two-Gospel Hypothesis the proposition that Luke used canonical Matthew; but it differs from the Two-Gospel Hypothesis in some of the points just mentioned above, and in these areas I am in agreement with 4GH.

So then: how do these authors see the question of authorship and dating?

In his 1976 volume *Matthew, Luke and Mark* (note the order), Orchard examines the text of the three Synoptics with a view to ascertaining their relationship without hypothesizing other documents. That is, he says (25), "In other words we are concerned only with the shape of the Gospels we have." His conclusion is (121) that "Matthew is now established as the principal source for the material common to Luke and Matthew", Luke having known and used our canonical Matthew in his own writing.

Orchard insists that this view of the relationship between the Synoptics (i.e., the Markan Posteriority view) is a result of consideration of the evidence and it is to be recognized quite independently of any question of dating. He says (121),

This literary nexus between Matthew, Luke and Mark is to be understood as being quite independent of any date that might be credibly assigned to any of them; it simply establishes a mutual, timeless and immutable literary relationship between the three of them.

Orchard and Riley co-authored the book *The Order of the Synoptics: Why Three Synoptic Gospels* in 1987, and then Riley published *The Making of Mark* in 1989. In the latter I find that he approaches quite close to my proposal of the Progressive Publication of Matthew Hypothesis. Riley identifies (245) at least two stages or "editions" of Matthew in circulation, saying that for this hypothesized first edition a date of "about the year AD 50 is probable", and that it would have been known to James (and is reflected in his Epistle) and to Paul when he wrote the Thessalonian Epistles and probably also to Luke, adding (246), "All this is of course in the realm of probabilities, but a consistent picture emerges, with its own evidential value." Matthew's "expanded text" (i.e., the canonical version) would have been "already available when Luke and Mark wrote"—and Luke knew both versions (246).

In reference to dating Luke and Mark, Riley explains (249):

The date of the Third Gospel must be earlier than that of Acts, though it need not have been much earlier. It is reasonable to suppose that if Acts was completed by the year 62 or 63, the Gospel would have been in circulation not later than the year 60. That is consistent

with the probable earlier date of Matthew, and with the production by Mark of his Gospel a few years later.

David Alan Black informs us thus about his book *Why Four Gospels?* (2001: 9);

While representing my own conviction about the synoptic problem, it is essentially a popularization of Dr. Orchard's views, written at his behest and with an eye on a hitherto unreached audience.

Black says (69), regarding Matthew's date,

The formation of Matthew's Gospel probably took place in the first decade of the church's life, that is, before 44, and thus not only before 1-2 Thessalonians and Galatians but probably before Paul's second visit to Jerusalem "after fourteen years" (Gal 2:1; cf. Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).

And Luke produced his Gospel in 58-60 (91), and Mark a few years later "after the death of Peter" (92).

More generally about this hypothesis he writes (52 and 72),

The Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis needs no hypothetical documents to support it, nor any restrictions. It holds that the second evangelist knew the first and that the third knew the other two, and it has practically the total support of the patristic and historical evidence. ... According to the Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis, Luke had Matthew before him as his exemplar.

Black sums up the position taken by this Hypothesis thus (94):

If the Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis is found to be the correct source-critical theory, then there will be no problem either in the apostle Matthew being the author of his Gospel or in Peter and Paul authenticating the Gospels of Mark and Luke, since it proves that Matthew and Luke were written before Mark, which itself is dated about 62, thus permitting all three Synoptic Gospels to have been written during the life span of Matthew and the "apostolic men".

My explanation does not envisage the production of the complete Gospel of Matthew by the early date proposed by Black but, rather (a) the production by then of quite a few Matthean documents that indeed could well have reached James and Paul and Luke, and then (b) the subsequent incorporation of these early Matthean documents (possibly together with others from Matthew) by Luke in his Gospel as well as their being included by Matthew in his "collected edition", i.e. our canonical Matthew.

I find that the evidence points to the conclusion that Luke did *not* know the complete Gospel of Matthew, as I explain in Chapter Eight, though in his research Luke would have accumulated a collection of documents produced earlier by Matthew. And I cannot

find the rationale for the Gospels of Luke and Mark to lie within a postulated plan by Paul to get their “authentication” from Peter, as set out by Black—for me, the explanation for Mark is to be found in a recognition, from its contents, of what its purpose was (as explained in Chapter Three). But in other areas, particularly in respect of the acceptance of authorship, and in the dating of the Synoptics by no later than the sixties, and in taking seriously the role of Peter’s preaching behind Mark and the patristic testimony more generally, I find that their research and mine has led us to similar conclusions.

## **6.2 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

### **6.2.1 The Part Played by Peter’s Preaching**

This is integral to the Markan Dependence hypothesis. Peter’s preaching is the third source that Mark has drawn upon in his Gospel.

The evidence for this is found in Papias, and in all the early church Fathers unanimously. It may be desirable to assess their testimony carefully in regard to other matters, and to weigh what they are saying with due attention to see what they are getting at, but not with regard to this point. They tell us: What Mark wrote down he got from Peter’s preaching.

We will need to consider how this information about Peter meshes with Mark’s use of Matthew and Luke as sources also. We will want to enquire what we can learn about that preaching, and about the nature of Mark’s use of it. We can ask whether he made notes or wrote it down accurately from memory later. But as to the fact of the matter itself, the testimony of the Fathers is clear.

And recognition of this evidence enables us to understand Mark’s different, colloquial and oral style of writing, in contrast with the Major Synoptics. Mark is reflecting both the manner of Peter’s speech and his own purpose in carrying on Peter’s ministry of evangelism by means of his writing of a handbook for preachers containing stories of Jesus. Details, Chapter Three.

### **6.2.2 Patristic Testimony to Authorship and Order of Writing**

In some quarters there has been a tendency to denigrate the testimony of the early church Fathers, even to the point of implying that they can be disregarded. The contribution to Synoptic issues to be made by a study of the Fathers has been recently examined in detail by David Alan Black in his *Why Four Gospels?*. He summarizes the present situation thus (2001: 47),

Today the academic guild, both in Europe and North America, assumes that the patristic

evidence is basically legendary and unreliable. ... the patristic testimony is said to be inconsistent, contradictory and insecurely based.

The attitude has been, "They contradict each other about Gospel origins, so they cancel each other out." The evidence of the Fathers is thus removed from serious consideration, and primarily because it conflicts with the hypothesis of Markan Priority. This is a very prejudicial and self-serving assessment.

The 2GH team have examined the evidence of the Fathers and come to the evaluation (2002: 54), "Until recent decades, the patristic evidence appeared to be essentially divided. In light of recent research it can be said that, on balance, the patristic evidence strongly supports the Two Gospel hypothesis with regard to the order of the composition of the Gospels."

Black has retranslated them and assessed carefully what they are saying, distinguishing when they are writing about the authorship of the Gospels (without particular attention to any question of order of writing or relationships) from when **these** issues are the specific focus of what they are saying. In his *Why Four Gospels?* (2001), Black sets out (37-44) the translation of all the relevant passages in the Fathers. In his evaluation of their explanations, Black emphasizes the trustworthiness of the testimony of their texts, and concerning these texts he says (42),

They have been preserved from the earliest times because they are the witnesses of the most distinguished churchmen of those days, men whose integrity and competence were universally recognized.

He notes (48) that the objections made to their testimony

need no refutation when we recall the scholarship, intelligence, and integrity of these outstanding churchmen. It is interesting to note that classical Greek and Roman scholars have never shared modern biblical critics' distrust of ancient ecclesiastical writers regarding the authority and authenticity of the Gospels. They have always been willing to give them at least as much credence as they have given to the secular historians of antiquity, and to recognize that the skills of ancient scholars in critical analysis were just as sharp as those of modern critics, even though they worked with less sophisticated tools.

What were the views of the early church Fathers about the writing of the Gospels? Papias does not make any comment about the order of the writing of the Gospels.

The early church Fathers record that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive and preaching. Eusebius (*Church History*, 6.14.5-7) reports what was said by Clement of Alexandria (c.190) concerning the writing of the Gospels:

Again, in the same books [i.e., *Hypotyposeis*], Clement gives the tradition respecting the

order of the Gospels, as derived from the earliest elders, as follows: He used to say that those Gospels were written first which included the genealogies, and that the Gospel according to Mark came into being in this manner: while Peter was engaged in preaching in Rome and proclaiming the gospel by the Spirit, numbers of people encouraged Mark, as one who had followed Peter for a long time, and remembered what he had said, to write it down. ... When Peter learned about this he neither encouraged nor discouraged this endeavour.

Additionally, Eusebius tells us (*Church History* 5.8.1-4) that Irenaeus (c.190; an older contemporary of Clement) wrote that after the death of Peter, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing the things that used to be preached by Peter."

If we take this testimony at face value, and put it all together, these early church Fathers indicate that Mark was working on his Gospel towards the end of Peter's lifetime, with the Christians in Rome requesting copies, particularly after Peter's death, of Mark's remembrance of what the apostle had preached.

Mark may or may not have completed his Gospel before Peter died, and it may or may not at that time have been intended for wide public (as distinct from private) circulation. Certainly after Peter's death Mark was asked for his record of what Peter had preached and Mark was not hesitant in "handing over the Gospel to those who had asked for it" (Clement of Alexandria, quoted from Black 41).

The judgement of Black himself is (85), "As long as Peter was alive, it seems to have circulated privately; but after his martyrdom, Mark himself probably published it as an act of *pietas* to the memory of his old master."

This information gives us a date for Mark: the year AD 65, when Peter was martyred. But when Mark began to write his Gospel in Rome, the other two Synoptics had already been written. (Note above the tradition of the earliest elders, reported by Clement, that "those Gospels were written first which included the genealogies.")

Black suggests, further (27f.) that Peter himself had been making use of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in his preaching and teaching. This remains a possibility, though I do not see any evidence for it (or against it, for that matter). I am rather doubtful that Peter would need the memory-jogging of these other Gospels for his preaching in Rome in the sixties, for he had by then already been preaching these stories for some thirty years.

What can be said with greater certainty is that his colleague Mark had both these Gospels in front of him when he came to assemble his notes of Peter's preaching into

order for publication. This is clear because Mark follows exactly the order of the pericopes of Luke to 6:14 and of Matthew thereafter (with four additional insertions into this framework each from the other Gospel)—for full explanation of this, see Chapter Nine.

There is unanimity in the Fathers that Matthew was the first Gospel written. None of the Fathers suggests the priority of Mark. There is some uncertainty whether Mark is to be placed second or third.

The one order of writing that is completely consistent with both Clement and Irenaeus, and contradicts nothing in either writer, is the order Matthew, Luke, Mark, John. Their joint testimony also indicates that Matthew and Luke wrote before the death of Peter, and that similarly Mark must have written (or at least, commenced writing) before Peter's death, and "handed down" or distributed his Gospel after Peter's death.

Origen uses the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, but does not give us any grounds that would suggest that he thought this the **order of writing**, and he appears rather to be reflecting the order into which the Gospels were then being placed, in the crystalizing of the New Testament canon, this being the order in which it was most helpful to **read** them. John Chrysostom states that "Matthew was before the rest in entering on the subject" and that Mark and Luke came after him—mentioned in that order, but without any express comment as to the order of writing for Mark and Luke.

We have seen earlier that Augustine initially accepted the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as being the order of writing, deriving this apparently from Origen and from the order in which the Gospels appeared in the canon of the New Testament. Later, however, Augustine apparently came as the result of his own studies of the Gospels to the view that Mark was the third, and knew and used Matthew and Luke.

In summary: It can be noted that Patristic testimony gives support to two, and only two, orders for the Gospels, viz., Matthew-Luke-Mark-John, and Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. Augustine is the only one who states that the latter was the order of writing, and it would seem that he himself later reconsidered this matter and altered his view; other references to this order are not to it as being to an **order of writing**. There is clear Patristic testimony in support of Matthew, Luke, Mark, John as the order of writing. There is no support for Mark or Luke being the first Gospel written. If Mark was the first Gospel published (as the Markan Priority view requires), then it would appear that no church Father knew of this, for every single one of them who mentions the matter at all says that Matthew was the first written.

There are no valid grounds for disregarding this testimony or explaining it away. The patristic evidence cannot be lightly set aside.

## 6.3 INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS

### 6.3.1 Similarity of Contents of the Synoptics

All New Testament scholars—indeed, all readers of the Synoptic Gospels—are aware of the significant extent to which they contain similar material. Most of the contents of Mark are paralleled in either or both Matthew and Luke. This is exactly what would result if the author of Mark's Gospel had drawn his material from Matthew and Luke.

### 6.3.2 Similarity of Wording of the Synoptics

Numerous Synoptic scholars have drawn attention to the significant extent to which within individual pericopes there is close correspondence between the Synoptic Gospels in vocabulary, points of grammatical construction, and the sequence in which things are mentioned. This is exactly what would result if the author of Mark's Gospel had drawn his material from Matthew and Luke.

### 6.3.3 The Order of Pericopes in the Synoptics

A comparison of the Synoptic Gospels shows that sometimes they agree in the order in which they set out the events that they record, and sometimes they differ amongst themselves. The overall extent of the agreement in pericope order is quite substantial, but the changes in order between one Gospel and another are also considerable.

A closer examination of the nature of the agreements and disagreements reveals that Mark always agrees with the order of Matthew and Luke where these two agree, and always agrees with the order of **either** Matthew **or** Luke where the two Major Synoptics differ in order. That is to say, the three Synoptics do not ever display three differing orders-of-events in which they give their pericopes, nor does it happen that Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in order of pericopes. This outcome is exactly what would result if the author of Mark's Gospel had drawn his material from Matthew and Luke. But could this feature have arisen in any other circumstance?

## Evaluation

These three arguments are the same as the first three of the five that Streeter put forward as establishing Markan Priority. When the data upon which they are based is examined, it can be seen that they decisively rule out the Complete Independence hypothesis, which does not adequately account for the extent to which similar contents and at times identical wording and phrasing and grammatical constructions occur in two or all three Synoptics. And which, furthermore, cannot account for the degree of corres-



pondence in pericope order if the Synoptics are written from the oral tradition independently of each other, since pericopes in the oral tradition would not all occur in a fixed order that would then be reproduced in independently-written Gospels.

Most New Testament scholars of today would agree that the explanation of Synoptic similarities and differences is to be found in either a Markan Priority-plus-Q (Two-Source) or Markan Posteriority approach. Not *all* scholars agree: there are those who affirm strongly the Complete Independence of the Synoptics, and also those who hold to the Farrer view (Markan Priority without Q) or the Jerusalem School view (Lukan Priority). (I discuss these possibilities in Chapter Ten.)

But for those who have concluded that the most probable answer is either Two-Source or Markan Posteriority, there is a strong tendency to believe that an argument *for* Two-Source is an argument *against* Mark being third. This is not necessarily so.

In particular it is to be noted that Streeter's first two "heads" are also the first two arguments I have listed for Markan Dependence. Specifically, the first two arguments are two main areas where Two-Source and Two-Gospel (and Fourfold Gospel and Markan Dependence) are in agreement. These are in fact areas that distinguish these hypotheses from others and that demonstrate that there must be some kind of literary relationship amongst the Synoptics, of which "Mark is the middle factor" (McKnight 2001: 77).

However, it is to be noted that the first two arguments are compatible not only with both Markan Posteriority and Markan Priority but also with Successive Dependence and with virtually any theory of Synoptic interdependence that has Mark as its middle term.

But the third argument, the question of pericope order, rules out the Successive Dependence view. For on this hypothesis, the data of pericope order would require that Luke adhered strictly to Mark's order whenever Mark *differs* from Matthew (because Luke always agrees with Mark where Mark and Matthew diverge), and yet that Luke would feel at liberty to desert Mark's order whenever Mark *agrees* with Matthew (because the only times that Luke differs from Mark's order are when Mark and Matthew agree in order). There is no basis upon which to believe that Luke would adopt such a peculiar procedure.

However, it is simple to explain the original divergence in order between Matthew and Luke from the Markan Dependence perspective. Both the Major Synoptics use the same general chronological framework for their presentation of Christ's life and ministry. Throughout his Gospel Luke was concerned with the question of order of events (as he himself tells us in his Preface, 1:3; see §4.6.5).

On the other hand, Matthew is very much interested in the teaching of Jesus (of the 18,298 words in Matthew's Gospel, 10,827, or 59.17%, are the words of Jesus: that is, six out of ten of the words of Matthew's Gospel are words spoken by Jesus). (See details, Chapter Four, §4.4.3 and §4.4.4.) Within a general chronological framework, Matthew's approach is to group together Jesus's teachings in large sections, and, similarly, to group Jesus's various miracles: Matthew 4:23-25 is not describing what happened **before** any of the events in following chapters, but is in effect a summary of them, and operates virtually as a "Table of Contents" or outline of his presentation of Jesus's Galilean ministry.

Advocates of the Markan Priority hypothesis seek to offer individual explanations for each separate instance when Matthew or Luke deserts Mark's order, but have produced no overall explanation of the phenomenon. Again, if Mark is the source for Matthew and Luke, then these two authors are independently deciding either to follow or depart from Mark's order, and then when to return to it again—and it **just happens** that while each is thus acting independently for his own reasons, it never turns out that they both leave Mark's order at the same time, seeing that Mark's order is always supported by at least one of them. Thus the Markan Priority view must invoke a very high level of coincidence for the fact that Matthew and Luke, each of whom departed from Mark's order when he chose, do not **ever** happen both to do so for the same material.

This phenomenon of Synoptic order is, however, explicable very simply by the Markan Dependence hypothesis: Mark had no knowledge of pericope order apart from what he saw in Matthew and Luke, or alternatively he deliberately chose not to alter their order. He adhered to the order of the Major Synoptics wherever they themselves were in agreement (which is why Matthew and Luke never agree in order against Mark), and when they differed he followed one or the other of them (which is why Mark always agrees in order with at least one other Synoptic).

The Argument from Order thus weighs very heavily against Markan Priority and is one of the strongest features pointing to Markan Dependence, and I have devoted an entire chapter—Chapter Nine—to a thorough and detailed consideration of this Synoptic feature.

### 6.3.4 The Argument from Conflation

There are a large number of places in the Synoptics where Mark has a form of wording or a setting out of detail that is partially paralleled in Matthew and partially paralleled in Luke.

The Markan Priority hypothesis explains this as being due to a Markan tendency to

verbosity, with Matthew and Luke sometimes using different ways of cutting down Mark's wordiness.

However, the wording of the Synoptic texts is better and more consistently accounted for as due to the carrying out on those occasions of a Markan policy of melding together what he has before him in the Matthean and Lukan stories.

Examples of this apparent conflation are:

**(a) The Promise of the Coming One (Mt 3:11/Mk 1:7/Lk 3:16)**

<b>Mt 3:11</b>	<b>Mk 1:7</b>	<b>Lk 3:16</b>
but he who is coming	After me comes he	but he
after me is mightier than I	who is mightier than I	who is mightier than I
		is coming,
	the thong of	the thong of
whose sandals	whose sandals	whose sandals
I am not worthy to	I am not worthy to	I am not worthy to
	stoop down and	
carry	untie	untie

If Matthew is using Mark, why does he change “stooping down and untying a sandal thong” to “carrying sandals”? Why does Luke omit “after me” and “stoop down”? (In the Greek, the accounts of Mark and Luke are identical except that Luke lacks these expressions and has an initial *δε* (*de*) that Mark does not need because of his introduction, “And he preached, saying”.)

If however Mark is using Matthew and Luke, then his procedure is straightforward: he follows Luke closely but adds in “after me” from Matthew, and “stooping down” as an additional point of detail of his own.

**(b) The Rich Young Man (Mt 19:16-30/Mk 10:17-31/Lk 18:18-30)**

The accounts of the Rich Young Man in Matthew and Luke differ from each other in a multitude of details of wording, word order, grammatical construction, perspective and viewpoint—but neither of them differs from Mark nearly as much. To put this another way: Mark is in general agreement with both of them when they agree with each other, and almost seems to alternate in agreement with each in those places where they differ. In fact, his account so effectively reconciles the Matthean and Lukan versions that only a careful consideration of their text, with Mark put to one side, allows us to see the extent of their differences. The data points strongly to the explanation that Mark has conflated the accounts of Matthew and Luke.

To consider an example. Mt 19:18-19//Lk 18:20 both give a partial list of the Commandments, but with these differences:

(a) In Mt 19:18, the Commandments are given in the form οὐ plus the future, and the order of the first two in the list is, “You shall not kill” and “You shall not commit adultery”, and then those from the Decalogue are followed by “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”;

(b) in Lk 18:20 the Commandments are given in the form μή plus the aorist subjunctive, and the order of the first two in the list is, “Do not commit adultery” and “Do not kill”; and the commandment to love one's neighbour is not given.

Mark corresponds with Luke in using μή plus the subjunctive and in the omission of “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”; but agrees with Matthew in the **order** in which the Commandments are set out. It is a reasonable explanation that Mark, in using Matthew and Luke and being confronted with their differences, conflates them by adopting the **order** used by Matthew and the **form of words** used by Luke. The alternative (Markan Priority) explanation would be that Matthew, in using Mark, retained Mark's **order** and altered his **form of wording** whereas Luke, also using Mark, chose to do the opposite and altered Mark's **order** but retained his **form of wording**. Which raises a very puzzling question: Why should either of them depart from Mark in these ways? But it is very straightforward to see why Mark, confronted with **existing differences** between his two accounts, should meld them by combining features of each.

This disagreement between Matthew and Luke, and the agreement of Mark now with one and now with the other, runs through the whole pericope.

This pericope has been put forward by numbers of writers as giving support to Markan Priority. However, these differences are so numerous (there are 36 of them) and so significant that I have devoted Chapter Eleven to examining them and accounting for them.

But it should be noted at this point that the various differences fall short of being contradictions and it is easy to conceive of how they could exist in two independent reports of the incident from two different eyewitnesses; what is much more difficult to explain is how they could arise from the redaction of a single account, whether that one account be Mark's or any other. Thus from the data one is led towards the conclusion that these two accounts, in Matthew and Luke, cannot have been derived one from the other or from any common document, but that they are separate accounts deriving independently from the one actual event.

The Markan Priority explanation for this pericope, that Matthew and Luke each made

quite a few rather insignificant changes at every level to much of what Mark says, but frequently acted alternatively in what they each retained from Mark and what they each altered, is a much less coherent explanation of the data than the Markan Dependence explanation that Mark had in front of him two differing accounts from two independent sources, and combined them together in a manner that largely reconciled their differences of detail.

### (c) Other Examples of Conflation

There are hundreds of other verses in the Synoptics where Mark's Gospel can be seen to be a conflating of the wording of Matthew and Luke. The following passages are some that exhibit this evidence of conflation:

Mt 3:1-4:17//Mk 1:2-15//Lk 3:1-4:15 (especially Mk 1:2-4, 7-13)

Mt 9:1-17//Mk 2:1-22//Lk 5:17-39

Mt 17:1-7//Mk 9:2-8//Lk 9:28-36

Mt 17:14-21//Mk 9:14-29//Lk 9:37-43a

Mt 21:33-46//Mk 12:1-12//Lk 20:9-19

These are examples of a phenomenon that can be observed in varying degrees throughout all the material of the Triple Tradition.

### Evaluation

Streeter in 1924 and Tuckett in 1983 looked at some of the possible instances of conflation, where half of something in Mark was paralleled in Matthew and the other half in Luke, and pointed out that Matthew and Luke were each shorter than Mark for most of the stories that they had in common. In the nature of things therefore, if Matthew and Luke were using Mark, and abridging it, sometimes they would agree in what they left out from Mark (giving rise to agreements against Mark at that point) and sometimes they would differ, one omitting one half of what Mark contained and the other Gospel omitting the remainder of what Mark had (giving rise to the appearance of conflation in Mark whereas it was actually a case of abridgement by Matthew and Luke).

This explanation of conflation sounds reasonable until one examines the actual Synoptic text and observes how in passage after passage Mark contains ideas, details, individual words, and grammatical structures, that occur also in **either** Matthew or Luke, but **not** in both.

If Mark is prior, then it seems that Matthew and Luke have virtually taken turns in excising or altering things that Mark says. The extent of these differences is exceedingly high—of the 11078 words in Mark, Matthew has taken over only 4230 words, or 38.2%,

in parallel passages; that is, he has omitted or changed 61.8% of Mark's words; of these 11078 words in Mark, Luke has taken over only 2675 words, or 24.1%; that is, he has omitted or changed 75.9% of the words that he had in front of him in Mark. (This information has been set out in full in Chapter Four, §4.2.3, Table 2.) Why in these passages Matthew or Luke should both wish to change the text of Mark to this extent, and then in such different ways, is hard to explain.

It is simple to see what Mark has done on the Markan Dependence view: he has in front of him two somewhat differing accounts of an event or a saying of Jesus, and he blends the two together by taking ideas, details, words, and grammatical structures from each.

It is relevant to recall (from Chapter Four) that, of the words that Mark has in common with Matthew (4230) and with Luke (2675), there are only 1835 words that Mark has in common with **both** Matthew and Luke. That is to say, on the Markan Dependence hypothesis there are 2395 words (i.e., 4230 minus 1835) that Mark drew from Matthew, and 840 (i.e., 2675 minus 1835) that he drew from Luke, and 1835 that occurred in both Matthew and Luke and that Mark took over. In addition, there are ideas, details, and grammatical structures that Mark has in common with Matthew or Luke where identical words were not employed, and that are also evidence of conflation. Mark's total words in common with **either** Matthew or Luke is 5070, or 45.8% of his total words, so that 6008 of his words (54.2%) are unique to Mark and **not** found in **either** Matthew or Luke in parallels. (See details in Chapter Four, §4.2.3, Table 3.)

This evidence of conflation strongly points to Markan Dependence as the relationship of Mark to Matthew and Luke.

### 6.3.5 The Argument from Mark's Shorter Accounts

On numbers of occasions Mark contains a short version of something (ranging from brief sayings to a lengthy pericope) that occurs in a fuller form in Matthew and Luke. In such cases Mark obviously cannot have been the source for all that is in Matthew and Luke.

#### Examples:

(a) Mt 3:11-12/Mk 1:8/Lk 3:16-17: All three Gospels contain John's testimony to the Coming One and say, "he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit". Here Mark stops, while Matthew and Luke continue, "... and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will [Mt]/to [Lk] clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

(b) Mt 4:1-11/Mk 1:12-13/Lk 4:1-13: All three Gospels record the Temptation, but Mark's account is very brief and does not refer to the nature of the temptation, while Matthew and Luke give considerably more detail.

(c) Mt 9:20/Mk 5:27/Lk 8:44: Matthew and Luke record that the sick woman touched the “fringe of” Jesus's robe; Mark lacks this and says only that she touched his robe. For the Jew, the fringe of a rabbi's robe had special religious significance (see Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12). If Matthew and Luke were drawing this story from Mark, it is barely possible to see why Matthew might decide to insert *the fringe of*, but quite impossible to conceive of any reason why it should occur to Luke to do so. But if Matthew and Luke wrote first, then they included the detail because it *happened*—the fringe was significant to the woman—and Mark omitted the reference to the fringe because this point was meaningless to his intended readership. [See further, Chapter Seven §7.09 (a)]

(d) Mt 17:17/Mk 9:19/Lk 9:41: Matthew and Luke read “O faithless and perverse generation”; Mark says only “O faithless generation”. It is not immediately apparent why Mark would have omitted the words “and perverse” if they were in the sources that he was following. But that he should do so is more believable than the alternative, viz, that both Matthew and Luke independently chose to insert the word “perverse” at this point. This is not a common word, and the occurrences of this term “perverse” (διεστραμμένη) in this pericope are its only occurrences on the lips of Jesus and indeed its only occurrences in the Gospels.

If then (as Markan Priority holds to be the case) the only source for this pericope in Matthew and Luke is Mark, and recognizing that if Matthew and Luke had followed the wording of Mark and not introduced “perverse” here then this word would not have occurred at all in the Gospels, it really stretches the imagination to conceive of why it would occur independently to both Matthew and Luke to add it in.

It is moreover no answer to the difficulty to say here that the explanation of why Matthew and Luke include “and perverse” is that this is what Jesus actually said. Once this explanation is tendered, then it completely contradicts the fundamental tenet of the Markan Priority hypothesis, which is that *Mark alone* is the source in this pericope for what is in Matthew and Luke.

The Markan Dependence alternative is much more believable: Matthew and Luke record this saying because *Jesus actually said it*, and, for some reason that is not now known to us, Mark (while using Matthew and Luke as his sources) chose to abbreviate Jesus's words here. [See further, Chapter Seven, §7.09 (b)]

### Assessing Alternative Explanations

Instances (a) and (b) and others of similar kind (notably, the Beelzebul Controversy, the Parable of the Mustard Seed, and the Mission Charge to the Twelve) are explained by exponents of Markan Priority as instances of an overlap between Mark and the presumed second source Q. But if this be so, it means that in these cases Mark is not the source for Matthew and Luke for material that is common to all three Synoptics. But whatever argument leads us to postulate in these cases an alternative source (that is, a source other than Mark) could also justify holding that same non-Markan source to be the origin of *other* Synoptic material that also happens to occur in Mark.

That is, we are obliged to call upon a source other than Mark to account for the observable data (as described above). Having invoked this source, there is then no basis (other than subjective opinion) upon which we can thereafter *exclude* the possibility that this other source, Q, could have been known and used by Mark, and thus could have itself been the source for the rest of the common material in the Synoptics. Once we open the door for the use of Q to explain Matthew-Luke agreements against Mark, it is very hard to keep it open only for selected instances. That is, it is impossible to affirm that some pericopes were found in both Mark and Q without simultaneously allowing the Ur-Gospel approach to take over from the Two-Source hypothesis.

For all these pericopes, the Markan Dependence explanation remains as a clear and simple alternative that fully accounts for the Synoptic data.

For examples (c) and (d) above, and all the many others of this kind, the exponents of Markan Priority offer the explanations (i) that Matthew and Luke in these instances had separate information about the events, information that they each chose here to conflate with Mark (note that this is virtually invoking Q here also); and/or (ii) that Matthew and Luke each happened to think of and use the same addition at the same point; and/or (iii) that the agreement between Matthew and Luke is due to the text of the one having here been assimilated to that of the other Gospel (advanced by Streeter, 1924: 327, for the question “Who is it that struck you?” in Mt 26:68//Lk 22:64, absent Mk 14:65, which he explains as due to *all the extant manuscripts of Matthew having been corrupted by being assimilated here to Luke*). (Tuckett does not agree here with Streeter’s explanation.)

The Markan Dependence explanation is much more believable.

#### 6.3.6 The Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark

The instances just mentioned above are particular instances of a much larger category, the agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark. It is widely



recognized that these agreements constitute a difficulty for Markan Priority, but Markan Priority advocates in general are satisfied with the explanations that have been offered for them. Perhaps however the number of these agreements is often underestimated—Stoldt (1980: 10-21) has shown that in addition to the five pericopes unique to Mark (the deaf-mute, the blind man from Bethsaida, the seed growing secretly, Jesus thought to be beside himself, and the young man who fled), there are:

(a) 180 “passages in the second Gospel in which minor additional details extend beyond the particular text parallels which Mark shares with Matthew and Luke”,

(b) another 35 “sections in which both Matthew and Luke contain material which goes beyond the parallel text of the second Gospel”,

(c) another 35 places again where there is “concurrence of the first and third Evangelists in expressions and wording against Mark” and

(d) a further 22 cases of “corresponding divergences of Matthew and Luke from Mark ... each of which involved the use of the same word”.

That is, there are a total of 277 instances of agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark. These cannot be as lightly set aside as some scholars apparently wish.

If only a few such instances existed, then it would be reasonable to explain them as due to the coincidence of Matthew and Luke hitting upon the same additions, deletions, or other alterations to Mark. But the large number and wide scope of these agreements of the Major Synoptics against Mark make this explanation seem much less convincing.

The more reasonable explanation is that Mark wrote with Matthew and Luke in front of him, and that in these instances—because he was an independent author and not a mere copyist and compiler, and because he had his own independent reasons for producing a Gospel, and because he was also drawing upon his knowledge of Peter’s preaching—he departed from what Matthew and Luke had written.

### **6.3.7 Mark’s Inclusions and Omissions**

We have seen several times that Mark’s omissions are regularly raised as being an argument for Markan Priority on the grounds that it is hard to see why Mark would omit this information if he had it in front of him in Matthew and Luke. But Mark’s inclusions and exclusions indicate that he wrote for a church that already possessed Matthew and Luke—otherwise these inclusions and exclusions are virtually inexplicable.

That is to say, it is not merely the case (as shown earlier, §3.2 and §3.8) that this assertion based on what is not in Mark has no substance as an argument for Markan Priority. For if a reader thinks carefully about this matter, and follows that thought to its

logical conclusion, they will recognize that this point is actually strong evidence in favour of the case for Markan Dependence.

For which serious student of the Synoptics is going to assert today that each of the Synoptists recorded all that he knew, so that if something is not in their Gospel, it is because of the author's ignorance of that detail or that pericope? If you can find me such a one, I will wish to ask him how he considers that the author of Mark could have grown up in a home that was a meeting-place for Christians, becoming a companion for a time with Paul and Barnabas in their missionary endeavours, a useful helper for Paul in his old age, and in particular an active associate of the apostle Peter in his preaching and teaching ministry, and never heard more than the things he records? Did Peter *never* mention the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, or others "of Jesus' most precious teachings" (as Blomberg put it in his eighth reason for Markan Priority—see §5.5.2), or any of the resurrection appearances, for instance? (The idea that Mark did not know these teachings is one of the impossibilities that Markan Priority is asking us to believe—see Chapter Seven, §7.01 and §7.03.)

There can be no question but that Mark would in fact know a great deal more than he included. On any view of who Mark was and when he wrote, we can see that the content of his Gospel (both what he included and what he omitted) is therefore the result of **selection** and not of **ignorance**, and is completely related to his purpose in writing. I have examined this question in detail in Chapter Three, §3.7 and §3.8. His inclusions are those stories about Jesus that conformed to the *kerygma* of the early church. And his omissions make complete sense if we see that, not only were they not regarded as part of the *kerygma* by the early church but also that, in leaving things out, Mark knew that fellow-Christians would have access to them in the other Synoptics.

The Markan Priorist has to face and answer the far more difficult question: If Mark was indeed the first one to write, so that the only written information that his readers would have had at that time is what he included in his Gospel, how can you explain (on the basis of Markan Priority) that Mark did not include this other teaching of which—as a member of the Christian community—he must have been aware? Mark's omissions point clearly to the conclusion that he must have known that this information was **already available** in the church in the other Synoptics.

Indeed, there are a number of occasions when Mark specifically mentions items of teaching that he does not himself record. It was encountering these passages when he was looking for them but not expecting to find them that led to Dom John Chapman being converted (his term) from Markan Priority to recognizing that Matthew was first and

that Mark was drawing upon this Gospel. Reference to these places that convinced Chapman—and they do indeed provide further evidence in support of the hypothesis that Mark utilized Matthew—will be found in Chapter Ten, §10.3.1, where Chapman’s work is discussed. As Chapter Seven demonstrates, it is impossible to read these verses and then say that Mark would **not** have known about this additional teaching when in fact he is telling us in his Gospel that he did.

### 6.3.8 The Integrity of the Text

To me the Integrity Argument is the most important and most convincing of them all. The others are significant, and they indeed point to Markan Dependence as the explanation of all the data: but what they are doing is pointing to Markan Dependence to the exclusion of other hypotheses, or else they are indicating that Markan Dependence is far more probable than any other. But this argument is the answer you get by simply accepting the integrity of the text as it stands. That is to say, by accepting that the accounts we have do represent what happened, and that they complement each other rather than contradict each other or “correct” and “improve” each other.

To consider first of all the Major Synoptics, Matthew and Luke: when they are sufficiently similar as to indicate a common source, that source was the apostle Matthew. And we can accept those accounts as they stand because **he** was trustworthy. The redaction that we find in these two Gospels is what results from fitting their accounts into the respective pattern and purpose of each of those two Gospels. Sometimes their two accounts will exhibit differences that are consonant with Matthew having rewritten in Greek an episode that he had originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic, whereas Luke’s account is a different translation of that same Hebrew/Aramaic. (The Jerusalem School—see Chapter Ten, §10.4.3—will tell you how often Luke seems just like such a translation.)

Where those accounts are so significantly different that they appear to have different sources, it is because they **do** have different sources: Matthew is the source of the version in his Gospel, and Luke has in the course of his investigations obtained the second account from some other eyewitness who was present on the occasion, and (as he says in his preface) he has checked it out and he will vouch for it. Sometimes the accounts are quite clearly of the same occasion but they actually have little in common. The pericope of Jesus’s visit to Nazareth in these two Synoptics is a very clear example of this. Sometimes the accounts overlap extensively, but with exactly the kind of difference of perspective that you would expect to find in two reports from different eyewitnesses.

Consider further the example of conflation I have just mentioned in §6.3.4 (b), above:

the account of the Rich Young Man. This explanation accounts exactly for what is found in the pericope. There are 36 differences of detail—most of them of very minor significance—between Matthew and Luke. Their sources were different eyewitnesses: this explanation accounts for these pericopes in the Majors as they stand. Then Mark came to these two different accounts, and he melded them marvelously, on 18 occasions choosing to follow Matthew and on the other 18 to follow Luke. (The list of these 36 differences and how Mark handles them is set out in Chapter Eleven.)

In this we have a simple, clear-cut, straightforward explanation that accounts fully for what is found in the three Synoptics. But consider the alternatives and what has to be explained if Mark is first. With this common starting point, Matthew altered his account from Mark's in 18 ways, small insignificant changes for the most part, and we have to try and figure out what he was doing and often we simply have to say, "He just felt like changing it." But then Luke, starting from the same pericope in Mark's Gospel, also makes 18 changes, but all of them different! Thus are created 36 points of difference between the Majors, and so, more explanations will need to be sought.

So there are two approaches to explanation: (a) Matthew and Luke between them "corrected" and "improved" Mark's text 36 times, in small points of detail, but in different ways. Or alternatively, (b) Matthew and Luke record two independent eyewitness accounts of the event, containing 36 minor points of difference, and Mark blended the two together seamlessly.

The reader should consider these two alternatives, the Markan Priority and the Markan Dependence hypotheses, and ask: Which of them gives the simple explanation? Which has the ring of truth? Which respects the integrity of the text as we have it of all three Gospels?

Then again, sometimes the different accounts are reports from different sources of similar parables or other teaching that Jesus gave on **different** occasions—for clearly we would not believe that he only ever said something the once in his three years of ministry. The Parable of the Lost Sheep is an example of this kind, a similar teaching given on two different occasions. (This situation is discussed further in §7.2.3.)

When I examine pericope after pericope in the Triple Tradition, I find this explanation fits: taken together with the recognition that a lot of the time Mark drew his wording from three sources not just two, and that third source was Peter—and we can see a great deal of Peter's language (and Mark's!) in Mark. And this explanation also accounts fully for the Double Tradition. And additionally for the places where Mark agrees with just one of the Majors. And for the *sondergut* in all three Synoptics.

And at all points the integrity of the text is preserved. By this I mean that I am not in the position where I have to grope for an explanation such as, “This author is correcting that author, or improving him, or creatively adding to him something that is being put into the mouth of Jesus that Jesus in fact did not say!” (All these explanations, as shown last chapter, are part of the range of speculations that Markan Priorists give for differences between the Synoptics.)

But if I believe that Jesus said the things the text says he said, and did the things the text says he did—in other words, if I accept as a starting point that the text is accurate as it stands—I find that the explanation that I come to, the one that stands up, is Markan Dependence.

This is not a doctrinaire approach, making the facts fit some prior doctrinal position that I adopt. Rather, it is simply saying, Can I account for the text of the Gospels as I have it in front of me if I approach it with the attitude of expecting that it is fully accurate unless evidence compels me to conclude otherwise? Yes, I can, on the Markan Dependence hypothesis. It is not that the Gospel just gives me a general idea (more or less) of what was said and done, but that it is thoroughly reliable. This is what I mean when I say that Markan Dependence respects the integrity of the text.

I am an academic, a theologian, a scholar, looking now at the text of the Synoptics. But before I became those things I was simply a humble believer. I got to be a Christian on the basis of believing the words of Jesus. Now that I have become an academic, a theologian, a scholar, do I have to adjust my thinking to take account of the fact that Jesus may not have actually said the words that the Gospels inform me that he did?

Not at all! For I find that Markan Dependence allows me to accept the text of the Synoptics as it stands. Markan Dependence is the explanation that I arrive at by taking the Gospel records seriously and at face value, and accepting them as being accurate. In their differences they are complementary, not contradictory. Those differences can be accounted for in the ways I have mentioned. On the Markan Dependence hypothesis they do not involve saying that one Gospel is correcting or improving another or is better or more accurate than another, but rather that they all give us a reliable account of what happened.

### **6.3.9 Coherence and Purpose**

Tuckett (1983: 12-13) made the point,

Any source hypothesis can in fact be proposed. ... The extent to which an hypothesis gives a coherent, consistent picture of the total redactional activity of each evangelist will then be a measure of its viability.

Black writes (2001: 52),

In our view, the source theory that best reflects the actual historical circumstances is most likely to be the true explanation.

Markan Dependence provides a valid, self-consistent explanation of all the data of the Synoptics, an explanation that accords with the situation of the early church as it is known to us. It accounts for all the similarities and differences in wording and order between the Synoptics, and accepts each Gospel as a work of authorship in its own right, written for a particular readership, with precise aims in view, and guided by specific criteria concerning what was included and what was omitted.

Y The Markan Dependence hypothesis all holds together.

Y It coheres beautifully.

Y It fits the facts.

Y It accounts for the data.

Y It explains the evidence.

Y It answers the difficulties.

Y It covers everything.

Y It is reasonable, logical, and satisfying.

Y It conforms to what information is available about the authors Matthew, Mark, Luke—and Peter, and it fully recognizes this apostle's role as Mark's third source.

Y It makes sense of what we find and—very important—what we don't find in each Gospel.

Y It arises out of the Synoptic data that we have.

Y It meshes with the information we have from the early church Fathers.

Y It allows us to understand what each of Matthew, Mark, and Luke have done in assembling their respective Gospels in the way that we can see they have.

Y It does not leave a host of "dangling loose ends" and significant unexplained conundrums.

Y It causes us again and again to exclaim, "Of course! That is why ...[this or that piece of evidence or part of the Gospel is what it is]."

Y It provides a solid basis for the further investigation of key questions (such as, Is it possible to identify more precisely the early Matthean documents that Matthew and Luke have in common?).

It may well raise the question, "Why hasn't anyone come up with this explanation before?" But they have!! I point this out all the way through this dissertation. The Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis, with Markan Dependence, builds upon

what a great many others have recognized down the years. What I have done is to take the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle and join them together so as to show the “big picture”. To assemble the various parts that others have made into an entire and workable whole. And now say: “Look at this—see how it all fits together.”

It does not require the acceptance of any improbabilities, let alone swallowing all the “impossibilities” that need to be believed if one endorses Markan Priority, as I shall go on to point out next chapter.

But first it is necessary to consider the 18 objections that have been raised against the Markan Posteriority hypotheses. And it shall be shown (to anticipate a little) that they do not represent a very convincing case against the presentation of the Markan Dependence explanation given here.

#### 6.4 THE CASE AGAINST MARKAN DEPENDENCE

Numbers of scholars have raised significant objections against the Markan Posteriority explanation of Synoptic relationships. I have collected all those I can find, and I set them out here, together with the answers that can be given to these objections.

Fitzmyer's presentation of the case against Markan Posteriority (set out in *Jesus and Man's Hope Vol. 1*, 1970: 131-170) is one of the best of which I am aware. Orchard (1976: 130) calls Fitzmyer's article “The strongest case so far made out against Farmer's thesis”. Fitzmyer tabulates nine arguments against the Griesbach hypothesis and in particular against Farmer's presentation of this theory. Farmer has taken these objections of Fitzmyer's seriously, and responded to each of them in “Modern Developments of Griesbach's Hypothesis” (1977). Fitzmyer's article may be taken then as the most complete and thorough tabulating of the case against the Griesbach hypothesis (Tuckett's book follows a different approach) and therefore his nine arguments are listed here, together with nine further arguments that have been raised by other scholars.

It is to be noted that seven of Fitzmeyer's objections are presented in the form of questions, with the implication that the questions are unanswerable, and that this therefore demolishes Markan Posteriority as a credible hypothesis. Examination of the questions will reveal that they are often founded upon an invalid premiss that needs to be identified and challenged. Then again, sometimes they are directed to aspects of the Farmer version of the Markan Posteriority hypothesis, and do not relate at all to Markan Dependence as I put it forward here. And to the extent that they are legitimate questions that are relevant to Markan Dependence, they are readily answered in this dissertation..

**1. Fitzmyer:** “Why would anyone want to abbreviate or conflate Matthew and Luke to produce from them a gospel such as Mark actually is?”

**Answer:** Neither Griesbach nor Farmer nor I would say that Mark is an abbreviation of Matthew and Luke. Fitzmeyer has shown he does not understand the hypothesis he is supposedly challenging. As to why Mark would “produce from them a gospel such as Mark actually is”: this is fully answered by Chapter Three.

**2. Fitzmyer:** “Why is so much of Matthew and Luke omitted in the end product? Why is so much important gospel material that would be of interest to the growing and developing churches eliminated by Mark? Why, for example, has he omitted the Sermon on the Mount?”

**Answer:** Fitzmyer’s question assumes that Markan Posteriority hypotheses assert that Mark intended his Gospel to supersede and replace both Matthew and Luke in their use in the church—a gratuitous assumption for which there is ***no evidence whatsoever***. The Two Gospel team state quite explicitly (Peabody *et al*, 2002: 63), “Thus, the two foundational memoirs of Jesus’ life, Matthew and Luke, were not to be replaced but to have a capstone, Mark.” As I have shown throughout, it is integral to understanding Mark’s Gospel to see that he presumed the availability and use of both Matthew and Luke in the churches. And the material in question, being available to the church in the existing Gospels of Matthew and Luke, is omitted (not, “eliminated”) by Mark because it was not relevant to his aim of presenting a handbook for evangelists and preachers of the *kerygma* used by the early church. Again, Chapter Three discusses this fully.

Those who raise this as an objection fail to see that it is actually far more devastating to the Markan Priority hypothesis, for Mark must have known key teachings that he failed to include (as he had been living in a home where the early church met, and had been part of its missionary outreach, and an associate of apostles). The Two-Gospel team (2002: 59) cite the comment made in 1976 by the Markan Priority supporter Nils Dahl, with respect to the sayings of Jesus, “Since Mark has chosen some sayings and excluded others, the selection must be determined by the evangelist’s intention.”

So, the question of the omissions in Mark is really one for the Markan Priorists to answer. Knowing as he did so much more than he used, why did Mark not include these other things if his Gospel was (at the time) the only Gospel there was? That needs answering! This issue is set out above (§6.3.7) as an argument in favour of Markan Dependence—which it clearly is.

**3. Fitzmyer:** “How could Mark have so consistently eliminated all traces of Lucanisms?”



**Answer:** Farmer has shown (in his answer to Fitzmeyer's objection, in "Modern Developments of Griesbach's Hypothesis", 1977) that "It seems doubtful that Mark has eliminated all traces of Lucanisms". Farmer claims that traces of five of Hawkins's list of "seven 'favourite or habitual' expressions of Luke ... are found in Mark". No "'favourite or habitual' expressions of Mark appeared in the text of Luke or Matthew", according to Hawkins's list—which is very odd if both Matthew and Luke are using Mark's Gospel. "Out of nineteen [Matthean expressions] listed by Hawkins, fourteen appear in Mark."

If, then, no "favourite or habitual" Markan expressions occur in Matthew or Luke, while five out of seven such expressions of Luke (and fourteen out of nineteen Matthean expressions) can be traced in Mark, it would seem that the evidence from "favourite and habitual expressions" favours the Markan Dependence explanation against that of Markan Priority, and not the other way around, as Fitzmeyer implies.

**4. Fitzmyer:** "What would have motivated Mark to omit even those elements in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke that are common? His alleged interest in narratives, rather than teaching, would have led him instead to present a conflated harmonized infancy narrative."

**Answer:** There is no evidence of any kind to suggest that the early church made any use of the infancy narratives in its evangelism. In particular, all the relevant references in Acts and the Epistles commence with the ministry of John the Baptist (see Acts 1:21-22; 10:36-38; 13:23-31; 18:25; 19:1-5; note that none of the Epistles recount or discuss the infancy of Jesus). That is to say, the infancy narratives clearly formed no part of the *kerygma* of the early church, and thus they were not included by Mark in his handbook of its kerygmatic material.

**5. Fitzmyer:** "Mark's resurrection narrative, even if it be limited to 16:1-8, is puzzling. Can it really be regarded as an abbreviation or conflation of the Matthean and/or Lucan accounts?"

**Answer:** If indeed the text of Mark ends at 16:8 (as I find is usually the view held by those who reject Markan Posteriority), this certainly does bring his Gospel to an abrupt halt. However, the Markan Dependence explanation is simply that the *kerygma* of the early church went up to the **fact** of the resurrection, and when Mark reached this he concluded his narrative.

The problem of Mark ending at 16:8 is certainly no greater from the Markan Dependence perspective than from the Markan Priority perspective. If Mark's truncated resurrection narrative is puzzling when the Gospel of Mark is regarded as third-written, it must be considered absolutely incomprehensible on the Markan Priority view, because at that time Mark's Gospel was the only one in existence.

For if Mark was the first Gospel written, then it was silent about the details of something that was a major emphasis of the early church (as can be seen from Acts and the Epistles) and therefore about which he would most certainly know—and **for information about which at that time readers of his Gospel had nowhere else to turn!**

On the other hand, suppose that his Gospel was the **last** written and that (for whatever reason) he terminated his Gospel at 16:8: he knew that his readers could turn to the two Majors to read details of the Resurrection and the appearances of the risen Christ. (See further, §7.03.)

An abrupt ending of Mark at 16:8 therefore tells strongly **for** Markan Dependence and **against** the Markan Priority view. When I have read someone's book putting this forward as an objection against Markan Dependence, I want to ask that author: "Then you tell me: how do **you** explain this Markan ending if Mark was first-written and thus the only Gospel in existence at the time?"

**6. Fitzmyer:** "What sort of early theologian does Mark turn out to be if his account is based on Matthew and Luke? Having behind him the certainly more developed christologies and ecclesiologies of Matthew and Luke, what would be his purpose in constructing such a composition?"

**Answer:** Putting Mark first in no way resolves this issue. Mark's Gospel was not written before the church had a high view of Jesus's person. Therefore, on **any** Synoptic view it is necessary to explain Mark's Christology.

Matthew and Luke write for the church, and therefore they can (and do) assume from the beginning that their readers accept that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Mark most certainly makes no such assumption. Mark is taking his readers (and his hearers—for Mark's Gospel is intended for preaching) along the same road that the disciples had trodden. Mark announces in his title (1:1) that this is where he intends to go with his Gospel—in fact, that title is an outline summary of his Gospel. Thereafter, he does not assume any prior faith or commitment on the part of the readers and hearers of the Gospel, but he reveals who Jesus is through his record of what Jesus does.

Thus Mark's Christology does not **differ** from that of Matthew and Luke, but Mark's revelation of the person of Jesus is **progressive**, assuming initially nothing on the part of the readers and hearers and leading them step by step in their understanding, and thus patterning his approach upon the way in which Jesus himself progressively led people into a deeper understanding of who he was. (This is set out in detail in Chapter Three.)

**7. Fitzmyer:** "It seems to be an argument from order that Farmer ultimately depends

on in his attempt to justify the creation of Mark. For the dominant reason of his contention that Mark is a conflation of Matthew and Luke is precisely the agreement, not in subject matter, but in order. If it were true that Mark was composed by a concentration 'on those materials where their [i.e. Matthew's and Luke's] texts bore concurrent testimony to the same gospel tradition', then why has Mark not copied at least some of the co-called Double Tradition?"

**Answer:** This objection appears initially to address the Argument from Order, but in the event does not challenge it at all. It asks (as an objection to Markan Posteriority) why Mark has not copied at least some of the Double Tradition.

Actually, when one thinks about it, Triple Tradition simply refers to material found in all three Synoptics, and so, whenever Mark chose to make use of Double Tradition it became Triple Tradition. So Mark *did* use Double Tradition, seeing that *all* Triple Tradition is Double Tradition that Mark has used! So, when one examines what Fitzmeyer's question is really asking, it is: "Why didn't Mark use what he chose not to use?"

Thus the question becomes merely another version of those on these lines asked by Fitzmeyer earlier, and the answer remains the same. This is explained in Chapter Three.

**8. Fitzmyer:** "No convincing reason has been given why Mark should have omitted the preaching of John the Baptist, which not only is an element to which Matthew and Luke bear 'concurrent testimony', but even in the same place in the Synoptic tradition."

**Answer:** The Baptist's preaching is included to the extent (and only to the extent) that it bore testimony to the person of Jesus. John's eschatological comments (Mt 3:11-12//Mk 1:8//Lk 3:16-17) are cut short in Mark either in accord with a general policy of shortening teaching segments (this is paralleled in other similar shortening of Jesus's teachings in Mark) or because to include these eschatological comments about Jesus would have seemed premature to Mark at this point in terms of his progressive revelation of the person of Jesus through his Gospel.

**9. Fitzmyer:** "It is 'asking too much' to regard Mark's phrase 'the son of Mary' [Mk 6:3] as a factor weighing in favour of a date for Mark after the idea of the virginal conception of Mary had been accepted in the Church."

**Answer:** Matthew at this point (13:55) has, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?" Luke (4:22) has, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Here Fitzmeyer is objecting to Farmer's point that Mark's departure from the Jewish custom that a person was designated the son of his father (not his mother)—which is also the pattern of Mark's two sources—is consonant with acceptance by Mark of the tradition of the virgin birth of Jesus, and thus consonant also with Mark being written after Matthew and Luke.

Farmer's answer to Fitzmeyer was that he raised this matter in *The Synoptic Problem* purely as "a counter argument against those defenders of Marcan priority who wish to develop a theological or christological argument supporting Marcan priority based upon the absence of the birth narratives in Mark". At most, Fitzmeyer is countering a minor point made by Farmer; this is in no way any kind of an argument against Marcan Dependence itself.

Extensive though Fitzmeyer's list is, it is not exhaustive. Nine further objections to the Greisbach hypothesis are mentioned by scholars.

**10. Grant** (1965: 354): "How does all this fit ... the widespread tradition of the Roman origin of Mark and its use of Petrine material? These questions are not answered. But they *must* be answered."

**Answer:** Both Griesbach and Farmer acknowledged the probability that the preaching of Peter was the source of all the additional snippets of information that Mark includes. I agree with them in this, but I see a much greater role for Peter's preaching in influencing the very form and language of Mark's Gospel.

So I am in complete agreement with Grant in acknowledging the use Mark made of "Petrine material"—but this does not conflict with the Marcan Dependence hypothesis. On the contrary: this role of Peter's teaching is well supported in tradition, and is central to my presentation of Marcan Dependence. This is shown particularly in §3.8 and §6.2.

Chapter Four shows that more than 25% of the content of Mark's Gospel is unparalleled in either Matthew or Luke, and where Mark does parallel Matthew and Luke in **content**, much of the wording differs from that used by the Major Synoptics. Of the 11078 words in Mark's Gospel, 6008 do not occur in either Matthew or Luke; 840 occur in Luke but not in Matthew, so that a total of 6848 (61.8%) of Mark's words do not occur in Matthew; and 2395 occur in Matthew but not in Luke, so that a total of 8403 (75.8%) of Mark's words do not occur in Luke.

These words that are in Mark but not in Matthew and/or Luke are due to the inclusion in Mark of additional information or wording that is lacking in the Major Synoptics, or to differences in the wording with which Mark and the Major Synoptics tell the same stories. On the Marcan Dependence hypothesis, Mark had in front of him the accounts of Matthew and Luke, which already differed from each other in wording to quite a considerable extent, so that to follow the wording of the one would automatically mean differing from the other. However, on many occasion Mark has chosen to differ from both, by altering their wording, or by adding in extra material. Now, there must be some other source for the different and additional material in Mark. The explanation from church

history is: the preaching of Peter. So Mark has three sources of information for the material of his Gospel, not two: Matthew, Luke, and Peter. Grant's objection thus does not constitute an argument against Markan Dependence, which fully recognizes the role of Peter's preaching.

**11. Kümmel** (1975: 64): "That Luke took his common material over directly from Matthew is championed again and again. [Here in a footnote Kümmel cites Farmer amongst a number of others.] This position is completely inconceivable, however. What could possibly have motivated Luke, for example, to shatter Matthew's sermon on the mount, placing part of it in his sermon on the plain, dividing up other parts among various chapters of his Gospel, and letting the rest drop out of sight? How could anyone explain the fact that not once does Luke place material that he has in common with Matthew at the same point in the Markan framework, apart from the baptism texts and the temptation stories in Lk 3:7-9, 17, if he took that material from Matthew and was therefore dependent upon the Markan order that is likewise encountered in Matthew? Is it conceivable that Luke would have taken over none of Matthew's additions to the text of Mark? On this question Schmid and Vaganay have shown that Matthew and Luke alternate in offering the original form of the material they have in common, so that with respect to all these arguments the assumption of a direct dependence of Luke upon Matthew must be described as untenable."

**Answer:** Farmer contends strongly for the view that Luke used the Gospel of Matthew as a major source. Kümmel's objection here is to *this* view rather than to the hypothesis of Markan Posteriority itself. I discuss this matter in §1.2.2 and then in full in Chapter Eight; but let me say here that I largely agree with Kümmel's arguments against the idea that Luke knew our Matthew. Certainly, this objection does not challenge in any way the Markan Dependence explanation of the relationship of Mark to Matthew and Luke.

**12. Metzger** (1965: 81): "In style and language Mark is decidedly less polished than Matthew and Luke, and it would be contrary to all analogy that well-written documents should be so revised as to produce a cruder one."

**Answer:** This argument is often found in the form, "Why would Mark alter Matthew's and Luke's good Greek to poor Greek?" This is the Argument from Improvements used in support of Markan Priority. It is founded in a totally incorrect (and prejudicial) understanding of the nature of the difference between Mark's Greek and that of the Major Synoptics. It has long ago been answered by Sanders (1969) and others. I have discussed it in detail in §3.8 in relation to the nature of the form of Greek that Mark uses, and in §5.4.2 as an argument in favour of Markan Priority.

However, it is not “contrary to all analogy” for the language of a more literary document to be recast in the more colloquial language of everyday usage. In fact, it happens all the time. And the Markan Dependence hypothesis is saying that this is what has happened here.

**13. Hill** (1972: 28): “Griesbach considered Mark as an epitomizer of Matthew, while Luke was regarded as also earlier than Mark. This theory ... has been discounted, to a large extent, because it fails to do justice to the literary characteristics and independence of viewpoint found in Mark.”

**Answer:** Neither Griesbach nor Farmer nor I would consider Mark to have been an abbreviator or epitomizer of Matthew, but rather to have expanded those sections of Matthew and/or Luke upon which he drew. We can see that in this regard Hill has completely misunderstood the view that he criticizes.

Furthermore, the implication in this objection is that Markan Posteriority makes Mark out to be no more than a scissors-and-paste editor or compiler, so that on the one hand this type of hypothesis would destroy the value and purpose of Mark’s Gospel while on the other hand the picture it gives of Mark’s Gospel is at variance with the freshness and vigour of his Gospel that we find when we read it.

**14. Abbott** (1879: 791): “It can be proved by *reductio ad absurdum* that St. Mark did not copy from St. Matthew and St. Luke. For suppose that he did so copy ... this would be a *tour de force* even for a skilful literary forger of these days, and may be dismissed as an impossibility for the writer of the Second Gospel.”

**Answer:** This is the “Impossibility Argument” that we have met before. My only excuse for mentioning it again here is because for numbers of scholars this has been a convincing objection ever since Abbott proposed it. It has of course been decisively answered in §3.9.

**15. Goodacre** (2001: 58) poses the issue, “If Mark wrote third, using both Matthew and Luke, one will want to know why it is that he omitted so much material from his predecessors.” He expects it would be because “Double Tradition pericopae must have been material that was in some way uncongenial to Mark.” He finds “places in Mark where the insertion of double-tradition might have been highly conducive to his purposes, both literary and theological.”

The material he considers here is the Lord’s Prayer. As Mark did not insert it where he might have, so Goodacre exclaims (59), “In other words, this data does not make sense on the assumption of Markan Posteriority.” This discussion of Mark leads him to conclude (65),

The difficulty, in short, for the Griesbach Theory in dealing with Mark's alleged omissions and additions is that so many contrasting features of Mark are placed into such sharp relief. ... Often, on the theory that Mark wrote third, there seems to be a deliberate rejection of the concurrent testimony of Matthew and Luke that on the Griesbach Theory he is supposed to value, in order simply to add almost redundant clarificatory clauses, something that appears to be contradicted by his very careful and subtle work elsewhere.

**Answer:** Goodacre puts forward some of the same contra-Griesbach objections mentioned above, but his main thrust is different. Basically, Goodacre's point is that Mark does not do what Goodacre thinks the Griesbach Theory says that he should. Goodacre's points are fully answered by the explanation of the "literary and theological" purposes of Mark to be deduced from Mark's Gospel itself. These are set out in Chapter Three.

**16. Blomberg** in "Rethinking the Synoptic Problem" (2001):

Two speakers at the April 2000 Conference on the Gospels set out a position against the Griesbach/Two-Gospel position (the papers of which are published in the above volume). As these represent evangelical thinking in criticism of this Markan Posteriority position at the commencement of the twenty-first century, it is important to take note of them.

Firstly Craig Blomberg begins (31) his critique of the Griesbach hypothesis in this way:

The major challenge to the two-(or four-) source hypothesis over the last forty years has been what is increasingly called the two-Gospel hypothesis. Following the lead of the late-eighteenth-century German scholar Johann Jakob Griesbach, this view stands Markan Priority on its head and argues that Mark was the last of the Synoptics to be written. Much like various Greco-Roman historians who substantially abbreviated their sources, Mark is believed to have abridged and conflated both Matthew and Luke.

From this introduction one would hardly suspect that Griesbach's Markan Posteriority view was the earlier (and that Owen had written some years before him), and that Markan Priority is the one that did the head-standing. And we note once again the furphy that Griesbach and the Two-Gospel school believe that Mark was engaged in abbreviating the others: which, as I have had occasion to reiterate before, is a misleading statement and simply **not true**.

He concludes these comments (32) thus:

Finally, as I mentioned above, the major weakness in the Griesbach theory to date is that its proponents have not demonstrated how Markan style and theology emerge more consistently on their hypothesis than on the alternatives. Until I see such a demonstration, I will remain unconvinced.

**Answer:** Such a demonstration will be found in Chapter Three.

**17. Osborne** in “Rethinking the Synoptic Problem” (2001):

Next, Grant Osborne sums up the various Synoptic Gospel presentations at this Conference and says (142),

Thus far the two-Gospel hypothesis sounds not only cogent but absolutely convincing.

However there are some serious drawbacks to the theory. ... For one thing, it is difficult to explain the many omissions if Mark used both Matthew and Luke.

Osborne then elaborates this point in a fashion that goes back to Streeter (and has been followed by a great many others ever since). We have seen that the explanation lies in the different purpose of Mark in writing, as set out fully in Chapter Three.

Then Osborne considers the patterns of each pair of Gospels agreeing in turn against the third, and finds that this occurs in all possible permutations, and deduces that therefore it favours neither hypothesis, though “the agreements between Matthew and Luke can be explained in several ways.” He suggests (143) that observable features that could have been thought to favour Markan Dependence “are often due to an overlap between Mark and Q, to those normal differences in style that writers normally make in using sources, or to other oral tradition.” Indeed, that both Matthew and Luke were “following a fixed tradition ... may have occasioned the Matthew/Luke agreements against Mark.”

**Answer:** The question of the Mark-Q overlap was considered in §6.3.5. We look at some of the more significant of the Matthew/Luke agreements against Mark in Chapter Seven, where I show that these are very difficult to explain away according to Markan Priority, and they strongly favour Markan Dependence.

**18. Osborne and Williams** in *Three Views of the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (2002):

In this book each of the proponents of the three views put their case, and the other two then critique the presentation. John Niemelä put a case for the Two-Gospel view, and Grant Osborne and Matthew Williams responded from the Markan Priority/Two-Source perspective. While they contend against Niemelä’s particular presentation and methodology, they advance few arguments against the basic contention that Mark was third. They do however put forward again the standard objections, such as (205) “instances where Mark omits contents that appear in both Matthew and Luke”, so that they enquire (205-206,208),

How does this theory explain these omissions, given that Mark normally follows and condenses the material that he finds in the other two Synoptic Gospels? Why Mark omitted the contents of these particular verses is of primary importance in a defense of the Two-



Gospel Hypothesis. ... This last point is perhaps the most significant critique of the Two-Gospel Hypothesis, namely, the failure to explain the textual differences between the Gospels. If Mark used Matthew and Luke on a larger scale, how does one explain his failure to use the Sermon on the Mount, or the Infancy stories, or, given Mark's emphasis on teaching, much of the teaching material?

Then they complain (208), "One looks in vain for any type of discussion of a specific text of the Gospels in Niemelä's chapter."

**Answer:** Discussion of specific passages will be found in this dissertation. The other comments they make are the same points already noted as "stock-in-trade" objections against Markan Posteriority, and answered in Chapter Three; see also §7.01.

## SUMMARY

The last four objections have been drawn from twenty-first century books. Perhaps you may get the feeling from these that nothing much has been added to the collection of objections advanced—and answered—over the last two centuries. Yes, so do I. And those answers to those objections have been spelled out again (with some elaborations and refinements) in this dissertation.

Other objections are found in many of the reviews of Farmer's book, objections that rejected strongly the case for Markan Dependence upon Matthew and Luke that he had made out. Some of them are:

The *Expository Times* review by C L Mitton (1965: 1-3) raises a number of objections, including these in particular:

Perhaps the greatest single weakness of Professor Farmer's position is his inability to discover any really convincing purpose for the production of such a book as he claims Mark to have been.

He dismisses in this way Farmer's attempt to explain Mark as fulfilling a role in reconciling differences that exist between Matthew and Luke. Next, Mitton quotes with approval Abbott's words (which I have referred to—see Objection §14, above), that the conflation of Matthew and Luke as Mark is supposed to have done "may be dismissed as an impossibility for the writer of the Second Gospel"; that is, the reviewer writes off Farmer's solution to the Synoptic Problem as ascribing an impossibility to Mark.

The review of Farmer by F C Grant in *Interpretation* 19 (1965: 352-354) is entitled "Turning Back The Clock"—a title that is (and was clearly intended to be) indicative of his response to this book. In the course of his review he writes,

Furthermore, what purpose can be alleged for such an abridgement? Why should anyone wish to substitute Mark's brief narrative, truncated at both ends, for the fuller

narratives of Matthew and Luke?

There are basically two distinct issues here in these objections. The first issue is Abbott's assertion that Mark could not have done what Markan Dependence says that he did, and then secondly, even if he could, why on earth (as Styler had asked) would Mark want to, and even if he did, why (as Grant asks) would he have done it in such a fashion as appears from an examination of his Gospel, leaving so much out?

I have several times referred to the frequency with which numerous otherwise careful scholars attribute to Griesbach—and Farmer—the idea that these authors were contending that Mark is abbreviating Matthew. Grant, for instance, in his review (as above) assumes that the Griesbach Hypothesis asserts that Mark was engaging in the exercise of **abridging** Matthew and Luke. So also in Cutt's review in *Theology* 69 (1966: 225-227). Cutt shows a fair appreciation of Farmer's arguments and of the overall value of his study, but is apparently not clear on what Farmer's view is of the nature of the use Mark makes of Matthew and Luke—Cutt says, "If Mark is an epitome of Matthew and Luke ..." and then questions a deduction made from this mistaken premiss.

Some scholars, it seems, fail to understand Griesbach's hypothesis (and Farmer's presentation of it) because they confuse it with the purpose that was postulated for Mark by Augustine in *his* hypothesis (which I have mentioned earlier, in §1.2.1). One must comment that the difficulty of combining two documents if one is simultaneously seeking to **abridge** them is of a different degree altogether from the level of difficulty if one is **conflating** what each says, adding in some details of his own, and expanding the length of the story in the process: and Mark's narratives—as both Griesbach and Farmer have several times pointed out—are almost invariably longer than the corresponding Matthean or Lukan versions.

Thus the reason for Mark's Gospel being shorter than the other two Synoptics must be sought elsewhere: it is **not** due to abbreviation by Mark of what he takes from his sources. Is it possible, one wonders, if this repeated misconception of Griesbach's hypothesis could now be laid to rest? No good purpose is served in scholarly enquiry if one distorts the teaching of a rival hypothesis before replying to it.

These then are the matters that need to be addressed—and most of them are answered in Chapter Three. Then Chapter Eight is devoted to the other major issue: a careful consideration of the question of the relationship of Luke with Matthew.

In fact, all the various arguments put forward as refutation of the Markan Dependence hypothesis have been examined. This chapter has shown that these objections:

(a) frequently betray a misunderstanding about, or an unclear perception of the

nature of, the Synoptic data (e.g., identifying Mark's colloquial, spoken Greek as being "poor Greek"), or

(b) are based upon subjective or invalid assumptions (e.g., that if Mark wrote after Matthew and Luke it could not have been with some different or independent purpose in view, but would have been with the intention of replacing their Gospels with his own), or

(c) have overlooked relevant facts (e.g., Grant's argument about Petrine material overlooks how both Griesbach and Farmer recognized Peter's teaching as a third source that Mark drew upon), or

(d) are simply factually in error (e.g., Hill's statement that "Griesbach considered Mark as an epitomizer of Matthew", or Abbott's bald assertion that to conflate material from Matthew and Luke to produce an account such as Mark's Gospel "may be dismissed as an impossibility").

The foregoing discussion has shown that none of the arguments that has been put forward provides any refutation of the Markan Dependence view propounded in this dissertation.

## 6.5 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

It is very generally agreed by Gospel scholars (e.g., at the AD 2000 Gospel Conference I have referred to) that the explanation of the Synoptic Problem is almost certainly either Markan Priority or Markan Posteriority. We have looked at the case for Markan Priority and for Markan Dependence, and the objections raised in rebuttal in each case.

It had been my original intention to list the objective arguments I could find that unequivocally and unambiguously give support to the Markan Priority hypothesis in distinction from all other alternative hypotheses. These arguments would then be weighed for relative strength against arguments in support of the case for the Markan Dependence hypothesis

But a list of such Markan Priority arguments cannot be made. I can't find any. There are **no objective arguments** that unequivocally and unambiguously give support to the Markan Priority hypothesis in distinction from all other alternative hypotheses.

Numbers of Synoptic arguments (like those from Similarities) are reversible. Other arguments (like those from Improvements made to Mark) are based upon subjective assumptions about relevant factors such as what constitutes evidence that one document is more primitive than another—and upon subjective opinions concerning what it is considered that the Synoptic authors would or would not have done. Other arguments again were founded upon opinion concerning which particular features indicated that

one Gospel was prior to or posterior to another, and which elements of a Gospel indicated copying in a given direction.

Then yet other arguments put forward in support of Markan Priority turn out upon investigation not to be **arguments in support of** Markan Priority at all but **explanations of the redactional procedures of Matthew and Luke** upon the prior assumption of Markan Priority. Many of these explanations were in fact first proposed in order to account for what were perceived as **difficulties** faced by the Markan Priority hypothesis. It is not an objective unequivocal unambiguous argument for a hypothesis being true, in distinction from all other alternatives, that an explanation can be offered for what the parties must have done if that hypothesis **were** true.

Then I have sought to find rebuttal put forward against earlier versions of the Markan Posteriority position that would also carry weight against the Progressive Publication of Matthew/ Markan Dependence explanation proposed in this dissertation. I have not yet been able to find one such objection that I feel cannot be adequately accounted for by this hypothesis.

I do note that numbers of objectors to the various forms of the Markan Posteriority position, from Griesbach's version onwards, have misunderstood what it is saying. Indeed, often their (assumed) success in demolishing the case for Griesbach and his successors has been in direct proportion to their misunderstanding of the position they reject.

Yet so many scholars are not taking note of the way in which progressively down the years the various arguments upon which Markan Priority was based have been demolished. They still hold tenaciously to it after the support for their viewpoint has disappeared beneath them and even when (as in some cases examined in this study) it has been shown that the arguments for it are in fact illusory. Ultimately their "arguments" in support of it now come down to asserting, "Markan Priority is right because I say it is right", and thereafter remaining deaf to those who reply, "No it isn't".

It is appropriate now to consider some particular passages, and look at the impossibilities that need to be believed by those who remain convinced of Markan Priority.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SEVENTEEN IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST**

#### **7.00 INTRODUCTION: AN “IMPOSSIBLE” SITUATION**

##### **MARK'S OMISSIONS**

- 7.01 That Mark did not Know the Sermon on the Mount
- 7.02 That Mark Deliberately Disobeyed the Commandment of Jesus
- 7.03 That Mark Would Omit the Resurrection if he Wrote First

##### **MATTHEW'S OMISSIONS**

- 7.04 That Matthew Would Omit the Ointment or Bread Value if he Knew Mark
- 7.05 That Matthew Would Omit the Number of Pigs if he Knew Mark
- 7.06 That Matthew Would Omit the Widow's Gift if he Knew Mark

##### **LUKE'S OMISSIONS**

- 7.07 That Luke Would Omit the Syrophenician Woman if he Knew Mk
- 7.08 That Luke Would Discard Names and Time Notes in Mark
  - (a) That Luke Would Discard Names Occurring in Mark
  - (b) That Luke Would Alter the Time Interval before the Transfiguration
  - (c) That Luke Who is Interested in People in General Leaves Out So Much Information about them

#### **7.09 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE CREATED**

##### **THE POSITIVE MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK**

- (a) The Fringe of his Garment (Mk 5:27)
- (b) The Perverse Generation (Mk 9:19)
- (c) The Question in the Mocking of Jesus (Mk 14:65)
- (d) Other Positive Minor Agreements against Mark

#### **7.10 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE OMITTED**

##### **THE NEGATIVE MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK**

- (a) Information about Background and Circumstances
- (b) Minor Descriptive Details of an Event

## **7.11 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE MADE**

### **THE TRANSFORMATIONAL MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK**

- (a) Running Ahead to Following (at The Feeding of the Five Thousand, Mk 6:33)
- (b) Moses and Elijah Reversed (at the Transfiguration, Mk 9:4)
- (c) Broke Down and Wept to Wept Bitterly (after Peter's Denials, Mk 14:72c)
- (d) Split Apart to Opened (in Jesus's Baptism, Mk 1:10)
- (e) A Network of Transformation (at the Healing of the Leper, Mk 1:40-42)
- (f) Other Transformational Minor Agreements against Mark

## **7.12 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE MADE**

### **THE TRANSPOSITIONAL MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK**

- (a) Evil [and Adulterous] Generation (in the Saying Re the Sign of Jonah)
- (b) Other Transpositional Minor Agreements against Mark

## **7.13 THAT Q EXPLAINS**

### **THE MAJOR AGREEMENTS OF MATTHEW AND LUKE AGAINST MARK**

- (a) John's Messianic Preaching (Mk 1:8)
- (b) The Temptation (Mk 1:12-13)
- (c) The Beelzebul Controversy (Mk 3:22-30)
- (d) The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk 4:30-32) see \7.18\ see \7.1\
- (e) The Five Sayings (Mk 4:21ff.)
- (f) The Mission Charge to the Twelve (Mk 6:6b-11)
- (g) The Significance of the Major Agreements

## **7.14 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE WOULD FILL OUT MARK'S SETTINGS**

## **7.15 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE WOULD EXPAND MARK'S TEACHING**

## **7.16 THAT MATTHEAN REDACTION OF MARK 9 COULD PRODUCE MATTHEW 18**

## **7.17 THAT THE SYNOPTIC PERICOPE ORDER COULD ARISE FROM MATTHEW AND LUKE USING MARK**

- (a) The Transposed Citation: Mk 1:2
- (b) The Order of Pericopes

## **7.2 THE IMPROBABILITIES**

- 7.21 That Matthew and Luke Show Such Disregard for Mark's Information and Wording
- 7.22 That Luke Would Have Made the Great Omission from Mark
- 7.23 That Jesus Would Only Ever Give Each Teaching Once
- 7.24 That the Early Church Would—or Could—Invent the Teachings of Jesus

## **7.3 IN CONCLUSION**

These seventeen things that the Markan Priority hypothesis invites us to accept are impossible to believe—and the others are highly improbable

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SEVENTEEN IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST

This chapter draws attention to seventeen impossible things—and a few improbabilities—that believing Markan Priority involves

*"I can't believe THAT!" said Alice.*

*"Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes."*

*Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One CAN'T believe impossible things."*

*"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."*

*Lewis Carroll, Through The Looking-Glass, Chapter Five.*

#### 7.00 INTRODUCTION: AN "IMPOSSIBLE" SITUATION

F W Beare once stated (on 296 of his 1965 review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*) that "anyone who could imagine any editor at any time or in any place going about his job as Farmer describes Mark as doing would have to make a habit of believing sixteen impossible things before breakfast". To accept Farmer's Synoptic hypothesis required, in his opinion, a much greater capacity for believing the impossible than that ever attained by *Alice in Wonderland's* Queen.

As I survey the Synoptic evidence, I find seventeen things that it is impossible for me to believe and that, it therefore seems to me, are significant as "direction indicators" for this present study. These will now be set out and examined.

There is an organization specializing in tackling troublesome projects that has as its motto "The difficult we do at once; the impossible may take just a little longer." Here is my collection of "impossible things" for believing about the Synoptics. They may be believed before breakfast, or in fact, if one needs a little longer, before any other meal.

#### MARK'S OMISSIONS

Some of the material omitted by Mark is quite significant in weighing the order and relationships of the Synoptics. Three aspects of Mark's omissions are considered here.



## 7.01 THAT MARK DID NOT KNOW THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

One of the most wellknown and widely-quoted of Streeter's comments about Mark's omissions is (1924: 158) that "only a lunatic would leave out Matthew's account of the Infancy, the Sermon on the Mount, and practically all the parables, in order to get room for purely verbal expansion of what was retained." And just about every other Markan Priority advocate has echoed Streeter's thought—up to and including writers in the twenty-first century (see the arguments against Markan Dependence in §6.4).

It should be noted that this is Streeter's *later* view, which he posits in *The Four Gospels* of 1924, after his change of mind. His *earlier* view, found in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* of 1911, was that Mark was acquainted with Q (167, 176) and that Q contained not only what is common to Matthew and Luke but also a considerable amount of the material now found only in Matthew or Luke: "Probably therefore much of the peculiar matter of Matthew and a little of the peculiar matter of Luke is from Q" (185). In Q would be included (184, 187, 189) the whole of the "Great Sermon" (the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew; the Sermon on the Plain in Luke) and also many of the parables found now only in one of the major Synoptics (184, 196-198).

Streeter puts forward some of his suggestions very cautiously (e.g., on 193 he says, "the solutions here suggested are therefore only tentatively put forward, and are of a far more speculative character than anything heretofore"); but he nonetheless considers them *possible*. Thus in 1911 Mark was considered to be familiar with much of the material that his Gospel lacks (because he was familiar with Q, and this material was in Q), so that Mark would have omitted this material by choice. Yet in 1924 Streeter asserts that Mark was to be classified as a lunatic if he could be shown to have acted in precisely this very way!

The assumption is that if Mark did not have Matthew (and/or Luke) in front of him, then he would not have known Jesus's teaching as contained in the Great Sermon—that is, that if he could not derive it from Matthew or Luke, then he would not have had access to it at all. This is to say, that the material in Matthew and Luke not found in Mark was unknown in the early church until Matthew and Luke published their Gospels.

Are we really to believe that Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount was not widely known in the church at large, but that its line of transmission to Matthew and Luke (whether per Q or the other postulated sources M and L, or otherwise) was secret—or at any rate, sufficiently secret that none of the Sermon on the Mount (or other teaching of Jesus that is omitted in Mark) ever became known to Mark?

This implication, implicit in Markan Priority reasoning, is preposterous and incredible.

Luke (1:1-4) states that he is recording “the things that have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word ..., that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed”. This is the very opposite of the idea of now publishing for the first time information that hitherto had been hidden from the church and unknown until his Gospel appeared.

Actually, altogether a very considerable amount of the teaching of Jesus that we now have in Matthew and Luke is lacking in Mark. Are we to believe that John Mark was totally unaware of any of it? It is impossible to see how a person so involved in the affairs of the early church as John Mark, and associated with its central figures, can have remained so ignorant of the teachings of Jesus.

So some scholars assign a late date to Mark's Gospel and reject the view that it is the work of the John Mark referred to in the pages of the New Testament. But to adopt this view of the authorship of the Second Gospel does not in any measure diminish the high probability that the author of Mark's Gospel (whoever he was) knew more of Jesus's teaching than he recorded and, in particular, knew the contents of the Sermon on the Mount and other major discourses. A later writer in the church would be more likely, not less, to know a greater amount of Jesus's teaching than is contained in the Second Gospel. Any opponent of this conclusion has a substantial task ahead of him: he would perforce need to explain how the author of this Gospel could know the things that he did know and record, and thus presumably be a member himself of the Christian community, and yet *not* know at least the more important teachings that his Gospel lacks.

A careful assessment of the situation in the early church, and of the evidence that we have for the way Jesus's teaching was disseminated in the Christian communities, leads to the conclusion that Mark, being actively involved within the Christian community, was aware of its traditions of the teachings of Jesus (including the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, and so forth) **before any of the Gospels were written**, and quite irrespective of their order. It is impossible to believe that Mark would not have known any of the Sermon on the Mount and other teaching until and unless he read it in Matthew and/or Luke.

Now once we recognize this, we see that Streeter's argument is turned on its head. It is now upon the basis of the assumption that when Mark wrote his Gospel he was indeed familiar with the Sermon on the Mount that we must examine what Mark has done. Why then did he omit all this teaching from his Gospel? If Mark was the first Synoptist to write, that question is difficult to answer. Knowing such incomparable teachings

of Jesus (which—on this view—were not at that time recorded in any Gospel) and being himself engaged in writing a Gospel, Mark would certainly (we might think) wish to include them. And, in those circumstances, ***that he did not do so*** is what needs explaining.

However, if Mark was the ***last*** Synoptist to write, it is so simple to account for his omission of the Sermon on the Mount (and other teachings of Jesus). Mark did not include it in his Gospel for the very straightforward reason that ***that teaching was already available to those for whom it was intended, the church, in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke***—and he had a different purpose in writing. It is far easier to understand Mark's omission of such material as the Sermon on the Mount if Mark knew that this teaching was already being read in the church than if he deliberately decided to leave it out of his Gospel when his was the first Gospel being written.

Now, if you believe in Markan Priority you will have to believe that Mark did not know the Sermon on the Mount. Because the moment you accept the alternative—that Mark knew it but left it out—you are confronted with the consequent conclusion that the omission was the result of an intentional decision that he made. And then you would have to face the possibility that in leaving it out he knew it was already available in the other Synoptics. And thus, that Mark was not the first Gospel. So your only consistent choice is to hold that (impossible as it seems) Mark did not know this teaching.

## 7.02 THAT MARK DELIBERATELY DISOBEYED

### THE COMMANDMENT OF JESUS

In Mt 28:20 Jesus instructs his followers to teach their converts to observe all those things that he had commanded. Mark records in very full detail the Gospel pericopes telling all that Jesus did, but he gives rather little of what Jesus commanded or indeed of Jesus's teaching at all.

This discrepancy—if that is what it is—between what Jesus commanded and what Mark did is worthy of some consideration.

To reply that Mark would not have known Matthew 28:20 because Matthew's Gospel had not yet been written is specious and irrelevant. Jesus's teaching ministry was central to his total ministry, and to be a Christian would be to know this. Mark's Gospel itself records how often Jesus was addressed as “Teacher”, and refers repeatedly to the frequency with which Jesus taught: Jesus is called “Teacher” 12 times in Mark (11 times in Matthew; 15 times in Luke); he is mentioned 15 times in Mark as engaged in teaching (10 times in Matthew, 14 times in Luke); a combined frequency of 21 times in Matthew, 27 times in Mark and 29 times in Luke. Bearing in mind the different lengths of the

Gospels, this is a frequency per hundred verses of 1.97 in Matthew, 4.08 in Mark and 2.53 in Luke, so that the **relative frequency** of the mention of Jesus as teacher can be seen to be much the highest in Mark's Gospel.

The words of Matthew 28 do not stand alone. The Sermon on the Mount ends (Mt 7:24-27) with the contrast between the house built on sand and the house built on rock, illustrating Jesus's intention that his teaching was to become the foundation of men's lives. He taught with authority (Mt 7:29; Mk 1:22; 1:27; Lk 4:32), that is, he expected to be obeyed. To "learn from him" was a requirement for those who would become disciples (Mt 11:29). His trenchant criticism of some who followed him was, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and do not do what I tell you?" (Lk 6:46).

In John, as in the Synoptics, this clear emphasis is found. Repeatedly Jesus stressed that the test, and the evidence, of true discipleship was obedience to his teaching (Jn 14:15; 14:21-24; 15:10; 17:8). Obedience to his teaching would be the basis of the judgement to come, and his words would in fact be the judge on the last day, because he spoke with the Father's authority (Jn 12:47-49; 14:10).

The early Christians were in no doubt concerning the importance of Jesus's teaching and their responsibility to teach it in turn to new converts. The members of the Pentecost church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, ... day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes" (Acts 2:42-46). Similarly Paul declared that his ministry had involved "teaching you in public and from house to house.... Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night and day to admonish everyone with tears" (Acts 20:20, 31). When Paul was teaching about divorce he based his comments upon the exposition of Jesus's teaching, introducing it with the words (1 Cor 7:10), "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord ..."

Examples could be multiplied. How then can it be that in writing his Gospel John Mark gives so little space to the things that Jesus taught?

It is impossible that this should be because Mark would deliberately disobey the things that Jesus said or the commands that Jesus gave concerning his teaching—such a thing would run directly counter to the spirit of all that Mark does say in his Gospel. It is impossible that this should be because Mark was unaware of Jesus's teachings apart from what he did include—we saw this in the previous section. It is impossible that this should be because Mark did not recognize the importance of Jesus's teaching—this possibility is ruled out when we consider the way in which he so frequently records that Jesus was addressed as "Teacher" and refers to Jesus engaging in teaching.

But those who hold to Markan Priority will find, in consequence of that view, that this is

an impossibility they are required also to believe. However, one may feel compelled to ask: Given then all the factors in the situation, why **would** Mark feel so free to write an account of the life and ministry of Jesus and to include in it so little of the teaching of Jesus?

The most reasonable explanation is to be found in two related factors: On the one hand, that recording Jesus's teaching as such, for its own sake, was not part of Mark's primary purpose in writing (a point which has been considered in detail in Chapter Three); and on the other hand, he was free not to record more than he did of Jesus's teaching ***because it was, and he knew it was, already available in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.***

### 7.03 THAT MARK WOULD OMIT THE RESURRECTION IF HE WROTE FIRST

Most early manuscripts of Mark's Gospel contain an account of Jesus's resurrection (16:9-20). We can note, however, that this "longer ending" is lacking in some important early manuscripts, while some manuscripts have an alternative ending (frequently referred to as "the shorter ending" to identify it) and a few have both endings. In view of the significance of the resurrection in early Christian preaching and Christian theology (as may be seen from the speeches in Acts and from the Epistles) numbers of New Testament scholars find it difficult to understand how the longer ending could have been deleted from or been lost from these manuscripts if it was part of the original text of the Gospel, or how there would come to be a second, alternative, ending.

As I have indicated earlier, I want to make it absolutely clear that the Markan Dependence hypothesis is not tied to any particular view concerning the ending of Mark's Gospel.

Now, if indeed the passage 16:9-20 is authentic, then we have in these verses the same kind of brief Markan summary of pericopes that are found in much greater detail in the other Gospels (such as the Temptation, the Mission Charge, and so on), together with the addition of numerous further details that are unique to Mark. There is certainly no difficulty for the Markan Dependence hypothesis to be found here. It is much more readily possible to account for the three Synoptics on the basis of Mark being third-written than that it was first-written and that Matthew and Luke have expanded Mark's verses into their respective versions.

But I find that it is the scholars who contend that the authentic text of Mark's Gospel ends with 16:8 who in particular consider that this poses a difficulty for any Markan Posteriority view. For they regard this as an impossible way for Mark to conclude if indeed he had Matthew and Luke in front of him as he wrote. Therefore it is to this

contention—and the implications of the 16:8 ending—that I will now address myself.

For if the genuine text of Mark's Gospel does not extend beyond 16:8, then what are we to make of how the Gospel ends? For this means that the Gospel does not contain any details of the resurrection. We have noted last chapter (§6.4, Objection 5) that Fitzmeyer actually raised this as an objection against Markan Posteriority. It is hardly that! Let us, though, consider its implications a little more deeply.

Mark contains an appearance in the tomb of a messenger from God, who says to the women (16:6-7), "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." Thus Mark's Gospel ends with a very clear statement attesting to the **fact** of the occurrence of the resurrection. But (on the truncated view) the risen Lord himself does not appear in this Gospel. There is an instruction for the women to report what they had seen to "his disciples and Peter", but there is no record of this having been obeyed. There is a promise of a meeting in Galilee, but no record of it taking place. There is an implication in the final verse of fear and incredulity, but no record of how this became transmuted into joy and trust.

All in all, it is a most unexpected way for the Gospel to end. This has led many scholars to postulate a "lost ending for Mark"—a final page of the original codex that became detached and lost, or the last part of the original scroll that became destroyed in some way.

Now in the nature of things it is impossible to prove that such a thing could not have happened; all one can say is that there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever in support of this hypothesis. It is completely speculative, and it leaves a number of other questions for which a convincing answer is not immediately apparent: if the end of one early copy was lost in some way (and assuming that the lack of the ending was as obvious to the people of that day as it is to us), why was this loss not immediately remedied from the original or from another copy that was not incomplete? If it was the original manuscript itself that became damaged in some way, why was Mark not able to rewrite the ending there and then?

An explanation **is possible**: Barclay (1975: 146) considers that

16:9-20 is almost certainly not a part of the original gospel of Mark. This must mean that at one time there must have existed only one copy of Mark which had lost its last section.

There would be only the one copy of Mark because it had not yet been copied and published more widely, or because this Gospel was being neglected and all other copies

had perished and the defective one was the only one to survive. Possibly Mark was unable at this time to rewrite his closing section. Barclay (1975: 146) suggests,

It is also remotely possible that what happened was that Mark died before he was able to complete his gospel, or was otherwise prevented from finishing it.

These explanations appear like grasping at straws. They are called forth because of the difficulty posed if Mark's Gospel ends at 16:8. Yet, according to the judgement of many scholars, that appears to be the case.

But psychologically, Mark's Gospel is an impossibility (in its present form) as being the first Gospel written. Unless we are to postulate some such lost ending that redressed this psychological flaw, we must be compelled to place Mark as at least the second Synoptic written and in fact almost certainly the third. Because the Christian church was founded upon the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that resurrection being God's seal upon his life and ministry, and upon the claims implicit in them concerning who he was. During the years of his ministry, his inner core of apostles had been very slow to perceive who he was. This full recognition came only after the resurrection—and we can see its consequences in the prominence given, in the *kerygma* of the early church, to the person of Jesus Christ and the fact of his resurrection.

Opinions differ amongst scholars, as has been seen, concerning the authorship of Mark's Gospel and its provenance. But whoever the author was, and whenever and wherever he wrote, his Christian life was lived within the context of a church that accepted as foundational the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transformation in the apostles that it produced.

Yet Mark's Gospel only shows the apostles in doubt and weakness; it never shows them in faith and strength. Again and again they miss the point of what Jesus is saying or they misunderstand his teaching; they exhibit doubt and are rebuked for their lack of faith. At the end they forsake him and flee, and their leader totally denies all knowledge of him.

All of this is to be found, too, in Matthew and Luke, but there, the account is set in balance at the end: the apostles encounter the risen Christ, and now they are able to grasp the truth about him. But although Mark's account goes up to the resurrection, in this Gospel the apostles do not meet the risen Christ—they are left in their pre-resurrection ignorance and doubt. The picture of the apostles that we are left with from Mark's Gospel is so totally in contrast with the evidence of the early church. It must lead one to see that it is psychologically impossible for someone—anyone—who is a part of that church to write such a Gospel when none other existed, and write as he did about

the apostles, and go up to the announcement of the resurrection of Christ, and **leave it there!** If at that time this was the only Gospel that the church had, the impression it created would have been so contrary to the situation known to its readers in the churches from the post-resurrection happenings that the contrast would have been unacceptably great.

It is no answer to say that “here we have the rationale for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke—they were written to set the record straight”. This may be thought to account for Matthew and Luke, given Mark, but it leaves the existence of Mark, in the form in which we have it, as an unexplained enigma of very sizeable proportions. Other explanations along the lines of a negative attitude on the part of the author towards the apostles would still leave unresolved the question of how Mark could leave such a gap between what he records in his Gospel and the post-resurrection experience of the church. Especially as he was an active colleague of the apostle Peter.

Apart from a “lost-ending” hypothesis, with its own inherent problems, there is only one explanation that can make sense of this situation: Mark had a restricted purpose in view in writing, and he did not seek to fill in all the gaps, or to link his pre-resurrection presentation to the post-resurrection awareness of the church, because he was fully aware that **the church already had Gospels that did that**. That is to say, he wrote in a situation where the church already possessed Matthew and Luke (or at least one of them) and he took for granted the post-resurrection material, and perspective, that these other Gospels presented. He had one fundamental purpose: to present a picture of the person of Jesus, through the record of what he did. The dullness of the disciples was a part of this picture, but Mark’s record of Jesus reached its culmination in the **fact** of Jesus’s resurrection, and nothing further about the apostles needed to be said in that connection.

Mark’s treatment of the apostles in his Gospel, and its conclusion with the appearance of the angel to the women, is psychologically inexplicable if Mark’s was the first Gospel written, so that it was the only Gospel that the church had at the time when it was written. Markan Priority seems an unlikely explanation of the data if the longer ending is authentic, but it is absolutely unbelievable that if it were first-written this Gospel could end at 16:8. But if you hold to Markan Priority, it is this impossibility that you are called upon to believe.

There is another possibility. Mark’s Gospel—and its ending—is much more readily understandable if Mark could take for granted that his readers in the church also had available to them Matthew and Luke.



## MATTHEW'S OMISSIONS

If Mark is first, then we are required to believe that Matthew, the former tax collector, excises financial detail or precise numbers and replaces them with vague generalities.

In several parallel passages, Mark contains, and Matthew lacks, specific figures for numbers or amounts of money. There is no reason to believe that Mark was particularly interested in figures, yet he contains these details; while ***precisely at these points*** in the record, Matthew, who was trained in handling finance and keeping records, puts into his account only vague generalizations. If Mark's Gospel were written first, then Matthew had exact figures in his source and he deleted them, substituting a generality.

As any person who has been trained in accounting will know, this is, psychologically, quite unbelievable. I know about this: I trained and practised as an accountant before entering the ministry. The alternative is that Matthew's account lacked that information because it was a detail not known to him or possibly forgotten (being trained in accounts does not mean that you can never forget a figure!), whereas it was a detail that Mark remembered from his other source, Peter's preaching, and that he inserted into Matthew's material when drawing upon Matthew in writing his own Gospel. But that Matthew had this precise information in front of him in Mark, and deliberately made it vague and general? Impossible.

Here are three instances of what I am referring to:

### 7.04 THAT MATTHEW WOULD OMIT THE OINTMENT OR BREAD VALUE IF HE KNEW MARK

In the account of The Anointing At Bethany, Mt 26:6-13//Mk 14:3-9//Jn 12:1-8, Mark and John mention, and Matthew omits, the value of the ointment used:

<b>Mt 26:9</b>	<b>Mk 14:5</b>	<b>Jn 12:5</b>
For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.	For this ointment might have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor.	Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

Why does Matthew omit the value of the ointment? It is impossible to believe that he begrudged the additional words required: at this point Mark uses three words (ἐπάνω δηναρίων τριακοσίων) and Matthew uses one word (πολλοῦ); it is impossible to believe that Matthew has made the change in order to accomplish the saving of ***two words***! It is impossible in fact to believe that Matthew had the information about the figure for the value of the ointment in front of him as he wrote.

For an additional example of this same kind: In Mark 6:37 Mark gives the value of the bread required to feed the crowd as “two hundred denarii”, which is paralleled in John 6:7—but in their parallels both Matthew and Luke omit this piece of information. Again, it is impossible to believe that Matthew would do this if this figure were in front of him.

## 7.05. THAT MATTHEW WOULD OMIT

### THE NUMBER OF PIGS IF HE KNEW MARK

In the account of The Exorcism of Legion, Mt 8:28-34//Mk 5:1-20//Lk 8:26-39, Mark mentions, and Matthew and Luke omit, the number of the pigs which ran down the steep embankment into the water and were drowned:

<b>Mt 8:32</b>	<b>Mk 5:13</b>	<b>Lk 8:33</b>
and behold the whole herd	and the herd,	and the herd
	numbering about two thousand,	
rushed down	rushed down	rushed down
the steep bank	the steep bank	the steep bank

This number was not without its significance in the development of the story: if some 2,000 pigs were destroyed, no wonder the people were upset, and begged Jesus to leave their neighbourhood!

Why do Matthew and Luke—and in particular, why does Matthew—omit this highly relevant detail? It is impossible to believe that he begrudged the additional words required: at this point Mark uses two words that Matthew and Luke lack (ὡς δισχίλιοι) while Matthew uses one word for the size of the herd (πᾶσα); it is impossible to believe that Matthew has made the change in order to accomplish the saving of **one word**! It is impossible in fact to believe that Matthew had the information about this figure in front of him as he wrote.

## 7.06 THAT MATTHEW WOULD OMIT

### THE WIDOW'S GIFT PERICOPE IF HE KNEW MARK

In recording the events of Passion Week, Mark and Luke mention, and Matthew omits, the pericope about the poor widow who put all she had into the treasury (Mk 12:41-44//Lk 21:1-4). In both Mark and Luke this pericope follows upon their brief account of Jesus's pronouncement of woe upon the scribes. Matthew follows his account of these Woes (Mt 23:1-36) with the Lament Over Jerusalem (23:37-39E) and proceeds straight to The Eschatological Discourse (Mt 24:1ff.//Mk 13:1ff.//Lk 21:5ff.).

The story that Matthew thus omits is in fact very “Matthean” in character: it concerns

money (what other textual material about money is there in Mark that is not also paralleled in Matthew?), it centres upon a feature of Jewish temple practice (the collection of gifts for the temple), and it concludes with a saying of Jesus contrasting the relative value of the widow's contribution and the other gifts. There is no parallel to it in Matthew, but it is close in spirit to many items that Matthew does include, ranging from the material on this kind of theme in the Sermon on the Mount to his story of the coin in the fish's mouth. It is not of such length to pose any significant problem for inclusion (75 words in Mark's version; 58 words in Luke's). It is unbelievable that Matthew should have had this pericope in front of him in Mark's Gospel, and would have chosen not to use it.

## LUKE'S OMISSIONS

### 7.07 THAT LUKE WOULD OMIT

#### THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN PERICOPE IF HE KNEW MARK

In recording the travels of Jesus, Matthew and Mark mention, and Luke omits, the pericope about the Syrophenician woman whose daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit (Mt 15:21-28//Mk 7:24-30). It occurs in that section of Mark that is sometimes called the "Great Omission" (Mk 6:45-8:26) because it is unparalleled in Luke.

This story that Luke omits is in fact very "Lukan" in character: it is the only story in which Jesus performs a miracle for the benefit of a Gentile woman, in healing her child. Now, throughout his Gospel Luke shows himself to be exceedingly interested in Gentiles, in women, in children, and in healings; here is a story that involves all four of these interests, a pericope that (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) lay before him in Mark's Gospel, and yet that he passed over!

It is not of such length to pose any significant problem for inclusion (130 words in Mark's version). It is unbelievable that Luke should have had this pericope in front of him in Mark's Gospel, and chosen not to use it.

Some advocates of the Markan Priority hypothesis have acknowledged the problem posed by Luke's Great Omission, and have proposed the explanation that the absence of all this material from Luke is due to it not being in Luke's copy of Mark: he had either a defective copy or a different, presumably earlier, rescension. No one can deny the **possibility** of such a thing; all one can say is that it is entirely without any supporting evidence of any kind, and is in fact an expedient to account for a difficulty, because it is indeed incredible that Luke would have omitted all the material of the Great Omission—especially **this** pericope—if he had had it in front of him. It is in fact an exercise in "damage control" for the Markan Priority hypothesis.

The alternative explanation—that Mark wrote third, and had this story before him in Matthew—fully accounts for all the data ***on the basis of the Gospels as we have them***, and does not require leaps into pure speculation concerning “different rescensions” or “defective copies” of the Gospel documents.

## 7.08 THAT LUKE WOULD DISCARD NAMES AND TIME NOTES IN MARK

In several parallel passages Mark contains and Luke lacks specific details of place and circumstance (including time notes or connecting links). Yet Mark as a general rule appears much less interested in such information than Luke, who is the one author who states that he plans to write an orderly (that is to say, chronological) account (Lk 1:3), who gives the careful dating of events at the beginning of his Gospel (Lk 3:1-2; cf. also 1:5; 1:26; 1:56; 2:1), who alone states Jesus's age (Lk 3:23; cf. also 2:21; 2:42), and who shows much interest in times, places and circumstances (see Chapter Four, §4.5).

If Mark was used by Luke, then on a number of occasions Luke had precise names of places and people in front of him in his source and deleted them, and exact time notes in his source, and made them more vague. Given what we can see of Luke as an historian—and noting his interest in and care about such details—this is, psychologically, incredible. The alternative explanation, which adequately accounts for the data, is that Mark used Matthew and Luke, and gained some of these pieces of information from their occurrence in Matthew and some from his remembrance of Peter's preaching.

### (a) That Luke Would Discard Names Occurring in Mark

Wright (1896: xvi) states,

There are many cases where S. Luke's record, and even S. Matthew's, is distinctly inferior to S. Mark's. Take for example the case of Proper Names. There are but few of these in S. Mark, 86 altogether, but 25 of them are absent from S. Luke. Now Proper Names give the assurance of definite information and of historic truth, which no reasonable author can afford to neglect. S. Luke was an historian, and in the Acts of the Apostles shows the instincts of an historian. Is it conceivable that he should have deliberately omitted so many names from his Gospel, if he had them before him in writing? I think not. But let us glance at two test cases. (1) S. Mark writes, 'And Jesus went forth and His disciples to the villages appertaining to Caesarea Philippi' (Mk 8:27), for which S. Luke gives, 'And it came to pass, as he was praying in a solitary place, His disciples were with Him.' (2) S. Mark writes, 'Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, a blind beggar' (Mk 10:46), for which S. Luke gives, 'A certain blind man.' What motive can be conceived for this deliberate preference of the indefinite?

Wright has asked two questions, and indeed they require an answer.

The suggestion occasionally found that a person's name was suppressed in Luke's account because of the danger that names represented in time of persecution is not convincing when one considers that (a) Luke's Gospel was published some thirty years after the events it records; (b) Luke records a great many other names without any sign of reluctance—there is no discernible justification along these lines that can be detected for those names that go in and those left out; (c) in any case the precaution is pointless, as the names under discussion occur in Mark's publication; and (d) at best the explanation if accepted would refer to personal names and does not cover other details and place names, which are also often omitted in Luke's Gospel.

It is in fact impossible to believe that Luke would have in front of him, in Mark's Gospel, specific names and definite information, and would replace this with indefinite generalities.

#### **(b) That Luke Would Alter the Time Interval before the Transfiguration**

In the pericope of The Transfiguration, Mt 17:1-9//Mk 9:2-10//Lk 9:28-36, Matthew and Mark give a precise time interval before the Transfiguration and Luke has a different time interval and states that it is approximate.

<b>Mt 17:1</b>	<b>Mk 9:2</b>	<b>Lk 9:28</b>
And after six days	And after six days	Now about eight days after these sayings

Frequently Luke uses general time notes of some kind when there is no information of a more precise nature in any Gospel (cf. Lk 6:6//Mt 12:9//Mk 3:1; Lk 8:22//Mt 8:18//Mk 4:35; Lk 9:57//Mt 8:19); from which we may say that (on any theory of Synoptic relationships) in those instances he clearly has no more exact information. We note therefore this data: at times Luke gives very precise dating; on occasions when he clearly does not have precise information he uses a generalization. In his account of the Transfiguration he gives a generalization, while both Matthew and Mark have a precise time here. It is not believable that Luke had "after six days" in front of him in Mark's Gospel and changed it to the vaguer "about eight days after".

The explanation that fully explains the data is that Matthew and Luke had independent traditions of the Transfiguration (an impression confirmed by a comparison of the similarities and differences in their accounts) and that Luke's version did not contain a more exact time note. Mark, writing with both accounts before him, preferred to adopt the more precise time given by Matthew rather than Luke's vaguer one.

**(c) That Luke Who is Interested in People in General  
Leaves Out So Much Information about them**

We have seen, above, that in several parallel passages Mark contains, and Luke lacks, information about people, such as their names (see §7.08-a) or even an entire pericope of specifically the type that Luke seemed to seek out (see §7.07). In addition, Luke lacks a considerable amount of personal information about people that Mark contains—information that on the face of it we would have expected to be of great interest to Luke, because of its warm, human content, and that would have increased the length of Luke's Gospel by only a few words in each case so that this factor (the usual reason given for Luke not including other material) hardly seems applicable. This kind of material can be seen set out in §4.2.1 and §4.2.2 (though these sections only tabulate what is lacking in *both* Matthew and Luke). In a large number of these instances, the material in question consists of details that are found in Mark's version of a pericope that also occurs in Luke, so that on the Markan Priority hypothesis *this information has been deliberately excised by Luke when taking over the story from Mark*.

Omissions that could be considered surprising are references to prayer, and Jesus praying, and to Jesus's compassion towards people; but one group of omissions is worthy of particular notice: the deletion of significant details in relation to healings. An example of this kind is the comment that the hemorrhaging woman felt in her body that she was healed of her disease (Mk 5:29; lacking, Lk 8:44).

But quite extraordinary is the absence from Luke of any mention of healing of the deaf. This was regarded as a healing of especial difficulty, because if the person was deaf, how could he hear the healing word? Mark records the healing of a deaf mute in 7:32-37E); Luke lacks the entire pericope. Then in Mk 9:14-29 he records the healing of a lad who was deaf and dumb (see 9:25)—and Luke takes over this story from Mark and *omits this information!* There are thus no healings of the deaf in Luke's Gospel. In Lk 7:22 he quotes Jesus as saying "the deaf hear", but he does not have a single instance of this type of healing on record! Can we really believe that Luke would thus keep out of his Gospel all mention of the healings of deafness that occur in Mark?

This attitude that is postulated of Luke applies also to "Q" healings. In numerous instances Luke has been careful to give not merely the nature of an illness, but also the extent of its progress: thus, in Mt 8:14//Mk 1:30 Simon's mother-in-law has a fever; in Lk 4:38 she has a *high* fever; in Mt 8:2//Mk 1:40 Jesus is approached by a leper; in Lk 5:12 he is "a man full of leprosy". But in the Q story The Capernaum Centurion, Matthew

informs us that the malady from which the servant was suffering was that he was paralyzed (Mt 8:5), while Luke tells us that he was at the point of death (7:2) but **does not mention the nature of his affliction**. Such an omission is, one may say, distinctly uncharacteristic of Luke.

Thus the second leg of the Two-Source hypothesis, the Q source, is also called in question. But primarily we are confronted with the omission from Luke not merely of such pericopes as the Syrophoenician's Daughter but of a host of small personal details about Jesus and about people that would have taken so little space to include and that are so much the kind of information that it appears Luke valued, and that he had in front of him in Mark and that **he excised from that account when he utilized it for his Gospel**. These omissions are, psychologically, quite incredible.

The alternative explanation is that Mark was not Luke's source, and that this information was not in Luke's sources; Mark obtained this information from Matthew, or, on those occasions when Mark's Gospel alone gives the details, his source was his recollection of these details in Peter's preaching.

**7.09 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE CREATED  
THE POSITIVE MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK**

In a number of Triple Tradition stories, Matthew and Luke on several occasions include a detail that Mark lacks. These are called the Positive Minor Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark. Some of these Positive Minor Agreements are:

**(a) The Fringe of his Garment (Mk 5:27)**

In the account of the Healing of the Woman with a Hemorrhage, Mt 9:18-22//Mk 5:21-34//Lk 8:40-48, Matthew and Luke mention, and Mark omits, the detail that the women touched the **fringe** of Jesus's garment:

<b>Mt 9:20</b>	<b>Mk 5:27</b>	<b>Lk 8:44</b>
came up behind him	came up behind him	came up behind him
	in the crowd	
and touched	and touched	and touched
the fringe of		the fringe of
his garment	his garment	his garment

The fringe of a rabbi's robe had special religious significance, so perhaps one can see why it might occur to Matthew to insert this detail into Mark's account, as he was writing for a Jewish audience.

The origin of the fringe is described thus by Schürer (Vol 2, 1979: 479ff.):

The *zizith* (... κράσπεδα in LXX and the New Testament ...) are the tassels or fringes of blue or white wool prescribed by Num 15:37ff. and Deut 22:12 to be worn by every Israelite at the four corners of his garment. As the passage from Numbers specifies, the purpose of the tassel is that “you may look at it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.” ... They are ... worn, as the Pentateuch directs, and as was still customary at the time of Jesus, on the over-garment (... ἱμάτιον).

Later Judaism had exaggerated “the importance attached to them, however, and the care with which everything is ordered down to the smallest detail (the number of threads and knots required in the *zizith*, ... etc.)” (Schürer, 1979: 481). The fringe of the garment was thus accorded special religious significance in itself. Further details are given by Schürer in this reference; and see also Note 1, 277, Vol 1, Alfred Edersheim, *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*, Eerdmans, 1883/1950. In a later story, Healings at Gennesaret, both Matthew and Mark refer to people touching the fringe of Jesus's garment: Mt 14:36//Mk 6:56. The practice of the scribes and Pharisees of making “their fringes long”, so that they were particularly noticeable, is referred to by Jesus in Mt 23:5 as part of his attack on their hypocrisies.

While Mark made no mention of the hemorrhaging woman's touch being to any particular part of Jesus's clothes, doubtless Matthew would see a religious point to be made by mentioning that it was the **fringe** she touched. And his Jewish readership would understand the significance of the detail.

However, even for Matthew to introduce the detail appears a trifle peculiar. He would not, now as a **Christian**, be likely to endorse the peculiarly Jewish concept of the especial sanctity of a part of Jesus's clothes, particularly in the light of his later citation of Jesus's criticism of the scribes and Pharisees for their ostentatious lengthening of their fringes (Mt 23:5): why then would Matthew choose to add such an idea into his account about the hemorrhaging woman? If Mark is the original account of this incident, and Matthew is using it as his source, we must remember that the Markan Priority theory does not provide for Matthew to be inserting this detail on the basis that it is extra information of which he has independent knowledge; rather, he would be putting it in because he thought it **might** have happened, or because he thought it appropriate or thought it would heighten the spiritual impact of the story, or similar. But in fact any such motivation on Matthew's part here appears rather unlikely.

If, however, it is **unlikely** that Matthew would invent such a detail and insert it into Mark's account in front of him, it is quite **impossible** to conceive of Luke doing such a



thing. We cannot know whether Luke would be aware of the specific significance of the fringe of a rabbi's robe (the word *fringe*, κράσπεδον, occurs only here in Luke). Even if we may for the sake of our discussion assume that Luke himself did in fact know about this, it can hardly be assumed that it would be a piece of information known to more than a small part of his Gentile readership. It is difficult to explain why Matthew would choose to add “the fringe of” into his source, even though he was writing for a Jewish audience who would recognize the reference; it is impossible to see why it would occur to Luke to insert “the fringe of” when it was absent in his source, seeing that he was writing for Gentiles for whom this detail was meaningless. That **both** Matthew and Luke, using only Mark as their source, should each independently choose at this same point to add in this same detail (and it is part of an eight-word sequence in which Matthew and Luke are identical in the Greek) stretches credulity quite beyond all limits.

In the same context there are two other minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark that can be noted in a comparison of the Greek:

<b>Mk:</b>	ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῶν ὄχλων ὀπισθεν ἤψατο	τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ
<b>Mt:</b>	προσελθοῦσα	ὀπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ
<b>Lk:</b>	προσελθοῦσα	ὀπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ

If we were to accept that Mark is the source for this story in both Matthew and Luke, then in this passage both Matthew and Luke have independently chosen to make these changes in the text of Mark that they had before them: (a) altered ἐλθοῦσα to προσελθοῦσα; (b) deleted Mark's ἐν τῶν ὄχλων, “in the crowd”; (c) added τοῦ κρασπέδου, “the fringe (of)”. That both the Major Synoptists should have decided to add in “the fringe of” is quite unbelievable, as we have seen; that they should make in this same place **two other changes** of a minor nature but **exactly the same**, so that after these alterations to Mark are independently made, the wording of Matthew and Luke in Greek ends up as being **completely identical**, must be rated as well and truly impossible.

Perhaps, as there are some variant readings for Lk 8:44, the correspondence between the Major Synoptics could be due to the assimilation of the text of Luke to that of Matthew? In his *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (1971: 145-146), Metzger states,

The words τοῦ κρασπέδου constitute one of the so-called minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark. The Committee regarded this as accidental and decided to follow the overwhelming weight of the external evidence supporting the inclusion of the words.

That is to say, the Committee responsible for the text of the United Bible Societies' edition of the Greek New Testament gave their attention to the significance of the fact that the inclusion of these words created an agreement between Matthew and Luke against Mark, which could have indicated assimilation of Luke to Matthew, and considered this possibility to be outweighed by "the overwhelming weight of the external evidence supporting the inclusion of the words". There is no textual basis for calling into question the agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark as set out above.

Now, an alternative that can be suggested is that Matthew and Luke each had another source (that is, independent of Mark's Gospel) for this information about the woman touching the fringe, and that **this** is why they agree here. Such other source must have contained an account of this woman's healing. That is, no one would postulate that this presumed other source simply contained κρασπέδου, "the fringe of"; obviously it contained all the words in this verse in which Matthew and Luke agree, and indeed it must have had some account of the entire incident. If, following tradition, this other document that is a source for both Matthew and Luke is referred to as Q, then we have here a case where Q and Mark overlap in that they both contain the story of the hemorrhaging woman.

But if this story is in Q, and at least this detail comes from Q, then we do not really have any evidence that in this pericope Mark is the source for the pericope in the Major Synoptics: the entire pericope can be derived by Matthew and Luke from Q. By identical reasoning, similar minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark in other pericopes can lead to the conclusion that most of Mark was paralleled in Q, and that Q rather than Mark is the source of Triple Tradition material; and indeed we will no longer have a Markan Priority hypothesis, but an Ur-Gospel hypothesis. (For this hypothesis, see §10.4.4.)

In fact, this reasoning for an overlap here between Q and Mark is a circular argument, and quite invalid: How do you know that Q and Mark overlap here? Because Matthew and Luke contain the same details not in Mark. How do you account for Matthew and Luke containing the same details not in Mark? Because Q and Mark overlap here.

On the Markan Dependence view, the explanation of the data is straightforward. The woman **did** touch the fringe on Jesus's garment. This factual detail was contained in the tradition transmitted to both Matthew and Luke. Thus it is included by them in their Gospels because it **happened**. Luke has it in his account because it was in his source, and he did not choose to alter his source (even if the point of the reference was without meaning for Gentiles). However, Mark **did** delete the words, because they were not relevant for **his** intended audience.

[There are numerous parallels for Mark lacking and one or both of the other Synoptics containing Jewish details—cf. the flute players (Mt 9:23); saluting a house, and your peace coming upon it (Mt 10:12-13//Lk 10:5-6); the priests in the temple on the Sabbath (Mt 12:5); the sheep in the pit on the Sabbath (Mt 12:11; cf. Lk 13:15 and 14:5); “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15:24; cf. Mt 10:5-6); “for any cause” (Mt 19:3); the difference between Mt 19:9 and Mk 10:11-12; and most of Mt 23.]

There are thus three alternatives available as explanations for this data: either both Matthew and Luke here independently but simultaneously decided to insert the reference to the fringe, for reasons which are impossible to fathom; or we must postulate an overlap between Mark and Q for this pericope (on evidence which is hardly able to bear such weight, and by reasoning which is entirely circular); or Matthew and Luke included it because it was part of the tradition of what happened, and Mark deleted it—in line with what he has done in numerous other pericopes—because it was a detail from the Jewish background of the events in Jesus's life that was absolutely meaningless to Mark's intended audience.

### **(b) The Perverse Generation (Mk 9:19)**

This example is one where it is difficult to account fully for either alternative: that Mark should omit what was in both Matthew and Luke, or that Matthew and Luke should both add the same expression into Mark. However, one is rather more believable than the other.

When Jesus came down from the Mountain of Transfiguration and met the epileptic boy whom his disciples had not been able to heal, he said:

<b>Mt 17:17</b>	<b>Mk 9:19</b>	<b>Lk 9:41</b>
O faithless	O faithless	O faithless
and perverse		and perverse
generation	generation	generation

It is not immediately apparent why Mark would have omitted the words “and perverse” if they were in the sources that he was following. But that he should do so is far more believable than the alternative, viz, that both Matthew and Luke independently chose to insert the word “perverse” at this point. This is not a common word. It is the perfect middle/passive participle of διαστρέφω, a word that occurs only seven times in the New Testament. Of those seven occurrences, only four are of this particular form, and the two instances other than those now before us are in Acts (20:30) and Philippians (2:15). That is to say, the occurrences of this term “perverse” (διεστραμμένη) in the pericope

under review are *its only occurrences on the lips of Jesus, and indeed its only occurrences in the Gospels*. If then (as Markan Priority would hold to be the case) the only source for this pericope in Matthew and Luke is Mark, and recognizing that if Matthew and Luke had followed the wording of Mark and not introduced “perverse” here this word would not have occurred at all in the Gospels, it really stretches the imagination to conceive of why it would occur to both Matthew and Luke to add it in.

More than that. Markan Priority here asks us to believe the unbelievable. There is nothing in Mark’s text that suggests this word. There is no other place in the Bible where the words “unbelieving” and “perverse” occur together. Why should either Matthew or Luke, looking at Mark’s wording, consider it necessary to add *any* word to “faithless”, and if for some reason they felt they should, then *out of all the words in the Greek language, why should they both select this same one, and thus give it its only appearance in the Gospels?*

Tuckett (1983: 66) deals with this minor agreement with the comment:

Why should Mark omit καὶ διεστραμμένη in 9:19, when the inclusion of it would provide a good example of duality, which is usually considered a feature of Mark’s style? On the assumption of Markan priority, its inclusion by Matthew and Luke could be due to assimilation to the text of Deut 32:5.

He then also suggests that the textual variant which places these words in Mark as well may be correct. This textual variant is so poorly supported that it is not included in the apparatus of the United Bible Societies’ text nor discussed by Metzger’s Textual Commentary, and appears to be a clear case, in a few manuscripts, of assimilation of the text of Mark to that of the others. The Hebrew and Septuagint texts of Deut 32:5 refer to a “crooked and perverse generation”: we are invited by Tuckett to believe that both Matthew and Luke, with Mark’s Gospel in front of them, would be caused by the single word γενεά, *generation*, to think of the Deuteronomy passage and from it to extract the word *perverse*, διεστραμμένη, to add to their accounts. Why would both of them choose *this* word—why not the other word, *crooked*, σκολιά? If they had an inclination to assimilate the words of Jesus to this Old Testament passage, why did not one or other or both of them drop Mark’s “faithless” and adopt *both* descriptive adjectives from Deut 32:5? Why, that is, would the sight of “generation” in Mark inspire *both* Major Synoptists to think of the same Old Testament passage and each to select just *one* descriptive adjective from it, and both of them the *same* adjective?

Moreover, γενεά occurs in Mark on four other occasions: 8:12 (twice); 8:38; and 13:30. On none of these occasions was either Matthew or Luke moved to assimilate

Mark's γενεά to Deut 32:5 (see *Wicked and Adulterous*, §7.12-a, below). Furthermore, Luke in Acts 2:40 has “this crooked (σκολιά) generation”, containing **two** words from Deut 32:5, and yet he was not stirred by this to add there the word διεστραμμένη, *perverse*. But both he and Matthew were influenced to add this one word into their record when they read γενεά in Mk 9:19! Those who wish to believe impossible things may certainly want to add this opportunity to their collections.

It is moreover no answer to the difficulty for Markan Priorists to say here that the explanation of why Matthew and Luke include “and perverse” is that this is what Jesus actually said. Once this explanation is tendered, then it completely contradicts the fundamental tenet of the Markan Priority hypothesis, which is that **Mark alone** is the source in this pericope for what is in Matthew and Luke. Instead, we are once again in a situation where we appear to need to invoke an overlap between Mark and Q to rescue the Markan Priority hypothesis.

The alternative is much more believable: Matthew and Luke record this saying because **Jesus actually said it**, and for some reason that is not now knowable Mark (using Matthew and Luke as his sources) chose to quote only part of Jesus's words here.

### (c) The Question in the Mocking of Jesus (Mk 14:65)

In the mocking to which Jesus was subjected, we read:

Mt 26:67-68	Mk 14:65	Lk 22:63-64
Then they spat in his face, and struck him;  and some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”	And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him,  saying to him, “Prophecy!”  And the guards received him with blows.	Now the men who were holding Jesus mocked him  and beat him; they also blindfolded him  and asked him, “Prophecy!  Who is it that struck you?”

The words “Who is it that struck you?” are identical in Matthew and Luke, and absent from Mark. Adherents of the Markan Priority hypothesis are faced with the requirement

of believing that when Matthew and Luke encountered Mark's "Prophecy!", they each inserted, in identical words, the question "Who is it that struck you?" Streeter found this rather too difficult to believe; instead he found it easier to believe that ***all the extant manuscripts of Matthew had been corrupted by being assimilated here to Luke, with this question from Luke being inserted into Matthew!*** There is no textual evidence showing variant readings here for Matthew (nor for that matter, for Luke). How then does Streeter justify his view? He says (1924: 327),

Assimilation of parallels is a form of corruption which can result, and, as I have shown, has often actually resulted, in producing an *identical* corruption along more than one *independent* line of transmission. I suggest that for once this has happened along all lines. I should say, rather, all lines for which evidence is extant.

Thus although there is absolutely no textual evidence on the basis of which to call these words into question, Streeter rejects them from Matthew nonetheless. The absence of any variants is to be attributed to ***all extant*** manuscripts sharing the same corruption, viz, the insertion of these words into Matthew's original text, which lacked the words of this question. This is one way of overcoming a piece of evidence against one's position: "suggest" that all the manuscripts of the New Testament that contain the troublesome words are unoriginal and corrupted! If the genuineness of words in Lk 8:44 (see §7.09-a, above) is to be questioned upon the slimmest of evidence, Mt 26:68b is to be rejected upon no evidence at all.

This outrageous alternative from Streeter means that there are now ***two*** impossibilities here from which one may choose which to believe: either that both Matthew and Luke decided to add these identical words into the text of Mark that they were using, or else that these words are not really a part of Matthew's original Gospel at all, although they are in all extant manuscripts.

#### **(d) Other Positive Minor Agreements against Mark**

There are several other instances of Matthean-Lukan agreement against Mark that are not so clear-cut and impressive as the three above, but that nonetheless are difficult to account for on the basis of Markan Priority. When these are considered together, their cumulative impact makes it impossible to believe that ***in all these cases*** it just happened that Matthew and Luke decided upon the same changes to be made to Mark, when those changes are not so self-evident as to cause us to think that in every such case it would have occurred simultaneously and independently to both Matthew and Luke to make it.

In several places Matthew and Luke are in agreement in having a word or a point of detail where it is lacking in Mark—which (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) requires us to believe that it occurred to both of them simultaneously to insert it at this place, even though it was not in the source they were using. A number of these have been treated in detail earlier; we may note here two others:

<b>Mt</b> 21:23 διδάσκοντι	<b>Mk</b> 11:27 [not in Mark]	<b>Lk</b> 20:1 διδάσκοντος
13:11 ὑμῖν	4:11 ὑμῖν	8:10 ὑμῖν
	ὁ μυστήριον	
δέδοται	δέδοται	δέδοται
γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια		γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια
τῆς βασιλείας	τῆς βασιλείας	τῆς βασιλείας
τῶν οὐρανῶν	τοῦ θεοῦ	τοῦ θεοῦ

## 7.10 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE OMITTED

### THE NEGATIVE MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK

“Negative minor agreements” refer to those places where Matthew and Luke are in agreement in omitting material which (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) they both have in front of them in Mark.

There are many hundreds of occasions where both Matthew and Luke lack information that Mark contains. From the perspective of Markan Priority this means that the two Major Synoptists have on all these occasions both chosen to delete the same words or expressions from Mark’s account, though they are frequently words or expressions that add preciseness or vivid and striking eyewitness detail to the narrative. The more significant of these occasions are tabulated in §4.2.1 (Verses Unique to Mark) and §4.2.2 (Shorter Details Unique to Mark), where they may be examined.

The most frequent way of accounting for the omission of this material in both the Major Synoptics is to note that in quite a number of cases the material lacking therein (so it is thus unique to Mark) will be seen to consist of Markan expansions or repetitions: thus these omissions can be attributed to a desire on the part of the two Major Synoptists to avoid unnecessary and repetitive material. But overall, as can be seen by an inspection of the material in question in Chapter Four, most of it is not of this character. It consists rather of detail that clarifies and sharpens the focus of the picture being presented in the narrative.

A second reason is adduced for those omissions that are not of the first kind: Matthew

and Luke were both conscious of a pressing need to keep the total length of their respective Gospels within manageable limitations of length. Yet, as noted elsewhere, **they themselves** frequently contain “repetitions” (doublets of words, sayings, or complete pericopes), while the inclusion of many of Mark’s vivid details would have meant the addition of just a few words and sentences here and there in their narrative: much of this material from Mark could have been retained without making any significant difference to their overall length.

It is also maintained that at times both Matthew and Luke could have had doctrinal or other objections to what Mark contained. Such judgements are far from being beyond challenge; but even after allowing the widest latitude for such opinions, there still remain many *sondergut* comments in Mark that these “explanations” do not cover.

A few representative examples may be considered.

#### **(a) Information about Background and Circumstances**

Numbers of Mark’s unique comments are explanations that in one way or another clarify the circumstances that are being described. Thus in 1:33 he informs the reader that “the whole city was gathered together about the door” when the sick were healed at nightfall; the explanation of the way in which the crowds filled the entire room (2:2) makes the rest of the story of the healing of the paralyzed man more understandable; the instruction to have a boat ready for him when he should need it (3:9) explains how it happened to be there when Jesus did use it later; a reason for the appointment of the Twelve was that they should be with Jesus (3:14); from 6:7 we learn that the disciples were sent out upon their mission in pairs; the Syrophoenecian was a Greek (7:26), indicating that Jesus spoke to her in that language; the epileptic demon-possessed boy was both deaf and dumb (9:25); the apprehension of the women concerning the size of the stone over the tomb and the difficulty of moving it (16:3-4); and the sublime comment at the anointing, “She has done what she could” (14:8). These examples are typical of a great number of similar instances.

#### **(b) Minor Descriptive Details of an Event**

Very frequently Mark adds to the reader’s ability to “see” the scene by means of a few words that sketch in the background or the circumstances. For example, in 2:3 the paralyzed man is being carried by four others; when Jesus fell asleep in the boat, it was in the stern, and upon the cushion there (4:38); at the feeding of the five thousand, the grass was green (6:39); Jesus took up the young child in his arms (9:36); and so forth.



When one examines the lists in §4.2 of what Matthew and Luke (on the Markan Priority theory) have chosen to omit from Mark when using this Gospel as their source, it is very difficult to conceive why either one of them should exclude any of this information from his Gospel; none of the usual explanations, nor all of them together, can adequately explain it. But when it is a case that they have **both** chosen to leave out **all** of this, it moves quite beyond the realm of the unlikely. It is impossible to believe that Matthew and Luke both had all this information in front of them in Mark, in using Mark as their source, and both rejected all of it from having a place in their Gospels.

## 7.11 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE MADE

### THE TRANSFORMATIONAL MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK

On not a few occasions Matthew and Luke change the nature or form of what lay in front of them in Mark (on the Markan Priority hypothesis), creating transformational minor agreements. Some instances:

#### (a) Running Ahead to Following (At The Feeding of the Five Thousand, Mk 6:33)

The prologue to the Feeding of the Five Thousand mentions:

Mt 14:13	Mk 6:33	Lk 9:11
But when the crowds heard it,  they followed him on foot from the towns.	Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them.	But when the crowds learned it,  they followed him;

The similarity here between Matthew and Luke is quite marked, and both are distinctly different from Mark not only in the actual words used but also in the idea expressed. Matthew and Mark concur in “on foot from the towns”, but otherwise Mark has nothing in common with Matthew and Luke. If in accordance with Markan Priority we are to say that Mark is the source here for Matthew and Luke, then we must believe that both these Synoptists, having in front of them an account stating that many **saw** them going, decided to change this direct basis for knowing about the departure of Jesus to **hearing** (Matthew) and **learning** (Luke)—and also both Major Synoptists changed **many** to **the crowds**. Now Mark's emphasis is upon the people **running** with the result that they **got there ahead of them**. Both Matthew and Luke change this idea and its wording, and say “they followed him” (the Greek is identical in both these Gospels, ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ).

One puzzles over **why** they would both wish to make such an alteration to Mark—no reason or justification for it is immediately apparent, and on the Markan Priority theory Mark is the most primitive Gospel and the closest to eyewitness testimony, and is here the sole source of Matthew and Luke, so it is not as if we are able to say that both Matthew and Luke were **correcting** Mark for any reason. And one marvels that, having both decided (for some unguessable reason) to alter Mark's vivid account of how the people ran ahead to get to Jesus's landing-point before him, they both opt, in lieu of Mark's wording, for the same bald statement, "they followed him". Perhaps we should adopt here Streeter's solution for similar problems, and postulate an overlap of Mark and Q, with Luke adopting Q, and Matthew conflating the two?

Alternatively we can see both Matthew and Luke as reflecting the tradition of this narrative as it was transmitted, while Mark here follows his third source, Peter. For Peter in telling this tale had described in vivid and excited language the way in which the people had run along the seashore faster than Jesus and the disciples could travel in their boat, so that they got to their landing-point ahead of them. This is exactly the kind of personal detail that Peter would include in recounting the story of what happened, and exactly the kind that would remain in Mark's memory, and be used to add further vigour to the story as he had it in front of him in Matthew and Luke. (Of course it is also highly probable that some others were not so nimble as their fellows, so that they were in fact moving more slowly along the shore, following the progress of Jesus in the boat, as Matthew and Luke indicate.)

Which explanation, then, is the more cohesive and believable here—Markan Priority or Markan Dependence?

Additionally, this same pericope contains numerous other details unique to Mark that clearly suggest eyewitness recollection: the reason why Jesus sought to withdraw with his disciples to a lonely place (6:31-32); the estimate of how much worth of bread would be required to feed the crowd (6:37—paralleled in John, but not the Major Synoptics); the greenness of the grass (6:39); and the vivid description of the way the crowds sat down, grouped (συνπρόσια συνπρόσια) as in flower beds (πρασιαὶ πρασιαί, 6:39-40). Matthew and Luke are agreed in excluding all these details from their accounts—or alternatively, from the Markan Dependence perspective, one may more likely see these as further touches of eyewitness recollection that Mark added into his Gospel from his knowledge of the way Peter used to tell this story.

#### **(b) Moses and Elijah Reversed (at the Transfiguration, Mk 9:4)**

In the pericope of the Transfiguration we find an example of the small agreements

that exist between Matthew and Luke and that often go unnoticed. Matthew (17:3) and Luke (9:30) state that “behold ... Moses and Elijah” appeared and talked with Jesus; Mark lacks “behold” and has “Elijah with Moses”. The Markan Priority hypothesis necessitates our believing that both Major Synoptists decided to add “behold” into their source at this point, and both also decided to change “Elijah with Moses” into “Moses and Elijah”. The rationale for such a change is not clear. This pericope is the only place where the names of these two Old Testament saints are linked together in this way, and there is no inherent reason why they should appear in one order rather than the other. should **both** Major Synoptists decide to alter their source in these two minor particulars? Perhaps it could be because immediately afterwards all three Synoptics record Peter as speaking of making booths for Moses and Elijah (in that order); this is a **possible** but hardly a **compelling** reason for both Matthew and Luke to have changed Mark's wording “Elijah with Moses”.

The alternative explanation is that once again Mark chose to omit “behold” (it is not a word that he favours, and he lacks it on many of the occasions when it occurs in Matthew and/or Luke, so his omission of it here is consistent with what is found elsewhere); and he speaks of “Elijah with Moses”, thus highlighting Elijah slightly, because Elijah is twice mentioned in the immediate context of this pericope (in Mk 8:28 and 9:11-13—Matthew parallels both of these, and Luke the first of them only).

### (c) Broke Down and Wept to Wept Bitterly (after Peter's Denials, Mk 14:72c)

When the cock crowed and Peter remembered Jesus's prediction of his denials, his response was:

Mt 26:75	Mk 14:72	Lk 22:62
And he went out and wept bitterly	And he broke down and wept	And he went out and wept bitterly
καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς	καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν	καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς

If Mark is here the source for Matthew and Luke, then each of the Major Synoptists has chosen independently to alter “he broke down” to “he went out”, and has changed the form of the verb “wept”, as we can see in the Greek (aorist to imperfect tense), and has added the word “bitterly”. There is no reason apparent from the text of Mark why either Major Synoptist should make such an alteration, let alone both of them simultaneously. The word *bitterly* πικρῶς, used here by both Matthew and Luke, **occurs nowhere**

**else in the entire New Testament.** That both Matthew and Luke, starting from the text of Mark, should make such alterations and **should as a consequence of their independent alterations to Mark end up with this identical wording** is quite incredible.

Streeter's explanation here is to draw attention (1924: 323) to the absence from Luke's text of this verse in several early Latin manuscripts, i.e. saying that the words are not original in Luke but that this Gospel has become assimilated to the text of Matthew. Something of this sort is virtually forced upon us, in view of the extreme unlikelihood that the words could have been adopted by Matthew and Luke independently if they were working from Mark's text. However, textual critics—even if they personally favour the Markan Priority hypothesis—have not followed Streeter's judgement here. This is hardly surprising in view of the paucity of support for omitting the verse, which does occur in a great many other early Latin manuscripts, and is found in p<sup>75</sup>, all the uncials (with the single exception of 0171, and even its absence there is not certain), the miniscules, and the ancient versions. The suggestion of rejecting this Lukan verse would hardly have been entertained were it not for the difficulty that it poses for the Markan Priority hypothesis.

The alternative explanation is that Mark, using Matthew and Luke, chose to alter their wording (“bitterly”) to inform his readers that Peter, in recounting this story, told how he quite broke down when he wept.

#### **(d) Split Apart to Opened (in Jesus's Baptism, Mk 1:10)**

The pericope of the Baptism of Jesus refers to the opening of the heavens and the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus. The three Gospels read:

<b>Mt 3:16</b>	<b>Mk 1:10</b>	<b>Lk 3:21-22</b>
καὶ ἰδοὺ	εἶδεν	καὶ προσευχομένου
ἤνεψχθησαν	σχιζομένους	ἀνεψχθῆναι
οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ	τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ
... ἐπ’ αὐτόν	... εἰς αὐτόν	... ἐπ’ αὐτόν

Matthew and Luke use forms of ἀνοίγω, *open*, and agree against Mark who uses σχίζω, *split apart*. The former is common in New Testament usage (78 occurrences), whereas σχίζω occurs only eleven times. Mark's only other use of this word, of the splitting of the temple veil, is paralleled in both Major Synoptics (Mt 27:51//Mk 15:38//Lk 23:45); Matthew uses it also in 27:51b (“the rocks were split”—this use not in Mark or Luke in their parallels), and Luke has it twice in Jesus's saying about sewing on a patch (tearing a new garment, 5:36—this use of the word not in Matthew or Mark in their parall-

els). The word also occurs twice in Acts (14:4 and 23:7). Thus five of the eleven New Testament occurrences—approximately half—are in Luke's writings. It does not appear therefore that either Matthew or Luke objected to the word, so if they were working from Mk 1:10 either of them **could** have accepted this word from Mark's account.

So then: **either** Matthew and Luke each simultaneously but independently rejected a word in Mark that they happily adopted concerning the veil in the temple and that they both introduced into their own accounts elsewhere, choosing here to replace it with a more common and less colorful one, **or** Mark, writing third, introduced the word into his account of the Baptism of Jesus as one more instance of an observable preference for using the vivid and colourful word in his Gospel.

It is also not without interest to note that in this same passage Matthew and Luke agree against Mark again in having ἐπ' αὐτόν (Mark has εἰς αὐτόν).

#### (e) A Network of Transformation (at the Healing of the Leper, Mk 1:40-42)

The pericope of the Healing of the Leper contains, as Farmer has commented (1964: 145), "a continuous verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke of eighteen consecutive words", some of which are also found in Mark, but from which Mark differs in a number of significant ways.

Mt 8:2-3	Mk 1:40-42	Lk 5:12-13
λέγων· Κύριε, ἐὰν	λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν	λέγων· Κύριε, ἐὰν
θέλῃς δύνασαί με	θέλῃς δύνασαί με	θέλῃς δύνασαί με
καθαρίσαι. καὶ	καθαρίσαι. καὶ	καθαρίσαι. καὶ
	σπλαγχνισθεὶς	
ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα	ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα	ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα
ἥψατο		ἥψατο
αὐτοῦ	αὐτοῦ	αὐτοῦ
	ἥψατο	
λέγων·	καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·	λέγων:
Θέλω, καθαρῶσθι·	Θέλω, καθαρῶσθι·	Θέλω, καθαρῶσθι·
καὶ εὐθέως	καὶ εὐθὺς	καὶ εὐθέως
	ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ	
	ἡ λέπρα	ἡ λέπρα
		ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.
ἐκαθαρίσθη	καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη.	
αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα.		

A succession of changes—inserting, omitting, substituting and transposing the order of words—must all have been made to Mark's account by Matthew and Luke, to produce the result that the two Major Synoptics ended up **identical in wording and word order for eighteen successive words**, and this with Matthew and Luke working independently of each other, and each using Mark's account as his source, and having no other source. Unbelievable!

#### (f) Other Transformational Minor Agreements against Mark

There are numbers of other agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark concerning which the same kinds of comments can be made as for the various examples given above. It can therefore suffice if the more interesting and significant of these are listed here together. In all these cases, the question at issue is, Is it more believable that Matthew and Luke independently altered Mark in the same way, to produce an identical text, or that Matthew and Luke were already agreed in their wording when Mark received them, and Mark departed from that wording when writing his Gospel?

Two significant instances are:

<b>Mt 9:7</b>	<b>Mk 2:12</b>	<b>Lk 5:25</b>
ἀπηλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ	ἐζήθεν ἐμπροσθεν πάντων	ἀπηλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ
<b>Mt 8:27</b>	<b>Mk 4:41</b>	<b>Lk 8:25</b>
οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν	καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν	φοβηθέντες δὲ ἐθαύμασαν

Other places where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in the use of a word include:

<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
4:1 διάβολος	1:13 σατανᾶς	4:2 διάβολος
9:11 διὰ τί	2:16 ὅτι	5:30 διὰ τί
9:16 ἐπιβάλλει	2:21 ἐπιράπτει	5:36 ἐπιβάλλει
12:10 ζηρά [χείρ]	3:1 ἐζηραμμένην [χείρ]	6:6 ζηρά [χείρ]
9:20 προσελθοῦσα	5:27 ἐλθοῦσα	8:44 προσελθοῦσα
10:14 κονιορτός	6:11 χοῦς	9:5 κονιορτός
14:20 τὸ περισσεῖον	6:43 πληρώματα	9:17 τὸ περισσεῖον
16:5 προσέχετε	8:15 βλέπετε	12:1 προσέχετε
16:21 τῇ τρίτῃ	8:31 μετὰ τρεῖς	9:22 τῇ τρίτῃ

ἡμέρα ἐγερθῆναι	ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι	ἡμέρα ἐγερθῆναι
16:24 ἐλθεῖν ὀπίσω	8:34 ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω	9:23 ἔρχεσθαι ὀπίσω
17:16 ἡδυνήθησαν	9:18 ἴσχυσαν	9:40 ἡδυνήθησαν
20:19 τῇ τρίτῃ	10:34 μετὰ τρεῖς	18:33 τῇ τρίτῃ
ἡμέρα	ἡμέρας	ἡμέρα
20:33 κύριε	10:51 ῥαββουνί	18:41 κύριε
21:2 ἀγάγετε	11:2 φέρετε	19:30 ἀγάγετε
22:19 ἐπιδείζατε	12:15 φέρετε	20:24 δείζατε
22:23 προσήλθον	12:18 ἔρχονται πρὸς	20:27 προσελθόντες
22:27 ὕστερον	12:22 ἔσχατον	20:32 ὕστερον
22:45 καλεῖ	12:37 λέγει	20:44 καλεῖ
24:34 ἕως ἂν	13:30 μέχρις οὗ	21:32 ἕως ἂν
26:16 εὐκαιρίαν	14:11 εὐκαιρως	22:6 εὐκαιρίαν
26:39 πλην - ἀλλά	14:36 ἀλλὰ - ἀλλά	22:42 πλην - ἀλλά
26:51 πατάζας	14:47 ἔπαισεν	22:50 ἐπάταξεν
27:31 ἀπήγαγον	15:20 ἐζάγουσιν	23:26 ἀπήγαγον
27:54 ἐκατόνταρχος	15:39 κεντυρίων	23:47 ἐκατόνταρχος
27:54 τὰ γενόμενα	15:39 ὅτι οὕτως	23:47 τὸ γενόμενον
	ἐξέπνευσεν	
27:58 προσελθὼν	15:43 εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς	23:52 προσελθὼν
27:59 ἐνετύλιξεν	15:46 ἐνείλησεν	23:53 ἐνετύλιξεν

In numbers of places Matthew and Luke agree in having the same form of a word or expression, while Mark has a different form of that word. The more significant of these variants are:

9:17 εἰ δὲ μή γε	2:22 εἰ δὲ μή	5:37 εἰ δὲ μή γε
13:9 ὁ ἔχων ὦτα	4:9 ὃς ἔχει ὦτα	8:8 ὁ ἔχων ὦτα
13:11 τὰ μυστήρια	4:11 τὸ μυστήριον	8:10 τὰ μυστήρια
10:1 ἔδωκεν	6:7 ἐδίδου	9:1 ἔδωκεν
17:22 μέλλει	9:31 παραδίδοται	9:44 μέλλει
παραδίδοσθαι		παραδίδοσθαι
19:20 ἐφύλαξα	10:20 ἐφυλαζάμην	18:21 ἐφύλαξα
19:27 ἠκολουθήσαμεν	10:28 ἠκολουθήκαμεν	18:28 ἠκολουθήσαμεν
21:2 λύσαντες ἀγάγετε	11:2 λύσατε καὶ φέρετε	19:30 λύσαντες ἀγάγετε
21:3 ἐρεῖτε	11:3 εἶπατε	19:31 ἐρεῖτε

21:8 ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ	11:8 εἰς τὴν ὁδόν	19:36 ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ
24:2 οὐ καταλυθήσεται	13:2 οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ	21:6 οὐ καταλυθήσεται
24:29 αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν	13:25 αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς	21:26 αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν
26:14 Ἰσκαριώτης	14:10 Ἰσκαριώθ	22:3 Ἰσκαριώτης

## 7.12 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE MADE

### THE TRANSPOSITIONAL MINOR AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK

On not a few occasions Matthew and Luke change the position of what lay in front of them in Mark (on the Markan Priority hypothesis), creating transpositional minor agreements. Some instances:

#### (a) Evil [and Adulterous] Generation (in the Saying Re the Sign of Jonah)

Jesus's teaching "Conditions of Discipleship" is given in Mt 16:24-28//Mk 8:34-9:1//Lk 9:23-27. Mark records Jesus saying (8:37f.), "For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Most of this is paralleled in either Matthew or Luke or both: Matthew parallels the first sentence; Luke the next section; then Mark is alone in saying "in this adulterous and sinful generation" (this is the only occurrence of the word *adulterous*, μοιχαλῖς, in Mark); Luke parallels the next section, and both Matthew and Luke the final part. Why should both Matthew and Luke wish to delete here, "this adulterous and sinful generation"? But that is not all.

In Mk 8:12 Mark quotes Jesus as saying, "Why does this generation seek a sign?", and this is paralleled in Matthew (16:4) as "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign" and in Luke (8:12) as "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign". The word *adulterous*, μοιχαλῖς, only occurs in Matthew in this verse and in the doublet in 12:39; it does not occur in Luke at all. Both Matthew and Luke here refer to the generation as an "evil" generation.

It seems then (from the Markan Priority perspective) that both Matthew and Luke chose for some reason to remove Mark's "in this adulterous and sinful generation" from 8:38 (these words do not occur in the parallels of Mt 16:26 and Lk 9:26) and **both** of them alter the wording—Matthew to "an evil and adulterous generation" and Luke to "an evil generation" and then they **both** conflate it with Mk 8:12, where Mark has "this generation" without "adulterous" or "sinful" or "evil"! Why should they each independently



decide upon this transposition of Mark's comment about the generation from where *he* has it, in 8:38, to where they each put it, into their parallel of Mk 8:12?

### (b) Other Transpositional Minor Agreements against Mark

The most significant other transpositional agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark is Mk 1:2//Mt 11:10//Lk 7:27. We can note it here, but because of its multifarious significance it is dealt with in detail separately in 7.17-a. In addition to these examples of transpositions to contexts removed from the original pericope in Mark, there are numerous instances where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in transposing words within the one pericope. Two examples:

<b>Mt 8:3</b>	<b>Mk 1:41</b>	<b>Lk 5:13</b>
ἥψατο αὐτοῦ	αὐτοῦ ἥψατο	ἥψατο αὐτοῦ
<b>Mt 9:6</b>	<b>Mk 2:10</b>	<b>Lk 5:24</b>
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας	ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας	ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας

It is not necessary to list the many other instances of this kind. No difference of meaning results; but it is worth noting that (from the Markan Priority perspective) Matthew and Luke have agreed in independently making such transpositions in Mark's text.

## CONCERNING THE MINOR AGREEMENTS

The foregoing is not a complete listing of these different types of minor agreement, but I have included here the ones that appealed to me personally as the most significant, selected from the listings given by Hawkins (1909: 210-211), Streeter (1924: 295-331), Argyle (1961: 19-22), Turner (1959: 223-234), Tuckett (1983: 61-75) and Stoldt (whose listing is the fullest—1980: 18-21; 263-280).

Clearly, some of these agreements can be explained from the perspective of Markan Priority (cf. Hawkins 1909: 209) as being “improvements” made by Matthew and Luke to Mark's wording (e.g., φέρετε in 11:2), or else as both Major Synoptists independently choosing to use the same rather obvious alternative to Mark's word (κύριε for Mark's ῥαββουνί in 10:51). Others, consisting of less obvious changes, could simply be due to coincidence: Mark's wording differs from that of Matthew and Luke upon many hundreds of occasions and if the Markan Priority hypothesis is the real explanation of what happened, then all these differences must be due to both Matthew and Luke choosing to

make frequent alterations to the Markan text that they had in front of them. Given such an editorial attitude upon the part of the two Major Synoptists, it would not really be surprising if in making all these editorial changes they should happen to select the same alternative word or expression on a dozen or two occasions.

But while this line of argument (which is commonly advocated by Markan Priorists: cf. Streeter 1924: 304) can validly account for many of the minor agreements, there are others of these agreements set out above that cannot realistically be attributed to such causes. When Mark has a perfectly acceptable word or expression (especially one that the Major Synoptists themselves use elsewhere in their own Gospels), then it is far from obvious why they should want to change it at all, and it represents a high level of coincidence that they should ***both change it for the same word*** when other forms of the word and indeed other words were available to them also. Numbers of the differences listed above between Mark on the one hand and Matthew and Luke on the other are of this kind.

Sanday (1911: 20-21) gives these additional explanations of the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark (his italics):

And then, allowance may also be made for the possibility ... that we have not yet got back to the true text of one or other of the Gospels, and that when we have done so, the double coincidence against St. Mark will be found to disappear. ....

But I believe that by far the greater number of the coincidences of Mt Lk against Mk are due to the use by Mt Lk—not of an *Ur-Marcus* or older form of the Gospel, but—of a *recension of the text of Mk different from that from which all the extant manuscripts of the Gospel are descended*.

Hawkins (1909: 212) accepts both of these explanations as accounting between them for any minor agreements not resulting from coincidence nor deliberate and obvious correcting of Mark's grammatical shortcomings. Streeter (1924: 180) describes Sanday's explanation of Matthew and Luke using a different text of Mark from that now extant as being "the most probable", and amplifies the idea thus:

It involves no *a priori* difficulties. There would have been several copies of Mark at Rome at a very early date; and it is quite likely that one copyist would have felt free to emend the style a little. From this copy those used by Matthew and Luke may have been made, while the unrevised copies, being in the majority, may yet have determined the text that has come down to us.

Streeter also takes up the other suggestion, that many agreements against Mark exist in Matthew and Luke because of errors in our texts of one or more of the Gospels, and

under the heading “Textual Corruption” (1924: 306-308) he removes many of the apparent agreements by choosing an alternative reading from the available textual variants. It should be noted that subsequent textual authorities—even those who themselves hold Markan Priority—have not followed Streeter in changing the text as he advocates; and Sanday’s idea of a different recension of the text of Mark is totally speculative and unsupported by any data of any kind.

There is another possible explanation for the minor agreements: viz, from the Markan Dependence perspective, that the traditions followed by Matthew and Luke agreed in the wordings set out above, and that Mark on these particular occasions chose not to follow them. Reasons for this are sometimes fairly easy to imagine. He has chosen a more colloquial expression, one more in line with his intended readership; or a more expressive or impactful word (σχιζομένους, for example); or simply a form of words more in accordance with his own usage; or (and it must be remembered that he had **three** sources, not two) he adopted at times the word or expression that he had heard Peter use (perhaps Ἰσκαριώθ, an Aramaic form, for Judas the traitor, rather than the Graecized Ἰσκαριώτης). Thus there are no difficulties in the way of accounting for these passages from the perspective of Markan Dependence, and of course Mark could have had other additional reasons of which we now know nothing.

If one considers these various agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, which on the Markan Priority hypothesis Matthew and Luke must have made in their use of Mark, and if one considers also the degree of improbability attaching to each one on its own and then the likelihood that **all of them** could be made in the course of two independent authors drawing upon Mark, it may be judged by a fairminded person that here, in what Matthew and Luke must each have done to Mark’s wording to produce this result, one indeed has another impossible thing to believe.

### 7.13 THAT Q EXPLAINS THE MAJOR AGREEMENTS OF MATTHEW AND LUKE AGAINST MARK

The Major Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark (in contradistinction from the Minor Agreements) are positive agreements that are more extensive in length. They are often referred to as the “Mark-Q overlaps”, because that is the explanation for them that is given by Streeter and others. In his essay on this subject in *Oxford Studies* in 1911, Streeter listed (167-178) eight such “overlap” passages:

- (1) John the Baptist’s Preaching (Mk 1:7-8) ;
- (2) The Temptation (Mk 1:12-13);

- (3) The Beelzebub Controversy (Mk 3:22-30);
- (4) Five Sayings (Mk 4:21-25);
- (5) The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk 4:30-32);
- (6) The Mission Charge (Mk 6:7-11);
- (7) On the Seriousness of Sin (Mk 9:42-50); and
- (8) Denunciation of the Pharisees (Mk 12:38-40).

He then suggested a further eight places in which he thought it possible that Mark and Q may have overlapped, but without discussing them in detail. In *The Four Gospels* in 1924 he reaffirms passages 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of the above list, adds the Baptism of Jesus to this list (188), and concludes (191),

There remain no other considerable passages where Mark and Q are parallel; for only portions of Mk 4:21-25 and Mk 9:42-50 have their equivalents in Q, and that in scattered contexts.

The passages that come to be placed into this category are ones that by their nature cannot be explained on the basis of Markan priority, for they contain significant amounts of material not in Mark in which Matthew and Luke agree. If they had no Markan parallel, they could be simply attributed to Q. In the circumstances, these pericopes are considered to have been in both Mark and Q. They do indeed merit careful examination.

In his book, Tuckett (1983) discusses a number of these passages in some detail, and therefore it is appropriate also to evaluate here what he says. The conclusion that he reaches for these pericopes is that they favour (in varying degrees) the Two-Document hypothesis over the Griesbach (Markan Posteriority) hypothesis. We shall examine the basis upon which Tuckett has reached this conclusion, and enquire to what extent it is justified by the evidence.

So I consider here Streeter's comments on these passages, and also the detailed discussion of them given by Tuckett.

#### **(a) John's Messianic Preaching (Mt 3:7-12//Mk 1:7-8//Lk 3:7-18)**

All three Synoptics have given much the same content (though with differences of detail and order) in their introduction of John the Baptist (Mt 3:1-6//Mk 1:1-6//Lk 3:1-6). The two Major Synoptics are almost identical in their account of John's preaching in Mt 3:7-10//Lk 3:7-9; Luke then has a unique section (3:10-15); and at this point all three Synoptics record John's announcement of the Coming One and say "he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit ..." Here Mark stops, while Matthew and Luke continue:

**Mt 3:11-12**

he will baptize you  
with the Holy Spirit  
and with fire; whose  
winnowing fork is in his hand,  
and he will clear his  
threshing floor, and will  
gather his wheat into the  
granary, but the chaff he will  
burn with unquenchable fire.

**Mk 1:8**

he will baptize you  
with the Holy Spirit.

**Lk 3:16-17**

he will baptize you  
with the Holy Spirit  
and with fire; whose  
winnowing fork is in his hand,  
to clear his  
threshing floor, and to  
gather the wheat into his  
granary, but the chaff he will  
burn with unquenchable fire.

Thus John's preaching about the Coming One is in all three Synoptics and yet the pericope cannot be explained on the basis of Markan priority: it is clear that Mark cannot here be the source for the other two because Matthew and Luke continue beyond Mark for a further 28 words in which they are virtually identical (Mt 3:12//Lk 3:17). Thus they must have another source for this material-in-common.

In 1911 Streeter discussed this passage (167-168), and commented thus:

Now Mk 1:7-8 occurs almost word for word in Mt 3:11=Lk 3:16, but it is clear that Matthew and Luke did not derive the verse from Mark but from the same source whence they derived the preceding and following verses. ...

For (a) Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in ἐγὼ μὲν βαπτίζω for ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα, in αὐτός ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει for αὐτός δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς, in placing the announcement of ὁ ἰσχυρότερος between instead of before these two contrasted baptisms, and in the addition of the words καὶ πυρί.

(b) What is still more significant, the subject of the relative οὗ in the verse which follows in Mt and Lk but does not occur at all in Mk (Mt 3:12=Lk 3:17) is contained in this verse which they have in common with Mark. Mt 3:12=Lk 3:17 has no meaning apart from the preceding verse, which therefore must have stood in Q and not have been derived by editors of Mt and Lk from Mark. Thus the verses Mt 3:11-12=Lk 3:16-17, or rather Mt 3:7-12=Lk 3:7-9, 16-17, form one connected whole, of which Mk 1:7-8 is a mutilated fragment.

Thus Streeter here attributed what is common to Matthew and Luke to the source Q, so that what is found in all three Synoptics is not here to be explained on the basis that Mark is the source for the others, but that there exists an overlap of Mark and Q. In 1911 Streeter affirmed that this overlap was due to Mark being himself familiar with the contents of Q, and his discussions of the Mark-Q overlaps (166-178) is part of his case for "St Mark's knowledge and use of Q" (166—his title for this essay). This was in 1911.

But by 1924 Streeter had changed his mind about Mark knowing Q. How then does he regard The Baptist's Messianic Preaching in *The Four Gospels*? The answer is that he adheres to his explanation that this is an overlap of Mark and Q (188) but apart from listing the passage in this category (and making the suggestion, 206, that Q contained a reference to baptism with fire that Matthew and Luke independently conflated with Mark's "with the Holy Spirit") Streeter does not deal with this pericope at all in the entire volume.

Tuckett does not deal with the story of the Baptist in Mark 1.

**(b) The Temptation (Mt 4:1-11//Mk 1:12-13//Lk 4:1-13)**

The Temptation passage is similar to The Baptist's Messianic Preaching in that it occurs in all three Synoptics, but Mark contains only part of what is found in Matthew and Luke. Thus Q is invoked as the source for the entire accounts in the Major Synoptics, and here again Mark is seen as overlapping with Q. Streeter's comment (1911: 168) is as follows:

Mark's brief allusion to the Temptation, 1:12-13, is less original than the longer account of Q, Mt 4:1-11, Lk 4:1-13. An original tradition is always detailed and picturesque, and would hardly record as does Mark a temptation to do nothing in particular. A later author might well allude to a story whose details were familiar, but which he could not entirely omit to notice in a life of the Master.

Streeter follows this comment with a very perceptive observation (1911: 168-169):

Thus at the outset we are struck by the fact that the first thirteen verses of Mark, so unlike his usual pictureque diffuseness, read like a summary of a longer and fuller account, which the author gives because it had become the recognized introduction to a Gospel writing, but which he hurries through in order to get on to his own special matter.

At this point Streeter is only a hair's breadth away from the recognition that (for the so-called "overlap" passages at least) Mark has derived his material from Matthew or Luke or both. Instead, he concludes that Mark derived them from Q, whence also Matthew and Luke obtained these stories.

In *The Four Gospels* Streeter continues to list The Temptation with his "overlap" stories (1924: 188; 211), but (as we have seen) abandons Q as a source for Mark. In view of his (1911) analysis of the nature of Mk 1:1-13, one would think that this *must* lead him logically to see Matthew and/or Luke as the source for Mark here. But it doesn't. So how does Streeter now account for, as he perceived in 1911, "the fact that the first thirteen verses of Mark, so unlike his usual pictureque diffuseness, read like a summary of a longer and fuller account, which the author gives because it had become the

recognized introduction to a Gospel writing”? He doesn't. He avoids facing the implications of his own assessment of Mark. In fact, in *The Four Gospels* he does not discuss the pericopes of Mark 1:1-13 in any detail.

Tuckett contends that the Markan Temptation narrative poses “enormous difficulties” for the Griesbach view because of the additional detail that it contains, brief as it is, and because of its difference of perspective. Thus he concludes that overall this indicates “that Mark does not offer here simply an excerpt from Matthew” (1983: 89-90).

He maintains (90),

Once again the overlap of two independent sources seems to be the most satisfactory answer to the literary problems here.

To Tuckett it is possible to reply: Once again the best explanation of the text is that Mark is working from (and here, significantly abbreviating) Matthew and Luke, and also drawing upon some details from his knowledge of source P. In fact, the best analysis of the situation remains that given by Streeter in 1911 (cited above), which is fully compatible with the Markan Dependence explanation set out in this study.

**(c) The Beelzebul Controversy** (Mt 12:22-45//Mk 3:20-30//Lk 11:14-32; cf. Lk 12:10)

The setting given for this pericope in Matthew and Luke is an exorcism (the details differ slightly). The people marvel. But then it is asserted (Matthew: by the Pharisees; Luke: by “some of them”) that Jesus casts out demons by Beelzebul the prince of demons. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, speaks to them.

In Mark the circumstances are different (3:19-21). There is no mention of the exorcism. Jesus goes home, and because of the crowds cannot find time even to eat. His family, hearing this, go out to seize him, saying “He is beside himself”. Scribes arrive from Jerusalem and say that Jesus is possessed by Beelzebul, and it is by the prince of demons that he casts out demons. Jesus calls them to him and speaks to them in parables. Immediately following Mark's record of Jesus's words Mark adds, “For they had said, ‘He has an unclean spirit’”, and then describes the arrival of his mother and brothers and their request to speak to him—presumably a follow-on from the earlier reference to their setting out to seize him.

There are numbers of places here where Matthew and Luke have positive and negative agreements against Mark, and overall the two Major Synoptics contain in this context a considerable amount of material lacking in Mark. The pericope is in all three Synoptics but the data is such that it cannot be explained on the basis that Matthew and Luke used Mark as their source. This pericope also, therefore, is explained as a Mark-Q overlap (Streeter 1911: 170f.; 1924: 189).

Tuckett commences his examination of the Beelzebul Controversy with the comment (1983: 85),

But how must Mark have treated his sources if these sources were Matthew and Luke? Initially, Mark must have ignored the context, i.e. the occasion of an exorcism, which is in both his sources. Yet this would be despite the fact that (1) the charge of being in league with, or possessed by, Beelzebub now comes very abruptly in Mark, and (2) Mark is usually very ready to record exorcisms: indeed this is the only non-Markan exorcism in the whole Gospel tradition.

Here Tuckett seeks to turn a difficulty into an argument: **both** Matthew and Luke have the same exorcism context for this incident. The strength of Tuckett's comment is the unlikelihood that Mark would ignore an exorcism to which the Major Synoptics give concurrent testimony. But the very fact to which Tuckett draws attention can explain this situation. Mark provides his readers with enough evidence for Jesus performing exorcisms **not** to need a specific example immediately before recording the charge of being in league with Beelzebul. Moreover, to assert that "Mark must have ignored the context" is to write in a non-objective way about the situation. What in fact we find is not an **absence** of context in Mark but a **difference** of context, a short pericope found only in Mark: the circumstance that led to Jesus's family setting out to seize him because "they were saying, 'He is beside himself'".

Thus what is happening here (and Tuckett's comments do **not** make this clear) is that Mark records **two** separate accusations being made against Jesus, one by his family ("he is mad") and the other by "the scribes who came down from Jerusalem" ("he has Beelzebul"). In a sandwich-type pericope arrangement, Mark deals first with the second of these (3:22-30) and then follows this with the arrival of Jesus's family and what happened next (3:31-35). Thus Mark indicates that the scribes from Jerusalem arrived **while his family were travelling to him** and then **they** arrived at the end of his comments on the Beelzebul issues. In this latter detail Mark concurs with Matthew, who records (Mt 12:46) that it was "while he was still speaking to the people" that his mother and brothers arrived. Thus on the Markan Dependence perspective, Mark did not see the need to record here a brief exorcism reference (that is all it is in Matthew and Luke—it hardly constitutes an **account** of the healing). Instead, Mark gives what Matthew and Luke do not: the circumstances that led to Jesus's family arriving to see him at this time.

[Mark uses this same type of arrangement elsewhere. In Mk 6:7-13 the Twelve are commissioned and sent out; in 6:14-29 he tells of Herod hearing about Jesus, and then explains the circumstances of the Baptist's death; in 6:30 the Twelve return after their



mission. The components of this “sandwich” are found in Matthew and Luke; in this form it is unique to Mark. A similar “sandwich” is the story of Jairus’s daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage (Mk 5:21-43), which *is* paralleled in Matthew and Luke in this form.]

In discussing this Beelzebul pericope Tuckett several times makes a point that, on the Griesbach perspective, “Here Mark avoids what is common to his sources” (1983: 86; also 85, 86 again). He cites Streeter (1924: 89): “The verbal resemblances between the two accounts [Mark and Luke] are no more than would be inevitable if they represent two quite independent traditions of the same original incident.” This Tuckett agrees with, and concludes (89), “Thus the best solution is that Matthew is not a source of the other two accounts, but a later conflation of them. There is thus good reason to believe that there are here, in Mark and Luke, two quite independent versions of the pericope, with Matthew as a later conflation of the two forms.”

But there is no basis in the text for preferring this explanation to that of Markan Dependence: that here indeed we do have two independent versions of the pericope, but that these independent versions are **Matthew and Luke** (note that Luke has sections corresponding to Matthew in the order Lk 11:14-23; 12:10; 6:43-45; 11:16, 29-32; 11:24-26). Then Mark drew upon Matthew and Luke (primarily upon Matthew, which he was following here for his order, because the main Lukan parallels are in Luke’s Central Travel and Teaching Section which Mark has preferred to ignore). Again, Mark combined this material with what he knew from P.

#### **(d) The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32//Mk 4:30-32//Lk13:18-19)**

Streeter’s 1911 comment on this pericope is (173),

There are twelve small verbal coincidences between Matthew and Luke against Mark, which show that their version is not derived from him but from Q. What is more important is the fact that in both Matthew and Luke the Parable of the Leaven is appended. ... Mark’s single parable here is therefore a mutilation of an original pair in Q.

His 1924 comment (190), after his change of heart about Mark knowing Q, accepts a suggestion that

in Mark the Mustard Seed does not stand alone; it is paired with the parable of the Seed growing secretly, which is quite as appropriate a twin as the Leaven to illustrate the idea of the gradual growth of the Kingdom. It would seem, then, that the twin-parable argument really cuts the other way, and suggests that in Mark and Q we have two pairs which descended along quite independent lines of tradition.

But Sanders (1973; “The Overlaps of Mark and Q and the Synoptic Problem”)

considers that Streeter's earlier comment continues to be very significant. After quoting it, he says (456):

Now, one of the important proofs of the priority of Mark is that Matthew and Luke do not place the same Q material in the same place in the Marcan Outline. But the Parable of the Leaven is Q material. In both Matthew and Luke, it follows immediately after the parable of the mustard seed. Thus the parable of the mustard seed *must* have stood in Q as well as in Mark. The only alternative is the establishment of an agreement between Matthew and Luke which cannot be explained away.

This is the pericope with which Tuckett commences his consideration of the Mark-Q Overlap Passages (1983: 78-85), and he comments (79), "Given that Mark has chosen to include this parable, the detailed wording of his version also presents problems for the Griesbach hypothesis." He discusses the differences between the three Synoptic versions of the parable, assessing what changes must have been made by Mark if he were writing last, and says (80-81),

It is possible that some of these last changes are due to Mark's efforts to make the picture more true to life: a mustard plant is not a tree, and birds might shelter under the shadow of the leafy branches but not in the branches themselves. But this will not account for all the changes. For the overall picture, if Mark is using Matthew and Luke as his sources, is that Mark has carefully and systematically avoided everything that is common to Matthew and Luke: where they agree, Mark disagrees, and where Matthew disagrees with Luke, Mark follows Matthew closely. Thus Mark appears to have taken an intense dislike to Luke (apart from the form, but not the wording, of the opening double question), and to have gone through Matthew's text, changing it where Matthew and Luke agree, and leaving it alone where they differ. Moreover, the result is, in places, grammatical chaos. This seems such an incoherent redactional procedure, and so inconsistent with Farmer's general thesis about Mark's redactional method ('not to deviate from the text to which his predecessors bore concurrent testimony') that it must place a serious question-mark against his overall theory.

There is in fact a strong case to be made for the traditional solution to the problem of literary relationships here. For there is evidence favouring the existence of two independent versions of the parable, namely the Marcan one and the Lukan one. The difficulties which the Griesbach hypothesis encounters are due mainly to the fact that Mark and Luke have virtually nothing in common beyond the barest essentials necessary for telling a parable comparing the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed. ... Apart then from the form (but not the actual wording) of the introduction, there is no point of contact at all between Mark and Luke except what is necessary to tell the story at all. ...

The result of this analysis is that there is strong evidence for the “existence of obviously different versions” (to use Streeter’s terms). There is a non-Markan source here which probably extended to the parable of the leaven too (in view of the very similar introductions). Luke’s source cannot be Matthew, as the Griesbach hypothesis would maintain, since Luke would have then changed Matthew’s wording in a wholly uncharacteristic way. Rather, Luke’s source must be a common source prior to both Matthew and Luke. If one calls this source “Q” (without necessarily postulating what else might belong to it), one must conclude that there is here a “Mark-Q overlap”. Further, the Q form of the parable can be seen in Luke, since Luke appears to have copied his source with very little change.

These comments can be made concerning Tuckett’s analysis:

1. He has adduced very little evidence here for holding that Matthew could have altered Luke but not vice versa. This evidence (83f.) consists of: (a) that “Matthew’s version has links with both the other accounts. ... Since these verbal agreements are so great, some sort of direct literary relationship between Matthew and each of the others is demanded”; (b) that “in some instances, Luke’s wording is not characteristic of Luke himself, whilst Matthew’s different version is characteristic of Matthew”; and (c) that “Certainly it is unlikely that Luke would have wanted to change an original ἄγρος (9 times in Luke, 1 in Acts); on the other hand, a change by Matthew to ἄγρος if κῆπος had stood in his source is quite intelligible given Matthew’s liking for this word (he uses it 16 times, and cf. the use of it in verses 24, 27, 44 of this chapter). Thus again there is evidence of the existence of a pre-Lukan source with Matthew rewriting it in his own idiom.”

On the Markan Dependence hypothesis there is of course another explanation available for (a), as shown in this study, viz, that some early documents produced by the apostle Matthew containing a pericope or pericopes were incorporated into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Tuckett’s evidence for (b) consists of a deduction drawn from Luke’s use of “the ὁμοιο-root” and ἔβαλεν, a deduction that appears to have as an unstated premiss the proposition that if a writer does not use an expression often enough for it to be classified as “characteristic” of him, he obviously would not think of using it at all, while both this and also Tuckett’s third instance are once again perfectly explicable upon the Markan Dependence view.

Tuckett’s proposal is a slim basis upon which to conclude that “Luke appears to have copied his source with very little change” while “Matthew has rewritten the source in his own idiom”. The belief that Luke uses his sources without making any substantial changes in them may (or may not) be valid from the perspective of the Markan Priority explanation of the Synoptic data; it has to be established separately as applicable from

the Markan Dependence perspective, and without having been thus established it cannot be evoked (as Tuckett has done) as a factor in discussions of how redaction would have been carried out from that latter perspective.

In fact, as has been shown in Chapter Four, re words in the Synoptics, it would appear on the basis of available evidence that, even from the perspective of Markan Priority, Luke cannot accurately be said “to have copied his source with very little change” but has substantially rewritten his sources—he has omitted or changed rather more than three out of every four words that he had in front of him in Mark.

Or perhaps rather one can say that he has used his sources as **sources**—that is, he has drawn upon them for the information he needed for his own account, and has utilized this information according to his own purposes in writing. Certainly ***we are not justified by the evidence*** in holding that his sources are incorporated in his text virtually unchanged. This comment that I have just made (re Luke’s willingness to reword his sources), on the basis of Morgenthaler’s statistics, will remain true both under the Markan Priority and the Markan Dependence perspectives.

2. More importantly, Tuckett has not adduced any basis for preferring the Markan Priority explanation of the data. In fact, he has offered us a choice of **two** alternative explanations.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed ends thus:

<b>Mt 13:32</b>	<b>Mk 4:32</b>	<b>Lk 13:19b</b>
but when it	yet when it	and it
has grown it	is sown it grows up	grew
is	and becomes	
the greatest of	the greatest of all	
shrubs	shrubs	
and becomes a tree		and became a tree
	and puts forth large	
	branches	
so that the birds	so that the birds	and the birds
of the air come and	of the air can	of the air
make nests	make nests	made nests
in its branches.	in its shade.	in its branches.

If Mark is the source for Matthew and Luke, then both the Major Synoptists, with Mark in front of them, decided to omit Mark’s reference to putting forth large branches,

referring instead to it becoming a tree, and they also both change his final word “shade” into “branches”. Streeter says (1924: 209) that the Parable of “the Mustard Seed ... must be assigned to Q”, and explains (246ff.) the form of the Synoptic data on the basis of Matthew's conflation of Mark and Q (found in Luke). That is, he considers that Mark and Q overlap for this parable, that Luke has followed Q, and that Matthew has conflated both. This is a tacit acknowledgement of the difficulty of seeing Mark's wording as the source of the other two Synoptics.

We can note Tuckett's explanation (1983: 80) of the agreement here of Matthew and Luke against Mark:

As for the end-result of the seed's growth, Matthew and Luke agree that it ‘becomes a tree’, γίνομαι and δένδρον being common to both. Mark uses neither of these common words and talks instead of ‘making great branches’. Matthew alone has a ὥστε construction which Mark accepts. Finally Matthew and Luke agree verbatim in having an allusion to Dan 4:21 (Theod.) with the birds nesting in the branches; Mark avoids this and has the birds resting in the shade, probably alluding to Ezek 17:23.

It is possible that some of these last changes are due to Mark's efforts to make the picture more true to life: a mustard plant is not a tree, and birds might shelter under the shadow of the leafy branches but not in the branches themselves. But this will not account for all the changes.

[Tuckett then outlines difficulties that he sees overall for the Griesbach explanation.]

To reflect further upon the implications of the Tuckett explanation. Mark says that the mustard seed has become the greatest of all shrubs, putting forth large branches under which the birds can nest: this is (Tuckett suggests, reflecting a comment by Wenham, *Synoptic Problem Revisited*, 1972: 35) a reference to Ezek 17:23. In fact, Ezek 17:22-23 speaks of God planting a young twig from a **cedar tree**, which “shall become a mighty cedar, and every bird (ὄρνις) shall rest (ἀναπαύσεται) beneath it, and every bird (πετεινόν) shall rest (again, ἀναπαύσεται) in its shade”.

Tuckett's view suggests that, with the text of Mark in front of them, both Matthew and Luke decided to alter it, and did so by making it an allusion to Dan 4:21, Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, “The tree ... whose leaves were fair and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all; under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the air dwelt ...” Not however, an allusion to the Septuagint version but, Tuckett notes, to the translation of the Old Testament by Theodotion. This translation was made in the second century (c. AD 160). It has been noted, concerning the New Testament period, that (494, DNTT Vol 3) “the textual

tradition was at that time still fluid. Thus NT citations sometimes show similarities to forms of the text that were later used by Theodotion, Aquila and Lucian as the basis of their translations.” Certainly Matthew and Luke did not use Theodotion’s translation of the Old Testament—that was not published until perhaps a century later. So (if Tuckett’s suggestion is right) both Matthew and Luke must have had access to the same non-Septuagintal form of translation of Dan 4:21 (which later became part of Theodotion’s version), and must both have chosen to insert this wording at this same point in Mark’s account, in place of his (Mark’s) allusion to Ezekiel. Tuckett in the end (85) prefers Streeter’s explanation: “one must conclude that there is here a ‘Mark-Q overlap’”.

The Markan Dependence explanation is that here (as indeed Streeter and Tuckett accept) Matthew and Luke are not following Mark but they have separate and independent forms of the story. Then Mark has drawn upon each of these (upon Matthew here to some extent, and Luke hardly at all) and has also been influenced by the form of this story as he knew it from the preaching of Peter. Mark’s wording “in their shade” may possibly have been influenced by Ezek 17, as Wenham and Tuckett suggest; or, his version of the parable may have been more influenced by the realities of the scene being described—birds could certainly find shade and shelter from a mustard shrub, but could hardly nest in its branches; or his wording may simply record the way in which Peter used to tell the story, which in its turn may represent what Jesus said on one occasion while the Matthew-Luke tradition could record the wording of another telling of the parable by Jesus on a different occasion (see §7.23, below).

In view of the independence here of the versions of Matthew-Luke and Mark—this is common ground, since Markan Priorists do not view Mark here as the source for Matthew-Luke—it must be accepted that Mark has **some** source other than the Matthew-Luke tradition, though Mark could have conflated this source with Matthew-Luke. Granted this, then **that** source will account for Mark having “shade” rather than “branches”.

We find in fact that the “problems” for the Griesbach hypothesis that Tuckett considers are posed by this pericope are non-existent if we see Matthew and Luke as being similar but independent accounts, and Mark as here conflating Matthew with his source P. (Luke’s version of the parable occurs in his Central Travel and Teaching Section, which Mark has preferred to ignore.) Markan Dependence thus offers a totally reasonable and coherent explanation for the data. Markan Priority however is forced to say, “Here is a pericope in the Triple Tradition, but Mark is not here the source for the others—Q is, and then Matthew conflates Mark and Q.”

**(e) The Five Sayings (Mk 4:21-25)**

This material is mentioned by Streeter but not covered in detail. Tuckett looks at it. He notes that these sayings occur in the same context in Mark and Luke, but differ somewhat in their wording, and considers this to be a difficulty for the Griesbach view, because (1983: 91)

Mark must have switched at this point to following Luke as his main source; but then, in the first two logia, he must have omitted very carefully all those small details which bring Luke's version closer to Matthew. ... Far from reproducing the "concurrent testimony" of his sources, Mark seems carefully to have avoided doing so at this point. Further, Mark must have made other small changes in Luke which make his version even more unlike Matthew's.

He concludes (92) in regard to this passage, as he has for the other passages he has been discussing,

Thus, in this passage, the analysis above indicates that Mark probably has independent versions of the sayings, and one is justified in talking of an overlap of sources.

It needs to be noted here that in Matthew these five sayings are scattered in six other different contexts (one of them occurs twice with slightly different wording) and that in general the wording of Mark is closer to that of Luke than to these sayings in Matthew (the exception is part of Mk 4:24).

On the Markan Dependence viewpoint, these sayings are given at this point (viz, after the explanation of the Parable of the Sower) **because that is where Luke has them**—that is, their position in Luke determines their position in Mark; and their **wording** reflects Mark's familiarity with them as teachings of Jesus that were doubtless quoted and used often in the church (by Peter and/or by others). Mark's familiarity with the Jesus-teaching current in the Christian church cannot be left out of account in discussing his wording of sayings such as these (see below, following).

**(f) The Mission Charge To The Twelve (Mt 9:35-10:42//Mk 6:6b-13//Lk 9:1-6)**

Mark's account parallels Mt 9:35-10:14//Lk 9:1-6 (except for Mt 9:35b-38, 10:5-8, 10:12-13, which is not in Mark; and Mt 10:2-4 gives the names of the Twelve, which Mark has at 3:13-19). Mark has a parallel for Mt 10:17-25 in another context (the Eschatological Discourse of Mk 13:9-13). Mark has no parallel for Mt 10:15-16; 26-42. Thus Mark parallels only a few verses out of a much longer Mission Charge discourse in Matthew. Some of Matthew's Charge to the Twelve is paralleled in Luke's Charge to the Seventy (Lk 10:1-12).

For this material, Streeter (1911: 175) considered that

Q therefore contained substantially all that Mark gives in much the same language, and in addition six sayings which are intimately connected with them. Again, therefore, Mark's version is a mutilated excerpt of Q.

In 1924 Streeter's explanation is (190):

Mt 10:5-16 is clearly a conflation of the Q discourse, given by Luke as the Charge to the Seventy (Lk 10:1-12), with Mark's discourse on the Mission of the Twelve (Mk 6:7-11). ... Assuming, then, that Lk 10:1-12 (not being conflated with Mark) represents Q, the differences between Mark and Luke are so great and the resemblances so few that they favour the view that Mark's version is independent, not derived from Q. If Mark did use Q, he must have trusted entirely to memory and never once referred to the written source.

Markan Dependence says: In this entire section Mark is following the order of Luke, and thus has listed the Twelve apostles earlier. For the Charge, Mark follows Luke's much shorter version: though with a number of minor differences that reflect his practice of adding in details and rewording his material, doubtless influenced by the preaching of Peter.

### **(g) The Significance of the Major Agreements**

From these pericopes (and, to a lesser extent, from the other "overlap" passages mentioned by Streeter) we are able to see that there are a number of places where all three Synoptics are recounting the same story and where Matthew and Luke contain substantial positive agreements against Mark. If Mark is here the source of Matthew and Luke, we are at such points required to believe that Matthew and Luke simultaneously and independently decided to depart from Mark in an identically-worded change or series of changes: or else that at this point they were both following some other source. Now the former of these alternatives is clearly an unbelievable explanation for these particular pericopes. But the second is in fact just as fatal to the Markan Priority position.

In such a case, Mark is not the source for Matthew and Luke for material in common to all three Synoptics. But whatever argument leads us to postulate in these cases an alternative source (that is, other than Mark) could also justify holding this non-Markan source to be the origin of other Synoptic material that also happens to occur in Mark.

That is, we are obliged to call upon a source other than Mark to account for the observable data (as described above). Having invoked this source, there is then no basis (other than subjective opinion) upon which we can thereafter exclude the possibility that this other source, Q, could have been known to and used by Mark, and thus could have itself been the source for the rest of the common material in the



Synoptics. In his article “The Major Agreements of Matthew and Luke Against Mark” (1966: 274), Simpson makes the pungent point,

The more strongly we plead the case for Q as a means of explaining all those resemblances between Matthew and Luke which are not attributable to their common use of Mark, the more we undermine the theory of the priority of Mark.

Once we open the door for the use of Q to explain Matthew-Luke agreements against Mark, it is very hard to keep it open only for the Major Agreements. Streeter himself perceived clearly the danger of using Q indiscriminately for resolving agreement problems; he wrote warningly (1924: 305),

Some scholars, however, have laid far too much stress on the bearing of the overlapping of Mark and Q on the problem of the minor agreements. We have no right to call in the hypothesis of the influence of Q for this ulterior purpose except in places where the existence of obviously different versions, or of doublets very distinctly defined, provides us with objective evidence of the presence of Q.

Sanders (1973: 454-455) quotes Streeter's warning, and then comments,

Streeter was quite right to make this stipulation. Those who wish to explain all or most of the agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark by attributing them to the influence of Q are simply arguing for an Ur-Gospel which very closely resembles Matthew. ... If Q were made responsible for all these agreements, in addition to the traditional Q material, it would be very much like Matthew. To expand the theory of Mark-Q overlaps much beyond Streeter's bounds is simply to deny the two-source hypothesis.

But once the door is opened at all in this way, Streeter cannot impose limits upon how wide it can be opened by means of his exercise of some omnipotent fiat, “Thus far and no further!” Or, to use his actual words, “We have no right to call in the hypothesis of the influence of Q for this ulterior purpose except ...” And then he states the limits that appear to him reasonable. But, despite his invocation of “objective evidence”, how he defines those limits and where he places them is completely arbitrary, and subjective.

The fact is, if Q can be seen as containing some material that is also found in Mark (i.e., the “overlaps”), then there is no basis upon which it can be asserted with any confidence or upon any objective evidence or argument that *any* particular pericope in Mark could not also have been found in Q. The test for this assertion is simple: name *one Markan pericope* that *could not have also occurred in Q*, and set out the data and/or the argument that shows that its occurrence in Q is impossible.

So then, let me summarize. The whole of Streeter's argument throughout his entire discussion of the Mark-Q overlaps in his 1911 essay is completely consistent with Mark

having derived his material from Matthew and/or Luke rather than from Q. It is therefore a very pertinent question for us to ask, rather, Why should we here call upon the hypothetical Q as a source for Mark when everything in Mark in these pericopes can be explained very well on the basis of known and extant Gospels?

Moreover, if the “sayings source” Q is to be expanded as needed, in order to include all these larger sections of material in which Matthew and Luke have positive agreements against Mark, on what basis (other than pure arbitrariness) can it be decided that Q cannot have included other pericopes in which there are similarly striking and significant (though shorter) positive agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark?

Streeter shrank from that, for it would result in Q assuming the dimensions of an Ur-Gospel similar in form and contents to Matthew. Instead, he sought for other ways of handling the “Minor Agreements”. And he saw the fundamental danger of his contention that Q was a source for Mark—for if so, then all the material that according to Markan Priority was derived from Mark by Matthew and Luke could have been derived by Mark from Q; and it was a very small step beyond this to dispensing with Markan Priority altogether and accepting that Matthew and Luke drew their material directly from Q: the Ur-Gospel hypothesis (see §10.4.4).

Thus by 1924 Streeter had withdrawn from his position that Mark knew Q. He still held to the Mark-Q overlap explanation of the Major Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark, but in abandoning the thesis that Mark knew Q he had also abandoned the strongest part of his case (in his 1911 essay) for the overlaps. In 1911, he built up a substantial edifice upon which to hang his “overlaps” case. In 1924, he removed the edifice, leaving his “overlaps” case hanging in the air—like the smile that remained after the Cheshire cat had gone.

What does Tuckett say in weighing up these issues?

I have examined the only four of the so-called Mark-Q overlaps that Tuckett discusses—the Parable of the Mustard Seed, the Beelzebul Controversy, the Temptation, and The Five Sayings. His conclusion is (1983: 92-93),

In all the passages considered in this chapter, the synoptic interrelationships are very difficult to explain by the Griesbach hypothesis in the form advocated by Farmer. Mark's redactional motives cannot be what Farmer claims them to be. Either Mark followed a totally different plan of dealing with his sources in these passages from elsewhere in the tradition, or else the underlying theory of synoptic interrelationships is wrong. In all these passages there is evidence of the existence of two distinct versions, a Markan and a non-Markan, and these two are independent of each other. The best explanation of these

passages remains the traditional solution of an overlap of Mark with an independent source lying behind Matthew and Luke. Since, therefore, the Two-Document hypothesis gives a more coherent, and self-consistent, picture of the overall redaction involved than does the Griesbach hypothesis, it must be preferred unless advocates of the Griesbach hypothesis can suggest a more convincing rationale behind Mark's alleged redactional procedure.

Thus Tuckett concludes that the overlap of Mark and Q provides the most coherent explanation of the Synoptic texts. But we must notice carefully what he says. The key clause in Tuckett's conclusion is "the Griesbach hypothesis in the form advocated by Farmer" (1983: 92). This, it will be recollected, was that Luke's account was derived from Matthew, and that the differences between Matthew and Luke were redactional. But we have seen that when Tuckett argues against Luke's use of Matthew he is arguing against **Farmer** but not against **Griesbach**, who never advocated this; and there are fundamental and compelling reasons (set out in Chapter Eight) for recognizing the basic independence of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Moreover, it is important to notice what Tuckett is comparing in coming to his conclusion that a Mark-Q overlap is the better explanation. For example in the temptation story he says (89), "There are here enormous difficulties for the Griesbach hypothesis, since Mark's account has virtually nothing in common with that of Matthew and Luke, and indeed presents major differences." Thus Tuckett is going outside the three Synoptics to another source (Q) to explain the pericopes, **but he does not allow Griesbach to do so**, and he then concludes that the Two-Document account, i.e. Markan Priority **plus Q**, provides a more coherent explanation than the Griesbach hypothesis (by which Tuckett means that Mark drew from Matthew and Luke **without reference** to any other source). Yet the nature of Mark is such as to require another source (or sources), and this **is plainly stated by Griesbach as part of his Synoptic theory**. That is, Griesbach recognizes that Mark has drawn upon his own extensive knowledge of the Jesus traditions in the writing of his Gospel—this would include what he knew from Peter as a source, but need not be limited to Peter alone. Griesbach's actual comments are:

Mark, I insist, was able to learn many things that could not have been known to everyone, because his mother lived in a house in Jerusalem in which the apostles and other Christians used to hold their meetings (Acts 12:12); moreover he had at one time been the servant and companion of both Peter and Paul and had without doubt learnt from them and their intimate friends many deeds and sayings of the Lord well worth relating; and lastly it was Mark too who enriched the narratives of Matthew and Luke with so many

special details ..., so that it was clear to all that he knew the story of Christ very well and could have told us a great many more anecdotes about him, if he had wished.” (1978: 110-111)

This one thing can perhaps be conceded, namely that Mark received from Peter the circumstantial details, with which he enriched throughout the narratives of Luke and Matthew; although even this is not quite certain, for they could also be derived from another source.” (1978: 134.)

This makes it quite clear that Griesbach considered that Markan detail came either from Peter and/or from some other source within Mark’s general knowledge of the circumstances of Jesus’s life and ministry.

Thus Tuckett’s comments in this instance hardly constitute fair dealing with a viewpoint from which he differs. He does **not** answer the Griesbach hypothesis, but gives us instead a bowdlerized version of it. **He** (Tuckett) makes use of an additional source in his explanation, and declines to notice that **so does Griesbach** in **his** Synoptic explanation. And this third source for Mark is also an important element in the Markan Dependence explanation.

If then we acknowledge—as upon the evidence we must—that Mark had another source or sources upon which he drew, then we can see that in the cases where he was not following Matthew and Luke he was recording the way this story was told by his other source(s).

Tuckett records the line of argument that leads him (and others) to the conclusion that there was another source, Q, that paralleled Mark to some extent and upon which Matthew and Luke were drawing for some of their material, at times conflating it with Mark. Upon the Markan Dependence perspective, **exactly this same evidence** can by **the same line of argument** justify that Mark’s private source P “overlapped” with Matthew and Luke and that he drew upon it as he chose and conflated his sources when he chose. The significant difference between the two alternative explanations is that Q is a totally speculative source, for which there is no objective evidence of any kind whatsoever, whereas Mark’s own involvement in the life of the church, and his association with Peter and others, is attested by the New Testament and by church history, and is **not a speculation at all**.

When the alternative hypotheses are put beside each other in their full form—Mark plus Q as the sources of Matthew and Luke, or Matthew, Luke and P as the sources for Mark—then it will be seen that (a) Markan Dependence offers the more cohesive explanation of the data, and (b) Markan Dependence explains everything in terms of

**known** people and their **attested** activities, and does not need to call upon hypothetical documents, while acknowledging that any number of such documents **can** have existed in the period prior to the production of the canonical Gospels by their respective authors, and **may** have been consulted by any of these authors.

As we have noted throughout this chapter, the explanations provided by Markan Priority are really impossible to believe; whereas on the Markan Dependence explanation, Mark's redactional procedure can be seen to be very lucid and rational. Therefore, upon Tuckett's own criterion, the Markan Dependence explanation is to be preferred.

I shall make some further comments in Chapter Eleven about Tuckett's rebuttal of the Farmer form of the Griesback hypothesis. However, here we may note that it is impossible to account for the pericopes in question solely on the basis of Markan Priority (because their contents go far beyond what could have been derived from Mark); and it is impossible to explain them as due to Mark-Q overlaps and then to set limits (as Streeter wished to do) upon which Markan pericopes can be permitted to be attributed also to Q. That is, it is impossible to affirm that some pericopes were found in both Mark and Q without simultaneously allowing the Ur-Gospel approach to supersede the Two-Source hypothesis. And for all these pericopes the Markan Dependence explanation remains as a clear and simple alternative which fully accounts for the Synoptic data.

#### 7.14 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE WOULD FILL OUT MARK'S SETTINGS

There are occasions when Matthew and Luke give the setting for one pericope, and after relating that story proceed to tell another story immediately following it that happened at the same time, whereas Mark has the **setting** from the first pericope but, omitting the balance of that story, proceeds immediately to the second story. The most noteworthy of these occasions are:

##### (a) **The Sermon on the Plain** (Mk 3:7-12//Lk 6:17-19; 20-49)

Luke's account here of the great multitude of people, of whom Jesus healed those who were ill (6:17-19), provides his setting for the Sermon on the Plain that follows (6:20-49). Mark describes the gathering of the crowds that Luke tells us that Jesus addressed, but gives nothing at all of the Sermon itself. Instead, Mark proceeds to give the Choosing of the Twelve (Mk 3:13-19), which Luke gives in the **same context** but **before** the description of the gathering crowds and the healings (Lk 6:12-16).

That is, Mark contains the **setting** of the Sermon on the Plain, but none of the Sermon itself.

**(b) Sayings to Would-be Disciples** (Mt 8:18-23//Mk 4:35-36//Lk 9:57-62; 8:22)

In Mt 8:18-23 Jesus decides to leave the “great crowds around him”, and gives orders to go across to the other side in the boat. At that point a scribe comes up to him and there ensues a discussion with him and with another would-be disciple about following Jesus. Then Jesus and his disciples embark in the boat, and there follows the pericope of Stilling the Storm. Mark contains the **setting** of the discussion Sayings to Would-be Disciples—Jesus’s instruction to go across to the other side—but in Mark’s account the sayings themselves are not recorded, and Jesus immediately leaves the crowd and embarks in the boat.

That is to say, Mark contains the **setting** of the Sayings to Would-be Disciples but not the sayings themselves, and he continues immediately with the following pericope Stilling the Storm, so that this setting has in his account become the introduction to the Storm pericope, explaining what they were doing on the Sea at the time. (This pericope is discussed in Chapter Eleven, §11.3.)

**(c) Coming to Capernaum**

Mark contains the setting of The Coin in the Fish’s Mouth, but not the story itself—the setting is prefixed to the pericope of the Lesson About the Child, which in Matthew follows The Coin in the Fish’s Mouth and has the same setting.

<b>Mt 17:22-23</b>	<b>Mk 9:30-32</b>	<b>Lk 9:43b-45</b>
[Second Passion Prediction]	[Second Passion Prediction]	[Second Passion Prediction]
<b>Mt 17:24-27E</b>	<b>Mk 9:33a</b>	<b>Lk -</b>
And when	And	
they came to Capernaum,	they came to Capernaum,	-
[The Coin in the Fish’s Mouth]		
and when he came into the house	and when he was in the house ...	
<b>Mt 18:1-5</b>	<b>Mk 9:33b-37</b>	<b>Lk 9:46-48</b>
[The Lesson about the Child]	[The Lesson about the Child]	[The Lesson about the Child]

Matthew’s narrative The Coin in the Fish’s Mouth occurs only in his Gospel, where it is preceded by The Second Passion Prediction (parallel in all three Synoptics), and is followed immediately by The Lesson About the Child (parallel in all three Synoptics). Matthew’s story about the coin for the Temple tax states that this incident occurred in Capernaum, with the discussion taking place “when he came into the house” (17:25); and in The Lesson About the Child that follows Matthew commences, “At that time ...”, thus placing the latter pericope also in Capernaum. Luke does not mention Capernaum

nor indeed give any specific setting for this account (9:46-48). But Mark places The Lesson About the Child in the house in Capernaum, thus giving his account the same setting that it has in Matthew—but in Matthew, that setting is stated *in a pericope that Mark does not contain*.

### 7.15 THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE WOULD EXPAND MARK'S TEACHING

There are several occasions where Mark's Gospel contains a short section of the longer material that is found in the parallel pericopes in Matthew or Luke or both. The most significant of these occasions are the Major Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark, the so-called Mark-Q overlaps, which have been discussed, above, in §7.13. There are also a number of other noteworthy passages of this kind.

There are, furthermore, several occasions where Mark's Gospel lacks a record of teaching which occurs at that point in the parallel pericopes in Matthew or Luke or both, and where Mark makes some reference to the fact that he records only part of what Jesus taught at that time.

The most noteworthy of the occasions of these two related kinds are:

#### (a) Summary of Jesus' First Preaching in Galilee (Mt 4:12-17//Mk 1:14-15//Lk 4:14-15)

All three Synoptics refer briefly to Jesus going to Galilee and there engaging in preaching or teaching. The verses Mt 4:13-16 (Jesus going to dwell in Capernaum, and the Old Testament quotation) are absent from Mark. That is, Matthew has (on the Markan Priority view) expanded the Markan reference to Jesus preaching.

#### (b) Teaching with Authority (Mt 7:28-29//Mk 1:22//Lk 4:32)

Mark contains nothing of Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. This Sermon ends, as Matthew gives it, with the statement, "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7:28-29).

This statement is paralleled in Luke in 4:31-32, "And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority." In Luke, this leads into the incident of the Healing of the Demoniac in the Synagogue (lacking in Matthew). Mark parallels Luke's statement that Jesus went to Capernaum and taught, and then the 18 words of Mk 1:22 correspond *exactly* with Mt 7:28-29 (Matthew has, additionally, "the crowds").

Thus Mark here parallels both Luke and Matthew in turn; at the point where both Major Synoptics refer to the astonishment of the people at the authority of Jesus's

teaching, Mark corresponds with Matthew exactly: and this point, in Matthew's Gospel, is the place where he records the reaction of the people to the Sermon on the Mount. That is to say, Mark records the crowd's reaction to Jesus's teaching, but omits the teaching.

**(c) Summary of Jesus' First Preaching Tour of Galilee** (Mt 4:23-25//Mk 1:39//Lk 4:44)

Matthew gives here what is in effect a program for the contents of almost the first half of his Gospel: Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching and preaching, and healing every disease and infirmity. Mark mentions only preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. Luke refers only to preaching in synagogues, and he places this in Judea. That is, Matthew has (on the Markan Priority view) expanded the Markan reference to Jesus preaching.

**(d) Healings by the Seaside** (Mt 12:15-21//Mk 3:7-12//Lk 6:17-19)

Mark's account parallels Luke's pericope and the first two verses of Matthew. Mt 12:17-21 is an OT citation that is absent from Mark (and Luke). The correspondence of Matthew with Mark here is only approximate; but if it is held that Matthew has used Mark, then Matthew has added extra material to what Mark has.

**(e) Teaching from a Boat in Parables** (Mt 13:1-52//Mk 4:1-34//Lk 8:4-18; 13:18-21)

Both Matthew and Mark state that Jesus sat in a boat and spoke "many things in parables" to the crowds on this occasion; then Mark adds "and in his teaching he said to them ..." That is, Mark indicates that what he himself records represents what was spoken by Jesus *in the course of* longer teaching. Mark then recounts three parables (The Sower, The Seed Growing Secretly, The Mustard Seed) together with some general comments about parables, while Matthew gives altogether seven parables (eight, if 13:51-52 is classed as a parable).

After giving his three parables, Mark's concluding paragraph (4:33) reiterates, "With many parables of this kind he spoke the word to them ..."; Matthew's parallel here (13:34) states, "All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables". Again, Mark's wording indicates that he does not profess to be recording *all* the parables that Jesus had spoken; Matthew's account implies no such kind of limitation.

Perhaps, as Markan Priorists suggest, Matthew had available a supply of suitable parables, and when he came to Mark's comments with their implication that more parables were actually spoken on this occasion than Mark himself recorded, Matthew was able to insert several additional ones from his parable stock—and then of course he would have removed the Markan implication (in 4:2 and 4:33) that other parables were



spoken at the time. Alternatively, it could be that Mark is using Matthew here, and his wording (in the way he writes his introductory and concluding statements) reflects the circumstance that he has used only some of the parables found at this point in his source.

**(f) The First will be Last and the Last First (Mt 19:30//Mk 10:31)**

At the conclusion of Jesus's teaching on Riches and Discipleship (Mt 19:23-30//Mk 10:23-31//Lk 18:24-30) Mark has the saying, "But many that are first will be last, and the last first." Luke lacks this here, but has a general parallel at 13:30. Matthew, like Mark, ends this pericope with this saying. Then Matthew includes a unique parable, The Workers in the Vineyard, which illustrates this saying in a very specific way, and he ends this parable (20:16) with another form of the same saying, "So the last will be first and the first last."

Now if Matthew is using Mark as his main source, then we must suppose that he had a stock of additional material from Q and from M (his own unique material) that he held ready to insert into the Markan framework at appropriate points, so that when he came across this saying in Mark he had available the ideal parable with which to illustrate it and reinforce it. This is very possible, of course. But as we keep coming across more and more cases where Matthew must be thus supposed to have had available, ready at hand, units of material that were so apposite to the Markan contexts, this explanation becomes progressively less likely.

**(g) Passion Week Teaching in Parables (Mt 21:33//Mk 12:1//Lk 20:9)**

Immediately after The Question about Authority, Luke says (20:9) "And he began to tell the people this parable", and recounts **one** parable, that of the Wicked Farmers, following this with On Paying Tribute To Caesar. Between The Question About Authority and On Paying Tribute To Caesar, Matthew gives **three** parables: The Two Sons, The Wicked Farmers, and The Marriage Feast. At this point, Mark (like Luke) gives only one parable, The Wicked Farmers—but in introducing it Mark writes in the **plural**: "And he began to speak to them in parables."

It is possible, once again, that Matthew noticed that Mark referred to Jesus speaking in "parables", plural, while only recording **one** parable, and thus this seemed a very appropriate place to insert others from the supply of special parables that he had—so he added two further parables here, one in front of and the other after the single parable found in Mark.

There are two difficulties with this explanation. The first is what it presumes about the

supply of other appropriate teaching from Jesus that Matthew apparently had on hand, lacking only a suitable context into which to place it.

The second is the extraordinary aptness of the contexts in Mark into which Matthew was able to insert them: so apt as to suggest the idea that they were original in those contexts, and have actually occurred in the circumstances in which Matthew has placed them. But this conclusion is excluded on the Markan Priority view, because (as Streeter, 1924: 166 puts it),

Matthew's method is to make Mark the framework into which non-Markan matter is to be fitted, on the principle of joining like to like. That is to say, whenever he finds in a non-Markan source teaching which would elaborate or illustrate a saying or incident in Mark, he inserts that particular piece of non-Markan matter into that particular context in the Marcan story. ... So the Marcan saying, repeated in Mt 19:30, 'The first shall be last and the last first,' suggests to him the addition in that particular context of the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard which points the same moral. Similarly the moral of the Marcan parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, Mt 21:33ff. (which is directed against the Jewish authorities), is reinforced by the addition immediately before and after it of the anti-Pharisaic parables of the Two Sons and the Marriage Feast.

Let us be quite clear about this. Streeter is telling us that, on the Markan Priority explanation of the Synoptic data, none of these teachings found in Matthew but lacking in Mark actually took place in the situation in which Matthew has placed them: for Matthew had them only as this or that "particular piece of non-Markan matter" and lacked any knowledge of the actual circumstances of their utterance, so that what he did was that "he inserts that particular piece of non-Markan matter into that particular context in the Marcan story" solely on the basis of his judgement as to a good fit: "wherever he finds in a non-Markan source teaching which would elaborate or illustrate a saying or incident in Mark".

So, if we hold the Markan Priority viewpoint, we have no basis whatsoever for believing that Jesus actually spoke the Parable of the Two Sons or of the Marriage Feast in the circumstances in which they are found in Matthew. They are placed into this context by Matthew purely because Matthew, in using Mark's Gospel, judged that they "would elaborate or illustrate a saying or incident in Mark" at that point.

Yet time after time the context in which Matthew has them appears to be the actual one in which they occurred. Thus the Parable of the Two Sons follows on so appropriately from the Question about John the Baptist and Authority that the two together form a flowing sequence, for in this parable Jesus is continuing his discussion

of the ministry of John the Baptist begun in the Question about Authority, and confronting the Jewish leaders with the fact that they had rejected John (Mt 21:32).

It is just not possible to believe that Matthew had this parable available as a separate unit in the way Streeter describes, which he could thus insert into Mark at such a point to add further to what Mark records of what Jesus said to the “chief priests and elders of the people” about John (Mt 21:23), and which provided such a fitting reply to the situation as Mark described it. Similarly, Matthew's Parable of the Marriage Feast elaborates the same theme of God's rejection of the Jewish nation. The three parables hang together as a close-knit unity, and **this** context, as Matthew has explained it, is the **right** and **original** context for them.

But if these parables point to the originality of Matthew's account here, so that it was Mark who used Matthew's Gospel (not vice versa), how could it happen that Mark would break up such a unity by leaving two of these three parables out of his Gospel?

Because whilst they are very relevant to Matthew's Gospel, with its Jewish background and milieu, and can be accepted as a record of what actually took place at this time, they were much less appropriate for Mark's readership. Both of the omitted parables dealt with the question of the rejection of the Jews. It is easy to see why further discussion of the ministry of John was not deemed useful by Mark (he has only recorded John's testimony to Jesus in his Gospel, and the story of John's death, prefiguring in its essentials, as it did, Jesus's own death; he has not included John's general teaching nor Jesus's testimony to John).

Similarly, the Parable of the Marriage Feast, with its climax based in Jewish custom—the wedding garment—did not advance either of Mark's two purposes of evangelism and Christology. Mark was adequately served by the inclusion of the middle parable, The Wicked Farmers, which summed up all that needed to be said about the rejection of the Jews and which was especially relevant from Mark's point of view because, in particular, it spoke proleptically of the death of the Son.

#### **(h) Woe to the Scribes** (Mt 23:1-6//Mk 12:37-38//Lk 20:45)

Mt 23:1-36 is a lengthy criticism by Jesus of the scribes and Pharisees. It is paralleled to some extent in Mk 12:37b-40//Lk 20:45-47; these quite short accounts are much closer to each other than to Matthew. Luke's introduction is general: “And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples ...” Matthew says, “Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples ...” But Mark states, “And in his teaching he said ...” That is, Mark states that he is about to record something that Jesus said **in the course of**

**longer teaching on this occasion.** Mark then gives **all** that Luke has on this matter, but **it represents only a small part of what occurs here in Matthew.**

It is possible, as Streeter affirms (254), that Matthew has compiled this discourse by a conflation of Q, M, and Mark. But the explanation that is much more consistent with the data is that Mark has drawn upon Matthew and Luke, and that in recording “And in his teaching he said ...” Mark has acknowledged that he has used only a small part of what Jesus said on this occasion.

### **(i) The Eschatological Summary (Mk 13:33-37)**

Mark parallels the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew and Luke quite closely up to Mt 24:35//Mk 13:31//Lk 21:33.

At that point Luke ceases to correspond to Matthew and has instead a short (three-verse) conclusion hinging upon two imperatives: “Take heed to yourselves lest ... that day come upon you suddenly like a snare” (21:34), and “watch at all times” (21:36). Matthew’s Eschatological Discourse continues at some considerable length (24:37-25:46E).

Mark’s account parallels Matthew’s next verse (Mt 24:36//Mk 13:32), and then also terminates with a brief (five-verse) conclusion. But while his wording is unique here, the ideas he expresses in fact summarize what is said in Matthew and Luke. He captures the thrust of Luke’s ending with his words (13:33), “Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come.” This same thought, amplified by Mark in his next four verses, also reflects the theme of much that is in the remaining sections of Matthew:

#### **Mt 24:37-25:30**

24:37-39 The people in the time of Noah were taken by surprise by the flood: “so will be the coming of the Son of Man”.

24:40-42 Two will be working in the field or at the mill: “one is taken and one is left. Watch therefore, for for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”

24:43-44 The householder is taken by surprise at night by the thief: “Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

24:45-51E The Good and Bad Servant: “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the

#### **Mk 13:33-37**

33. Take heed, watch;  
you do not know  
when the time will come.

34. It is like a man  
going on a journey, when  
he leaves home and puts

proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. ... But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants ... The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know."

25:1-13 The Wise and Foolish Virgins: "As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold the bride-

groom! Come out to meet him. ... Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

25:14-30 The Talents: For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property ... Then he went away. ... Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

The exhortation to watch in Mark's opening, middle, and closing verses (13:33, 35, and 37) occurs at several points in Matthew's account; connected with this is the warning concerning the uncertainty of the time of the Master's return, a point which is made repeatedly in Matthew with an Old Testament citation and several stories; Mark illustrates this factor with a story (13:34) of a man leaving home on a journey, which has ideas (and some words) in common both with The Parable of the Good Servant and Wicked Servant and also The Parable of the Talents; the references in Mk 13:35 to the various times of the day or night when the master of the house may return correspond with the times implied in Matthew's stories (any time: Noah and the flood; during daylight hours: the workers in the field and at the mill; during the night: the householder and the thief; and midnight for the cry of the arrival of the bridegroom. Compare also the warning about finding them asleep (Mk 13:34) with the comment (Mt 25:5) that "As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept." Mark's closing verse is a reiteration of the theme of both Matthew and Luke in this section: "And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

So, it may legitimately be said that Mk 13:33-37 reads like an interpretative summary

his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

35. Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crow, or in the morning, 36.—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

37. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

34. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his own work.

not only of the essence of Luke's closing three verses, but also of the teaching contained in Matthew after 24:36. Thus, it is a reasonable interpretation of the data that Mark used Matthew's and Luke's Gospels and rather than including the balance of Matthew's material (given Mark's policy regarding teaching material, this passage was too long to include) or else simply omitting it, instead he chose to summarize it in his closing five verses. The alternative is that Luke replaced Mark's ending with other material of his own, and Matthew used the themes and ideas in Mark's last five verses as the basis for inserting here a further 61 verses, which he happened to have available and which happened to correspond in such a striking way with the thoughts in Mark.

### **The Explanations**

All the above passages have in common this factor: they are places where one of the Major Synoptics (usually Matthew; occasionally Luke) has material that is lacking in Mark, and at that point in Mark one finds either (a) the setting in which that material is given in another Gospel; or (b) some lesser part of the material that the Major Synoptic(s) give(s) in greater detail; or (c) some mention of other teaching, the reference being of a kind that indicates that Mark was aware that he was including only part of the teaching of Jesus given on the occasion in question.

This is the data. The alternative explanations of this data are: that the Major Synoptist in question (usually Matthew) expanded upon Mark's teaching or references to teaching to produce the longer accounts in their respective Gospels; or, that Mark extracted what he wanted for his Gospel from Matthew and Luke, frequently using only part of what they contained, and at times, at the place where he used only a section of what was available, he wrote in such a way as to indicate this.

Streeter considers that Luke has arranged his sources so that "Marcan and non-Marcan material alternates in great blocks" (1924: 167), and from the Marcan Priority perspective he gives this explanation (to which attention was drawn earlier) for how Matthew has handled the material he found in Mark. It is a bit lengthy, but it is worth noting:

Matthew's method is to make Mark the framework into which non-Marcan matter is to be fitted, on the principle of joining like to like. That is to say, whenever he finds in a non-Marcan source teaching which would elaborate or illustrate a saying or incident in Mark, he inserts that particular piece of non-Marcan matter into that particular context in the Marcan story. ... So the Marcan saying, repeated in Mt 19:30, 'The first shall be last and the last first,' suggests to him the addition in that particular context of the parable of the Labourers

in the Vineyard which points the same moral. Similarly the moral of the Marcan parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, Mt 21:33ff. (which is directed against the Jewish authorities), is reinforced by the addition immediately before and after it of the anti-Pharisaic parables of the Two Sons and the Marriage Feast.

Examples of this kind of adaptation of non-Markan matter to a Marcan context could be indefinitely multiplied. But it is worth while to call special attention to the bearing of this process on the longer discourses in Matthew. All of them are clear cases of 'agglomeration', that is, of the building up of sayings originally dispersed so as to form great blocks. Four times, starting with a short discourse in Mark as a nucleus, Matthew expands it by means of non-Markan additions into a long sermon. Thus the 7 verses of Mark's sending out of the Twelve (Mk 6:7ff.) becomes the 42 verses of Mt 10. The three parables of Mk 4—with one omission—are made the basis of the seven-parable chapter, Mt 13. The twelve verses Mk 9:33-37, 42-48, are elaborated into a discourse of 35 verses in Mt 18. The 'Little Apocalypse' (Mk 13) is expanded, not only by the addition of a number of apocalyptic sayings (apparently from Q), but also by having appended to it three parables of Judgment (Mt 25). To some extent analogous is the way in which the Sermon on the Mount, far the longest and most important block of non-Markan matter, is connected with the Marcan framework. It is inserted in such a way as to lead up, and thus give point, to the Marcan saying, 'And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' Cf. Mk 1:22; Mt 7:29. That the Sermon on the Mount is itself an agglomeration of materials originally separate will be shown later. ... Mt 10:5-16 is clearly a conflation of the Q discourse, given by Luke as the Charge to the Seventy (Lk 10:1-12), with Mark's discourse on the Mission to the Twelve (Mk 6:7-11). Matthew has additional matter both at the beginning and the end which may possibly come from a third source ..., but in the central part of his version of the discourse (Mt 10:9-16a) there is hardly a word which is not to be found either in Mk 6:7-11 or in Lk 10:1-12). (166-167, 190.)

Now, Streeter's explanation of how Matthew used what he had in front of him in Mark is a good one—***if on other grounds we knew that Mark was prior to Matthew, and that Matthew used it.*** But his explanation assumes this relationship without in any way strengthening the case for it. As an explanation for how Matthew ordered material available to him, it has considerable merit, and is particularly useful in accounting for the difference between Matthew and Luke in their distribution of much of the "sayings" material that is common to both of them; but in regard to the relationship between Matthew and Mark, it is ***totally reversible***. If on other grounds we had reason to know that Mark used Matthew (and not vice versa), then we could recognize that ***all*** the

material in Matthew to which Streeter refers came from Matthew's sources, including what subsequently became incorporated into Mark's Gospel. When reading Matthew, there is no difference discernible between what is also found in Mark and what is not. And there is no difficulty whatsoever in accepting that Mark drew from Matthew such material as he judged appropriate in terms of his own purposes in writing. That is, in accepting the Markan Dependence explanation.

So the explanation that one adopts flows entirely from the relationship that one presupposes.

But there is one important extra factor to consider. Almost all the material that we are examining in these sections of our study has in common that it occurs at a point where Matthew contains more than does Mark, and what Mark lacks and the Major Synoptics include in these passages consists of various kinds of teaching. It has been noted earlier (in Chapter Four, where the statistics are given, and in Chapter Three, where Mark's purposes are discussed) that Mark's policy was to be selective about the teaching he included, and to incorporate much less teaching into his account than is found in Matthew or Luke. The Markan Dependence hypothesis will say that Mark carefully went through Jesus's teaching in these passages in Matthew and Luke **and selected from it only those short extracts that accorded with his purposes**, and that when major teaching is not included it is either represented by short extracts, or else summarized, or some reference indicates that Mark has only recorded part of what was said in the whole discourse.

So also is found, similarly, the inclusion in apocopated form of occasional other material (i.e. which is not specific teaching by Jesus; e.g. John's Preaching; The Temptation): this enables the incident to have a place in Mark's Gospel without slowing down the action and detracting from his main purposes. This is a very reasonable explanation (and in accord with Mark's clear general policy).

Streeter's explanation from the Markan Priority viewpoint only covers some of the occasions that have been listed here; it does not touch upon the overall pattern, so frequently in evidence, that Mark shows an awareness of Jesus engaging in teaching or giving more teaching precisely at those places where Matthew (and sometimes Luke) **has given** such additional teaching. This may be written off to coincidence in one instance or another; or in some passages it could, with Streeter, be attributed to Matthew using a nucleus of teaching found in Mark as a hook on which to hang non-Markan teaching of similar kinds that he had available: but when we consider the totality of the passages concerned, it is not really possible to believe that they can together be all dismissed in this way.



## 7.16 THAT MATTHEAN REDACTION OF MARK 9 COULD PRODUCE MATTHEW 18

Mt 18:1-5	Mk 9:33b-37	Lk 9:46-48
[The Lesson about the Child]	[The Lesson about the Child]	[The Lesson about the Child]
	Mk 9:38-41	Lk 9:49-50
	[The Stranger Exorcizing]	[The Stranger Exorcizing]
Mt 18:6-9	Mk 9:42-50E	-
[On the Seriousness of Sin]	[On the Seriousness of Sin]	-
Mt 18:10-14	-	-
[The Parable of the Lost Sheep]	-	-
Mt 18:15-35E	-	-
[Teaching, and		
The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant]	-	-
-	-	Lk 9:51-18:14
-	-	[Central Section]
Mt 19:1-12	Mk 10:1-12	-
[On Marriage and Divorce]	[On Marriage and Divorce]	-
Mt 19:13-15	Mk 10:13-16	Lk 18:15-17
[Jesus Blesses the Children]	[Jesus Blesses the Children]	[Jesus Blesses the Children]

All three Synoptics are parallel at The Lesson about the Child. Then Matthew has On the Seriousness of Sin and The Parable of the Lost Sheep, in which the theme of young children is further continued (see Mt 18:6; 18:10). Luke goes off at a tangent: Jesus had said, “Whoever receives one such/this child in my name receives me” (Mt 18:5//Mk 9:37//Lk 9:48), and Luke records next (9:49) that “John answered, ‘Master we saw a man casting out demons in your name ...’” Mark has **both** the pericopes of The Stranger Exorcizing and On the Seriousness of Sin, and in **that order**. That is to say, Mark parallels Matthew’s continuation concerning young children, but he **interrupts** this discussion with the insertion of the Stranger Exorcizing, in which he parallels Luke. Not only so, but between these two pericopes Mark has (9:41) a saying that occurs in Matthew in another context (Mt 10:42) that Mark has not used. In Matthew it says, “And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water ...”; whereas in Mark it says, “whoever gives you a cup of water ...”.

Let us consider the redactional procedures of the Synoptists that were carried out, according to the differing hypotheses, to produce the text here.

On the Markan Priority hypothesis, Mark produced this sequence without reference to Matthew and Luke (which, of course, had not been written at that time). Drawing upon

his pericope sources, he writes two pericopes relating to young children (The Lesson About the Child, and On the Seriousness of Sin), and then *inserts in between them* The Stranger Exorcizing pericope, thus interrupting what otherwise would be a continuous unit relating to children. Yet Mark does not state (cf. Lk 9:49) that “John answered”, i.e., responded to, what Jesus had said earlier; Mark has merely, “John said to him”. That is, Mark’s pericope of The Stranger Exorcizing is not tied specifically to what has preceded, and could in fact have been placed anywhere else he chose—there is no specific reason apparent that shows why Mark would break up Christ’s teaching relating to young children with this short pericope at this point. [It is no response to say, It is given here because this is when it actually took place. No links that indicate this are to be found in the story. It is not generally held by Markan Priorists that Mark’s pericopes have their particular order because that is the order in which they all took place.] Why then would Mark place The Stranger Exorcizing into the middle of teaching by Jesus relating to young children?

Mark follows On the Seriousness of Sin with On Marriage and Divorce (10:1-12) and then with another pericope concerning children, Jesus Blesses the Children (10:13-16). No one can say of Mark what Streeter (1924: 166) says of Matthew, that he works “on the principle of joining like to like”! Instead, Mark has (9:33-10:16) three pericopes about children, and separates them from each other by, respectively, the pericopes of The Stranger Exorcizing and On Marriage and Divorce.

Once Mark was written, Matthew and Luke each use it (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) for writing their own Gospels. In addition to minor redaction, Luke excises from Mark’s account “for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me” together with Mark’s climax to The Stranger Exorcizing, “For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward”, together also with the whole of On the Seriousness of Sin and On Marriage and Divorce. Then instead at *this* point Luke introduces into Mark his substantial Central Teaching Section (approximately a third of the length of his Gospel, 9:51-18:14), rejoining Mark (at Mk 10:13//Lk 18:15) with Jesus Blesses the Children.

If these may be judged rather unlikely ways for Luke to handle Mark’s text, Matthew’s redactional procedure is quite bizarre. He alters substantially the thrust of Mk 9:33-35 (see Mt 18:1)—in fact he omits 9:35, a very relevant comment for the context; he takes over 18:2 from Mark and then adds in 18:3-4 from some other source (and yet it suits *this* context so exactly as to seem to be original here!); next, he excises 9:37b, “and

whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me”, and then deletes the whole of The Stranger Exorcizing, except for “For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward”. He changes “you bear the name of Christ” to “he is a disciple”, and “gives you” to “gives to one of these little ones”, so as to make it fit better the context about children—and then moves it to 10:42, where it becomes the final saying of the Mission Charge, in a context in which there is not one other single mention of “little ones”! Continuing with Mk 9:42, Matthew adds in the “Woe” of 18:7, apocopates the comment about cutting off hand or foot and deletes Mk 9:48-50. Instead, at this point he continues Jesus's dissertation with The Parable of the Lost Sheep and various other teachings up to the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Mt 18:10-35E), being parallel again with Mark at Mt 19:1//Mk 10:1.

The explanation from the Markan Dependence perspective is: Matthew and Luke are independently-written accounts. In the Lesson about the Child, Mark conflates Matthew and Luke. He then confronts the situation that his two sources differ as to what they place next, and he resolves to use what each has. Obviously, he cannot follow **both** of his sources in what to put next, as they differ, so he must choose between them.

He is not going to include any of Luke's Central Section, with its emphasis upon Jesus's teaching. Therefore, notwithstanding that it thus gets placed into a sequence about children, Mark takes Luke's The Stranger Exorcizing next. At this stage he has completed the use that he plans to make of Luke until Luke again parallels Matthew at 18:15.

Mark is therefore now free to follow Matthew, and in moving from Luke to Matthew he includes the saying about the cup of water. In the next verse that he is to take from Matthew (18:6) occur the words “one of these little ones”, which recalls to him the saying regarding a cup of water (in which these same words also occur), which is part of a section of Matthew that he was not using. So he took the verse from there (quite possibly from memory), but in using it as the climax of his version of The Stranger Exorcizing he omitted the reference to “little ones” as not fitting its new context. (There are several examples where Mark's Gospel has parallels with single verses of Matthew, the Matthean context being a pericope that Mark does not contain; the two most well-known are Mk 1:2 and 1:22.) An alternative explanation is that Mark adds 9:41 to this pericope, together with his other insertions in this context, from his recollection of how these stories were told in the preaching of Peter. Mark continues with On the Seriousness of Sin and then omits Matthew's subsequent teaching (in line with his policy of limited use

of long teaching sections), paralleling Matthew again for the pericope On Marriage and Divorce (Mt 19:1/Mk10:1).

There is nothing inherently unlikely in such a procedure on Mark's part, if he were using Matthew and Luke as sources: in fact, it is a very reasonable and logical way of proceeding, and consistent with his handling of sources elsewhere. However, the procedure that, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, would have been followed by both Mark and Luke is unlikely, and the redactional behaviour required of Matthew is quite illogical and inconsistent. If he knew the saying in Mk 9:41 (whether only as it is in Mark, or in a form that already said "one of these little ones"), then he would most certainly have been expected to have given it **where Mark gives it**, for here it would have been in a most appropriate context, and this position would have harmonized with his recognized practice of adding like to like. Whatever the reason for Matthew's version of this saying being in the context that it has at 10:42, it is mute testimony that **Matthew did not have before him Mk 9:33-42**. The other redactional changes and the deletions (such as Mk 9:35, 37b, 38-40, 48-50) that Matthew has here made to Mark (on the Markan Priority theory) are in varying degrees unlikely to unbelievable.

The way in which, in Mark, The Stranger Exorcizing intrudes into Jesus talking about children is very odd, and requires explanation. The sequence in Mark **cannot** be the order in which these things would be placed in an original composition. The only plausible explanation is that **this pericope occurs where it does in Mark because that is where it is found in Luke** and Mark was engaged in combining the Matthean and Lukan narratives. Overall, the Markan Dependence explanation accounts here for the data. Overall, the Markan Priority explanation invites us here to believe the impossible.

## 7.17 THAT THE SYNOPTIC PERICOPE ORDER COULD ARISE FROM MATTHEW AND LUKE USING MARK

### (a) The Transposed Citation: Mk 1:2

At the beginning of his Gospel, after his title (1:1), Mark gives an Old Testament citation. This is unusual in several ways.

First, it is the **only** Old Testament quotation in Mark of an editorial/ redactional nature—that is, the only one which comes from the **author** of the Gospel, as distinct from being an Old Testament quotation made by one of the participants in the story he tells.

Second, it is the only "formula" quotation in Mark's Gospel, that is, introduced by the formula "in order that it may be fulfilled as was spoken by the prophets", or words to that effect.

Third, it comes **after** Mark's introduction of it, in a formula that attributes what follows to Isaiah, and **before** Mark's actual quotation of Isaiah, while it itself is **not** from Isaiah.

Fourth, it consists of a very unusual form of wording: it is a conflation of wording from Ex 23:20 and Mal 3:1, and its wording is partly taken from the Septuagint and is partly a translation from the Hebrew. These factors mean that it has a quite unique wording, which would never be duplicated independently by someone else citing from the Old Testament, seeing that it is taken from **two** places and **two** versions.

Fifth, in Mark it is found (with otherwise exactly identical wording, but) without the same two concluding additional words, *before you*, *ἐμπροσθέν σου* which are found at **both** Mt 11:10 and Lk 7:27. (These two words do not occur in the Septuagint of either Ex 23:20 or Mal 3:1.)

Let us contemplate the explanation that is required in order to account for this data on the Markan Priority perspective, that is, on the basis that Mark is the source for Matthew and Luke here.

It is out of character for Mark to include an “editorial” quotation and indeed to use such a formula quotation at all (there are no other instances). It is out of character for him to use a form of Old Testament quotation wording that does not derive from the Septuagint (all his other quotations are derived from the Septuagint—cf. Gundry, 1975: 148). It can reasonably be said therefore that the wording of this citation can hardly have originated with Mark himself.

When they came across this quotation here in Mark, both Matthew and Luke must have decided that it should indeed be included in their respective Gospels, but **not** where Mark had it—for them, as for Mark, this quotation was to be applied to John, but for some reason it was not to be used in the introductory material about the Baptist. And both Matthew and Luke had exactly the right place for it somewhere else: they inserted it at precisely the same point into the comments that Jesus made about the Baptist after John sent a message to Jesus from prison. And they both independently decided to add in “before you” at the end—even though these words do not occur either in Mark or in the Septuagint of either of the conflated Old Testament verses!

Now if this appears altogether too far-fetched, there is another alternative: that the citation was originally part of Q in the form and in the position that it now has in Matthew and Luke in Jesus's comments about the Baptist. This explains Matthew and Luke. But where, then, did Mark derive it from? The simplest answer is, Also from Q. And this answer could be given in accord with Streeter's 1911 views: he attributes the story of the advent and preaching of the Baptist in all three Synoptists to Q. And concerning the quotation from Isaiah in Mk 1:3 he says (1911: 168):

Seeing that in no other case does the editor of Mark himself introduce a quotation or reference to the Old Testament it is probable that this also occurred in Q. Mark alone prefixes to it the quotation from Malachi ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελον, which is applied to John Baptist in Mt 11:10=Lk 7:27, in the account of John's Message from prison, a passage of Q which does not occur in Mark. It looks as if Mark's double quotation in this passage is a conflation of the two quotations applied to John in two different contexts of Q.

That is, Streeter held that **Mark found this quotation in Q “in the account of John's Message from prison”, which he did not himself choose to use, and instead conflated the quotation with the other Q material about the Baptist with which his Gospel commences.**

But by 1924 Streeter had repudiated the possibility that Mark knew Q, so in *The Four Gospels* this explanation was no longer available to him. He does not however offer an alternative explanation; in fact he does not refer to the matter at all (neither Mk 1:2 nor Mt 11:10/Lk 7:27 are dealt with in *The Four Gospels*). Nor does Tuckett deal with the issue in his *Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis*, nor indeed do Farmer (*The Synoptic Problem*) nor Stoldt (*History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*).

How **can** we account for the fact that Mk 1:2//Mt 11:10/Lk 7:27 are identical—except for the addition of the same two further words in Matthew and Luke? And that Mark uses this citation **in a different context**? The unusual structure of the quotation totally precludes the idea that Mark and Matthew-Luke have independently come up with an identical wording. Thus these are the alternatives available:

1. Each Synoptist obtained it from Q;
2. Each Synoptist derived it from the pre-Gospel oral tradition;
3. Each Synoptist obtained it from some other pre-Gospel written tradition that was not Q;
4. Mark found it in Matthew and Luke in a pericope that he did not intend using, and deciding that it would be a worthwhile addition to his introduction to his Isaiah quotation about John, used it there instead;
5. Matthew and Luke each derived their account from Mark 1:2, and independently decided (a) to switch it to their Jesus's Comment on John pericope, and (b) to add the same two further words to it.

Those who find Explanation 5 impossible to accept may make their choice amongst the others.

They can reject Streeter's change of mind, and opt for Explanation 1, Q as the source of the quotation in all three Synoptics. Such an approach does underline the perceptivity of Dungan's description (75) of the role of Q:

the real value of the Q hypothesis is that it provides a way for those doing research in the Synoptic Gospels to handle all of the passages which clearly belie the theory of Mark's originality.

In Chapter One (§1.2.4) we noted Dom John Chapman's devastating critique of Q, concluding (1936: 126—his original italics):

Consequently these passages have shown that Q, as a source of Mt. and Lk., independent of Mk., is impossible, since it must include Mk.

I hope the absurdity of all this is clear to the reader. It merely means that *the assumption of a common source for Mt. and Lk. always leads us to find this source to be the common source of three Gospels*. This is not a two-document hypothesis, but a one-document hypothesis, and it is simply a *reduction ad absurdum*. ...

Q is not a collection of discourses, independent of Mk., *but a name to cover any source one meets with*, and might have included any part, or the whole, of Mt., Mk., or Lk. In fact, it might be the whole Bible.

[For further information about Dom John Chapman, his change of mind about Markan Priority, and his significant book *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, see §10.3.1, below.]

A Q like this is, by its very nature, incapable of falsification. Seeing that an authentic copy of Q does not exist, there are no controls. Q is what you make it. It is pliable enough to fit any purpose you may have in mind. Q is an all-purpose, all-weather, one-size-fits-all, kind of explanation. If in non-Markan material Matthew and Luke agree, they are both quoting Q precisely. If they differ a little, one (or both) has/have redacted Q to suit their purposes—and often we can even make a stab at hypothesizing which version is the more “original”. If they are so significantly different that one can hardly postulate they both came from a common source, then either (choose your explanation) one of them used Q and the other used a differently-sourced version, or Matthew used M and Luke used L.

Q indeed becomes an explanation for all seasons, a rescue device for the Markan Priority hypothesis whenever it is inadequate to describe the data, in fact a kind of literary *deus ex machina* that when all else fails can be invoked to step in and save the day. Q may prove to be an excellent standby for such occasions, but ***are we really intended to believe that invoking Q in this kind of way is giving a realistic account of something that actually happened?***

But you can still go for Explanation 1 if you want to.

Or, if Streeter's 1924 case is accepted for rejecting that Mark knew Q, then Explanation 1 is ruled out; but it is still open to opt for Explanation 2, that the quotation had

independent currency in the early church, from which all three Synoptists drew it; or (if its occurrence in Matthew and Luke is still attributed to Q), from which Mark derived it. Now, if it is thought that the problem with this is the **exact correspondence of wording**—perhaps, it might be thought, a little **too** exact for oral tradition—then Explanation 3 can solve this: we postulate another written account, not Q, from which it was taken.

The trouble is that we have now adopted a hypothesis of some kind of Ur-Gospel (whether oral or written) to cope with the data, which in this instance would be fulfilling the same kind of explanatory role usually assigned to Q.

The most straightforward explanation is the fourth that is set out above, viz, that Mark derived this quotation from Matthew and Luke. This explanation is in fact almost identical with the implications of Streeter's 1911 "Q" explanation, given above. Mark's motivation and procedure is exactly the same under the two explanations: Mark found the quotation in his source(s) in the context of Jesus's words about John, a pericope that he himself did not intend to use; he decided that this would make an excellent introduction to his Isaiah quotation which together with its formula-introduction he was taking from Mt 3:3 and Lk 3:4, and so he conflated the two, inserting the transferred citation **between** the introductory formula and the words from Isaiah, and omitting the last two words to improve the link with the Isaiah quotation. All this is completely in accord with Streeter's 1911 position with the sole difference that instead of invoking a hypothetical document Q as the source from which Mark obtained his quotation, this Synoptist is seen as taking it directly from two extant documents, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

In the light of the logic and rationality of this Markan Dependence explanation of the data, is it still possible to opt for one of the **other** explanations?

### **(b) The Order of Pericopes**

The examination, in Chapter Nine, of the question of Accounting for Pericope Order in the Synoptics allows to us to see the extent to which Mark's order is supported by only one of the Major Synoptists. If Mark was the first Gospel written, and was used by Matthew and Luke, then both the Major Synoptists have chosen to depart from its order on numerous occasions. No overall cohesive explanation has been offered for the abandonment of Markan order on these occasions; at best, suggestions can be made on a pericope-by-pericope basis.

Furthermore, even if these suggestions could be accepted as reasons for why they each left Mark's order on a particular occasion, the reasons do not extend to providing an explanation of the specific order that they have each given to the pericopes in their own Gospels.



It seems, upon the basis of the *prima facie* evidence of the fact that both Matthew and Luke change the order given by Mark, that the two Major Synoptists have found fault with (or at least consider that there are some shortcomings in) the Markan order: yet **on not one single occasion have they altered Mark's order in the same way or even at the same place**. This seems strongly to point to there being **some other explanation** for the question of Synoptic pericope order.

Mark's order is always supported by the order of one or both of the other two Synoptics. Of the eighty units into which Mark's Gospel can be divided upon the basis of considerations relating to pericope order, for forty units Mark is supported by only one Gospel, so if that Synoptist had placed any of those forty units into his Gospel at a different place, it would not have been true that Mark's order is **always** supported. (This can be readily seen from Chapter Nine, where the full eighty pericope groups are set out.) Since by common consent it is agreed that Matthew and Luke are acting independently when they concur with or else depart from Markan order, **no explanation is possible** for why it did not happen that both Matthew and Luke deserted Markan order at the same point: this circumstance can only be put down to coincidence.

Similarly, there can be no collusion about the way in which, whenever a Gospel that has been supporting Mark is about to leave Mark's order, the other Major Synoptist always continues adhering to Markan order if he has been doing so in the previous pericope, or if he has not, he **invariably immediately returns to Markan order**. This extraordinary timing must, once again, be attributed to coincidence.

That some of these things could occasionally happen is believable. Such coincidences do happen in life. But that Matthew and Luke should come and go in their support for Mark's order as often as they do without there being any discernible overall reason why either of them should have done so, and that their respective comings and goings should mesh together in the way that we find in the data, strains credulity beyond acceptance. That the existing Synoptic pericope order has arisen as a result of Matthew and Luke each using—and from time to time altering—Mark's order, is quite unbelievable.

## 7.2 THE IMPROBABILITIES

### 7.21 That Matthew and Luke Would Show Such Disregard for Mark's Information and Wording

There are numbers of other things which, while not totally **impossible** to believe, are certainly somewhat difficult to swallow. We shall consider here the improbability of Matthew's and Luke's disregard for Mark's information and wording.

The impression one gets from reading some writers on the Synoptics is that Matthew and Luke each took over Mark's material virtually unchanged, beyond doing some minor editing to improve his grammar and style, and making small modifications to adapt it more specifically to his own intended readership (e.g. Allen, *Commentary on Matthew*, refers throughout to the **editor** not the **author** of this Gospel and sees his editing of Mark's material primarily in terms of such improvements and modifications).

The modern tools of our computer age enable us to reassess this verdict. *Synoptic Statistics* (Morgenthauer, 1971: 239-241) sets out the numbers of words used by the three Synoptics for each pericope, and the numbers of words in Matthew and Luke that each has in common with Mark. These statistics have been set out in Chapter Four of our present study, and may be consulted there. Morgenthauer lists 118 pericopes that Mark and Matthew have in common, and for only eight of these does Matthew have 75% or more of his words in common with Mark. (§4.2.3, Table 2.) That is, in 110 out of 118 pericopes that Matthew drew from Mark, he altered more than a quarter of the words that he found in his source! Furthermore, in the case of half of the pericopes that he took from Mark, Matthew used less than half of the words that are found in Mark's account!

Mark's Gospel contains 11,078 words. In his parallels to Mark, Matthew uses 8555 words; of these, 4230 (49.4%) are identical with Mark's words and 4325 (50.6%) are different (Morgenthauer, 163 and 166). That is to say, in his pericopes that are parallel to Mark (and that on the Markan Priority hypothesis are derived from Mark), Matthew overall has 49.4% of his words in common with his source, so that 50.6% of Matthew's words are **not** in Mark's parallel pericopes. Bearing in mind that Matthew's pericopes are shorter than Mark's we see that Matthew has used 4230 of the 11,078 words that he had in front of him in Mark, or 38.2%—that is, he rewords and reworks and reorders and otherwise revises Mark's Gospel, and actually copies from Mark less than two-fifths of what Mark contains. (Again, details in §4.2.3, Table 2)

Overall, Matthew used fewer than two-fifths of the words that lay in front of him in Mark's Gospel.

In these circumstances it is therefore hardly legitimate to speak any longer of Mark's material being "incorporated" into Matthew: such extensive changes to the source material constitute a large-scale rewriting, for which the reasons hitherto adduced will no longer suffice.

The case is similar for Luke. Morgenthauer (1971: 241-243) lists 96 pericopes that Mark and Luke have in common, and for only four of these does Luke have 75% or more of his words in common with Mark. That is, in 92 out of 96 pericopes that Luke

drew from Mark, he altered more than a quarter of the words that he found in his source! Furthermore, for only 30 of these pericopes does he use even half of the words used by Mark—in 66 out of 96 pericopes taken from Mark, Luke used fewer than half of Mark's words. Overall, Luke used fewer than one quarter of the words that lay in front of him in Mark's Gospel.

From this same Table 2, you can see that in his parallels to Mark, Luke uses 6737 words; 2675 of these (39.7%) are identical and 4062 (60.3%) are different (Morgenthaler, 163 and 166). That is to say, in his pericopes that are parallel to Mark (and that on the Markan Priority hypothesis are derived from Mark), Luke overall has 39.7% of his words in common with Mark, while 60.3% of Luke's words do not occur in Mark's parallel pericopes. We see that Luke has used 2675 of the 11,078 words that he had in front of him in Mark, or 24.1%—that is, when you look at words, you find that Luke copied from Mark ***less than one quarter of what Mark contained***.

Lest there be some suspicion concerning the objectivity of Morgenthaler's statistics (which I am citing) it can perhaps be mentioned that he himself is an advocate of Markan Priority, and sees this position as being supported by deductions to be made from his statistics. But his statistics, which he obtained by means of computer analysis, give facts that are rather far removed from the estimates of Streeter and other previous writers.

For Streeter's comment (1924: 159-160) is that

Mark's style is diffuse, Matthew's succinct; so that in adapting Mark's language Matthew compresses so much that the 600 odd verses taken from Mark supply rather less than half the material contained in the 1068 verses of the longer Gospel. Yet, in spite of this abbreviation, it is found that Matthew employs 51% of the actual words used by Mark. ... If we leave out of account all passages where there is reason to suspect that Luke has used a non-Markan source, it appears on an approximate estimate that about 350 verses (*i.e.*, just over one half of Mark) have been reproduced by Luke. When following Mark, Luke alters the wording in his original a trifle more than Matthew does; on the other hand he retains many details which Matthew omits, and he does not compress the language quite so much. The result is that on an average Luke retains 53% of the actual words of Mark, that is, a very slightly higher proportion than does Matthew.

Some of the word classifications depend upon the subjective judgement of the researcher, and there is scope for future workers to modify Morgenthaler's details a little. But the basic situation revealed by his figures is beyond challenge, viz, if Markan Priority is true, then Matthew took over somewhat less than two words out of five that lay in front of him in Mark, and Luke took over rather less than one quarter of the words of Mark!

Streeter made the best possible assessment in these matters with the tools available to him at the time. But these Streeter statistics are still being quoted today as if they were correct, whereas we now know that they are very wrong.

If the Markan Priority hypothesis is accepted, then it is incumbent upon its supporters to consider the significance of this data, and to explain the reason for such drastic and extensive changes by Matthew and Luke to their source, and the basis for them, and the nature of the other source(s) for what Matthew and Luke include that they did not derive from Mark and that is contained in pericopes that parallel Mark in the Double and Triple Tradition.

Let us consider the situation from the alternative point of view, the hypothesis of Markan Dependence. In relation to the materials of the Markan Double Tradition, Mark has in front of him material which also occurs in Matthew or Luke, as the case may be. He draws upon this as it suits his purpose (see Chapter Three, above), supplementing it with his own knowledge of the circumstances of the event or details of the saying—knowledge derived from his close acquaintance with Peter. In the case of materials of the Triple Tradition, Mark has these pericopes before him in both Matthew and Luke. He draws upon both of these accounts, together with his knowledge of the teaching and preaching of Peter. And he rewrites his sources to make his Gospel more colloquial in vocabulary and style, to suit his readership and those using the Gospel as a basis for the preaching of the *kerygma* (see Chapter Three).

He certainly (on this view) made changes to the wording. But there is an explanation on this hypothesis for the low wording correlations, an explanation that does not apply from the perspective of the Markan Priority hypothesis: in many passages Mark found that his two written sources, Matthew and Luke, did not agree with each other in their actual wording, and in incorporating their subject matter into his Gospel he would normally follow the wording of one or the other. So that from the perspective of Markan Dependence ***there is a very greatly reduced amount of change to sources to be accounted for***, since many of the differences are not due to any of the Synoptists altering his source. Rather, they are due to different lines of tradition, with divergent wording, behind Matthew and Luke, so that even if Mark had wholly followed one of them on all such occasions there would thus have been divergences between Mark's Gospel and the other of his sources, except in those places his sources agreed.

Consider the representative case where in a given pericope Matthew and Luke differ in numerous ways and where on the occasions when they differ Mark agrees with Matthew a third of the time, with Luke a third of the time, and is different from both of

them a third of the time. On the Markan Priority hypothesis it is incumbent to account for when Matthew varies from Mark—which is two-thirds of the time, one third when Mark is the same as Luke and one third when Mark is different from both—because for all this material Matthew is altering Mark. Similarly, on the Markan Priority hypothesis it is incumbent to account for when Luke varies from Mark—which is two-thirds of the time, one third when Mark is the same as Matthew and one third when Mark is different from both—because for all this material Luke is altering Mark.

But on the Markan Dependence view it is necessary only to account for the places where Mark differs from **both** Matthew and Luke (i.e. one third of the time, in this example), because the remaining two-thirds of the time he is following either Matthew or Luke and nothing needs explaining since he differs from the other only because Matthew and Luke differ between themselves. To the extent therefore that Matthew and Luke differ and Mark agrees with one or the other (and this is quite frequent), to that extent there is less redactional modification to be explained from the Markan Dependence perspective than from the Markan Priority perspective. And as for the occasions when Mark differs from both of the others: the most probable explanation is that Mark is being influenced by his recollection of how Peter worded this part of the story.

Examples of this situation will be found below (Chapter Eleven sets out several such passages for careful assessment). Let one illustration suffice us for now (from Morgenthaler 1971: 147):

**Mt 23:6-7**

φιλοθυσιν

ὁ δὲ τὴν

πρωτοκλισίαν

ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις

**Mk 12:38b-39**

βλέπετε

ἀπὸ τῶν

γραμματέων

τῶν θελόντων

ἐν στολεῖς

περιπατεῖν

καὶ

ἀσπασμοὺς

ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς

**Lk 20:46**

προσέχετε

ἀπὸ τῶν

γραμματέων

τῶν θελόντων

περιπατεῖν

ἐν στολεῖς

καὶ

φιλοθύντων

ἀσπασμοὺς

ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς

καὶ	καὶ	καὶ
τὰς		
πρωτοκαθεδρίας	πρωτοκαθεδρίας	πρωτοκαθεδρίας
ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς	ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς	ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς
καὶ	καὶ	καὶ
	πρωτοκλισίας	πρωτοκλισίας
	ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις	ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις
τοὺς ἀπασμοὺς		
ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς καὶ		
καλεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν		
ἀνθρώπων ῥαββί.		

If in this passage we believe—when we compare Matthew and Mark—that either of these is derived from the other, then we must hold that the one who copied has made some very substantial rearrangements of the order of ideas of his source, maintained the form of words for what he did use virtually unchanged, but left out some of the material in his source while introducing other material of his own. (Numbers of words: Matthew, 25; Mark, 24. Number of identical words: 13. Overall, quite a low level of correlation for both words and order.) We note however the almost total agreement between Mark and Luke: they differ in one change of word (Mark, βλέπετε; Luke, προσέχετε), one change of word order (περιπατεῖν after the phrase ἐν στολαῖς in Mark and before it in Luke), and one word in Luke not occurring in Mark (φιλοῦντων).

Streeter (1924: 253-254) explains this entire pericope of Woes to the Pharisees on the basis

that Luke's version of the discourse ... stood in that document [Q] and that Matthew has again conflated a discourse of Q with one on the same topic which came to him in M. ... Yet again, Matthew, besides placing the discourse in a Marcan context, adds to it a few words from Mark.

This last comment is a peculiar one, since there is not **a single word** in common between Matthew and Mark that is not also in Luke—that is, upon Streeter's analysis, in Q. And how then does it happen that Mark and Luke are almost identical?—for according to Streeter **Luke is from Q and not from Mark!** Is this **another** overlap between Mark and Q? Is this a piece of evidence for the fact that Mark knew Q? Yes, said Streeter in 1911 in *Oxford Studies*, where on 176 he lists this passage as the eighth in his series of Markan passages derived from or greatly influenced by Q. (On 412 of the

same volume N P Williams refers the reader to Streeter's proofs of "the use of Q by the author or final redactor of Mark" and amongst the passages "either drawn from or based upon Q" he lists Mark 12:38-40.) However, by *The Four Gospels* (1924) Streeter had reversed his opinion that Mark knew Q. What now is his explanation for Mk 12:38-40? He is completely silent upon the point.

Tuckett deals in some detail with The Woes against the Scribes and Pharisees (1983: 134-139), and comments:

Lk 11:43 is closely parallel to Mt 23:6, and thus forms a doublet with Lk 20:46. On the Two-Document hypothesis, the presence of such a doublet can be easily explained as due to the presence of the saying in Luke's two sources, Mark and Q. Mt 23:6 is then a conflation of these two sources.

Luke (he believes) derived 20:46 from Mark (138); "It is hard to envisage Mark spoiling Luke's construction by omitting φιλοῦντων, whereas Luke's addition of the word is an intelligible improvement of Mark's Greek" (139). But it is not so simple. Now, on Tuckett's view Luke derived this verse from Mark, and Matthew took the words of Mark and substantially rearranged them and then conflated them with a considerable volume of material from Q and/or M (for Mt 23:6-7 is part of a much longer "Woes" section in Matthew not paralleled in either Luke or Mark).

The Markan Dependence explanation is very simple: Mark found in Matthew a long denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, and a much shorter comment in Luke, which paralleled material included in Matthew but which also differed in numbers of ways. Mark decided to include a short quotation about this matter in his Gospel, and therefore adopted Luke as his guide—and **that** is why his wording is so close to Luke and different from Matthew. The divergence between Matthew and Luke goes back to the two independent lines of tradition behind them (see Chapter Eight).

The same kind of divergences as exist between Matthew and Luke where they parallel Mark can be noted from the statistics for where Matthew and Luke parallel each other but not Mark, the so-called Q material. Morgenthauer (1971: 83, 166) gives the passages where Matthew and Luke are similar, comprising a total of 3861 words in Matthew and 3663 in Luke, of which 1851 words are identical in both, i.e. 47.9% of Matthew's wording and 50.5% of Luke's. These figures are considerably higher than those for the correspondence of Matthew and Luke with Mark, because narrative predominates in the material of the Markan Double and Triple Tradition, while most of the Q tradition is direct speech (primarily, Jesus's teaching), and it is recognized that direct speech is transmitted and copied with fewer alterations than is the case with narrative.

Morgenthaler (1971: 163) shows that the identical words in the Markan Double and Triple Tradition for his two subdivisions of direct speech, W (conversation) and L (teaching), are 56% and 62% (for Matthew) and 51% and 52% (for Luke) of the total words in parallel pericopes. (These are higher than the Q percentages of 47.9% and 50.5% because the latter are affected by the non-direct-speech that **does** occur in Q material.)

In sum then we may say: the level of divergence between Matthew and Luke appears to be at a fairly similar level in both the material paralleled in Mark and the material not paralleled in Mark, the Q material. The Markan Priority hypothesis requires that both Matthew and Luke made very considerable alterations to the text of Mark that they had in front of them, Matthew taking over only 38.2% of Mark's material unchanged, and Luke taking over just 24.1% of Mark's material unchanged (as we have noted from Table 2). Thus a very high degree of change must have been made by Matthew and Luke to their source if Markan Priority is true. This is not impossible, but it **is** improbable, and now that these figures are known to us from Morgenthaler's research, exponents of Markan Priority have the task ahead of them of explaining why and how and on what basis these extensive changes were made.

The Markan Dependence explanation is much more reasonable: Matthew and Luke already contained differing traditions, with divergent wording and order, when Mark commenced his work. Because of his theological purposes and his intended readership, he made a number of changes to his source material even where Matthew and Luke agreed; but much of the low level of correlation of Mark with his written sources is due to the extent of the initial divergence between Matthew and Luke, so that to that extent Mark by incorporating what **one** of his sources said would be diverging automatically from his **other** written source.

Moreover, in many cases the lack of exact identity of grammar and wording between Mark and Matthew or Luke in parallel pericopes is because when Mark came to conflate them he frequently had to employ a grammatical construction and forms of the words that differed (even if only slightly) from both of them.

Thus an explanation based upon Markan Dependence accounts well for why there would be such a relatively low level of word correlation as actually exists between Mark and each of the two Major Synoptics. This explanation contains no improbabilities.

## 7.22 That Luke Would Have Made the Great Omission from Mark

Mark 6:45 to 8:26—a section comprising 74 consecutive verses—is completely unparalleled in Luke: it is referred to, in consequence (e.g., Hawkins, 1911: 61; Streeter



1924: 172, 178) as “the Great Omission”. This circumstance requires some comment from the perspective of Synoptic theories. Hawkins has written an essay (in *Oxford Studies*, 1911: 60-74) on this matter from the perspective of the Markan Priority hypothesis, in which he notes that prior to and subsequent to this section Luke follows Mark’s order closely and omits very little of what he contains—and then in this one section Luke omits one-ninth of the total contents of Mark’s Gospel (62). He proceeds to consider the three explanations that are advanced for the Great Omission: that this material was missing from the copy of Mark used by Luke; that the omission occurred by accidental oversight; and that Luke would have had reasons for the deliberate omission of each of the nine pericopes in the section.

It is considered possible that Luke may have used an early edition of Mark’s Gospel that lacked the passage in question; but Hawkins shows (64) in his essay that the distinctive features that characterize the other eight-ninths of Mark’s Gospel “occur in the block of 74 verses here omitted by Luke with as much proportionate frequency as they do in the other 587 verses which ... were used by him”.

Hawkins views (66) more favourably the second possibility, concerning which he says, “Considerably more probability attaches to a second theory, viz that this division of our Second Gospel was contained in Luke’s copy of it, but that he accidentally left it unused ... I have long thought this a more than possible solution.”

But Hawkins much prefers the third explanation, that Luke intentionally chose not to use any of this material “because its contents seemed to him unsuitable for his Gospel, or at least not so suitable for it as other materials which he had ready for use”. Hawkins then discusses (1911: 67-74) the “nine constituent parts” of the Great Omission. He suggests that the miracles of healings (Mk 7:31-37 and 8:22-26) were unnecessary because (68)

Luke especially, in his readiness to save space by avoiding repetition, would be content with the more impressive and significant healings of a κωφός and of a blind man which he meant to record further on in his Gospel (11:14 and 18:35-43).

This desire to avoid unnecessary repetition also accounts (he says) for the omission of The Feeding of the Four Thousand (he has The Feeding of the Five Thousand), a second Storm on the Lake (he has a record of an earlier one), a general account of Healings at Gennesaret (he has a somewhat similar account in 6:17-19, based on Mk 3:7-11), and Request for and Refusal of a Sign (he has something similar in 11:16 and 29). The omission of the Eating with Unwashed Hands (Mk 7:1-23) is to be attributed to the fact that “Another observable tendency in Luke is to limit the amount of anti-Pharisaic

controversy which he preserves". For the pericope The Leaven of the Pharisees, "this omission is the result of Luke's tendency to 'spare the twelve'—to say comparatively little as to their faults and failings." Hawkins concedes that in the ninth case, the pericope of the Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter,

in this one case it may seem at first sight that the omission of the incident could not be intentional, since the idiosyncracies and prepossessions of the Third Evangelist would incline him to preserve it in his Gospel.

But after discussing it further he says (74),

It would seem then, on consideration of this narrative, that it might be repellent rather than attractive to St Luke's readers so far as it was taken as bearing on the mutual relations of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian Church ... We can thus easily understand his omitting this section as well as the other eight, if at this stage of his compilation he began to see the impossibility of compressing his materials within his space, and therefore the necessity of limiting himself to the most important of them.

Hawkins has a most effective way of disarming criticism of his preferred explanation: he himself sets out the objections to it, thus showing that he knows of these objections and has taken them into account in coming to his final judgement. But doing this does not in any way actually *nullify* these objections. He first explains how closely Luke follows the order and content of Mark both before and after this section, thus encouraging the reader not to meditate upon how very peculiar it is, therefore, that **Luke should so totally ignore this entire 74 verse section, if he had it available to him.**

Another significant objection that Hawkins himself ingenuously mentions is the fact that Luke's Gospel contains many of the very kinds of "repetitions" that (according to Hawkins's arguments) is the reason for Luke's rejection of six out of the nine pericopes in the Great Omission. Note for example the two Missions sent out (Lk 9:1ff; 10:1ff.); two leprosy healings (5:12ff.; 17:12ff.); two comparisons of the position of Jesus's mother with that of his disciples (8:19ff.; 11:27ff.); two disputes concerning greatness (9:46ff.; 22:24ff.); and three Passion Predictions (9:22; 9:44f.; 18:31ff.); plus Luke's eleven doublets (*Horae Synopticae*, 1909: 99-106). In the light of these "repetitions", the bald assertion that Luke omitted six of the pericopes of the Great Omission because he avoided repetitions and for reasons of conservation of space appears less convincing.

Hawkins's reason for Luke omitting the seventh pericope—the "observable tendency in Luke to limit the amount of anti-Pharisaic controversy which he preserves"—is by no means impossible, but "limit the amount" is a flexible term that can cover whatever in fact is found: and there is *some* anti-Pharisaic material in Luke, so he obviously was being

somewhat selective. In other words, **whatever amount** of anti-Pharisaic material had occurred in Luke's Gospel, Hawkins could have covered the situation by varying his terminology slightly. Thus his comment here provides no real reason for the absence of the Eating with Unwashed Hands pericope.

His explanation that the eighth "omission is the result of Luke's tendency to 'spare the twelve'" is a similarly flexible comment that can be adjusted to suit what is found, but which does not adequately account for the omission of the pericope. (Actually, we are able to find numerous occasions where Luke does not appear to have operated on the basis of some principle to "spare the twelve".)

Finally, Hawkins's explanation of why Luke would leave out the Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter pericope is a case of doing a good job in a difficult situation: one sympathizes with the performer, but one is not convinced by his achievement. (This pericope is listed and discussed separately above—§7.07—as one of the Seventeen Impossible Things.)

Overall, Hawkins's careful and thorough explanations still leave one with the impression, "Not proven".

Streeter speaks (1924: 174) most warmly of aspects of Hawkins's essay on this subject, as he does at other times of Hawkins's work generally; but this is one occasion when Streeter declines to follow Hawkins, though he concedes that his "hypothesis of intentional omission cannot be ruled out" (175). Further, Streeter gives weighty reasons against the "two editions of Mark" explanation (174-175). His own explanation he introduces with the remarks, "My mind has of late been attracted by a third alternative, that Luke used a mutilated copy of Mark. The case for this I state, but merely as a tentative suggestion" (175).

Kümmel (1975: 62-63) says,

That Mk 6:45-8:26 is lacking [in Luke] is admittedly "enigmatic", but at the same time Luke gives evidence that he had read this section. ... The view that Luke had access to a truncated version of Mark is as unsatisfactory an explanation of the evidence as any hypothesis of an *Urmarkus*. ... By far the most probable conclusion is that in the form handed down to us Mark served as a source for Matthew and Luke.

In a footnote (62) he quotes with approval the opinion of Morgenthauer that "Luke recognized the close relationship of some texts with the texts taken over from Mark and wanted to leave room for his own special material."

It can be seen then that the so-called Great Omission proves "enigmatic" (to use Kümmel's word) for advocates of Markan Priority. The explanations suggested cannot

be ruled out of court: any one of them is most certainly **possible**. But equally certainly they cannot be said to be **convincing**. If Luke had Mark in front of him, it is definitely improbable that he would move through a section of 74 verses, one-ninth of the length of this Gospel, and find **absolutely nothing at all** in it of which he wished to make any use!

We have already noted (§7.07) the pericope of the Syrophonecian's Daughter; but much else in this section would also be of interest to Luke, and a thoughtful reading of the "omitted" section suggests that the explanations offered are attempts to explain a difficulty. That difficulty does not exist on the Markan Dependence reading of the data: Matthew and Luke are independently-written Gospels, this material in question occurring in the traditions Matthew himself recorded and not in what Luke recorded. Mark in drawing upon both Gospels, found this material in Matthew and utilized it, and has supplemented what Matthew contains from his third source, Peter, for some stories and details which he himself has added in.

It is quite improbable that Luke would have made the "Great Omission" from Mark if he had had that Gospel in front of him, as Markan Priority postulates. It is very straightforward to account for the data here in all three Gospels on the basis of Markan Dependence. That is, once again in this instance Markan Dependence provides a much more reasonable explanation of what the Gospels are seen to contain.

### 7.23 That Jesus Would Only Ever Give Each Teaching Once

It is a tacit assumption—and sometimes an explicit assertion—by numbers of Markan Priorists that the variant forms of similar teaching by Jesus recorded in the Synoptics are redacted versions of the one saying by Jesus (if indeed a particular teaching is regarded as genuine: see also §7.24, following).

There are three main points at which this impinges upon the discussion of Synoptic relationships: the question of doublets; judgement regarding equivalence between pericopes in different Gospels; redaction of Mark and Q by Matthew and Luke.

Doublets are those places where a similar saying occurs twice in a given Gospel. They are referred to or discussed in all detailed studies of the Synoptic problem. Thus Hawkins sets out full lists of doublets (1909: 82-107), introducing this section of his book (80) by saying,

The "doublets", or repetitions of the same or closely similar sentences in the same Gospel, are of great value in supplying hints as to the sources and composition of the Gospels, especially when a comparison can be made with parallels in one or two other

Gospels, which is fortunately the case in most instances. ... These doublets will therefore be brought together here, with a few comments pointing out their bearing upon the Synoptic Problem.

The standard assessment of the doublets is that the doublets in Matthew and Luke are derived from two sources, Mark and Q, and these are presumed to be variant forms of what was originally said.

The second issue is that of judgement regarding equivalence between pericopes in different Gospels. Particular pericopes are in view here. Is the Parable of the Pounds (Lk 19:11-27) a variant version of the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30)? Is the Parable of the Marriage Feast (Mt 22:1-14) the same as the Parable of the Great Banquet (Lk 14:15-24)? What is the relationship between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4) and the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Mt 18:10-14; Lk 15:3-7)? Numerous scholars accept passages such as these as redactional variants of the one teaching.

Numbers of passages in Matthew and Luke differ from each other in specific details while having a general similarity of content. If these passages are not paralleled in Mark, then they are attributed to Q, and their differences are then the subject of discussion: do these differences result from the redactional modification of Q by Matthew or Luke (or both)? Or are the differences due to Matthew and Luke using differing rescensions of Q (or possibly, Aramaic versions of Q)? If the passages in question are not only in Matthew and Luke but also paralleled in Mark, then (with the specific exception of the passages that are regarded as Mark-Q overlaps—see §7.13) it is taken that the variation of Matthew and Luke respectively from Mark is due to the alterations made to Mark by Matthew and Luke respectively. This third issue is thus the question of the redaction of Mark and Q by Matthew and Luke.

Many of these various passages and types of passages are discussed separately in this study in the appropriate places. The point at issue here is the underlying assumption that exists in many scholars' treatment of these issues. This is: that such sayings and pericopes have one common origin, from which variation has occurred, either during the oral transmission stages (thus, the variation between the Q and Markan versions of a saying, for example) and/or at the stage of the redaction of Mark and Q by Matthew and Luke.

The one relevant—indeed, vital—consideration that appears to be lacking in the examination of the issue by many scholars is the question of whether ***Jesus could have given similar teaching on more than one occasion.***

In his Jowett Lectures, Burkitt has very sagely said (1911: 20),

On the very shortest estimate the length of the Ministry must have extended to about 400 days, and I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from 40 separate days. So that nine-tenths at least of the public life of Jesus remains to us a blank, even if we were to take every recorded incident as historical and accurately reported. And all the recorded sayings of Christ—how long would they take to pronounce? With due gravity and emphasis they might take six hours—hardly, perhaps, so much. In other words, they would take no more than two great political speeches, and a considerably less time than this present course of Lectures.

Yet the Gospel records tell us that Jesus engaged in preaching and teaching tours in town after town (Mk 1:38; 6:6), preaching in their synagogues (Mk 1:39) and to crowds in the countryside (Mk 1:45; 2:13; 3:7-10; 4:1-2). He often taught for hours at a time (6:34-35); sometimes for days on end (Mk 8:1-2). He taught many different groups of people in different places on different occasions. Now what did he teach in the course of these many hours of ministry? In particular, are we really to believe that he never said the same thing twice over, never preached the same message in different towns or different synagogues?

The idea is totally ludicrous. One of the most basic principles of effective teaching is judicious repetition. The writers of the New Testament Epistles very frequently repeat themselves in what they say in different letters. We can see this most clearly of course in Paul, as we have the greatest number of his letters available for comparison. We see some teachings come up only once or twice, but we see other themes and concepts constantly repeated—and in the case of some matters that are only mentioned on a small number of occasions in the Epistles, they were covered (we know from his passing comments) in the course of Paul's personal visits. For example: specific explanations about the Lord's Supper are very few in the New Testament, but where this subject does arise in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul also mentions that he had fully explained about it when he was personally present with them (11:23). Paul is quite willing to draw attention to the fact that he is repeating what he had already said to them previously (Phil 3:1b), as is Peter (2 Pet 1:12). Any modern-day teacher or preacher will know that he gives the same lessons to different people on different occasions, and indeed, for the sake of revising and reinforcing the lesson, he goes over it more than once with the same group.

Why then indeed should it be thought that Jesus would only ever give each teaching once? There is no possible evidence in support of or justification for coming to such a bizarre opinion about Jesus.

If, however, we are to grant this much, are we to hold that any repetition of the teaching must be in words identical with those used on the first occasion? Again, there are no grounds for such a peculiar opinion. Like any other effective teacher, Jesus would modify and adjust the thrust of his teaching from one occasion to another to give it maximum relevance for each group to which he spoke it; and he would adapt his stories and illustrations from one situation to the next. We know this, not merely because it is what good teachers have always done, not merely because this is what we see happening in the ministry of Jesus's followers in Acts and the Epistles, but we know it ***because this is what we find in the Gospels themselves.***

We have been busy, as Gospel scholars, inventing speculative explanations of how the Synoptic pericopes were redacted so as to end up being different from each other. All we have to do is to cease this for long enough to look at the actual situations described in the Gospel records. The two versions of the Lord's Prayer are ***said*** to have been given in quite different circumstances on different occasions. The same basic illustration of the Lost Sheep is given a different application in two totally different teaching situations. There are some similarities of ideas between the Parables of the Marriage Feast (Matthew) and of the Great Banquet (Luke), but the introduction to each of them makes it quite plain that they were spoken in completely different circumstances.

It is ***possible*** that these and other similar "distant parallels" are variants of the one original teaching, and that the context is in each case the invention of the later redactor. But it is ***highly improbable***. There is no evidence, there is no line of argument, there is no basis in logical thought, there is no valid ground of any kind, upon which to declare that these distant parallels are derived in each instance from the one original teaching: for this requires a commitment to the position that Jesus would only ever give each teaching once—a matter of the highest improbability.

What is most probable is that in the history of each Gospel the circumstances of each pericope's setting were transmitted with that pericope, or were known in some other way to the Gospel's author: to Matthew, from his memory of his own involvement, and of what he had heard said by the other apostles; to Luke, from the traditions he collected during his investigation and from his personal checking with eye-witnesses; to Mark, from his knowledge of the general traditions of the church and in particular of the teaching of Peter.

When Matthew and Luke record this teaching or that, one incident or another, they reflect and thus represent the separate traditions that to such a large extent lie behind their Gospels. Frequently, their wording of Jesus's teaching will differ ***because they are***

**recording what Jesus taught upon somewhat similar issues on different occasions, derived from different eyewitnesses.** When Mark's wording differs from both of them—which is usually when he is adding in some further details—this represents the influence upon his Gospel of his third source, the apostle Peter.

This is the evaluation to which one is led by taking the Gospel records at their face value. And this is a far more probable general explanation of the observable differences in Jesus's teaching recorded in the Gospels than the alternative: that Jesus would only ever give each teaching once, or that if he repeated himself it would be in identical words, so that any difference in reports of that teaching were solely due to changes made in the words of his teaching in the course of their transmission, or that if his teaching differed a little from one occasion to another there could be no multiplicity of witnesses to pass on that teaching in its variant forms.

#### **7.24 That the Early Church Would—or Could—Invent the Teachings of Jesus**

Developments in New Testament scholarship last century—as have been detailed and documented earlier in this study—have led to the adoption by many researchers of a very sceptical attitude about the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus and indeed of the entire Gospel narratives. In their present form the Gospels are (according to this theory) the result of many decades of development and adaptation by the early church. Occasionally in the Gospels we can catch glimpses here and there of the authentic, historical Jesus behind the overlay of tradition which has encrusted the record of the facts of his life and very largely hidden the truth. It is not possible, we are assured, to accept the statements of the Gospels as being historically accurate, either in narrative or in their record of Jesus's teaching. Rather, what we see in the Gospels is the evidence of the perceived needs of the early church several decades after the time of Christ, for these Gospels were written to meet those needs, and so their contents were devised on *that* basis and for *that* purpose. The Gospels that we have are thus the product of the creative writing of the early Christian community.

This viewpoint conveys the implication that it is quite naïve (as well as rather quaint and oldfashioned) to think that in the Gospels we have the actual words and deeds of Jesus. What we have, rather (so we are informed), are the tales about Jesus told in the oral tradition, shaped and moulded in the course of transmission, written down in primitive form in Mark (this theory presumes the Markan Priority hypothesis) and in more developed form in Matthew and Luke, being reworked and reworded, expanded, amplified and supplemented, by the respective authors of Mark, Matthew and Luke for and in conjunction with their respective Christian communities.



From this belief emerges the “search for the historical Jesus”, which seeks to penetrate through these accretions of the later church to whatever substratum of genuine and accurate tradition about Jesus underlies our present Gospels. Q material is held to be early and original, and largely reliable: if we can work our way backwards from our present text to its original form. It used to be thought that what was found in Mark could be accepted as historical, with only the additions and modifications of Matthew and Luke being the result of later church adaptation; but many scholars today would not accept this position, but regard Mark as being as historically unreliable as the other two. What we have, then, in all three Synoptic Gospels (I do not encroach here into the related but separate field of Johannine studies) is not by any means an authentic and reliable record of what Jesus said and did, but the fruits of the imaginative redactional manipulations engaged in by the authors of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

The line of argumentation in support of this theory is quite circular—we know what these community needs were, which the Gospels were written to meet, from examining the contents of the Gospels, and we know that the Gospels were written to meet such needs because those are the matters with which the Gospels are concerned.

Moreover, even if (and this is an “if” of substantial proportions) we had adequate reason to believe that the particular contents of the Gospels were decided and shaped by such needs of Christian communities decades after the events that they record, this in itself in no way automatically impugns the veracity of their contents. It would be perfectly possible for members of the Christian church who were eyewitnesses, or were taught by eyewitnesses, to write down a record of those parts of the total tradition that were most relevant to those needs of the community, and for those accounts of what Jesus said and did to be **true**. There is no justification for the conclusion that those writers would be compelled by lack of suitable material amongst the authentic Jesus-traditions to **invent** things for Jesus to have said and done.

Nor have we any basis for believing that the other members of these early Christian communities would have been so gullible that they would believe everything that they were told that purported to be about Jesus. Or that they would be so cut off from the mainstream of the traditions as to be unaware of whether such things were part of those traditions, or cleverly devised myths. And there is certainly no evidence whatsoever that would suggest that these early Christians would willingly and knowingly embrace fictitious myths and tales, and adopt them as the basis of how to live, and sacrifice and die for what they had thus adopted as their beliefs. It is those who today believe such things about the early church who show great evidence of gullibility.

If such fictions could have become accepted thus in the early church, what is presumed to have happened to all the people who knew the life and ministry of Jesus at first hand? To the members of the crowds who so frequently received his teachings and saw his mighty works? To the apostles themselves, specifically chosen and designated by Jesus to be his witnesses, and trained for this role?

Moreover, communities are not “creative”. **Communities** do not invent and devise stories and tales. **People** do. And if there were people with the ability to create the kind of teaching that in the Gospels is attributed to Jesus and that has ever after excited the admiration of the world, then people of this kind and calibre can hardly have been lost anonymously amongst the membership of the early church. If, moreover, such people (whoever they were) are the real authors of the teaching attributed in the Gospels to Jesus, then **they** (and not Jesus) are to be recognized as the superb teacher of Christendom—they are greater than Jesus, for **they** said these things and Jesus did not. The disciple has become greater than his master!

Not only is there absolutely no evidence for the idea of a community that created its own “teachings and deeds of Jesus”, but all the evidence that does exist is directly, sharply, and strongly against such a possibility. There is only one saying not attested in the Gospels that in the Acts and Epistles is attributed to Jesus (Acts 20:35). The fact that there is one such saying reminds us that not all that was known in the early church of the sayings of Jesus has become incorporated into our Gospels. But this saying, spoken by Paul, hardly qualifies as a creative invention of the early church.

Yet if this theory is correct, there were considerable quantities of “sayings of Jesus” (and “deeds of Jesus”) being generated in the early church just as the need arose.

The church had need of divine guidance at numerous points in the period covered by the Acts, from the appointment of a replacement for Judas to the appointment of assistants for the apostles for the church's welfare work, from the decisions about ministry to Gentiles to the decisions concerning obedience to the Law of Moses. There is no emergence of appropriate “sayings of Jesus” to cover any of these situations. In each case the church took the next step after prayer and in dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit, and frequently with the mention of an Old Testament Scripture as relevant to the situation: but without any citation of some “word of Jesus” on the point. Where at this time were the creative inventors of such helpful sayings of Jesus as the theory postulates?

In the Epistles the same situation exists. There are a considerable number of citations of or allusions to Jesus's teaching—but these are restrained, limited, and in concord with

the Gospels. The most noteworthy part of the Epistles in this connection is 1 Cor 7. In this chapter Paul gives his authoritative pronouncement upon an issue (7:10), and then states explicitly that this is the citation of a word of the Lord. At several other points in the discussion he states a judgement upon one issue or another, and equally expressly states that this is given upon his own authority in the absence of any word of the Lord Jesus upon the matter (see 7:6, 8, 12, 17, 25-26, 32, 35, 40). This careful distinction between what was said by the Lord Jesus Christ and cited by Paul, and what was said upon Paul's own apostolic authority, is the very opposite from the "creative invention" of sayings of Jesus for all occasions, and shows in unmistakable fashion that the distinction between what Jesus himself said and what was being taught by his authorized followers was being very carefully preserved.

It is not as if the matter of authenticity was not raised in the early church, so that at that time all things were possible. There were those who were willing to claim to speak in the name of an apostle (cf. 2 Thess 2:2 and 3:17). The possibility that the first Christians had begun to "follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" is expressly stated and repudiated on the basis that "we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet 1:16). The genuineness of the message of Jesus was explicitly asserted on the ground of specific eyewitness involvement with Jesus (1 John 1:1-4).

The idea of wholesale largescale invention of Gospel material is in fact a complete denial of what Luke himself expressly states to be the case: his Gospel, he declares (Lk 1:1-4) in very sober tones, is "a narrative of the things accomplished amongst us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word"—and this comment is true of others also who had undertaken the work of compiling such a narrative. Moreover, in writing his own record he had checked out everything carefully and closely from the beginning, in order to set down an orderly account that would enable the reader to **know the truth** of the things that had been taught.

If this is correct, then the theory of invention of "words and deeds of Jesus" is incorrect. And vice versa: the "invention" theory is totally contradicted by Lk 1:1-4. They are mutually exclusive. In fact, to hold the theory of church invention of what is now found in the Gospel record is to accept pure speculation devoid of the slightest foundation of objective evidence of any kind and to fly in the face of all the evidence that does exist.

This theory is totally suppositional, and devoid of the slightest skerrick of actual

objective evidence. Who were the members of this “creative community”? When and where did they live? What information do we have about their activities from any historical source? The opinions about these matters are imaginative speculations and are comparable for dependability, authenticity and accuracy with what you would get in a dissertation upon life forms on the planets of Alpha Centauri.

Yet many people accept these “conclusions” as being a scholarly extension of the hypothesis of Markan Priority. In fact, that the early church would—or could—invent the teachings of Jesus can be regarded as highly improbable.

Why designate this as improbable, rather than place it with the seventeen impossibilities listed earlier? Because in those other cases, the relevant evidence is all available for investigation. In those instances one was able to say, Compare the data, evaluate the evidence. Here, one must say, Compare the reasoning, evaluate the argumentation. We do not have enough information concerning the time of the early church to be able to say that we have all the facts needed as the basis for final judgement. But we do have enough data from which to judge that to accept the reliability of the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus, so far from being naïve and unscholarly, is to accept the conclusion to which reason, logic, and all available evidence points, as does the work of sober, careful scholarship that respects the known facts and does not engage in wild conjectures and unsubstantiated speculations.

### 7.3 IN CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have set out seventeen things that the Markan Priority hypothesis invites us to accept and that, it seems to me, are impossible to believe. I realize, of course, that in these matters the judgement of one individual will differ from that of another, and there will doubtless be numbers of people who have less difficulty than I in accepting some of these things. But it must be acknowledged that these various matters do constitute something of a problem for the Markan Priority hypothesis.

In a few cases, they also constitute something of a problem for the Markan Dependence view (and indeed for any Synoptic relationship view), but it is always ***much less*** of a problem than it is for Markan Priority. And in the vast majority of cases, the passages delineated above are very simple and straightforward to account for from the perspective of Markan Dependence.

These passages, and the issues raised concerning them, are therefore “direction indicators”. Given that the data strongly indicates the existence of ***some*** kind of literary relationship involving all three Synoptics, the question confronting Synoptic scholarship

is that of determining in which direction that relationship has flowed. These passages indicate that the direction of relationship is that Matthew and Luke were used by Mark rather than vice versa.

Those who desire to reject Markan Dependence and espouse Markan Priority will find it requisite to give their attention to the task of providing reasonable explanations for the passages set out here—which as things stand certainly are more easily explained on the basis of Markan Dependence. Alternatively, these people may emulate Alice's Queen in *Through the Looking-Glass* and through practice develop the capacity for believing impossible things before breakfast.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LUKE AND MATTHEW**

#### **8.1 PRELIMINARY: DID LUKE KNOW MATTHEW'S GOSPEL?**

The similarities between Matthew and Luke can be explained by the hypothesis of Markan Priority plus Q. But this is not the only valid explanation that covers the data

#### **8.2 THE SIMILARITIES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE**

##### **8.2.1 Similarities of Content**

##### **8.2.2 Similarities of Wording**

- (a) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, Shared with Mark
- (b) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, Where Mark is Less Similar
- (c) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, with No Markan Parallel

##### **8.2.3 Similarities of Order**

##### **8.2.4 Conclusions Drawn**

The extent of the similarities between Matthew and Luke demand a literary explanation. The simple explanation that Luke used Matthew provides that connection, as an alternative to the proposition that Matthew and Luke used Q, or Q together with Mark.

#### **8.3 THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE**

##### **8.3.1 Dissimilarities of Content**

##### **8.3.2 Dissimilarities of Wording**

##### **8.3.3 Dissimilarities of Order**

##### **8.3.4 Differences in How Much Luke Includes**

##### **8.3.5 Differences Due to What Luke Omits**

##### **8.3.6 Differences Whereby Luke Excludes What Matthew Presents**

##### **8.3.7 In Conclusion**

All the various passages mentioned in this section constitute cumulatively an assembly of very strong evidence: they make it very difficult to see how Luke could possibly have known Matthew's Gospel.

## 8.4 ASSESSMENT

We have reached an impasse. The two preceding sections of this study present conflicting evidence, showing that Luke ***must have known***, and that Luke ***cannot have known***, Matthew's Gospel. The conflicting evidence can be reconciled by the recognition that Luke knew and used ***some parts*** of Matthew, and did not know or use ***other parts*** of Matthew. The evidence indicates, further, that the parts of Matthew that Luke knew were not in the form of a Proto-Matthew, but were in circulation as written documents containing separate pericopes or clusters of pericopes.

## 8.5 THE INDEPENDENCE OF LUKE

The data indicates that there is a very high level of independence of Matthew and Luke from each other.

## 8.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Most of the material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is not of such a nature as to suggest or require a common source for both Major Synoptics, nor that either one of them used the other.

Some of the material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is of such a nature as to indicate that it had a common literary origin.

All the evidence, when considered together, suggests that Luke was acquainted with ***sections only*** of Matthew's Gospel, and that those sections were not parts of a complete Gospel (that is, some sort of Proto-Matthew) but rather that they were in separate circulation prior to being incorporated into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke by their respective authors. Further, the most probable author of this material common to Matthew and Luke was the apostle Matthew.

There thus exists a very reasonable view of the data other than the Two-Source hypothesis of Q and Markan Priority. On a number of grounds this view proves to be a more satisfactory explanation of the data than the Two-Source hypothesis.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE**

This chapter takes a careful look at the evidence for and against the proposal that Luke knew and used Matthew

#### **8.1 DID LUKE KNOW MATTHEW'S GOSPEL?**

The similarities and differences between the Gospels of Matthew and Luke require explanation. How are they to be accounted for?

There is the explanation that is given for the data by the Two-Source hypothesis: where Matthew and Luke parallel Mark (that is, in what is called the Triple Tradition), then the similarities in Matthew and Luke are due to these two Synoptists closely following Mark as their source, and their differences are due to redactional modifications that one or other (or both) of them have made when drawing upon Mark as their source.

But where Matthew and Luke are similar to each other and are not paralleled in Mark, they are (it is explained) following a second source, usually referred to as Q; and where Matthew and Luke are parallel in basic contents but differ in details or wording this is due to either of (or a combination of) their redactional modifications of Q or their use of different recensions of Q.

The question now to be investigated is, Is this the only valid hypothesis that covers the data?

For the purpose of this investigation, then, it is necessary put aside the idea of Q and the hypothesis of Mark as a source for Matthew and Luke, in order to see what sense can be made of Matthew and Luke apart from Q or Mark. This investigation may lead to absurdities, requiring the return to the Two-Source hypothesis and its acceptance as the only sensible explanation of the data; or it may lead to one or more alternative explanations that need to be evaluated alongside the Two-Source hypothesis.

#### **8.2 THE SIMILARITIES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE**

A comparison of Matthew and Luke reveals similarities of essentially the same kind that have been noted when Mark is also involved in the comparison: that is, similarities of content, of wording, and of order.

##### **8.2.1 Similarities of Content**

Both Major Synoptics contain the same basic kind of material: they cover Jesus's



teaching, they describe his healings and other miracles, they record his temptation, his transfiguration, and so on. They may at times have different accounts that nonetheless cover the same basic material. Thus they have different accounts of the genealogy of Jesus, the birth narratives, the call of the first disciples, the rejection at Nazareth, the resurrection appearances, and so on, but we can note that they both **do have** accounts of such things, and they portray a basically similar ministry of healing and teaching.

Now, it may be promptly responded that the similarity simply reflects the tradition in the early church and that this goes back to the deeds and sayings of Jesus themselves, so that if you were going to write a Gospel record at all, this is what you would put into it. But a glance at John's Gospel will show that a very different approach is possible, and this comparison further highlights the similarities of Matthew and Luke: in John's Gospel, Jesus teaches in lengthy discourses, in Matthew and Luke mostly in shorter discourses and conversations, and pithy memorable sayings, and in parables; in John Jesus has a ministry in Judea, in Matthew and Luke his ministry is in Galilee until his last Journey to Jerusalem. And so on.

So we can note the extent to which the Major Synoptics agree in including the same story, or at least are similar in that they include the **same kinds of things** even when they do not give identical accounts, and this is a feature that requires explanation.

### 8.2.2 Similarities of Wording

Not only do we often find the same events described and the same teachings recorded in Matthew and Luke, but quite frequently this occurs in language that is very similar. The degree of similarity varies considerably, from (a) absolute identity extending over a dozen or more words in succession, and general identity (with a few insignificant verbal differences) that may extend over whole paragraphs, through to (b) places of broad agreement in sense occurring with quite significant differences in some wording, through, further, to (c) virtually no similarity of wording at all even though the same event is clearly being described.

An example of the second category would be the Lord's Prayer of Mt 6:9-13//Lk 11:1-4 (compare the similarities and differences of wording), and of the third category would be the Rejection at Nazareth in Mt 13:53-58//Lk 4:16-30 (the agreements are negligible and the differences are extensive). The differences can be explained in numerous ways, particularly on the basis of a combination of variant sources and redactional modifications. What is of prime consideration for us at the moment is the extent of the similarities of wording, especially in passages that fall into the first category described above.

It is relevant to note some examples of these similarities. They can be found in passages: (a) where the similarities are also shared with Mark, (b) where the passage is paralleled in Mark but Matthew and Luke are much more similar in wording to each other than either is to Mark, and (c) in passages that are without any Markan parallel. Here are some of the more striking examples of each of these:

**(a) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, Shared With Mark**

The Cleansing of a Leper (Mt 8:2-4//Mk 1:40-45//Lk 5:12-16)

The Healing of a Paralytic (Mt 9:1-8//Mk 2:1-12//Lk 5:17-26)

Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8//Mk 2:23-28//Lk 6:1-5)

The Parable of the Sower (Mt 13:1-9//Mk 4:1-9//Lk 8:4-8)

Conditions of Discipleship (Mt 16:24-28//Mk 8:34-9:1//Lk 9:23-27)

Blessing the Children (Mt 19:13-15//Mk 10:13-16//Lk 18:15-17)

The Question about Authority (Mt 21:23-27//Mk 11:27-33//Lk 20:1-8)

The Question about the Resurrection (Mt 22:23-33//Mk 12:18-27//Lk 20:27-38)

Signs before the End (Mt 24:4-8//Mk 13:5-8//Lk 21:8-11)

The Parable of the Fig Tree (Mt 24:32-36//Mk 13:28-32//Lk 21:29-33)

(For statistics of the extent of agreement in number of words and percentages, see these passages in §4.2.3, Table 1.)

**(b) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, Where Mark is Less Similar**

John's Messianic Preaching (Mt 3:11-12//Mk 1:7-8//Lk 3:16-17)

The Temptation (Mt 4:1-11//Mk 1:12-13//Lk 4:1-13)

The Beelzebul Controversy (Mt 12:22-45//Mk 3:22-30//Lk 11:14-32)

**(c) Close Similarity in Matthew and Luke, with No Markan Parallel**

John's Preaching of Repentance (Mt 3:7-10//Lk 3:7-9)

On Serving Two Masters (Mt 6:24//Lk 16:13)

Sayings to Would-be Disciples (Mt 8:19-23//Lk 9:57-60)

The Plentiful Harvest (Mt 9:37-38//Lk 10:2)

John the Baptist's Question (Mt 11:2-6//Lk 7:18-23)

Jesus's Testimony Concerning John (Mt 11:7-19//Lk 7:24-35)

Woe to Cities of Galilee (Mt 11:20-24//Lk 10:12-15)

Jesus's Thanksgiving to the Father (Mt 11:25-27//Lk 10:21-22)

Jesus's Lament over Jerusalem (Mt 23:37-39//Lk 13:34-35)

### 8.2.3 Similarities of Order

Not only are the same pericopes found in Matthew and Luke, with a wording that is quite frequently very similar and even at times identical, but the general order of pericopes is very similar in the two Gospels.

That is to say, the overall structure of the Major Synoptics is the same, and the extent and significance of the similarities is much greater than that of the relatively few places where a difference of order does exist. Thus the differences of order are not really significant but are simply due to a rearrangement of some of the material at some stage, while the agreement of order *is* significant, because it can hardly be accidental or fortuitous. Even when a large block of material is found in two different locations in Matthew and Luke, pericopes that are not in themselves necessarily connected with each other and that certainly do not possess any innate order are given by both Matthew and Luke in the same sequence within that block.

Noteworthy examples of this are the two blocks each of several pericopes that occur in succession in Matthew (Across the Sea of Galilee, Mt 8:18-9:1; and Events in Capernaum, Mt 9:2-17), immediately following upon the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law and the Sick At Nightfall (Mt 8:14-17), and that occur in reverse order in Luke and widely separated (Across the Sea of Galilee, Lk 8:22-40, with one part of Matthew paralleled in Lk 9:57-60; Events in Capernaum, Lk 5:17-39E), and both of them well after the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law and the Sick At Nightfall (Lk 4:38-41).

Orchard avers that the explanation of this data is that Luke has used Matthew's Gospel in writing his own, and adopted Matthew's order as his own basic framework. He argues (1977: 45) that

Luke adheres firmly to certain fixed points in Matthew's framework. What is especially clear is that in the very places where Luke's sequence varies from Matthew's ... there still remain a number of fixed points (the First Preaching Tour, the Gathering of the Crowds, the Great Sermon, the Centurion's Slave, the Sending of the Twelve, the Missionary Discourse, Herod's Interest in Jesus) where their joint sequence remains absolutely the same. Thus the units which Luke re-groups in his own way in chapters 4-8 are still grouped round the same fixed points. Moreover Luke retains every one of Matthew's topics, except for those in his Great Omission. The quality and amount of agreement is in fact so high as strongly to urge assent to the conclusion that the one Gospel must be in some real literary dependence on the other, i.e. that Luke has adopted the actual pattern and sequence of Matthew, with the reservations stated.

Orchard has then examined in detail the differences of order between Matthew and

Luke in the placement of their common material, and attributes this to Lukan reworking of Matthean order to suit his own purposes. After an explanation of how Luke appears to have treated Matthean order, Orchard comments (1977: 53),

These re-arrangements of Luke properly explain what many have thought to be a jumble of clueless transpositions, and show his Gospel to be a purposeful re-editing.

It can thus be argued that the substantial agreements between order of pericopes in Matthew and Luke are evidence of a literary relationship between the two Gospels, and that the best explanation of the nature of this relationship is that Luke made use of Matthew's Gospel.

### 8.2.4 Conclusions Drawn

There are a significant number of sections in Luke, ranging from short sayings to lengthy pericopes, that in content and wording are so similar to parallel sections of Matthew, and found in such similarity of order, that scholars in general would conclude that they must have a common source. There are four ways in which such similarities could have arisen:

- (a) If Luke used Matthew.
- (b) If Matthew used Luke.
- (c) If both Matthew and Luke used the same earlier material. (The Two-Source hypothesis would come into this category of explanation, but there are other explanations of this kind, as we shall see.)
- (d) If Matthew and Luke each used oral tradition that was transmitted in a sufficiently fixed form to account for the similarities.

The first view, that Luke used Matthew, commands quite strong support and will be evaluated in detail. The second view, that Matthew used Luke, would require that Matthew's Gospel was somewhat later than Luke's, and necessitates rather complex explanations for how Matthew is perceived to have handled what he found in Luke. While this approach does have some supporters—it is a concomitant of Lindsay's view of Lukan Priority (see Chapter Ten, §10.4.3)—and cannot be dismissed as an impossibility, it is rarely propounded, and the arguments in its support, though advanced strongly by the Jerusalem School, have not appeared very compelling in the academic world. The difficulties that it faces seem so insurmountable that I have come to agree with the others who have reached the same conclusion, and adjudge that this appears the least likely of the possible explanations of the parallels in Matthew and Luke. The third view, that Matthew and Luke both used an earlier source other than our Mark, has had an advocate in Koestler (see Farmer, 1983: xxxv).

The fourth view confronts a major obstacle in regard to the matter of order. To assert that the identical order of numerous independent pericopes would be conveyed as an integral part of the oral tradition is to adopt a position that is difficult to sustain logically, and for which there is absolutely no direct evidence of any kind, internal or external. One must concede that this is **possible**, but it is not easy to see why **oral** tradition would have connected together as a single item of transmission the pericopes (for example) of the Healing of the Paralytic, the Call of Matthew-Levi and Eating with Sinners, and the Question of Fasting, Mt 9:2-17//Lk 5:17-39E, so that they have become embodied in both Matthew and Luke in just that sequence in each case.

(To say that this block and other similar clusters of pericopes are given in just that order because that is the sequence in which the events occurred is not to solve this problem in itself, because these blocks as a whole occur **out of order** as between Matthew and Luke, so that the question is, Why would oral tradition so carefully preserve this order **within each block** when there is no observable reason for that order having any significance and when the blocks of pericopes are in different order in relation to each other in Matthew and Luke?)

Similarly the completely oral theory of transmission has the difficulties in accounting for similarities of content and wording that we note in Chapter Ten, §10.2.

The view that Luke used Matthew has, we have noted, been given strong support. It has been advocated by those who hold Markan Priority but are unconvinced of the existence of Q. Thus A W Argyle, "Evidence For The View That St Luke Used St Matthew's Gospel" (1964); and A M Farrer, "On Dispensing with Q" (1955: 56) says "We can conceive well enough how St Luke could have both read St Matthew's book as it stands, and written the gospel he has left us. ... There is no difficulty in supposing St Luke to have read St Matthew." The Farrer hypothesis is examined in §10.4.2. Similarly, Morgenthauer in 1971 asserts both the priority of Mark and that Luke knew Matthew (*Synoptic Statistics* Part IV, especially 300ff.).

Some who advocate the independence of Matthew and Mark also suggest that Luke knew Matthew. Thus Albright and Mann (1971: XL) say, "It is only necessary (as some have suggested) to posit that Luke had read Matthew before compiling his gospel ... to dispense with the mysterious 'Q' altogether." In particular, that Luke knew Matthew is affirmed by Farmer and his associates of the Two-Gospel view, and also by the Fourfold Gospel school. I have discussed these in Chapter Six, §6.1.3 and §6.1.4.

The extent of the similarities between Matthew and Luke demands a literary connection. The simple explanation that Luke used Matthew provides that connection, as an

alternative to the proposition that Matthew and Luke used Q, or used Q together with Mark. But these similarities are only part of the observable data.

### 8.3 THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE

Numerous scholars have assessed the question of whether Luke could have known and used Matthew. Some have given explanations of how he could have done so. And some have given explanations of why he could not have done so.

There is no doubt that the hypothesis that Luke used Matthew will account for all the phenomena of similarity between the Major Synoptics that has been noted above. The major question would be to account for the manner in which Luke used Matthew. A thoroughly detailed presentation of how Luke could have used Matthew so as to produce the Gospel of Luke as we have it today has been given by Orchard in his *Matthew, Luke and Mark* (1977), and Black in *Why Four Gospels?* (2001: 69-76), and has been considerably developed by the Two-Gospel team in *Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's Use of Matthew* (McNichol, 1996). Their explanation of Luke's methodology is (14), that after the infancy stories and genealogy,

Luke did not simplistically adopt the order of Matthew's pericopes from Mt 3 to 18. Rather, he created his narrative by moving forward through Matthew to a certain point and then—still following his own narrative agenda—*went back* to an earlier part of Matthew and proceeded to work his way forward in Matthew again. He repeated this procedure a number of times until he used most of the material in Matthew down to Mt 18 (a speech of Jesus dealing with community discipline). Here Luke stopped his method of successive utilization of Matthew's stories and sayings in order to create a lengthy teaching section loosely set against the backdrop of Jesus travelling towards Jerusalem (Lk 10:1-19:27). Known as the Lukan Travel Narrative, the method Luke followed here was to weave together sayings taken from the major speeches of Jesus in Matthew, mostly in the order in which the sayings occur within each speech in Matthew, around a number of themes appropriate to Christians in the Hellenistic world.

These scholars thus envisage Luke as making a series of "sweeps" through Matthew's Gospel, progressively in each run-through taking out from this Gospel whatever he wished to use in his own Gospel, without (it would appear) a great deal of regard for the context into which Matthew had placed it. In this manner, Luke was then able (14) "to weave together sayings taken from the major speeches of Jesus in Matthew". As well as placing some of these in various parts of his Gospel, he was also from these sayings and by this method to construct "a lengthy teaching section", his Lukan Travel Narrative. This is explained (15):

Luke's revision of Matthew was guided by a number of considerations which we will identify and explain in due course, but the most important of all was his determination to write a narrative that was 'accurate,' i.e., presented in what he considered to be an appropriate *chronological* order for a literary work.

The very idea that anyone would treat Matthew like this has long been raised as a serious objection against any hypothesis of either Mark or Luke having utilized Matthew's Gospel. In 1924 Streeter raised it as an argument against Matthew's priority to Mark, saying that only a "crank" would dismember Matthew in such a way as Mark would be envisaged as doing. Kümmel (1975: 64) growls,

What could possibly have motivated Lk ... to shatter Mt's sermon on the mount, placing parts of it in his sermon on the plain, dividing up other parts among various chapters of his Gospel, and letting the rest drop out of sight.

On the basis of these and other arguments (which were based on assuming Markan Priority), Kümmel then asserted that the idea that Luke was dependent upon Matthew was "completely inconceivable".

Then in his 1981 *Anchor Commentary on Luke*, Fitzmyer considers the question of "Luke's Supposed Dependence on Matthew" and gives six reasons (Vol 1, 73-75) for rejecting this possibility. The thrust of several of these various objections is directed primarily against the Farrer hypothesis, which accepts Markan Priority, and thus these arguments have no relevance regarding Markan Posteriority. But, Fitzmeyer also asks (74), Why would Luke ignore such things as the "fuller form of the Beatitudes", and similar material in Matthew? Like Kümmel, he queries (74) whyever Luke would wish to break up Matthew's sermons and discourses, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Then he objects (75), "The frequent disagreement with the Matthean order in this regard is crucial to any judgement about Luke's dependence on Matthew; indeed, it suggests he does not depend on him at all."

These comments have cogency. I will return to them shortly. However, I want first to consider the entire question of Luke's dissimilarities with Matthew.

The similarities of the two Major Synoptics have been mentioned. But to recognize the existence of numerous similarities between Matthew and Luke is to see only part of the issue under consideration. It is also necessary to take account also of the equally striking differences between them.

These dissimilarities correspond with the categories of similarities that we have just noted: there are dissimilarities of content, wording, and order. Additionally, there are differences between Matthew and Luke of other kinds.

### 8.3.1 Dissimilarities of Content

When considering the content of Matthew and Luke, it is not enough to mention (as in §8.2.1, above) that Matthew and Luke have different accounts of the genealogy of Jesus, the birth narratives, etc., and to comment that each of the two Major Synoptics **do have** accounts of such things, and then to move on - as if this comment adequately covered the issue and as if in fact the similarity of subject matter was a point of correspondence between Matthew and Luke that strengthened the case for there being a literary relationship between the two.

Such a conclusion has as an unstated premiss the proposition that a similarity of subject matter between the two pericopes in Matthew and Luke indicates (or at least, provides support for) a literary link. But under what circumstances could such a thing be true? Two only:

(a) where one account was used by the other Gospel author (or where a common original source was used by both Matthew and Luke) and the differences are redactional modifications; or

(b) where the fact that the first Major Synoptic had a particular type of pericope prompted the second Major Synoptic to include a different account on the same subject.

Now, neither of these two circumstances applies to pericopes in the category that we are now considering. Into the present category we place pericopes that, although similar in subject matter, can hardly be held to be drawn one from the other or both from some earlier common source. Thus it is not believable to say that Luke's genealogy derived from Matthew's (or vice versa) but was subjected to redactional modification; nor is it believable to say that they have come from a single common source.

The following pericopes may certainly be considered as having similarity of subject matter but independence of origin, and therefore go into this present category:

PERICOPE	MATTHEW	LUKE
1. The genealogy	1:1-17	3:23-38
2. The infancy narratives	1:18-2:23E	1:5-2:52E
3. The call of the first disciples	4:18-22	5:1-11
4. The rejection at Nazareth	13:53-58E	4:16-30
5. The parable of the great feast	22:1-14	14:15-24
6. The parable of the talents/pounds	25:14-30	19:11-27
7. The anointing	26:6-13	7:36-50
8. The resurrection appearances	28:1-20E	24:1-53E



There are other pericopes that some scholars hold should be added to this list (including in particular the Greatest Commandment, the Dispute about Greatness, and the Parable of the Lost Sheep), but the foregoing instances are sufficient at least to establish the existence of this category of pericope. It is also relevant to note the difference of their placement. Orchard comments about this thus (1977: 49),

We may now note that whenever he has a unit with the same topic as a corresponding Matthean unit but with a different content, Luke never places it in the same absolute or relative sequence with its Matthean counterpart, but always in another context.

Moreover, it is unbelievable to hold that the existence of one pericope in one Gospel inspired the other Major Synoptist to include in his Gospel a **different** account covering **similar** subject matter; as if Luke had said, “I see Matthew has put in a story about The Call of the First Disciples [or The Rejection at Nazareth or any other of these pericopes]; I had therefore better include an account of such a thing”—and thereupon included in **another** place a **different** account that he had available from **some other** source.

There is no way that the existence in one Gospel of any of these pericopes can be taken as providing any evidence for any kind of literary relationship with the second Major Synoptic.

On the contrary: the existence of these two sets of pericopes in Matthew and Luke respectively, which we can call “distant parallels”, constitutes an argument for averring that neither Matthew nor Luke knew the other's Gospel: because if either of them had done so, his parallel would hardly have been as distant as it is, but would have shown **some** awareness of the existence of the other account. That is to say, the presumption is that if Luke had known Matthew's account of the Rejection at Nazareth then his own account would have shown some evidence of his awareness of it (and similarly for other pericopes in this category), and the onus would be on the advocate of a contrary view to provide a satisfactory explanation on the basis of that view.

The difference in content between Matthew and Luke refers to passages in the one Gospel for which the source could not be the other Gospel nor a source also used by the other Gospel. The difference in content in these pericopes is so extensive as to constitute a serious objection to the view that Luke knew Matthew. That Luke, having access to Matthew, would choose to make use of 37% (395 verses) of that Gospel, taking at most only 35.5% (408 verses) of his own Gospel from it and 64.5% (740 verses) from other sources, is a feature that requires explanation by those who hold that Luke knew Matthew's Gospel. [For these statistics, see §4.3.6. This issue is considered further in §8.3.5, Differences Due to What Luke Omits.]

### 8.3.2 Dissimilarities of Wording

In the pericopes which Matthew and Luke share and in which there is similarity of wording such as to suggest a literary relationship or at least a common source, dissimilarities also occur. These are of such a nature as to require explanation, if Luke was here using Matthew as his source.

There are many cases where it is possible to say that the differences are the product of Luke's redaction of Matthew's material; and where this is a completely feasible and adequate explanation. But there are numerous places where (a) at crucial points in the story it seems that Luke's account is the more original and that it is Matthew who has redacted Luke, or else (b) Matthew and Luke appear independent in what they say, or else (c) it is possible that Luke altered Matthew—but it is very difficult to conceive what his purpose was or what he achieved by the alteration.

(a) Examples of the first kind: Mt 12:28/Lk 11:20: “the finger of God” in Luke is considered more original than “the Spirit of God” in Matthew, and more Jewish, while it is Luke's Gospel overall that highlights the work of the Spirit. If we found “finger of God” in Matthew and “Spirit of God” in Luke this would accord with their usual respective interests. But that Luke should find “Spirit of God” in his source, Matthew, and alter it to “finger of God” is very unexpected.

Thus Marshall (*Luke*, 1978: 475-476) says,

There is one significant difference from the wording in Matthew. Luke has δακτύλος, ‘finger’ (11:46 par. Mt 23:4; Lk 16:24) where Matthew has πνεῦμα. The close verbal agreement in the rest of the verse indicates that one word must be a substitution for the other by the Evangelist or his source (if we are dealing with two rescensions of the same source). The meaning is the same in both versions. ... Although the meaning is thus the same, both phrases indicating the action of God, the question remains whether Jesus himself here made one of his rare references to the Spirit in a verse which is generally recognised to be his authentic teaching. A majority of scholars hold that δακτύλος stood in Luke's source (Schulz, 205 n.218). It is argued that Luke is fond of references to the Spirit, and would hardly remove one that already stood in his source; that Matthew may have been removing an anthropomorphism and assimilating the wording to Mt 12:18, 31; that the Spirit is not known as an exorcisor in Jewish sources ..., but the ‘finger of God’ may be so attested ...; and that ‘finger’ gives a direct allusion to the OT ... On the other hand, it has been argued convincingly by C S Rodd (‘Spirit or Finger’, Exp.T 72, 1960-61, 157f.) that Luke has no greater predilection for adding references to the Spirit in the body of his Gospel than Matthew; cf. 20:42 par. Mt 12:36. We need not, therefore, be surprised if Luke has removed an

original reference to the Spirit. There is no clear case where Matthew has added a reference to the Spirit to his source. However, he does use πνεῦμα θεοῦ. in 3:16 diff. Mk. (Schultz, 205). The case for Matthean alteration thus falls short of proof, but on the whole it remains more likely that this is the case, since no good reason for a change by Luke can be found.

Thus Marshall prefers the explanation of a common source for both the Matthean and Lukan accounts, containing δακτύλος, *finger*, with Matthew having then altered this to πνεῦμα. *Spirit*.

Again, in Prediction of Persecutions, in the Eschatological Discourse, Luke has (21:15) "... not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict." "I will give you a mouth and wisdom" is a very Semitic type of expression. Plummer (*Luke*, 1896: 479) compares the usage with Exod 4:12 and Jer 1:9; G H P Thompson (*Luke*, 1972: 248) invites additionally comparison with Isa 51:16; Wisdom 10:21 and Ecclus 34:8. Matthew parallels this (10:19) with, "... do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

Matthew here is certainly not the source for what Luke has, and Luke's wording may be judged to be "more original" than Matthew's. It should also be mentioned that Mark is much closer to Matthew than to Luke, and similarly cannot here be the source for Luke's wording. Mk 13:11 says, "... do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." It is inconceivable that Luke himself *invented* his expression here, "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom": he has it from ***some source other than Matthew or Mark***.

On this, Thompson comments (1972: 248),

The omission of reference to the Holy Spirit, together with the difference of language, suggests that Luke is not dependent on Mk 13:11. It is perhaps a sign of Luke's faithfulness to his special sources that, despite his obvious interest in the Holy Spirit, he prefers this version of Jesus' promise.

(b) Examples of the apparent independence of Matthew and Luke: in the introduction to the Transfiguration, Mt 17:1 (in concurrence with Mk 9:2) has "after six days"; and Lk 9:28 has "about eight days after". "Eight days" is a Jewish way of referring to a week (thus for example Jn 20:26 has "and after eight days", referring to the same day—Sunday, in this case—of the following week; this is rendered in the NEB, TEV and NIV as, "a week later"). Again: in Mt 19:16-22 the rich man who went away sad is twice said

to have been young, whereas in Lk 18:18-23 this man was not young but an elder (ruler) who stated that he had kept the Commandments from (ἐκ) his youth.

(c) Examples of differences that could be due to Lukan redaction of Matthew but for which a reason is difficult to discern: Matthew (20:29) tells that as Jesus was leaving Jericho he healed two blind men; Luke (18:35) says that Jesus healed one blind man "as he drew near to Jericho" on the way into the city (cf. 19:1). It is difficult to envisage any possible reason why Luke, using Matthew as his source, would make such an alteration. Again: Jairus's daughter was already dead, according to Matthew (9:18), when the synagogue ruler approached Jesus, while in Luke (8:40-56) she was dying when Jairus came to Jesus but died while Jesus stood talking with the woman whose hemorrhage he healed. Again: Luke's list of the Twelve Apostles (see Lk 6:15-16) is not identical with that of Matthew (see Mt 10:3-4). Again: Matthew refers to two demoniacs exorcized (Mt 8:28-34), two blind men healed (Mt 18:35), two animals brought for Jesus's use (Mt 21:7), whereas in each case Luke mentions only one.

The first type of dissimilarity of wording is where some difference in emphasis, doctrine, viewpoint, or the like, can be perceived. The second and third types are not mutually exclusive and shade from one into the other. Opinions could vary as to whether a given dissimilarity of wording was of the first, second or third kinds. Examples of some of the more noteworthy of these dissimilarities of wording between Matthew and Luke are:

<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>LUKE</b>
4:23 And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues	4:44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.
7:9 how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!	11:13 how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!
7:16 Are grapes gathered from thorns or figs from thistles?	6:44 For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.
8:5f. a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying ...	7:2f. a centurion ... sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come ...
8:15 and he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose	4:39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and she rose
9:9 saw a man called Matthew	5:27 saw a tax collector named Levi

10:9 the labourer deserves his food	10:7 the labourer deserves his wages
10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?	12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?
11:17 we wailed, and you did not mourn	7:32 we wailed, and you did not weep
11:19 wisdom is justified by her deeds.	11:35 wisdom is justified by all her children.
12:27 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons ...	11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons ...
13:6 and since they had no root they withered away.	8:6 it withered away, because it had no moisture.
13:17 many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see	10:24 many prophets and kings desired to see what you see
14:13 he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart.	9:10 And he took them and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida.
16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples,	9:18 Now it happened as he was praying alone the disciples were with him, and he asked them,
17:1 And after six days	9:28 Now about eight days after
17:5 This is my beloved Son	9:35 This is my Son, my Chosen
19:20 The young man said to him, "All these I have observed."	18:18 And a ruler asked ... 18:21 And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth."
23:34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify	11:49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will sent them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute'
24:15 So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place ...	21:20 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.
26:15 And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.	22:5 And they were glad, and engaged to give him money.

26:50 Jesus said to him,  
“Friend, why are you here?”

22:48 Jesus said to him,  
“Judas, would you betray the Son  
of man with a kiss?”

27:54 Truly this was the Son of God!

23:47 Certainly this man was innocent!

28:10 tell my brethren to go to  
Galilee, and there they will see me.

24:48 stay in the city, until you are  
clothed with power from on high.

28:16 Now the eleven disciples went  
to Galilee, to the mountain

24:52 And they returned  
to Jerusalem with great joy.

### 8.3.3 Dissimilarities of Order

Even upon the most casual reading of Matthew and Luke it is speedily apparent that while they share a similar framework, they differ frequently in the order in which they give pericopes or groups of pericopes. If Luke used Matthew, why should there be this difference of order of events?

In fact, the dissimilarities of order between Matthew and Luke exist at every level, from that of the sequence of blocks of pericopes and of the order of individual pericopes, to the order of paragraphs within pericopes and the order of details or words within paragraphs.

The following Table shows the dissimilarities of pericope order. In this Table, the numbers in the column to the left of the references for Matthew and Luke respectively are to units of the two Gospels (pericopes, parts of pericopes, or pericope clusters) that are being compared. These numbers (my pericope numbering) are consecutive for each Gospel. Numbers absent in the sequence for each Gospel apply to units that are in one Gospel and not in the other. The centre column of numbers headed “Mt” sets out the Matthean unit reference number for each of the units listed for Luke; that is, this column shows where that Lukan unit against which it appears is to be found in Matthew’s sequence. Thus a comparison of this column with the unit numbers for Luke that appear in the column on its immediate right allows it to be seen at once how extensively the Matthean sequence differs from that of Luke for the events or teaching that they both record.

MATTHEW			Mt Lk			LUKE
5b	4:12b	Jesus Goes to Galilee	5b	10	4:14	Jesus Goes To Galilee
5c	4:13	Jesus Moves to Capernaum	5d	10	4:15	Jesus Teaches in their Synagogues
5d	4:17	Jesus Begins To Preach	26	11	4:16-30	Rejection At Nazareth

6	4:18-22	Call of the First Disciples	5c	12	4:31a	Jesus Moves to Capernaum
7a	4:23a	Preaching and Healing Tour	8g	12	4:31b-32	Astonishment at his teaching
7b	4:23b-25E	Summary, Galilean Ministry	11a	12	4:38-39	Healing Peter's Mother-in-law
8	5, 6, 7	The Great Sermon	11b	12	4:40-41	Healing the Sick at Nightfall
8g	7:28-29E	Astonishment at his teaching	7a	12	4:44E	First Preaching Tour Begins
9	8:1-4	Healing of A Leper	6	13	5:1-11	Call of the First Disciples
10	8:5-13	Healing Centurion's Servant	9	14	5:12-16	Healing of A Leper
11a	8:14-15	Healing Peter's Mother-in-law	13	15	5:17-39E	Events in Capernaum
11b	8:16	Healing the Sick at Nightfall	20	16	6:1-11	Sabbath Controversies
12	8:18-9:1	Across the Sea of Galilee	17a	17	6:12-16	The Choosing of the Twelve
13	9:2-17	Events in Capernaum	21	18	6:17-19	Lakeside Healings
14a	9:18-19	A Ruler's Request	8	19	6:20-49E	The Great Sermon
14b	9:20-22	Woman With A Hemorrhage	22c	19	6:43-45	Trees and Their Fruit
14c	9:23-26	Raising a Ruler's Daughter	10	20	7:1-10	Healing a Centurion's Servant
16a	9:35	Summary of Galilean Ministry	18	22	7:18-35	Concerning John the Baptist
16b	9:36-38E	The Harvest Is Plentiful	25	24	8:4-18	Teaching in Parables (1)
17a	10:1-4	Twelve Chosen Disciples	24	25	8:19-21	Jesus's True Family
17b	10:5-42E	The Mission Charge	12	26	8:22-40	Across the Sea of Galilee
18	11:1-19	Concerning John The Baptist	14a	27	8:41-42	A Ruler's Request
19a	11:20-24	Upbraiding the Cities	14b	27	8:43-48	Woman With A Hemorrhage
19b	11:25-27	Jesus's Exaltation	14c	27	8:49-56E	Raising a Ruler's Daughter
20	12:1-14	Sabbath Controversies	17b	28	9:1-6	The Charge to the Twelve
21	12:15-21	Lakeside Healings	27a	29	9:7-9	Herod's Perplexity
22a	12:22-30	Beelzebul Controversy	27c	29	9:11-17	Feeding of the Five Thousand
22b	12:31-32	Sin Against the Spirit	29	30	9:18-36	Confession to Transfiguration
22c	12:33-35	Trees And Their Fruit	30	31	9:37-48	The Mountain to Capernaum
23a	12:38-42	Seeking A Sign				
23b	12:43-45	Return of Unclean Spirit				
24	12:46-50E	Jesus's True Family	12			
25	13:1-52	Teaching In Parables	16b			
26	13:53-58E	Rejection At Nazareth	19a			
27a	14:1-2	Herod's Perplexity	19b			
27c	14:13-21	Feeding of the Five Thousand	25			
29	16:13-17:8	Confession To Transfiguration	8			
30	17:9-18:5	The Mountain To Capernaum	22a			
32	19:13-15	Blessing the Children	23b			

*Together with these parallels to Matthew  
in Luke's Central Teaching Section:*

9:57-62  
10:2  
10:12-15  
10:21-22  
10:23-24  
11:9-13  
11:14-23  
11:24-26

23a	11:16, 29-32
22b	12:10
8	12:22-32
8	12:33-34
8	12:57-59
25	13:18-21
8	16:13

At the pericope Blessing the Children (Lk 18:15) Luke rejoins Matthew in pericope order after his Central Teaching Section, and thereafter their order corresponds quite closely.

The above parallels are of similarity of event or teaching, and are not intended to imply that they are necessarily to be regarded as having a common source. (A number of shorter teachings have not been included here.)

Some notable dissimilarities of order occur within pericopes; for example, the order of the Temptations (see Mt 4:4-11; Lk 4:4-13) and the order of the bread and cup (see Mt 26:26-29; Lk 22:15-19).

There are also numbers of minor differences of order within pericopes, of which this example is illustrative:

#### **MATTHEW 12:34a-35**

For out of the abundance of the  
heart the mouth speaks. The  
good man out of his good treasure  
brings forth good, and the evil  
man out of his evil treasure  
brings forth evil.

#### **LUKE 6:45**

The  
good man out of the good treasure  
of his heart  
produces good, and the evil  
man out of his evil treasure  
produces evil;  
for out of the abundance of the  
heart the mouth speaks.

Other differences of order within a pericope between Matthew and Luke include these:

#### **MATTHEW**

8:26a Jesus speaks to disciples  
8:26b Jesus rebukes winds and sea

#### **LUKE**

8:24 Jesus rebukes wind and waves  
8:25 Jesus speaks to disciples



10:3 Bartholemew Thomas Matthew	6:14-15 Bartholemew Matthew Thomas
11:21 Woe to Chorazin, Bethsaida	10:12 More tolerable for Sodom
11:24 More tolerable for Sodom	10:13 Woe to Chorazin, Bethsaida
12:41 The men of Ninevah will arise	11:31 The queen of the South will arise
12:42 The queen of the South will arise	11:32 The men of Ninevah will arise
12:38-42 Request for a Sign	11:24-26 Return of the Evil Spirit
12:43-45 Return of the Evil Spirit	11:29-32 Request for a Sign
13:11 to know the secrets of the kingdom	8:10a to know the secrets of the kingdom
13:12 to him who has more will be given	8:10b seeing they may not see
13:13 seeing they do not see	8:18b to him who has more will be given
14:18-20 The crowds eat the loaves and fish	9:14 there were about 5,000 men
14:21 there were about 5,000 men	9:15-17 The crowds eat the loaves and fish
18:6a causing one of these little ones to sin	17:1 Woe to him by whom temptations come
18:6b better to have millstone round his neck	17:2a better to have millstone round his neck
18:7 Woe to man by whom temptation comes	17:2b causing one of these little ones to sin

The similarities of order that have been discussed above (§8.2.3) are certainly significant, and any Synoptic explanation will need to cover this feature if it is to be convincing. Undeniably, a common framework **does** exist for Matthew and Luke. But does this, as Orchard contends (1977: 45), establish literary dependence between Luke and Matthew? There are two fundamental reasons why at times the order of units in Luke corresponds with that in Matthew.

Firstly, there are some units that by their inherent nature can only be placed at a particular point in the Gospel account. Thus the infancy and Baptist stories must come first, and the Passion narrative (from Palm Sunday onwards) has its own intrinsic order dictated by the events themselves. Very few other units have an inherent absolute order but some (such as The Calling of the First Disciples) must come early and before certain other events, and others (e.g., Passion predications) are more likely to be later than earlier. There is thus a basic framework in the Gospel narrative that is intrinsic to the nature of the material itself. If a pile of looseleaf pages, each containing one Gospel pericope, fell to the floor in chaotic confusion, any editors seeking to put them in order again would find themselves in agreement on the basic framework.

Similarly, some pericopes imply that others have come earlier: for example, a reference to Jesus's disciples following him implies an earlier call to do so; Jesus's reference (in his answer to the disciples of John) about healings he has performed makes it desirable that examples of those healings be included before that point.

Secondly, there are some events of such importance in the overall narrative that they are part of the framework of the Synoptic story and would of necessity occur in a specific sequence. These would include in particular the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi and First Passion Prediction, the Transfiguration, and the commencement of the Last Journey to Jerusalem. These events represent successive stages in the unfolding of events and therefore could hardly be given in any other order.

Thus we could assemble this list of pericopes that have an inherent or relative sequence factor:

The infancy narratives (and genealogy)  
 Ministry of John, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus  
 From Judea to Galilee; First Preaching  
 Call of the First Disciples  
 John's Question to Jesus, and Jesus's Testimony to John  
 Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi and First Passion Prediction  
 Transfiguration  
 End of the Galilean Ministry; Leaving Galilee for Jerusalem  
 Entry into Jerusalem and Events of Passion Week  
 Crucifixion and Resurrection

Furthermore, some short sequences of a few pericopes may well have been linked together in the tradition behind both Matthew and Luke. Thus there are "clusters" of pericopes that remain the same in sequence in both Matthew and Luke though occurring at different points in these Gospels, even though there is no apparent reason for the grouping of these particular pericopes. This phenomenon will require explaining.

Apart from the pericopes of the foregoing kinds, there are no inherent reasons dictating that individual pericopes should occur in a particular order. And apart from pericopes of the foregoing kinds, there is a very low correlation between the order of pericopes occurring in Matthew and Luke.

That is to say, after discounting the pericopes for which sequence is predetermined by their inherent nature or their position within the overall flow of events, the pericopes of Matthew and Luke do not correspond in sequence to an extent that suggests either

knowledge of Matthew by the author of Luke (or vice versa) or derivation of the order of both from a common source document (such as Mark).

As can be seen from an examination of the Table of Synoptic Pericopes set out above, the extent of agreement in sequence in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels from the time of Jesus's First Preaching Tour to his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is not sufficiently great to be significant or to offer any real support to the argument that Luke knew Matthew.

On the other hand, the extensive **changes of order** that Luke has made, if he used Matthew, constitute a more difficult phenomenon to explain. In his book *Matthew, Luke and Mark* (1977), Orchard has shown that such an explanation can be offered for how Luke's Gospel was derived from Matthew, but it involves Luke combing through Matthew several times and selecting small sections each time; and while this can account for what is found in Luke's Gospel today it is very difficult to see any motivation or indeed justification for such a redactional procedure. It is as if Luke has taken every major structure within Matthew's Gospel, from the Sermon on the Mount to Matthew's blocks of healing and miracle stories, and systematically dismembered it, disbursing the pieces throughout his own Gospel, many of them being scattered throughout his Central Teaching Section.

Moreover, the contexts that these pericopes and pericope blocks have in Matthew (for the most part, comprising realistic and logical settings) are very frequently abandoned, or the Lukan parallels are found in different contexts or without any real setting at all. Thus the Lord's Prayer in Matthew has a fitting and appropriate setting within the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:9-13), whereas Luke's version (Lk 11:1-4) is given by Jesus in response to the disciples' request that Jesus teach them to pray as John taught his disciples. The context is quite different.

Similarly, the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Matthew (18:12-13) is told in a context (18:10-14) concerning children ("little ones"), the point of which is, "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish"; whereas Luke's version of the Parable of the Lost Sheep (15:1-7) is told by Jesus in response to the circumstance that "the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them'", has a rather different ending and application (15:6-7), and is the first of three "Parables of What Has Been Lost" (15:1-32E).

Then, Matthew gives teaching by Jesus about divorce in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:31-32) and again, later in his ministry, when he was in Perea on his final journey to Jerusalem and he was questioned about this matter by the Pharisees (Mt 19:1-12).

Luke's one short comment about divorce (16:18) appears a conflation of some parts of Matthew's two different passages, is very brief compared with Matthew, and occurs as a disconnected saying for which Luke has provided no specific setting at all.

Can we accept that the explanation of all these various differences is Luke's alteration of what he found in Matthew? Why should Luke treat Matthew's Gospel in this kind of way? One is quite at a loss to conceive of an adequate reason.

But this is not all. Within the pericopes, Luke has engaged in frequent rearrangement of order of details. On some occasions one can think of a possible reason for it—though we have no actual grounds for believing that Luke in fact made the change for that particular reason; on many other occasions the change of order appears pointless.

The explanation, therefore, of Luke's order as a modification that Luke had made to Matthew's order portrays Luke as frequently following a most arbitrary and bizarre redactional procedure that (so far as one can ascertain from evaluating what it achieves) is pointless and motiveless, and destroys the setting and context, usually very appropriate, that the material had in Matthew. This conclusion contradicts what we know on other grounds about Luke as an author, and therefore causes us to question very seriously the proposition that Luke knew Matthew. If Matthew had been Luke's source, it is very difficult to believe that he could have treated that Gospel in this fashion!

### 8.3.4 Differences in How Much Luke Includes

On a number of occasions Matthew will record a lengthy and detailed passage of teaching or dialogue on a subject, and this will be represented in Luke by one or two short sayings only. Examples:

Re the scribes and Pharisees	Mt 15:4-20	Lk 6:39
Re Reproving One's Brother	Mt 18:15-18	Lk 17:3
Re divorce and remarriage	Mt 19:1-12	Lk 16:18
Re the Pharisees' hypocrisy	Mt 23:1-36	Lk 20:45-47

If the full account of Jesus's teaching is in front of Luke in Matthew's Gospel, why does he omit most of it in such cases as these?

### 8.3.5 Differences Due to What Luke Omits

There are numerous pericopes found in Matthew that are absent from Luke; and this points to Luke *not* having known Matthew's Gospel. This argument operates on two levels: the more general, and the particularly surprising. More generally, it can be remarked that Luke's expressed purpose included thoroughness and completeness

(see 1:1-4), and if he had access to Matthew, it is a trifle unexpected to find that the material that he has in common with Matthew occupies considerably less than 50% of his Gospel. (This figure is frequently put at just under 50%; I myself would assess it—see §4.3.6—as no more than 395 verses [or 37%] of Matthew, corresponding with 408 verses [or 35.5%] of Luke.)

Now, a reply often given on this issue is that there were practical constraints on the length of a Gospel, no matter how “complete” an author may have wanted it to be—space limitations (in particular, the maximum practical length of a scroll) placed restrictions upon what Luke could afford to incorporate from Matthew. Clearly the sheer problem of length may well prevent *all* of Matthew's material being used by Luke, even if he had had it in front of him and even had he wished to incorporate it into his own Gospel in some form. Luke had to operate on *some* principle of selection even if, at this distance of time, we can only imperfectly apprehend exactly what it was. Moreover it appears that Luke in any case possessed another version of many of these events, or of a similar saying or happening, and it is reasonable that he should have chosen to use only one such version when he had two available to him, and that in numerous cases that version would be a non-Matthean one.

That Luke's accounts of a given pericope are almost invariably longer than Matthew's does not accord, however, with a conscious desire on Luke's part to restrict what he took from Matthew because of considerations of overall length, for he has considerably expanded what (according to this view) he took from Matthew. Sometimes Luke's additional wording is purely verbal expansion that adds nothing to the meaning and provides no additional information. It ranges from single words to complete sentences: cf. the redundancy in Lk 20:2, καὶ εἶπαν λέγοντες πρὸς αὐτόν; and see Lk 7:20, unparalleled in Matthew, which repeats Lk 7:19b//Mt 11:3; and again Lk 8:47//Mk 5:33 (this section of the pericope is absent altogether in Matthew)—both report that the healed woman fell down before Jesus, and whereas Mark says simply, “and told him the whole truth”, Luke states at greater length, “(she) declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed”. Instances of this kind—which are to be found throughout Luke—appear inconsistent with the assertion that Luke took from Matthew all the pericopes he could fit in, and was prevented from using more only by space restrictions.

Now if we were to take it that Luke's Gospel is of approximately the maximum possible length, then the explanation may simply be that Luke considered it more worthwhile to include the specific material he had that is not in Matthew than to have to exclude

some of this in order simply to repeat what was already said by Matthew. This sounds a reasonable explanation until we ask three simple questions about it: Granted this attitude on Luke's part, (1) why then did he include as much as he did from Matthew (drawing between one third and one half of his own book from that Gospel)? (2) why did he choose, from all that Matthew offered, the particular pericopes that he did include? and (3) why did he so frequently so extensively expand Matthew's version of a particular pericope rather than simply adhere to Matthew's pericope length, which would have enabled him to use more pericopes overall?

§4.4.1 allows a comparison of the word-length of Matthew and Luke for all the healing stories in which they parallel Mark (totals for parallel healing pericopes, Matthew 868 words, and for Luke 1366 words); it can readily be seen how frequently Luke's account is from 50% to 100% longer than Matthew's. For a complete presentation of these comparative statistics, see Morgenthaler 1971: 233ff.

The advocates of Markan Priority who also hold that Luke used Matthew (i.e., Farrer theory supporters) will reply to the first of these questions by saying that, for much of this material that Luke and Matthew have in common, Luke's source was not Matthew but actually Mark. But the question is not fully answered thus, because if Luke used both Matthew and Mark as sources, an explanation is still needed for why—if an argument is being propounded that he was more concerned to include what was **not** already available in Matthew and/or Mark—he chose to use so much that **was** already available (either in Matthew or Mark or both)

Will the answer be proposed that he included **all** that he had from all sources other than Matthew and Mark, but **selections only** from his Matthean/Markan sources? Apart from it being unlikely that he would not have learnt of other things, in addition to what he does include, that Jesus said and that are not in Matthew and Mark, this attributes to him a difference in his use of his sources that it would not be easy to substantiate. This first question also requires a careful answer from advocates of the Two Gospel hypothesis, and Questions Two and Three (above) merit answers from all who hold that Luke used Matthew.

Luke has allowed himself the luxury of including versions of pericopes that are longer than the Matthean ones he could have used, and then has chosen (if he is using Matthew) to omit completely some pericopes that on the face of it are very much more suited to his overall purposes (as best we can judge them) than many stories that he **does** include. As the example *par excellence* of this, we may note the story (Mt 15:21-28) of the Healing of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter (the healing of a child at the plea

of a person who was apparently poor, certainly a woman and a Gentile, all simultaneously, and all being groups in whom Luke took a special interest)—discussed in Chapter Seven, §7.07. On the face of it, this pericope would appear to be a more likely candidate for inclusion in Luke than The Widow's Gift, a very Jewish-oriented story which Luke shares with Mark and which Matthew omits!

In summary then, this point is: Given that Luke was going to restrict himself to the length that his Gospel now is, if he had known Matthew's Gospel we have good grounds for believing that his Gospel would have differed in numerous ways from what it now is, omitting some things that it contains and including instead other material taken from Matthew that so eminently fitted Luke's purposes.

### 8.3.6 Differences Whereby Luke Excludes What Matthew Presents

There are a number of places where there is an apparent contradiction between what Matthew says and what Luke says. Several of these have been noted already—the divergences in the genealogies of Jesus, in the names of the Twelve Apostles, in the details of the healing of the blind man (or men) at Jericho, and so on. I say “an apparent contradiction” because it is possible to see a reconciliation between the two accounts, or a way of accounting for their differences.

There are, however, some differences which are of a much more significant kind: places where Luke not merely **omits or ignores** or differs from Matthew, but **shows a total unawareness** of what Matthew has written. Indeed, at times he even seems positively to exclude what Matthew says.

I mention now the major occurrences of this kind, and then consider their significance.

1. Luke's infancy narrative not merely shows no awareness at all of what Matthew says, but leaves no room for the Matthean events to have occurred.

The events of Mt 1:18-25 are not given a geographical setting, and from the way in which 2:1 continues on, mentioning Bethlehem without any change of venue being implied, it seems that Matthew knows nothing of Mary and Joseph having come from Nazareth, and his narrative presumes that they had been living in Bethlehem all along, and after the birth of Jesus simply continued to do so, in their own house (2:11). In fact, Jesus and his parents are still living in Bethlehem when he is upwards of two years old (Mt 2:7, 16); he is not referred to as a baby (βρέφος, as in Lk 2:12, 16), but as a young child (παιδίον, Mt 2:8, 9, 11, 13, 14) at the time of the visit of the Wise Men. After the Return from the Flight to Egypt, Matthew's wording in 2:22-23 gives the impression that they had not previously lived in Nazareth and in fact Matthew's reference to the circum-

stances of their going to Nazareth would convey (if we did not have Luke's account) that this was the first time they had gone there and that they chose this place as being an obscure little hill village outside the territory of Archelaus where they would be safe from any danger from him.

Luke explains in his narrative how Joseph and Mary travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem (2:4), where Jesus was born. After eight days Jesus was circumcised and then after forty days he was taken by Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem “for their purification according to the law of Moses” (2:22; see Leviticus 12), and from there they returned immediately “to their own city, Nazareth” (Lk 2:39), where Jesus grew up. Luke's account leaves no room for the visit of the Wise Men and the sojourn in Egypt. The two accounts can be observed to be quite independent. It is left for the readers of the two accounts to see how to reconcile them.

2. This total independence of narrative that is found at the beginning of the Gospels is found also at the end. Luke's resurrection appearances are not merely different from Matthew's, but show him as apparently unaware of the fact that Jesus had first appeared to the women, as Matthew tells. In Matthew, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (28:1) meet an angel (28:5) and then Jesus (28:9), who instructs them to tell his disciples (brethren) to go to Galilee to see him (28:10), which the disciples do (28:16). In Luke, a larger group of women (24:10) meet two men in white (24:4) but do not meet Jesus himself, and there is no instruction for the disciples to go to Galilee. So they do not go to Galilee—most of them remain in Jerusalem but two set out for Emmaus and meet Jesus on the way (24:13-35) and return to Jerusalem where Jesus meets them all (24:36-43), having just previously appeared to Simon Peter (24:34). Jesus instructs them to continue in the city of Jerusalem until clothed with power from on high (24:49), leads them out as far as Bethany and there ascends to heaven (24:51), after which they return to Jerusalem (24:52) and remain there (24:53).

Here once again there is very important information found in Matthew (i.e., that immediately after his resurrection Jesus was seen alive by the women) which Luke's account lacks. The explanation is sometimes offered that in those days the evidence of women was little regarded, and Luke did not want the initial report of Jesus's resurrection appearance to be dependent upon the claims of some excited women. There could be a measure of truth in this: once the risen Christ had appeared to the apostles and they had begun fulfilling their role as Witnesses of the Resurrection, that initial appearance to the women appears to have played no part in their testimony and it is not mentioned by Paul in his listing of the Resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15. So it is con-



ceivable that it was a detail that, being absent from the format of the resurrection testimony of the early church, did not ever come to Luke's attention when he was researching his Gospel and Acts.

But if Luke knew Matthew's Gospel, the whole matter is somewhat different, for then it would appear that Luke has not merely ignored this appearance but has deliberately **suppressed** it.

Luke says that the women saw two men in dazzling apparel (24:4) who reminded them about Jesus's prediction of his resurrection (24:7). This group of women included Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James (24:10); after they heard the words of their informants (identified in the account of Cleopas as "a vision of angels", 24:23), they remembered Jesus's words, and returned from the tomb to report about this "vision of angels" to the Eleven and "to all the rest" (24:8-9). But Matthew says that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (28:1) met Jesus risen from the dead (28:9) and that the risen Lord personally gave them a message for his "brethren" (28:10). In Luke the women only report about seeing angels (24:9, 23). Note Luke's wording of Cleopas's report: "They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive." How could Luke be content to write thus if he had in front of him Matthew's account that said that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary **had actually seen Jesus's body—alive?**

But any suggestion that Luke would have deliberately suppressed the appearance of Jesus to the women is beyond belief; and the alternative that Luke did not think it worthwhile to mention the women's testimony to the resurrection of Jesus because he gives details of **men** meeting Jesus (24:28-51) is equally incredible. Luke's stated intention (1:1-4) is to give a fully detailed account; and **his** Gospel is the one that gives the fullest recognition to the role of women in Jesus's entourage. It would be altogether in keeping if it had been **Luke** who recorded the appearance to the women and **Matthew** who did not! We must conclude that Luke could not possibly write as he did about the women, restricting them to having seen angels only, if he had in front of him Matthew's account that Jesus appeared to the women also. There is absolutely no satisfactory reason why he should deliberately suppress or simply omit this piece of information.

The conclusion to which we are compelled then is that Luke did not know Matthew's Gospel when he wrote his own.

3. The matter of Jesus's appearance to the women is not the only issue that arises here. There are differences in the information given in Matthew and Luke concerning what happened after the Resurrection. In Matthew, the Risen Christ instructs his

followers on the day of his Resurrection that they are to go to Galilee, where he will meet with them (28:10), and accordingly they go to Galilee and meet with him there (28:16-20E). In Luke, the Risen Christ instructs his followers on the day of his Resurrection (24:36) that they are to remain in the city of Jerusalem “until you are clothed with power from on high” (24:49) and after saying this “he led them out as far as Bethany and ... while he blessed them he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven” (24:50-51). Luke’s account leaves no recognizable place for the visit to a mountain in Galilee; and it states that on the evening of the day of resurrection Jesus gave his disciples instructions to the very opposite effect, viz to remain in Jerusalem. Acts throws some light upon all this by allowing us to know about the forty days’ interval between resurrection and ascension, and it *is* possible to find a reconciliation between the two accounts as given in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; however, the point is that what Luke says does not merely fail to mention what Matthew has reported but shows no awareness whatsoever of it. Thus once again we find Luke writing in a way that is most readily compatible with the explanation that he was quite unaware of what Matthew had written. What is at issue is: if Luke used canonical Matthew, how does it happen that at such a number of points Luke differs from Matthew so that the two accounts are *in need of* some form of reconciliation?

### 8.3.7 In Conclusion

All the various passages mentioned in this section constitute cumulatively an assembly of very strong evidence: they make it very difficult to see how Luke could possibly have known Matthew’s Gospel. Consider the Call of the First Disciples. Mt 4:18-22 pictures the two pairs Simon and Andrew, and James and John, working quite separately and independently, the latter two working “in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets”, so that their decision to respond to Jesus’s call meant that “they left the boat and their father” when they “followed him”. Lk 5:10-11 says that together with Simon in the fishing boat were “James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon”, and “when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.” In Luke, there is no reference to Andrew (which is odd in the light of the implication of Matthew’s account that Andrew was Simon’s partner, and the explicit statement that he also responded to Christ’s call), and there is no suggestion that Zebedee was a member of the business partnership or even that he was still alive.

Again, it is easily possible to reconcile the two accounts, and to conceive of explanations for each of these factors, but that is not the point. The point is that no such

reconciliation of the two accounts (which—if Luke used Matthew—lay in front of Luke, i.e., his own source material and Matthew's record) is attempted by Luke himself. Rather, it is as if Luke were completely unaware of all that Matthew had said in his version. If one holds that Luke knew Matthew, then one has to say that of two narratives available to him, Luke chose a particular account as the one to use—and it was the non-Matthean one—and that he then used it totally without reference to the other (i.e., Matthean) version.

The situation is similar in relation to all the many other places mentioned above where Luke contains a different version of an event or teaching from that in Matthew, and where Luke in his Gospel appears to be completely unaware of what Matthew said in his account. In each of these various cases, the "Luke used Matthew" school has to say, Luke had access to two versions of the story, one in Matthew and one from another source, and he chose in the exercise of his creative prerogative, as an author in his own right, to use the latter version rather than the former; this was his preferred method rather than to conflate the two versions.

This may well be so: but if it is, then it appears to conflict with Luke's stated intention (1:1-4) of writing an exhaustive account covering everything from the beginning. It is one thing to accept that some of what Matthew records may not have come to Luke's attention; it is another matter to say that Luke had access to all the information in Matthew and in producing his own account chose to ignore a considerable amount of it, and to write as if he were totally unaware of it.

## 8.4 ASSESSMENT

We have reached an impasse. The first major section of this study (§8.2) has presented solid and compelling evidence that shows that Luke **must have known and used** Matthew's Gospel: the similarities of content, wording and order demand this literary relationship if they are to be most satisfactorily accounted for. The second major section of this chapter (§8.3) has presented solid and compelling evidence that shows that Luke **cannot have known or used** Matthew's Gospel: the dissimilarities of content, wording and order, and particularly the differences whereby Luke excludes what Matthew presents, preclude this literary relationship.

How is it possible for this paradox to be resolved?

A careful examination of the passages upon which our two conflicting conclusions are based will disclose an obvious but significant factor—they are **different parts** of Matthew's Gospel. Properly interpreted, therefore, the evidence does not lead to an

impasse, but to the recognition that some Matthean material shows evidence of having been known and used by Luke and other Matthean material was evidently not known to or used by Luke. That is to say, the evidence leads to the recognition that Luke knew and used **some parts** of Matthew and did not know or use **other parts** of Matthew.

Once this is seen, it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting evidence and the deductions based on it. One group of scholars, noting the places that indicate Luke's use of Matthew, has extrapolated that Luke knew and used **all** of Matthew. Another group of scholars, noting the places that show that Luke was unaware of what was in Matthew, has extrapolated that Luke knew and used **none** of Matthew. Both groups are correct in their perception of the evidence, and unjustified in the extrapolations that they have drawn from it.

It is not a satisfactory explanation of the evidence to postulate that Luke knew and used an early and shorter edition of the Gospel of Matthew, a Proto-Matthew. The evidence that Luke did not know Matthew (the places where Luke appears completely unaware of what Matthew contains, and the various differences of wording and pericope order) extend across too much of Matthew, and if these sections were excluded what is left could hardly be called a Gospel. We must seek for something that more adequately accounts for the data.

The explanation that accords best with the data is that (a) the Gospel of Luke is completely independent of the Gospel of Matthew, and that (b) the portion of the Gospel of Luke that is best explained as having a common source with the parallel sections of the Gospel of Matthew has come from a number of separate documents—pericopes (or “clusters” of pericopes)—which circulated separately as short tracts, which Luke encountered and collected during his research, and which were also incorporated by Matthew into his own Gospel when he wrote it in its final form.

Such written pericopes used by both Matthew and Luke **could** have been produced by any person in the early church, but we have no need to postulate some anonymous author: their most probable source is the apostle Matthew himself. The apostles were appointed by Jesus to be his witnesses, and of the Twelve, Matthew the former taxation official would be the most familiar with making notes and writing up reports. For Matthew to have written down notes and stories about Jesus is entirely logical and reasonable.

Evidence of the hand of the one author is found throughout Matthew's Gospel, both in the places where the Gospel is unparalleled in Mark or Luke as also in the places where it is paralleled by Mark or Luke or both (see for example Hawkins's treatment of “Words and phrases characteristic of St Matthew's Gospel”, 1909: 3-8). This supports the

conclusion that the author of the “tracts” under discussion, subsequently incorporated into this Gospel, was the same person as the author of the balance of this Gospel, and responsible for its final form.

These short tracts were subsequently re-edited (indeed, even revised) at the time when they were utilized in the Gospel of Matthew. And numbers of them were also used by Luke, who supplemented their sparse information with additional detail obtained during the course of his investigations (Lk 1:3). Thus the similarities between accounts in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke arise from the use of the same original tracts in both Gospels; differences in Synoptic pericope order result from the use, by the authors of these two Gospels, of different principles for the arrangement of their respective material; and differences within such pericopes are due to redaction of the accounts at the point of the writing of the respective Gospels, together with some rewriting by Luke as he wove into the account the other information that he had discovered.

This proposal is, in the nature of the case, as incapable of final and irrefutable proof as any other suggestions about the origins of the canonical Gospels. But it should be noted: so also is the view that the Gospel of Matthew was given its present form in one writing, over a short period of time. There is no inherent improbability in, nor any evidence against, the idea that Matthew wrote down some separate stories about Jesus and that these circulated in the churches and came to Luke's attention during the period prior to the writing of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as we now have them.

This explanation that some parts of Matthew's Gospel were written down and began to circulate separately is much **more likely** than that Matthew had written nothing at all about Jesus prior to the time when he came to produce his complete Gospel. The suggestion that I have presented accords with and provides an explanation for the material that is similar in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, without invoking an anonymous, amorphous, unattested source such as Q.

A criticism that has validly been leveled against the Q hypothesis is, How could such a source, if it existed, have completely disappeared without trace? At first sight the present suggestion may appear open to the same criticism. In fact, however, such evidence could be present amongst our data, and simply have gone unrecognized. If such separate stories existed in written form, what would have happened to them eventually? Those (churches and individuals) who possessed them would be glad to have the complete Gospels when they were eventually published; but (costs of producing written documents being as high as they were in ancient times), the short tracts would not have been discarded but would have been added-to. An early codex

manuscript where Matthew's wording appears to have been assimilated to Luke's on occasions may in fact have a different history: it may have originated from one (or more) of these early tracts produced by Matthew, to which the later Matthean material had been added when it became available—and the apparent assimilation of some wording to Luke would then actually be the **original** wording of the tract, which subsequently was incorporated unchanged in Luke's Gospel but was revised by Matthew when this story took its place in his complete Gospel.

Moreover, it is possible that some of these small tracts or "Gospel portions" continued to be treasured, preserved, used, and **copied**, by those who could not afford the cost of complete Gospels—and that some of the "Gospel fragments" numbered amongst our present manuscripts were never in fact part of complete Gospels but rather were part of such smaller "Gospel portions", ***circulating on their own***.

For a number of the fragments that we have, there is no real evidence that they **must** have come from a complete New Testament or at the very least a complete Gospel, so that they could not have come from a smaller Gospel segment, circulating on its own. Our assumption about the size of the total document from which only a small fragment has been preserved is frequently unsupported by any internal or external evidence: perhaps it may be that in some instances such an assumption is as wide of the mark as would be the conclusion of some future archeologist that any pages of New Testament material that he found from our own century must have come from a complete Bible (or at least, a complete New Testament). And it would be wide of the mark because we today publish and circulate separate portions of Scripture. Perhaps the small Gospel manuscript fragments that we possess from the early centuries could be reconsidered with this possibility in mind. Certainly it remains possible that, without our being aware of it, we may have in our possession some surviving pieces from copies of original short tracts of Matthew predating his completed Gospel.

## 8.5 THE INDEPENDENCE OF LUKE

Chapter Four (§4.3.2) provides the statistics to show that Matthew's *sondergut* consists of 485 verses, or 45.5% of that Gospel, and (§4.3.4) that Matthew shares with Mark (but not with Luke) a further 187 verses or 17.5% of Matthew's Gospel, so that Matthew has a total of 672 verses (63% of Matthew's Gospel) that has no direct parallel in Luke: which means that Matthew has 395 verses (37%) in common with Luke (see §4.3.6). Similarly we can note (§4.3.3) that Luke's *sondergut* consists of 686 verses, or 60% of that Gospel, and (§4.3.5) that Luke shares with Mark (but not with Matthew) a

further 54 verses (4.5%), so that Luke has a total of 740 verses (64.5% of his Gospel) that has no direct parallel in Matthew, which means that Luke has 408 verses (35.5%) in common with Matthew (see §4.3.6).

This points to a high level of independence of Matthew and Luke.

We need to note, further, the extent of the independence of Luke and Mark, both upon the Markan Priority and also the Markan Dependence perspectives.

Thus Streeter discusses the overlaps of Mark and Q (*Oxford Studies* 1911: 167ff.; *Four Gospels* 1924: 186) and assigns Lukan material to three sources: Mark, Proto-Luke (Q+L), and the Nativity source. The picture based on his allocation (1924: 222) is:

Pericope	Proto-Luke	Vv.	From Mark	Vv.	Other	Vv.
Nativity Stories					1:1-2:52E	132
Baptism, Temptation, etc	3:1-4:30	68				
Capernaum Healings			4:31-4:44E	14		
Call of First Disciples	5:1-11	11				
Healings and Controversy			5:12-6:13	41		
The Twelve Apostles	6:14-16	3				
The Large Crowds			6:17-19	3		
Preaching and Healing	6:20-8:3	83				
Parables and Mission			8:4-9:50	103		
Luke's Travel Narrative	9:51-18:14	351				
Ministry and Healing			18:15-34E	29		
Zacchaeus and The Pounds	19:1-27	27				
Triumphal Entry (1)			19:28-36	9		
Triumphal Entry (2)	19:37-44	8				
In Jerusalem			19:45-21:17	68		
Not a Hair Will Perish	21:18	1				
The End of the Age (1)			21:19-33	15		
The End of the Age (2)	21:34-36	3				
End (3), Last Supper			21:37-22:13	15		
Passion and Resurrection	22:14-24:53E	<u>167</u>		—		—
Total Verses:		722		297		132
Less: Not regarded as genuine:						
17:36; 19:25; 22:19b-20:		<u>3</u>				
NETT TOTAL		719				

[The passage Luke 22:19b-20 is usually excluded in counts of the verses in Luke, but the arguments for inclusion and exclusion are evenly balanced. It is noteworthy that the Aland/ United Bible Societies Greek Text notes the manuscript support for exclusion, but includes this passage in its text. As these verses are often excluded from critical editions of the text and in statistics of verse counts, they are listed here, but this is without prejudice to an opinion on this point. This does not affect the main argument of this chapter.]

We may wish to question some of these allocations (e.g., Lk 21:37-38, which is not paralleled in Mark, is **not** allocated to Proto-Luke (Q+L), and thus is left as Markan; an anomaly); but overall this enables us to see that from Streeter's own analysis just under 30% of Luke's Gospel is derived from Mark and more than 70% of it comes from independent sources (including, on Streeter's view, Q).

My own assessment and allocation of Lukan verses as parallel or not parallel with Mark differs in some particulars from his, but in this regard our overall figures are surprisingly close—my count (see §4.3.6) shows 28.5% of Luke's Gospel (330 verses) as paralleling Mark, and thus 71.5% (818 verses) as not paralleling Mark.

As far as Mark is concerned, Streeter says (1924: 160), "If we leave out of account all passages where there is reason to suspect that Luke has used a non-Markan source, it appears on an approximate estimate that about 350 verses (i.e., just over one half of Mark) have been reproduced by Luke." Again, notwithstanding some differences of detail, my overall count is quite close to Streeter's figures: I find (see §4.3.6) 335 verses (i.e., 50.5% of Mark) are paralleled in Luke (of which 41.5% are also paralleled in Matthew).

Now, Streeter is convinced that we are talking here of Markan verses that Luke has used, whereas the present enquiry is whether there is a valid alternative to this explanation. But what is not in dispute is the high degree of independence between Matthew and Luke in regard to their respective contents, and the comparatively small extent of the derivation of Luke from Mark (on the Markan Priority hypothesis), and the large extent of Luke's material drawn from independent sources, or (on the Markan Dependence hypothesis) the comparatively small amount of Luke that Mark has used, comprising just half of his (Mark's) total contents.

The present chapter has considered an alternative to Markan Priority for the material in which Mark and Luke show close correspondence: that is,

(a) that where this material **is not** closely paralleled in Matthew, then to that extent this Lukan material is **also** derived by Luke (like his *sondergut*) from his admittedly extensive independent sources;



(b) that where there *is* close correspondence in this material between Matthew and Luke, then it has been derived from a source common to both Matthew and Luke, viz, documents written by Matthew and circulating in the churches, and subsequently incorporated into both of the Major Synoptic Gospels. This material is then found also in Mark for the reason that (on this Markan Dependence view) Mark had the use of both Matthew and Luke in the writing of his Gospel.

## 8.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A fundamental limitation for the explanatory power of the Markan Priority hypothesis can be stated thus: Matthew and Luke contain material not paralleled in Mark. Now, the Markan Priority hypothesis can be used to explain what Mark has in common with the other two, but obviously it cannot explain what they do not have in common with Mark. Thus at this point there remain features of the Synoptic data to be explained on some other basis. We noted at the beginning of this chapter that the usual explanation offered for the parallels of Matthew and Luke that are lacking in Mark was the source Q, and the question was posed, “Is this the only valid hypothesis that covers the data?”

One potential solution that was considered was the frequently-advocated view that Luke may have known and used Matthew's Gospel. We have found that there is good evidence in support of this view, but there are significant arguments against it. It seems to me, for example, that there is substance in the objections of Streeter, Kümmel, Fitzmeyer and others about a later Gospel writer “dismembering” such sections of Matthew as his sermons and discourses and other patterns, or ignoring fuller expositions given in Matthew (for example, the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer).

And the question of the overall order of the two Major Synoptic is a real enigma: sometimes, in unexpected sections, we find a cluster of pericopes in complete agreement in order, and then such a lot of the time there is such a great disparity of order of pericopes (and pericope clusters). I concur with Fitzmeyer (1981: 75),

The frequent disagreement with the Matthean order in this regard is crucial to any judgement about Luke's dependence on Matthew; indeed, it suggests he does not depend on him at all.

And I remain completely unpersuaded by the explanations tendered by Orchard, Black, and the 2GH school for how Luke's treatment of Matthew can be accounted for.

I find, rather, that the evidence that Luke knew Matthew is partial and limited: that is, it provides support for believing that Luke knew and used **some parts** of Matthew's Gospel. On the other hand, we saw overwhelming evidence against believing that Luke

knew Matthew's Gospel in anything approximating its canonical form. This evidence thus suggests that Luke was acquainted with **sections only** of Matthew's Gospel, and (in view of the different order in which those sections appear in his own Gospel) that those sections were not parts of a complete Gospel (that is, some sort of Proto-Matthew) but rather that they were in separate circulation prior to being incorporated into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke by their respective authors. Further, the most probable author of this material common to Matthew and Luke would be the apostle Matthew, and the links between this material and the other material in the Gospel of Matthew are concordant with the view that the same author who wrote the sections that are paralleled in Luke wrote all of the Gospel of Matthew.

It should be noted that this conclusion is drawn from **all** the data in Matthew and Luke, and is not restricted to those parts that are not shared with Mark. That is to say, it is an alternative not merely to Q but to Markan Priority.

This hypothesis may be summed up thus:

1. Most of the material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is not of such a nature as to suggest or require a common source for both Major Synoptics, nor that either one of them used the other; material that contains similarities can be readily explained on the basis of independent oral transmission of Jesus-traditions, sometimes of the same event or teaching, sometimes of similar but different events or occasions of teaching, and some of these latter traditions could also have been transmitted in writing. That is to say, to a very significant extent the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are completely independent of each other, and certainly the evidence points to the conclusion that neither author, while composing his own Gospel, saw the finished Gospel written by the other.

2. Some of the material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is of such a nature as to indicate that it **does have** a common literary origin. This material was originally circulating in the churches in the form of separate written pericopes (or pericopes clusters), and was subsequently utilized by both Matthew and Luke in the writing of their Gospels. The differences that will be noted between these pericopes in the form in which they occur in the two Gospels are attributable to one or a combination of: separate translations (or rewritings) into Greek of material originally written in Aramaic; revision by Matthew of this material at the time of incorporating it into his Gospel; redaction and expansion of this material by Luke, on the basis of other information that he had obtained, at the time of utilizing it in his Gospel.

The purpose of this chapter, as initially stated (§8.1) was “to see what sense can be

made of Matthew and Luke apart from Q and Mark". It was acknowledged that "This investigation may lead to absurdities, requiring the return to the Two-Source hypothesis and its acceptance as the only sensible explanation of the data". But this has not happened. It has been found in fact that a very reasonable alternative view of the data is possible. It remains to offer a brief comparison of the two alternative explanations.

Q is a hypothetical source, postulated on the basis of the Matthean-Lukan parallels in order to solve the difficulty of how to explain them. We have no independent, objective knowledge of Q—some scholars in previous decades and centuries have identified this source with the Matthean *logia* to which Papias referred, but this identification has lost support by this century. It is to be noted that with the rejection of the identification of Papias's *logia* with the source used by Matthew and Luke has gone the last objective evidence for such a source. Its support is now solely the argument of logic that proceeds from the examination of the parallels in Matthew and Luke and the desire to account for them.

The suggestion that early written documents each containing one or more pericopes were used by both Matthew and Luke is, in a sense, also hypothetical. But it does not invoke some lost source written by some unknown author—the postulated documents can easily be identified as written by the apostle Matthew, and indeed as being the first stage in the production of what eventually became our present canonical Gospel. These documents did not become "lost"; they were incorporated into a greater whole.

It is altogether probable that some of such documents were originally written in Aramaic for Aramaic-speaking churches, and that these were known to Papias and that it is to them he refers when he speaks of the *logia* of Matthew written in Hebrew/Aramaic. Are we not justified in declining to invoke an unknown, unsubstantiated source to explain the agreements of Matthew with Luke when a very straightforward explanation is at hand: in his investigations of which he writes, Luke encountered and made use of early documents written by Matthew before that apostle produced his full Gospel of Matthew?!

This explanation accounts for all the data, does not invoke unknown authors or documents, but rather identifies a preliminary stage in the production of (what became) an existing, canonical Gospel. Q has always been the end-product of a circular argument, a hypothesis deduced from another hypothesis, an unsubstantiated and unnecessary hypothesis. It is time to enquire whether, in view of the alternative set out here, Q is now to be seen as an unsound, unjustified, and, ultimately, untenable hypothesis.

## **CHAPTER NINE: PUTTING THINGS IN ORDER**

### **9.1 AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS IN ORDER**

This chapter investigates the extent of variation in pericope order in the Synoptic Gospels, and examines the explanations that can be given for this phenomenon.

### **9.2 TABLE OF THE ORDER OF MARKAN SECTIONS, AND PARALLELS**

#### **9.2.1 The Synoptic Table**

The eighty sections of Mark's Gospel are set out so as to show whether they parallel the order of Matthew, of Luke, of both, or of neither.

#### **9.2.2 Mark is Always Supported in Pericope Order by Another Synoptic**

Mark's order is always supported by either Matthew or Luke or both.

#### **9.2.3 The Comparison of Synoptic Order**

The extent of agreement in pericope order indicates a literary relationship between the Synoptics. But in which direction has that relationship operated?

### **9.3 ACCORDING TO THE MARKAN PRIORITY HYPOTHESIS**

#### **9.3.1 What Matthew Has Done**

A summary of how, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, Matthew has altered Mark's order of pericopes.

#### **9.3.2 Why Matthew Has Handled Mark Thus**

A survey of the explanations offered for why Matthew would have made these changes to Mark's order.

#### **9.3.3 Luke's Use of Mark**

Changes that Luke, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, has made in Mark's order.

### **9.4 ACCORDING TO THE SUCCESSIVE DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

The differences in Synoptic order considered from the perspective of the Successive Dependence hypothesis: Luke adopted Mark's order, but was free to leave it at just those places where Mark was adhering to Matthew's order.

### **9.5 ACCORDING TO THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

Mark followed the common order of Matthew and Luke where they agreed, and the order of one or the other of them when they differed, and never deserted their order to introduce an order of his own.

## **9.6 A VIEW OF MARK'S USE OF MATTHEW AND LUKE**

### **9.6.1 Identifying the Markan Framework**

On the basis that Mark used Matthew and Luke, it is possible to identify the framework for his Gospel that he drew from them.

### **9.6.2 The Setout of the Markan Framework**

The framework is: Mark followed the sequence of Luke's Gospel to Mk 6:14, and thereafter followed the sequence of Matthew's Gospel to the end. Into his Lukan framework Mark inserted four sections drawn from Matthew's Gospel; and into his Matthean framework Mark inserted four sections drawn from Luke's Gospel.

### **9.6.3 Explanation of Synoptic Pericope Order**

Where following a distinctive order, Matthew's basic intention was a systematic arrangement of his material, adding like to like; but Luke's intention was to present his material chronologically, so far as he was able to ascertain this. In following first Luke and then Matthew, Mark adopted a framework that would steer him around major teaching sections that he did not plan to use. Thus Mark was parallel to one of the Major Synoptics at all times, and to both of them when they themselves agreed.

## **9.7 EVALUATION OF THE MARKAN PRIORITY CASE**

### **9.7.1 The Argument for the Requirement of a Common Source**

The argument states that the correspondence in pericope order between Matthew and Luke points to a common source, viz Mark. But this argument is fallacious.

### **9.7.2 The Weakness of Explanations of**

#### **Why Matthew and Luke Desert Markan Order**

These explanations proceed on a pericope-by-pericope basis, and do not adequately account for why Matthew and Luke desert Mk's order.

### **9.7.3 The Coincidence that Matthew and Luke**

#### **Never Leave Markan Order at the Same Point**

For forty of the eighty sections of Mark, if the Synoptic that is paralleling Markan order had placed Mark's material in a *different point* in his own account, Mark would have been left unsupported. But it never happens. This cannot be explained, and can only be attributed by Markan Priority to coincidence.

### **9.7.4 Matthew and Luke Always Return if the Other is Deserting Mark's Order**

The way in which Matthew and Luke, acting independently, each return to Mark's order when the other is deserting it is uncanny. Or incredible.

### **9.7.5 Assessment**

The Markan Dependence hypothesis offers satisfactory explanations for each section of the data. Markan Priority does not give an adequate explanation.

## **9.8 ACCOUNTING FOR THE MARKAN OMISSIONS AND INCLUSIONS**

### **9.8.1 Mark's Procedure Where Matthew and Luke Differ in Order**

When Mark finds, after a particular point of agreement in pericope order, that Matthew and Luke differ in what they give next and he wishes to use what each contains at this point, he first uses the pericope from one, and then the pericope from the other. This accounts for many of the pericope sequences in Mark.

### **9.8.2 The Influence of Mark's Framework on his Inclusions and Omissions**

Mark's framework provides a simple explanation for his inclusions and omissions.

## **9.9 ORDER IN MATTHEW AND LUKE**

### **9.9.1 Basic Synoptic Framework**

The inherent nature of some of the Synoptic material provides the basic framework for the Synoptic Gospels without requiring that the Major Synoptics derived this order one from the other or from Mark.

### **9.9.2 Pericope Clusters**

The existence of clusters of unconnected pericopes which have the same order in Matthew and Luke, though the clusters as a whole occur at different places in the Matthean and Lukan frameworks, points to the circulation of these clusters as written documents prior to the composition of the Synoptics.

### **9.9.3 Healings and the Baptist's Emissage**

Matthew's "Healings" section compared with Luke.

### **9.9.4 From the Baptist's Emissage Onwards**

The sequence of these pericopes in Matthew and Luke.

### **9.9.5 A Comparison of Luke with Matthew**

Contrasting chronological links in Matthew and Luke.

### **9.9.6 Summary and Conclusion**

A comparison of how pericope order would be explained by the different Synoptic hypotheses. Markan Dependence gives a more complete, more satisfying and more convincing explanation of each aspect of the data of Synoptic pericope order.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PUTTING THINGS IN ORDER

This chapter examines the pericope order in the Synoptics, and proposes an explanation to account for it

*The manner, however, in which Mark's Gospel is composed, the cycle of events he records, and the order in which he groups them strikingly imply a knowledge on his part of the two other Synoptics. This fact really serves to confirm our opinion that Mark makes use of Matthew and Luke as his main authorities in writing his gospel.*

- Friedrich Bleek, *Introduction to the N.T.*, 1870: 266-267.

*Decisive [for the Markan Priority hypothesis] is the comparison of the sequence of the accounts in the Gospels: within the material that they have in common with Mk, Mt and Lk agree in sequence only insofar as they agree with Mk; when they diverge from Mk, each goes his own way.*

- Werner G Kümmel, *Introduction to the N.T.*, 1975: 57.

*It is, however, doubtful if this phenomenon [pericope order] can prove much either way. ...: the evidence is ambiguous and allows a variety of hypotheses, i.e. any hypothesis which places Mark in a 'medial' position ... and it is logically fallacious to assume that one and only one hypothesis can adequately explain them.*

- Christopher M Tuckett, "Response to the Two-Gospel Hypothesis", Jerusalem Conference, 1984: 10-11.

#### 9.1 AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS IN ORDER

Several times there have been occasions to note, in the course of this study thus far, that sometimes the Synoptic Gospels agree in the order in which they set out the events that they record, and sometimes they differ amongst themselves. The overall extent of the agreement in pericope order is quite substantial, but the changes in order between one Gospel and another are also considerable.

Explanations offered for these changes of pericope order are tied to viewpoints held about sources of the Synoptic Gospels. Those who hold to a theory of oral sources for the Synoptics, and thus their literacy independence, have no problems with the

differences in the order of pericopes. For them, what requires explaining is the extent to which the various pericopes, all circulating independently, have come to be arranged in the same order in the Synoptics.

Conversely, those who hold one of the theories of literary interrelationship can expect that as a result of this interrelationship there will be correspondences in Synoptic order. For them, what requires explaining is why one author, in copying from another, would at times choose to alter drastically the pericope order of his source.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the extent of variation in pericope order in the Synoptic Gospels. As a result of this analysis, it is then possible to suggest a simple three-proposition explanation as being capable of fully explaining all the variations of pericope order that occur.

It is to be noted that the present chapter is primarily concerned with the order of complete pericopes, and how this phenomenon can be explained. There are quite a few pericopes in which there exists an internal difference of order between the Synoptics; e.g. (as noted last chapter, §8.3.3) Mt 4:4-11 and Lk 4:4-13 (the Temptations); Mt 26:26-29/Mk 14:22-25 and Lk 22:15-19 (bread and cup); also Mt 15:3-9 and Mk 7:6-13; Mt 19:4-8 and Mk 10:3-9;. This however is a separate issue, and *any* Synoptic theory that takes one Gospel to be the source of another will require the supposition that the later writer (whoever he be) altered the order of his source within the pericope in order to make more effectively the points of the story as he saw them.

## 9.2 TABLE OF THE ORDER OF MARKAN SECTIONS, AND PARALLELS

### 9.2.1 The Synoptic Table (Table 9.1)

Scholars have recognized that almost all the pericopes in Mark are also to be found in either or both of Matthew and Luke, and that Mark stands in some sense in an intermediate position between Matthew and Luke in the matter of pericope order, as Mark agrees with the order of Matthew or Luke or both; and Matthew and Luke do not agree in order against Mark.

This aspect of the phenomenon of order indicates that the way to present the data for examination is to set out an outline of the pericopes contained in Mark with the Matthean and Lukan parallels given on the left and right of Mark respectively.

To facilitate an overview of all the common Synoptic material, the total length of the chart has been minimized by compressing those pericopes that are consecutive in all Synoptics that contain them into a single “section” or “pericope cluster” for placement on the chart.



This may result in some loss of detail but will not affect any of the overall statements about Synoptic order. Constructed on this basis, the chart has 80 sections.

One of the most relevant pieces of data for this examination will be to see, in relation to each pericope or section, whether at that point Matthew and Mark or Mark and Luke agree in order, or whether all three are in agreement. Therefore, Mark's references are set out in three columns. When a Markan reference is placed in the centre column, then Matthew and Luke are both *in agreement* with Mark as to order, or else are in agreement in that both *omit* that particular Markan pericope. When a Markan reference is placed in the left column, adjacent to the Matthew reference, then Mark's order accords with the order of Matthew, and Luke's order is different. When a Markan reference is placed in the right column, adjacent to the Luke reference, then Mark's order accords with the order of Luke, and Matthew's order is different. A Matthean or Lukan passage that occurs in an order different from that of Mark is given in the Table in brackets. Thus it can be seen that the columns in the Table will have the following significance:

When the Major Synoptics are following the order of Mark, their references are given without brackets. When either differs from Markan order, that Gospel's reference will be in brackets (or will be a dash, if his difference from Mark is that he omits the episode), and the Markan reference will be placed in the column adjacent to the other Major Synoptic. If both Major Synoptics differ from the Markan order at the same point, both their references will appear in brackets. Thus where the Markan reference appears in the centre column, Mark's order is being followed by *both* the Major Synoptics, or by *neither* of them, or else it is an episode in Mark that is not used by either of them. If the Markan reference appears in the column adjacent to one of the Major Synoptics, then that Gospel and Mark are agreed in order against the other Major Synoptic (which has either omitted the episode or placed it in a different position).

NO	SECTION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
1.	John the Baptist	3:1-17E	1:2-11	3:2-22
2.	The Temptation	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13
3.	Ministry in Galilee	4:12-17	1:14-15	4:14-15
4.	Call of the First Disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20	(5:1-11)
5.	Demoniac in the Synagogue	-	1:21-28	4:31-37
6.	Heals Peter's Mother-in-law	(8:14-17)	1:29-34	4:38-41
7.	Jesus Prays, Then Departs	-	1:35-38	4:42-43
8.	Preaching Tour	4:23-25E	1:39	4:44E
9.	Cleansing the Leper	8:1-4	1:40-45E	5:12-16

10. Paralytic/Matthew/Fasting	9:1-17	2:1-22	5:17-39E
11. Plucking Grain/Withered Hand	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11
12. Lakeside Crowds & Healings	12:15-21	3:7-12	(6:17-19)
13. Appointment of the Twelve	(10:1-4)	3:13-19	6:12-16
14. Jesus Thought to be Mad	-	3:20-21	-
15. Beelzebul Controversy	12:24-30	3:22-27	(11:15-23)
16. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit	12:31-37	3:28-30	(12:10)
17. Jesus's True Family	12:46-50E	3:31-35E	(8:19-21)
18. The Parable of the Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
19. Lamps, Hearing and Getting	(various)	4:21-25	8:16-18
20. Parable of the Growing Seed	-	4:26-29	-
21. Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	(13:18-19)
22. Jesus's Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34	-
23. A Storm and a Demoniac	(8:23-34E)	4:35-5:20	8:22-39
24. Jairus's Daughter/Sick Woman	(9:18-26)	5:21-43E	8:40-56E
25. Rejection at Nazareth	13:53-58E	6:1-6	(4:16-30)
26. Mission of The Twelve	(10:5-16)	6:7-13	9:1-6
27. Herod's Perplexity about Jesus	14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9
28. Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:17-29	(3:19-20)
29. The Return of The Twelve	-	6:30-31	9:10a
30. Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:13-21	6:32-44	9:10b-17
31. Walking on the Water	14:22-33	6:45-52	-
32. Healings, & Washings Dispute	14:34-15:31	6:53-7:37E	(11:37-41)
33. Feeding of the Four Thousand	15:32-39E	8:1-10	-
34. Re the Pharisees	16:1-12	8:11-21	(12:1)
35. Bethsaida Blind Man Healed	-	8:22-26	-
36. Peter's Confession/Passion (1)	16:13-21	8:27-31	9:18-22
37. Peter's Rebuke	16:22-23	8:32-33	-
38. To Deny Oneself	16:24-28E	8:34-9:1	9:23-27
39. The Transfiguration	17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36
40. The Coming of Elijah	17:10-13	9:11-13	-
41. An Exorcism, and Passion (2)	17:14-23	9:14-32	9:37-45
42. True Greatness	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48
43. The Stranger Who Was Exorcizing	-	9:38-41	9:49-50
44. Warnings About Offences	18:6-9	9:42-50E	-
45. Marriage and Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12	(16:18)

46. Blessing Children/Rich Man	19:13-30E	10:13-31	18:15-30
47. Passion Prediction (3)	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34
48. Request of Sons of Zebedee	20:20-28	10:35-45	-
49. The Healing of the Blind	20:29-34E	10:46-52E	18:35-43E
50. Entry into Jerusalem	21:1-9	11:1-10	19:28-40
51. Surveying the Temple	-	11:11	-
52. Cursing the Fig Tree	21:18-19	11:12-14	-
53. Cleansing the Temple	(21:12-17)	11:15-17	19:45-46
54. Chief Priests & Scribes Conspire	-	11:18-19	19:47-48E
55. The Fig Tree is Withered	21:20-22	11:20-26	-
56. The Question about Authority	21:23-27	11:27-33E	20:1-8
57. Parable of the Wicked Farmers	20:9-19	21:33-46E	12:1-12
58. Questions: Taxes, Resurrection	22:15-33	12:13-27	20:20-40
59. The Greatest Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34	(10:25-28)
60. David's Son; Woe to Pharisees	22:41-23:36	12:35-40	20:41-47E
61. The Widow's Gift	-	12:41-44E	21:1-4
62. Eschatological Sayings	24:1-22	13:1-20	21:5-24
63. False Christs and Prophets	24:23-28	13:21-23	(17:23-37)
64. Coming of Son of Man; Watch	24:29-25:46E	13:24-37E	21:25-36
65. The Plot to Kill Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2
66. Jesus Anointed	26:6-13	14:3-9	(7:36-50E)
67. Betrayal Made/Passover Preps	26:14-20	14:10-17	22:3-14
68. Jesus Foretells his Betrayal	26:21-25	14:18-21	(22:21-23)
69. The Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20
70. Peter's Denial Predicted	26:30-35	14:26-31	22:31-34
71. Gethsemane; Jesus Arrested	26:36-58	14:32-54	22:39-54
72. False Witnesses in Sanhedrin	26:59-62	14:55-60	-
73. Jesus Questioned by Sanhedrin	26:63-66	14:61-64	22:66-71E
74. Jesus Maltreated/Peter Denials	26:67-75E	14:65-72E	(22:55-65)
75. Jesus Before Pilate	27:1-14	15:1-5	23:1-5
76. Jesus or Barabbas?	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:17-25
77. The Mockery of the Soldiers	27:27-31	15:16-20	-
78. The Road to Golgotha	27:32	15:21	23:26-32
79. Crucifixion to the Burial	27:33-61	15:22-47E	23:33-56
80. The Women at Empty Tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-12

Times when Mk is supported only by Mt:	27
Times when Mk is supported only by Lk:	13
Times when Mk has unique material	4
Times when Mk is supported by both Mt & Lk:	36

### 9.2.2 Mark is Always Supported in his Order by Another Synoptic

At any point where Matthew, Mark and Luke recount the same pericope, there are four possibilities concerning what can occur next. Following the passage under consideration:

1. Both Matthew and Luke contain Mark's next pericope; or
2. Matthew contains Mark's next pericope, and Luke has something else; or
3. Luke contains Mark's next pericope, and Matthew has something else; or
4. Neither Matthew nor Luke contains Mark's next pericope.

Now, obviously the fourth of these circumstances is going to occur in relation to each instance of a pericope unique to Mark. There are eight such pericopes:

3:20-21	"He is beside himself"
4:26-29	The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly
7:31-37E	The Healing of the Deaf Mute
8:22-26	The Healing of the Blind Man of Bethsaida
9:49-50E	About Salt
11:11	Jesus Looks around The Temple
13:33-37E	Keep Awake
14:51-52	The Young Man Who Fled

Four of these are unparalleled in the Major Synoptics (3:20-21; 4:26-29; 8:22-26; 11:11: they will be seen, in the above table, to have a dash alongside them in the Matthew and Luke columns).

Two of these (7:31-37E; 13:33-37E) are in the nature of Markan alternatives with somewhat similar content to what Matthew has at that point; some scholars would include a third (9:49-50) in this category also. One (14:51-52) is included within a Triple Tradition passage.

On the Markan Priority hypothesis, these would all be occasions when Matthew and Luke both independently decided not to use a given Markan pericope; on the Markan Dependence hypothesis these would all be occasions when Mark inserted a small pericope of his own into what he was drawing from Matthew and Luke; in neither case is

the question of Synoptic pericope order involved. As far as the discussion of Synoptic pericope order is concerned, then, these Markan *sondergut* pericopes are put aside.

It will be found that there are numerous cases where the first of the above four circumstances applies, viz where Matthew, Mark and Luke continue in parallel for two or more pericopes in succession. This would be expected on both the Markan Priority and Markan Dependence views—on the Markan Priority view, it would frequently occur that at successive points in Mark's narrative neither Matthew nor Luke would have any reason to leave Mark's order; on the Markan Dependence view, wherever Mark found that Matthew and Luke had the same order he himself retained that order.

One of the "givens" of our investigation is that on occasions Matthew and Mark, and Mark and Luke, do not agree in order. This means then the recognition that sometimes Matthew and sometimes Luke will not be in agreement with the order of the other two Synoptics (alternatives 2 and 3 of the four possibilities listed above). This in fact is the phenomenon under investigation. Both Markan Priority and Markan Dependence are able to account for this: Markan Priority by offering reasons why on each given occasion Matthew or Luke should desert Mark's order; Markan Dependence by the explanation that when Mark came to Matthew and Luke there already were these divergences of order between them, and in each such case Mark followed the order of one or the other.

The major focus of interest in this present section is the fourth circumstance. I have noted the situation where Matthew and Luke differ from Mark's order at a given point because neither of the Major Synoptics in fact include the pericope. But does it happen that at a particular point in Mark, the next pericope he gives is found in one of the Major Synoptics, but in a different place? That is, that Mark's order where he gives such a pericope is unsupported by either Matthew or Luke?

Given that Matthew and Luke are each free to differ from Mark's order for reasons that are independent of each other, it is to be expected that they could each choose to do so at the same point. As can be seen from a careful consideration of the above table of Synoptic segments, the fact is that this circumstance **does not occur**. That is, there are numbers of occasions when after a point of threefold agreement in recounting a pericope, the threefold agreement extends to the following pericope also, and numbers of occasions when the next pericope is found only in Matthew and Mark or only in Mark and Luke; but **there is no occasion** when what is found after a given pericope in Mark is not found next in **either** Matthew **or** Luke but **is** found elsewhere in Matthew's or Luke's sequence. That is, there is **no place** where Mark places a pericope in an independent order of his own, an order that is not paralleled in either Matthew or Luke.

There are two places concerning which it is sometimes stated (e.g., 183, G Murray, "Order In St Mark's Gospel", *Doonside Review* Vol 101 No. 344, July 1983) that "Mark's order lacks support from either Matthew or Luke. [These] are (1) 3:13-19 and (2) 11:11-27". Closer consideration of the text will disclose that these passages do not constitute exceptions to the generalization that for every pericope Mark will be paralleled in either Matthew or Luke (or both) by the *next* pericope in that Gospel (those Gospels) so that the sequence of pericopes is maintained between Mark and at least one other Synoptic.

In the first situation, it can be seen that Mark (3:1-6, the Withered Hand) is paralleled by the other two (Mt 12:9-14//Lk 6:6-11), and then Matthew and Luke differ in what they place next: Matthew (12:15-21) has The Healing of the Multitudes, which Luke has deferred to a slightly later position (6:17-19), and Luke has The Appointment of The Twelve (6:12-16). What Mark has next is The Healing of the Multitudes, and in this his order parallels Matthew; and then he has The Appointment of The Twelve, in which he parallels the next pericope in Luke *after* the point of threefold agreement. This agreement in sequence is not nullified by the circumstance that the previous pericope in which the order of Matthew and Mark corresponds (Mt 12:15-21//Mk 3:7-12) is also the next-but-one pericope in Luke (6:17-19).

In the second instance cited by Murray, Matthew and Mark have a difference of order: Matthew gives the Cleansing of the Temple before the Cursing of the Fig Tree, whereas Mark has the Cursing of the Fig Tree and then the Cleansing of the Temple.

A careful consideration of the data will disclose that it is not the Cursing of the Fig Tree which is out of order between Matthew and Mark (as is often stated to be the case), but the Cleansing of the Temple. It can be plainly seen that this is the case: note that in Matthew the Cleansing of the Temple occurs on Day One of Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem, and the Cursing and Withering of the Fig Tree both occur on Day Two, whereas in Mark the Cursing of the Fig Tree and the Cleansing of the Temple occur (in that order) on Day Two, and the fig tree is noticed on Day Three to have already withered away to its roots (Mk 11:20). Thus Matthew apocopates these events into two days and Mark extends them over three days. Note the occurrence of the elements in the story:

STORY ELEMENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
	DAY ONE	DAY ONE	DAY ONE
Jesus enters Jerusalem	21:10-11	11:11a	
Jesus enters the Temple	21:12a	11:11b	
Jesus cleanses the Temple	21:12b-16		-
Jesus retires to Bethany	21:17	11:11c	

	DAY TWO	DAY TWO	
Jesus returns to Jerusalem	21:18	11:12a	
Jesus curses the fig tree	21:19a	11:12b-14	
Jesus enters the Temple		11:15a	19:45a
Jesus cleanses the Temple		11:15b-17	19:45b-46
			<b>DAILY</b>
Conspiracy against Jesus		11:18	19:47-48E
They leave Jerusalem		11:19	
		<b>DAY THREE</b>	<b>ONE DAY</b>
The fig tree withered	21:19b-22	11:20-26	
Jesus enters the Temple	21:23a	11:27a	20:1a
Question about Authority	21:23b-27	11:27b-33	20:1b-8

Note the way in which Mark parallels Matthew for the first few elements in the narrative (11:11-14)—save only that he omits the Cleansing of the Temple that occurs here in Matthew. Then from 11:15 to 18 Mark parallels Luke, and here gives the Cleansing of the Temple. Thus Mark records (contra both Matthew and Luke in this regard) **two** occasions when Jesus entered the Temple, on consecutive days, before the Day of Questions (Mk 11:11b and 11:15a). Luke makes no mention of the cursing or withering of the fig tree, so that in his Gospel the Cleansing of the Temple thus follows immediately after Jesus's entry into the city.

So Mark's account is an amalgam of correspondences with each of Matthew and Luke, but with these clear differences between Mark and Matthew: (a) Mark has the Cleansing of the Temple on the Second Day and Matthew has it on the First Day; (b) Mark has the noticing of the withered fig tree on the Third Day and Matthew has the Withering of the Fig Tree on the Second Day, immediately after the Cursing.

Now, whatever may be thought about these differences, they are most certainly **not** a case simply of the transposition of the order of two pericopes: what is happening is more fundamental than that. Rather, there is a less detailed chronological sequence of events in Matthew and a more detailed chronological sequence of events in Mark—a situation that has similarities to Mt 9:18//Mk 5:23, 35 (Lk 8:42, 49) where the daughter is dead from the beginning in Matthew but in contrast is dying at the beginning of the pericope in Mark (and Luke) and is reported to be dead at a later point in the story. It is this kind of difference that is to be seen between Matthew and Mark in the interrelated pericopes of the Cleansing of the Temple and the Fig Tree, and not a difference of pericope order as such. Moreover, Mark's order is in accord with Luke's in placing The Cleansing of the

Temple immediately before, and as a lead-in to, the pericope The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire (which Matthew lacks).

Certainly, what is to be seen here is not of such a nature as to disturb the validity of the acknowledged circumstance that Mark's order is always supported by either or both of Matthew and Luke.

It is also to be noted that when Mark is paralleled in order with only one of the Major Synoptics, Mark's next pericope will *either* continue to be parallel with that same Major Synoptic *or else* it will be parallel in sequence with the *next* pericope that that Major Synoptic contains that is also contained in the other Major Synoptic. Thus in this circumstance also, it remains a valid observation that Mark's order is supported by either or both of Matthew and Luke.

### 9.2.3 The Comparison of Synoptic Order

From the Synoptic Table 9.1 given above (#9.2.1), it can be seen that the order of pericopes in Matthew and Mark is the same for most of the pericopes in the two Gospels. However, there are a number of exceptions to this generalization, all of which occur in the first six chapters of Mark and their equivalent in Matthew, where the dislocation of order is quite substantial.

The extent to which there is a common Synoptic order is one of the arguments for the existence of a literary relationship between the Gospels—it is difficult to account for this degree of correspondence if Matthew and Mark are considered to have been written from the oral tradition independently of each other, since pericopes in the oral tradition would not all occur in a fixed order that would then be reproduced in independently-written Gospels.

Therefore there is some relationship between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and one of them has followed the order of the other most of the time, departing from it occasionally.

But which has followed which?

The Markan Priority hypothesis holds that Matthew has used Mark (and similarly, Luke has used Mark). On the basis of this hypothesis, it is thus Matthew who has on a number of occasions deserted Mark's order. The Successive Dependence hypothesis and the Markan Dependence hypothesis both hold that Mark used Matthew, so on these hypotheses it is Mark who has deserted Matthew's order from time to time. Next, then, to examine the question of Synoptic order on the basis of each of these three hypotheses in turn.



## 9.3 ACCORDING TO THE MARKAN PRIORITY HYPOTHESIS

### 9.3.1 What Matthew Has Done

First of all, I shall consider how Matthew has handled Mark's account, upon the presuppositions of the Markan Priority hypothesis, and then I shall examine the explanations of Matthew's treatment that have been offered.

Matthew and Mark differ in what they *include* in some of the following pericopes (a feature that in itself is a matter of significance worthy of further consideration separately), but they are in agreement in the *order* in which they give these pericopes:

1. John the Baptist	Mk 1:2-11	Mt 3:1-17E
2. The Temptation	Mk 1:12-13	Mt 4:1-11
3. Ministry in Galilee	Mk 1:14-15	Mt 4:12-17
4. The Call of the First Disciples	Mk 1:16-20	Mt 4:18-22

It can be suggested that the subject matter itself determines that these pericopes come at this point in each Gospel, and in the order given.

Thus, the earliest point at which differences in pericope order could occur would be after Jesus commenced his Galilee ministry. Matthew and Mark have only one pericope in common after this point (the Call of the First Disciples) before their order diverges:

NO.	MARK	MATT	ORDER	WHAT MATTHEW DOES
-----	------	------	-------	-------------------

1.	1:2-11	3:1-17E	1	
2.	1:12-13	4:1-11	2	
3.	1:14-15	4:12-17	3	
4.	1:16-20	4:18-22	4	
<b>Mk's "Busy Sabbath in Capernaum" dismantled:</b>				
5a	1:21-22	7:28-29	6	Transfers this to end the Sermon on the Mount
5b	1:23-28	-	-	Omits Mark's first healing
6.	1:29-34	8:14-17	8	Transfers these to be his 3rd and 4th healings
7.	1:35-38	-	-	Omits the circumstances leading to the Tour
8.	1:39	4:23-25E	5	The Tour now immediately follows the Call of First Disciples
9.	1:40-45E	8:1-4	7	This healing now follows the Sermon on the Mt
10.	2:1-22	9:1-17	10	<b>Mk's two chapters of Conflict Stories (chapters 2 and 3) have</b>
11.	2:23-3:6	12:1-14	14	<b>now been split up in Mt</b>
12.	3:7-12	12:15-21	15	
13.	3:13-19	10:1-4	12	Moves this back to an earlier position
14.	3:20-21	-	-	Omits Jesus "Thought to be Mad"

15.	3:22-27	12:22-30	16	
16.	3:28-30	12:31-37	17	
17.	3:31-35E	12:46-50E	18	
18.	4:1-20	13:1-23	19	
19.	4:21-25	5:15; 10:26; 11:15//13:43; 7:2; 13:12.		Broken up into five
20.	4:26-29	-	-	Omits Parable of the Growing Seed
21.	4:30-32	13:31-32	20	
22.	4:33-34	13:34-35	21	
23.	4:35-5:20	8:23-34E	9	Moves this back to an earlier position
24.	5:21-43E	9:18-26	10	Moves this back to an earlier position
25.	6:1-6	13:53-58E	22	
26.	6:7-13	10:5-16	13	Moves this back to an earlier position
27.	6:14-16	14:1-2	23	

The numbers on the right of the Matthew reference (under the heading ORDER) indicate the order of these pericopes in Matthew's Gospel. These numbers show the extent of the general correspondence between their order in Matthew and Mark, and also the departures occurring from that order on numbers of occasions.

Hereafter Matthew **exactly** follows Mark's order to the end of his account, with the minor difference of reversing the order of the Cleansing of the Temple and the Cursing of the Fig Tree (as examined in detail in §9.2.2, above).

### 9.3.2 Why Matthew Has Handled Mark Thus

Following upon this statement of **how** (upon the presuppositions of the Markan Priority hypothesis) Matthew has handled Mark's Gospel, we must now enquire **why** he has acted in this way. Numbers of explanations of Matthew's alterations have been proffered by biblical scholars. I shall note these four:

1907	W C Allen	<i>I C C on Matthew</i> , xiii-xvii
1924	B H Streeter	<i>The Four Gospels</i> , 161-162; 273-274
1963	N B Stonehouse	<i>Origins of the Synoptic Gospels</i> , 66-69
1975	W G Kümmel	<i>Introduction to the New Testament</i> , 57-60

Allen's treatment is detailed and thorough, and is accepted by Streeter (1924: 161) with the commendation, "The discussion of the relation of Matthew and Mark in this work (by W C Allen) is the most valuable known to me." It is frequently referred to by modern writers as a sufficient treatment of the issues. However, it can be noted that Allen uses slightly differing Matthew/Mark equivalents from the more usual.

Allen regards Mark 1:21a “And they went into Capernaum”, as being equivalent to (or more precisely, being substituted by) Matthew 4:23-25, Jesus’s Preaching Tour of Galilee and the reports of his increasing fame (xv). This, Allen believes, is where Matthew then inserts the Sermon on the Mount. His comment is:

Mark 1:21b speaks of teaching in the synagogue. Here, therefore, is an opportunity of inserting an illustration of Christ’s teaching, which is to be followed by an illustrative group of His miracles. As an introduction to these two sections of illustration, the editor substitutes for Mark 1:21 a general sketch of Christ’s activity (4:23-25), using for this purpose phraseology borrowed from various parts of the second Gospel. The reason why he places his illustrations of Christ’s teaching before that of His miracles is no doubt to be found in Mark 1:22, which describes the effect produced by that teaching on the people. The editor therefore inserts the Sermon on the Mount between Mark 1:21 and 22 and closes it with the latter verse.

After acknowledging that “It is not easy to account for” what Matthew has done here, Allen gives suggestions for the omission of some pericopes and the transposition of others. He considers that Matthew may have placed the Healing of the Leper as the first of his group of healings (rather than the Demoniac in the Synagogue, which he omitted, or Peter’s Mother-in-Law and the Sick at Nightfall, which he placed as his third and fourth healing pericopes, and which were earlier in Mark) because “Leprosy was perhaps the most dreaded of all bodily ailments in Palestine, and its cure forms a fitting introduction to a series of three healings of disease.”

Allen suggests (xvi) that Matthew did not use the Healing of the Demoniac because (a) it “may have been that he wished to form a series of three healings of disease, and that in the Church tradition the healing of the centurion’s servant was closely connected with the Sermon”, and (b), “there were features in the story of the demoniac which did not commend it to the editor”.

Next Allen proceeds to explain that Mark 1:35-39 (Jesus Prays Alone, Then Proposes a Tour) “would be out of place in a series of miracles, and is therefore omitted”. Allen continues (xvi):

Mark 1:40-45 has been already inserted. The editor, therefore, comes to Mark 2:1-22. This he postpones, perhaps because it occurred on a visit to Capernaum different to that just described. By recording it here the editor would confuse the two visits. Mark 2:23-3:6 he reserves for a controversial section. 3:7-35 contain no miracle. 4:1-34 he reserves for his chapter on parables. ...

Several similar comments follow, on omissions and transpositions, and then Allen says (xvii),

Having now given illustrations of Christ's teachings and miracles, the editor now proposes to show how this ministry found extension in the work of the disciples. He therefore postpones Mark 6:1-6a, and expands 6b into an introduction to this mission modelled on the similar introduction 4:23-25. ...

Chapter 10:1 continues with Mark 6:7; but the editor here inserts Mark 3:16-19, which he had passed over. The rest of 10-11:1 is an amplification of Mark 6:8-9. ...

There now follows a series of incidents illustrating the growth of hostility to Christ on the part of the Pharisees. For these the editor now goes back to Mark 2:23-28ff. ...

Having already borrowed Mark 3:13-19a he now comes to 19b-21 and 22-30. For this he substitutes a similar but longer discourse introduced by another miracle. ...

This brings him to Mark 4, which is a chapter of parables. The editor borrows this and adds other parables. ... As he has already inserted Mark 4:35-5:43 he now comes to Mark 6:1-6a. From this point the editor follows the order of Mark's sections.

The above selection of extracts is representative of all that Allen says. It will be noted:

(a) That Allen's explanation proceeds on a pericope-by-pericope basis, at times in fact virtually on a verse-by-verse basis, since each omission and deviation requires its own explanation.

(b) That much of the time Allen does not actually give any explanation of **why** Matthew ("the editor") has proceeded in a particular way, but only gives a statement of **what** Matthew has done (if Markan Priority is true).

Thus he attempts no explanation of some of the major transpositions, e.g. why (on his view) Matthew would postpone "a series of incidents illustrating the growth of hostility to Christ on the part of the Pharisees".

(c) That Allen's explanations are often so general that they could cover Matthew's text **whatever** order he had adopted.

That is, the explanations he does give are highly subjective and would fit **any** situation. Thus: it has been seen that his explanation of why Matthew brings up The Healing of the Leper from its position as Mark's **fourth** healing story to become his (Matthew's) **first** healing story, is because "Leprosy was perhaps the most dreaded of all bodily ailments in Palestine, and its cure forms a fitting introduction to a series of three healings of disease" (xvf.). But the cure of leprosy would be equally fitting as the **midpoint** or (especially) as the **climax** of a series of healings. Allen does not offer any explanation for why it is **more fitting** as the first in a series of healings, that is, why it is put where it is in Matthew—Allen's comment could readily be made to apply to the story **wherever** it had occurred in Matthew. If for instance Matthew had put The Healing of the

Leper last, as the climax of a series of healings, we would only have to change one word—"introduction" to "climax"—in Allen's comment, and it would still fit the situation. In other words, the most that Allen's comment does is explain the inclusion of this pericope **somewhere** in a group of healing miracles. Thus Allen's comment is an all-purpose explanation readily adaptable to whatever the text happened to contain, so it is not specifically related to what the text actually **does** contain.

(d) That Allen's explanations frequently depend upon Matthew having followed a course of action on some occasions contrary to what he has done on others, so that Matthew's principles of compilation are in fact self-contradictory.

Thus for example Mark 1:35-39 (Jesus Prays Alone, Then Proposes a Tour) was omitted because it "would be out of place in a series of miracles" (xvi). But at exactly the point where Mark places this pericope (i.e. after the Healing of the Sick at Nightfall, Mk 1:32-34//Mt 8:16-17), Matthew himself inserts (8:18-22) Discussions with Aspirants to Discipleship. It is not immediately apparent why what **Mark** had at this point is "out of place in a series of miracles" whereas what **Matthew himself** inserts at the same point, which also has nothing to do with miracles, is not inappropriate "in a series of miracles".

Again, at a later stage—Chapter 9 of Matthew's Gospel—Matthew is setting out another series of miracles for which (on the Markan Priority view) he is drawing on Mark, and between two miracle pericopes (Mt 9:1-8, The Healing of the Paralytic, and Mt 9:18-26, Jairus's Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage) Matthew is quite content to leave in position two other non-miracle pericopes that occur at this point in Mark (Mt 9:9-13, The Call of Matthew/Levi, and Mt 9:14-17, The Question about Fasting).

It can be noted then that no actual reasons for Matthew's changes of order are given by Allen that are not either quite subjective or so general that they would cover anything, or else inconsistent with what Matthew is seen to be doing (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) elsewhere in these first thirteen chapters. Certainly the transpositions are not explained on the basis of the outworking of discernible principles of policy or procedure.

As noted earlier, Streeter cites Allen's work with approval. He does add these comments (1924: 273f.):

It is noticeable that Matthew places the [Mission] Charge much earlier than does Mark, a rearrangement of Mark which is probably due to the influence of the order in Q. ...

The next item in both [Matthew and Luke] is the pair of parables, the Mustard Seed and Leaven. This brings us into Matthew 13. Now we have observed (161) that up to this point Matthew seems to have rearranged the materials he took from Mark with the greatest freedom; but that from chapter 14 onward he never departs from Mark's order. We seem to

have lighted on the explanation. Matthew's rearrangement of Mark has been, at any rate partly, determined by the necessity of combining Mark with Q. Thus the order of Q has evidently suggested to him to anticipate the place of the Mission Charge in Mark; and the late occurrence of the Mustard Seed and Leaven in Q has led him to postpone Mark's collection of parables of the Kingdom, among which he desired to include this pair from Q and others from M.

In a footnote (to page 274), Streeter adds this further comment:

The endeavour to group together representative miracles seems to have been another motive for rearrangement. Cf. W C Allen, *Commentary on Matthew*, xivff.

Streeter's additional proposal is that accommodation of Marcan material to the order of Q explains "at any rate partly" the Matthean rearrangement. At best this is using the uncertain order of material that may have been in Q to account for the changes. However, there is very considerable scepticism (even amongst those who believe in the existence of Q in some form) that Q was a single document with a fixed order. It can be concluded then that this proposal is of very limited value in explaining the reason for Matthew's changes made to Mark's order of pericopes.

Ned B Stonehouse (*The Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, 1963: 66-69) describes the sequence of pericopes in the first half of Matthew and compares this sequence with that of Mark. He notes

that Matthew, following the report of the call of the first disciples, has nothing comparable to the Marcan cycle of events connected with Capernaum but proceeds at once to speak generally of the preaching and healing activity in Galilee (4:23-25). Next Matthew goes on to illustrate the ministry of Jesus in considerable detail, introducing the Sermon on the Mount as an example of his preaching (Mt 5:3-7:27) and many works of healing as instances of the manifestation of his power and mercy (8:1-9:34).

Stonehouse examines how Matthew does this, concluding

that it becomes plain that in chapters 8 and 9 Matthew is mainly concerned to exemplify the miraculous activity of Jesus, as he has previously done with his ministry of teaching. Pursuing this plan, Matthew follows the Sermon on the Mount with the story of the healing of a leper, thus returning to the Marcan framework at the exact point where it had left it to introduce the Sermon.

Thus Stonehouse (who in this regard is representative of a great many others) sees Matthew as following out, in the writing of this part of his Gospel, a plan of grouping like things with like: a section of teaching, of miracles, of instructing his disciples, of controversies, of parables. In part, a program for this is to be found in the words with

which these sections are introduced (4:23-25). Matthew, then, is held to have rearranged Mark's pericopes in accordance with this plan.

However much truth there may be in this as an explanation of the construction of Matthew's Gospel, it is not wholly adequate in accounting for the way Matthew has handled Mark, which can be seen set out in detail in the previous section of the present chapter. This explanation has nothing to contribute, for example, to our understanding of why Matthew includes the mention of Jesus's Galilean Tour (Mt 4:23-25//Mk 1:39) and excludes the description of the circumstances that led up to it (Mk 1:35-38), or of why the Healing of the Demoniac at Capernaum (Mk 1:21-28) is omitted or why the dual pericopes of the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law and the Sick at Nightfall (Mk 1:29-34) are not put first in Matthew's section of miracles (which is where they occur, after the Capernaum Demoniac, in Mark's account) but are taken later than Mark's story of the Healing of the Leper and the Q story (?) of the Centurion's Servant.

Similarly, no light whatever is thrown upon why the two linked pairs of pericopes that follow each other in Mark, Jesus Quietens the Storm and the Demoniac (Mk 4:35-5:20), and Jairus's Daughter/the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk 5:21-43), are separated in Matthew by another story block—The Healing of the Paralytic/the Call of Matthew/the Question about Fasting—which Matthew has taken from earlier in Mark (Mk 2:1-22).

Yet Stonehouse is convinced that his explanation is persuasive and moreover that this question of the relative order of Matthew and Mark constitutes an overwhelming argument in support of Markan Priority. His treatment of the question of order concludes with this paragraph (1963: 68-69), here reproduced in full:

On the basis of this comparison of the Matthean arrangement of his subject matter in this section with the Marcan order the acceptance of Matthean priority hardly constitutes as live an option as that of the priority of Mark. In both Matthew and Mark, in spite of the presence of many temporal and geographical details, we note a relative unconcern to set forth the precise temporal sequence of the occurrence of various happenings. In this respect, however, Matthew manifests even less interest than Mark. This has been highlighted in the foregoing survey by the observation that Matthew does not present the Capernaum cycle of events found in Mark 1:21-35. On the other hand, as the manner in which the Sermon on the Mount is presented in chapters 5-7 and the long list of miracle stores in chapters 8 and 9 demonstrate, Matthew's approach is more topical and systematic. Thus Matthew is readily understood as having retained substantially the Marcan framework and as having inserted into this framework additional materials derived from various sources or known to him as personal reminiscences. To the extent that a selecting

process is manifest it is clear that Matthew qualifies as the selector rather than Mark. On the other hand, if one should start hypothetically with the Matthean outline of events one would have to adopt the implausible supposition that Mark had chosen more or less at random various largely scattered elements of the Matthean framework and yet that he had introduced greater definiteness and concatenation of events into his outline.

Whether Stonehouse's confidence in his conclusion is justified is an issue presently under consideration in this discussion. (We note that he totally ignores the simple explanation: Mark here exactly follows Luke, with the inclusion of the Call of the First Disciples and the omission of Rejection at Nazareth, which he [Mark] later includes, using Matthew's version.)

W G Kümmel (1975: 57-60) examines the differences of order amongst the Synoptics and reaches conclusions similar to Stonehouse. He gives a chart showing only four places in which the respective order of Matthew and Mark diverges: Mk 1:29-34//Mt 8:14-17; Mk 3:13-19//Mt 10:1-4; Mk 4:35-5:20//Mt 8:23-34; Mk 5:21-43//Mt 9:18-26. He introduces this chart, "Basically Matthew diverges from the Markan order only in a twofold way." The chart is followed by this explanation of the "twofold way" to which Kümmel has referred:

(a) In connection with the first great discourse of Jesus (Mt 5-7), there follows a string of ten miracle stories by way of illustrating 4:23; thus Matthew brings together in chapters 8 and 9 miracles that are scattered throughout the first half of Mark (1:29ff; 4:35ff; 5:21ff).

(b) Matthew attaches to these miracle chapters a mission address (10:5ff), as an introduction to which he has moved forward The Call of the Twelve (Mk 3:13ff).

We have here a generalization that cleverly conceals the problem.

Firstly, saying that "thus Matthew brings together in chapters 8 and 9 miracles that are scattered throughout the first half of Mark" is no explanation of **why they are given the order that they have received in Matthew**, where, even granted that many of Mark's miracle stores have been collected together into a Matthean "miracles section", in that section they have a **different** order from the order they had in Mark. Kümmel's generalization quite jumps over this question.

Secondly, no account at all is taken of the omission of a miracle (the Demoniac, Mark 1:21-28) and also the omission of the explanation of the circumstances preceding the Galilean Tour (Mk 1:35-38), both of which in Mark are tightly linked to pericopes that Matthew **does** use, and transpose.

Thirdly, Kümmel does not include any mention at all of Mk 6:7-13, another Markan passage that is paralleled in Matthew (Mt 10:5-16), and found in a different place in



Matthew's order. Similarly he ignores Mk 1:21-22//Mt 7:28-29 (which Allen had considered to be a significant parallel). Kümmel offers no explanations of these transpositions.

In particular, Kümmel finds support for his conclusions in a detail of Matthew's use of Mark (1975: 60):

Here also can be observed in detail Matthew's alteration of Mark's sequence: the two controversy sayings in Mt 9:9-17 are out of place in a cycle of miracles and can be accounted for only on the ground that this is where they occur in Mark.

Thus what is found in the order of pericopes in Matthew (in particular, the placing of Mt 9:9-17 where we have it) is attributed to Matthew's carelessness in carrying through his plan for the structuring of his Gospel. Yet Matthew could so easily have avoided this "inconsistency" in his Gospel's structuring. The passage in question is 2:13-22 in Mark, part of Mark's "Controversies" section. Matthew takes the very next pericopes of Mark (2:23-3:6) and places them into *his* "Controversies" chapter, Chapter 12. Why did he not commence this transfer of material ten verses earlier, at Mk 2:13 instead of 2:23, and thus avoid these verses getting into the "wrong" section, his "Miracles" section? Carelessness indeed on Matthew's part!

Or another simple alternative open to Matthew: He has used Mark 4:35 to 5:43 (in Mt 8:23-9:26), but he has actually inserted Mk 2:1-22 *into the middle* of this other passage that he has taken from Mark (in fact, between Mk 5:21 and 5:22). All Matthew had to do was take over Mk 4:35 to 5:43 as a block, as he found it, and place Mk 2:1-22 at the *end* of it instead of in the *middle*: then all Matthew's miracles would be grouped together, and the "problem passage" Mk 2:13-22 (which appears in Matthew as 9:9-17) would thus be at the end of and outside the grouping of miracles. But the placing of this material into the middle of another large block of material taken from Mark indicates a deliberation of intent quite at variance with the carelessness attributed to Matthew by Kümmel.

These considerations call in question Kümmel's explanation.

Yet Kümmel, like Stonehouse, is convinced that the order of Matthew and Mark is explained on this basis, and that the Markan Dependence explanation as an alternative is ruled out, having been quite "disproved".

Kümmel says (1975: 60):

The opposite position—that Mark has altered the sequence of Matthew or Luke—offers no clarification in any of the cases mentioned ... so that the hypothesis of Griesbach, according to which Mark has excerpted the other two synoptists, is disproved, as well as the theory that Mark has used and abbreviated either Matthew or Luke.

These then are the explanations offered for the ways in which Matthew has altered Mark's order, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, together with some initial comments on the extent to which these explanations do in fact explain the exact features of different order that is observed in comparing these two Synoptic Gospels.

There are other explanations offered, of course, but there is also a tendency for scholars to refer to one of more of these writers whom I have discussed as if they had shown that the phenomenon of Synoptic order had been demonstrated to favour Markan Priority.

Thus for example in *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*, Robert Stein (1988: 70) cites with approval earlier work which offers "an explanation of why Matthew's and Luke's divergences from the Markan order are more understandable than a Markan divergence from Matthew and/or Luke". He doesn't recognize that there are **no** Markan "divergences from Matthew and/or Luke": Mark **always** follows one or the other! Then at this point, in a footnote Stein adds "For an explanation of these Matthean and Lukan divergences see Werner Georg Kümmel *Introduction to the New Testament* ... 57-60".

Tuckett however, in the quotation with which this present chapter commences, asserts that the order of pericopes is not decisive for either Markan Priority or Markan Dependence.

Some scholars simply refer in passing to the way in which one or other of the Major Synoptists departs from Mark for his own reasons, without attempting any explanation of what those reasons may have been. An example of this approach is found in Ladd (1967: 123, 126), who says:

The strongest evidence is found in the order of material in the three Gospels. ... In their ordering of events, the Gospels do not agree. ... The order of events is determined not by the order in which these events happened, but by the Evangelists' interests and purpose in writing ... Three amazing facts emerge from the comparison of these three Gospels. First, Matthew and Luke follow Mark's order for the most part; second, in numerous specific points, as illustrated above, Matthew and Luke, in pursuing their own particular aims, depart from Mark's order of events; and third, *Matthew and Luke never depart from Mark in the same way*. That is to say, Matthew and Luke never agree in their order of events over against Mark. When they differ, they do so in different ways. If Matthew were the oldest Gospel and had been used by Mark and Luke, there would certainly be places where Luke followed Matthew but Mark did not; but this phenomenon is never found. This fact establishes the priority of Mark with reasonable certainty. The Second Gospel provides the basic outline for the other two. However, since Mark's order is not determined primarily by

historical chronology, neither the First nor the Third Gospel follows Mark slavishly; both feel free to vary his order as well as his wording. But Mark clearly provides the key to the problem of Synoptic interrelationship. (*Italics original.*)

Ladd's way of presenting this data (concerning which he says "The strongest evidence [for Markan Priority] is found in the order of material in the three Gospels" and "This fact establishes the priority of Mark with reasonable certainty") actually serves to cleverly cover up and conceal fatal flaws in his reasoning and thus in the "reasonable certainty" of his conclusion.

Firstly, he commits the logical fallacy of the "undistributed middle": he says, "If Matthew were the oldest Gospel and had been used by Mark and Luke, there would certainly be places where Luke followed Matthew but Mark did not; but this phenomenon is never found." Therefore (Ladd deduces) it is not true that Matthew is the oldest Gospel and was used by Mark and Luke. And thus (Ladd concludes) Mark is the first Gospel, as this is the only other explanation. Ladd does not allow for any other possibilities but that either Luke used Matthew or else that Mark is the first Gospel. He refutes the possibility that Luke used Matthew, and therefore concludes that Markan Priority is established. But the hypothesis propounded in this dissertation—that amongst the documents circulating in Luke's day, to which he refers (1:1) and which he utilized, were pericopes and pericope-clusters written by the apostle Matthew—is totally compatible with the order-of-pericopes data in the Synoptics, and is a completely viable alternative explanation to Markan Priority. This will be demonstrated shortly.

Secondly, he affirms that "the order of events is determined ... by the Evangelists' interests and purposes in writing", and that "in numerous specific points ... Matthew and Luke, in pursuing their own particular aims, depart from Mark's order of events" for "both felt free to vary his order". This being so, it would be perfectly possible for **both** of these Major Synoptists to leave Mark's order at the same time, but (as Ladd correctly tells us), in fact **they never do so!** There are forty occasions when one of the Major Synoptists chooses **not** to follow the pattern of Mark, and **on each one** of those occasions at just exactly that point the other Major Synoptist **will** choose to do so. I identify these forty occasions below (§9.7.3), and further discuss this extraordinary coincidence! This feature of the data of Synoptic order is a really large-size problem for the Markan Priority hypothesis. It is, however, concealed from view in Ladd's analysis.

### 9.3.3 Luke's Use of Mark

Luke's order is very close throughout to that of Mark, and in most cases where Luke appears to be deserting Mark, what is happening is that Luke in fact is not drawing upon

Mark as his source at all, but using a **similar** story from **another** source. Streeter gives (1924: 209-210) an explanation of this factor in Luke's Gospel,

...derived from a consideration of the way in which he deals with incidents or sayings in Mark, which he rejects in favour of other versions contained either in the Q or in the L elements of that source. ...

If we look up these passages in Mark or in a Synopsis of the Gospels and notice the incidents which immediately precede and follow them, we shall see that Luke reproduces everything else in the neighbourhood from Mark in the original order, but that he simply omits Mark's account of these incidents. The alternative versions which he gives are **always** given in a **completely** different context, presumably, then, their context in the source from which he took them.

Pericopes of the kind mentioned, and their Markan and Lukan versions, are:

	MARK	LUKE
1. The Call of the First Disciple	1:16-20	5:1-11
2. Jesus's Rejection at Nazareth	6:1-6	4:16-30
3. Criticism of Pharisaic Views on Washings	7:1-23	11:37-41
4. The Greatest Commandment	12:28-34	10:25-28
5. Jesus Anointed by a Woman	14:3-9	7:36-50

There are four places where the order of two contiguous pericopes (or groups of pericopes) is reversed in Mark and Luke. These are:

	MARK	LUKE
6. Lakeside Crowds and Healings	3:7-12	\ / 6:12-16
Appointment of the Twelve	3:13-19	/ \ 6:17-19
7. Jesus's True Kindred	3:31-35E	\ / 8:4-18
The Parable of the Sower/Sayings	4:1-25	/ \ 8:19-21
8. Jesus Foretells his Betrayal	14:18-21	\ / 22:15-20
The Last Supper	14:22-25	/ \ 22:21-23
9. Jesus Questioned by Sanhedrin	14:61-64	\ / 22:55-65
Jesus Maltreated/Peter's Denials	14:65-72	/ \ 22:66-71

Kümmel (1975: 58) states that "from Mk 6:7 on, Matthew and Luke practically never deviate from Mark's sequence, even though at completely different points they offer substantial supplements to Mark". He then goes on immediately to note that "an

exception is Lk 22:21-23, 56-66" (i.e., the third and fourth of the four cases listed immediately above), but he does not attempt to **account** for these exceptions (to **mention** something is not to **explain** it).

The first two of these four cases are explained by Kümmel thus (1975: 60):

The call of the twelve (Mk 3:13-19) is placed before the crowding of the people around Jesus (Mk 3:7-12) because in this way Luke has hearers on hand for the sermon on the plain which he inserts at 6:20ff; the transposition of the rejection of Jesus' family (Mk 3:31-35) before the parable speech provides the crowds necessary for the scene.

The other instances where Luke has a parallel to Mark, but gives his material in a different place in his Gospel, are:

	MARK	LUKE
10. The Beelzebul Controversy	3:22-27	11:14-23
11. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit	3:28-30	12:10
12. The Parable of the Mustard Seed	4:30-32	13:18-19
13. The Fate of John the Baptist	6:17-29	3:19-20
14. Re the Leaven of the Pharisees	8:11-21	12:1
15. Marriage and Divorce	10:1-12	16:18
16. False Christs and Prophets	13:21-23	17:23-37

Of this list, there are three cases (numbers 13, 14 and 15) where a fairly lengthy episode in Mark is represented by a single saying or quite short comment in Luke.

Streeter considers that in some of these cases, the source for Luke's material would not be Mark but Q or L, and so they are covered by his comments given above. Kümmel does not mention these transpositions.

#### 9.4 ACCORDING TO THE SUCCESSIVE DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS

On this hypothesis, Mark used Matthew, following his order most of the time though occasionally departing from it, and Luke used the writings of his predecessors Mark and Matthew. In his exposition of this view and his consideration of the question of pericope order in the Synoptics, B C Butler (*The Originality of St. Matthew*) rebuts effectively the contention that pericope order establishes Markan Priority (1951: 62-71) but does not come to grips adequately with the difficulties and shortcomings of his own view, Successive Dependence, in relation to Synoptic order.

It is observable in §9.2.1, as noted above, that while Matthew and Luke both differ in pericope order from Mark on many occasions, they never differ from Mark **simultaneously**. This means, on the Successive Dependence hypothesis of Dom John

Chapman (*Matthew, Mark and Luke*) and B C Butler, that while Luke used both Matthew and Mark as sources for the **contents** of his Gospel, he (Luke) took his **order** exclusively from Mark, never Matthew. Thus Chapman (1936: 233) refers to Luke's order as "The framework which he borrows from Mark". Further, this means that when Luke found Matthew and Mark following a different order, he has **never** followed Matthew's order: for Matthew and Luke never agree in order against Mark.

Moreover, Luke was willing to leave Mark's order himself on sixteen occasions (as just listed in the immediately preceding section of this chapter)—but **only** when Mark was himself following Matthew's order at the time.

Thus Luke is willing to desert Mark's order, **except** when Mark has himself deserted Matthew's order: i.e., when Matthew and Mark agree on their order, Luke is willing to leave that order; when Matthew and Mark differ on order, Luke adheres to Mark's order and never follows Matthew's order. (This can be seen by noticing that none of the bracketed references in the Synoptic Table in the first Section of this study, §9.2.1—indicating that one of the other Synoptists is not in agreement with Mark's order at that point—ever occur simultaneously for Matthew and Luke against the same passage of Mark.)

Now, this is indeed a point to ponder. It is possible to believe that an author like Luke **could** follow such a procedure in writing his Gospel. It is very difficult to see any reason **why** he should choose to do so.

## 9.5 ACCORDING TO THE MARKAN DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS

On this hypothesis, Mark wrote last, and utilized the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The explanation of Synoptic order on the Markan Dependence hypothesis is that:

- (a) Whenever Matthew and Luke agreed in their pericope order, Mark **always** followed their common order, resulting in agreement between all three.
- (b) Whenever Matthew and Luke differed in their pericope order, Mark **always** followed one or the other, resulting in agreement between Matthew and Mark against Luke, or Mark and Luke against Matthew—Mark **never** introduced a divergent order of his own that would have resulted in all three Synoptics diverging in their order for the pericope(s) in question.

The reason why Mark acted thus was that he was interested in the content of the Synoptic material he was using, and not in its order—**either** he himself had no independent knowledge of pericope order, **or** in each case his own information tallied with the order of Matthew or Luke (or both, where they agreed), **or else** he was

consciously engaged in harmonizing their pericope order and scrupulously avoiding introducing at any point a different order of his own. (Papias has an explanation for this: he says Mark drew his material from Peter, but was left without any information concerning the order of events—see regarding patristics, Chapter One.)

This statement is in itself a complete explanation of all the occurrences of divergences of order in the Synoptic Gospels and in particular of the reason why Mark would have followed the procedure detailed above.

It may be compared with the quandary experienced by scholars in suggesting reasons for the alterations in pericope order that must have been made, on the Markan Priority hypothesis, by Matthew and Luke; or the difficulty in explaining, on the Successive Dependence hypothesis, why Mark would have left Matthew's order when he did, and the even greater difficulty in seeing any reason for the very odd way of treating his sources that Luke must have followed on this view.

Stoldt (in *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*, Chapter VI) gives a very thorough rebuttal of the use of the argument from order as an argument for Markan Priority.

Other very useful treatments showing that the argument of order favours Markan Dependence rather than Markan Priority will be found in Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem*, 1964: 221-215, and Orchard, *Matthew, Luke and Mark*, 1977: 72-84.

It will be remembered that Kümmel's comment (1975: 60) on the Markan Dependence (Griesbach) hypothesis ran as follows:

The opposite position—that Mark has altered the sequence of Matthew or Luke—offers no clarification in any of the cases mentioned ..., so that the hypothesis of Griesbach, according to which Mark has excerpted the other two synoptists, is disproved.

This is indeed a truly amazing assertion from a person of the scholarship and calibre of Kümmel, and must represent a momentary lapse of thought that slipped through into print. For on the Griesbach hypothesis Mark **never** alters the sequence of Matthew or Luke. Rather, when confronted with a part of the narrative where these two written sources differ in order, he always chooses one or the other to follow. This in fact offers complete clarification of the cases Kümmel mentions.

Kümmel's first cases (1975: 59) are the way in which "Matthew brings together in Chapters 8 and 9 miracles that are scattered throughout the first half of Mark (1:29ff; 4:35ff; 5:21ff)". As may be seen by consulting the Synoptic Table (§9.2.1, above), all these pericopes occur in Mark at the **exact** place and in the **exact** order in which they occur in Luke. (Kümmel fails to indicate, in his examples, that the last two passages that

he gives—4:35ff. and 5:21ff.—are in fact all one consecutive block in Mark, and hardly “scattered”, whereas this block is broken into two segments in Matthew 8 and 9, with another block of three pericopes inserted between those segments, where “Matthew brings [them] together”. This is hardly objective description of the situation.)

Kümmel’s second case (1975: 60) is “a mission address (10:5ff), as an introduction to which he [that is, Matthew] has moved forward the call of the twelve (Mk 3:13ff.)”. Matthew has combined the Appointment of the Twelve (Mt 10:1-4) and the Mission Charge (Mt 10:5ff.), which Mark has set out separately in his Gospel (Mk 3:13-19; 6:7-13). But in this, Mark is **exactly** following Luke’s procedure, and in regard to where he gives them in his Gospel, Mark is adhering to Luke’s order.

Kümmel’s third case is that “the two controversy sayings in Mt 9:9-17 are out of place in a cycle of miracles and can be accounted for only on the ground that this is where they occur in Mark”. In all three Gospels, these “sayings” (they actually include also the Call of Matthew/Levi) follow upon the Healing of the Paralytic—evidently a linking of pericopes from the pre-canonical-Gospel days, made by one of those who “have undertaken to compile a narrative” (Luke 1:1). In this group of pericopes, and in what precedes them, and what follows them (in which Matthew differs), Mark is **exactly** following what Luke includes, and Luke’s order.

Kümmel’s fourth case is “the comparison of the parable chapter, Mk 4:1-34, with Mt 13:1-52”. No question of divergence of order is, however, involved here, as all three Gospels include the parables at the same point. Mark’s procedure is easily recognizable. After the initial parable, the Sower, which is common to all three Synoptics, Mark follows Luke for the sayings (Mk 4:21-25//Lk 8:16-18; these are not in Matthew at this point). Then Mark inserts the short parable that he alone gives (Mk 4:26-29). Next he follows Matthew for one more parable (the Mustard Seed, Mk 4:30-32//Mt 13:31-32; elsewhere in Luke) and also for Jesus’s Use of Parables (Mk 4:33-34//Mt 13:34-35) with which he closes his Parables section. On the Markan Dependence hypothesis, what Mark has done is clear, straightforward, and logical.

There is no justification for Kümmel’s strong assertion that by means of “the cases mentioned, ... the hypothesis of Griesbach ... is disproved”. On the contrary, Markan Dependence offers a very simple explanation for all these cases. Kümmel’s “explanations” leave his readers with the impression that on the Griesbach (Markan Dependence) view, Mark would be totally dismembering coherent sections of Matthew—but this scholar has failed to point out that Mark’s procedure is fully explained by **Mark simply and consistently following Luke**.



Further, one can similarly see that Stonehouse's strictures against Mark using Matthew (which were quoted earlier) are fully met by the explanation that when not following Matthew's order Mark was **always** (and scrupulously) following Luke's order.

The Markan Dependence hypothesis can accept that Luke aimed to follow a logical or chronological order of presentation (Lk 1:3), and that Matthew worked on the basis of grouping like with like and assembling material in blocks—a widely accepted view. Vincent Taylor's judgement (*The Gospels*, 1967: 70)—that "Matthew's *love of orderly arrangement* (his italics) is seen in his treatment of his sources"—remains true no matter how one views Matthew's sources.

In such circumstances the pericope order of the two Major Synoptics would at times differ, because of their different approaches. However, they would agree in their overall chronological framework, and in the order of pericopes within small sections, where that grouping of pericopes already existed in the material that they were incorporating. Then Mark followed the order of one or the other **at all times** in writing his Gospel.

That Mark followed the common order of Matthew and Luke when they agreed and the order of one or the other when they differed provides a complete explanation of every aspect of the pericope sequence of the Synoptics.

But examination of the Synoptic Table (§9.2.1) will allow a further significant step to be taken in understanding exactly what Mark did (on the Markan Dependence hypothesis), and why. Now, therefore, to consider this data further.

## 9.6 A VIEW OF MARK'S USE OF MATTHEW AND LUKE

### 9.6.1 Identifying the Markan Framework

It has been noted by a great many scholars that after Mt 14:1//Mk 6:14, Mark and Matthew coincide completely in their order, subject to the minor factor that the two contiguous pericopes Cursing the Fig Tree and Cleansing the Temple appear in reverse order in these two Gospels (see the detailed discussion earlier, in §9.2.2).

What then is Mark's relation to Luke during this section of his Gospel? Examination of the Synoptic Table (§9.2.1) discloses these three features:

1. A substantial section of the Gospel of Luke (Lk 9:51-18:14)—mostly consisting of teaching—is not directly paralleled at this point by anything in Mark, though half a dozen verses or so are paralleled in **other** contexts in Mark (where they occur in the **same** contexts that they have in Matthew, from whom he has drawn them).

2. After 6:14, Mark contains several pericopes for which Luke **has** parallels, but that occur in Luke in an order different from that of Mark.

3. There are four sections that occur in both Mark and Luke and in the same place in the pericope order of Mark and Luke, and that are not paralleled in Matthew. These are (with the numbers that they have in the Table in §9.2.1):

	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>
29 The Return of the Twelve	6:30-31	9:10a
43 The Stranger Who was Exorcizing	9:38-41	9:49-50
54 The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire	11:18-19	19:47-48
61 The Widow's Gift	12:41-44	21:1-4

It is therefore possible to formulate these statements:

(a) From Mark 6:14 to the end of his Gospel, Mark has followed the order of Matthew's Gospel.

(b) Into this framework Mark has inserted four short sections taken from Luke's Gospel.

A logical reason for this procedure suggests itself.

Inspection of Mark's Gospel shows that he had a limited interest in recording Jesus's teaching, which makes up a small proportion of his Gospel compared with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (cf. Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation). Luke's Central Section consists very largely of teaching. Choosing Matthew here as his framework has allowed Mark to steer a course around Luke's Central Section, which was unsuited to his (presumed) purposes. When Luke did contain something that Mark wished to use, he simply inserted it into the Matthean framework at the point where it occurred in Luke's narrative. The number of entries in the Synoptic Table in the lefthand Markan column (i.e. adjacent to the Matthew column) shows the extent to which Mark was following Matthew as against Luke throughout this section (Mk 6:14-16:8).

This explanation of Mark's procedure in the second half of his Gospel leads us to examine what has happened in the first half.

From the occurrence of the entries in both the lefthand ("following Matthew") and the righthand ("following Luke") columns of Mark's three columns in the Synoptic Table, it appears at first as if Mark is simply alternating in his choice of whomever he follows. However, a more careful inspection shows that from Luke 3:2 to 6:19 Mark uses all that Luke contains excepting:

(a) The Genealogy of Lk 3:23-38E (it was evidently no part of Mark's purpose to include either genealogies or nativity narratives—he includes none from either Matthew or Luke);

(b) Rejection at Nazareth, Lk 4:16-30 (Mark chose instead to use the alternative version of this event given by Matthew, which he places where Matthew puts it in his account—see Mk 6:1-6);

(c) Call of the First Disciples, Lk 5:1-11 (Mark chose instead to use the alternative version of this event given by Matthew, which he places where Matthew puts it in his account—see Mk 1:16-20).

This may be summarized by saying that from the end of Luke's nativity section (but omitting the Genealogy) to Lk 6:19, Mark contains **exactly** the pericopes that Luke contains, in the same order, excepting that for two Lukan stories he substitutes the equivalent Matthean stories, which he inserts in the position in his framework that they occupy in his source (Matthew).

No comparable statement can be made about Matthew's order and contents in relation to Mark for this part of Matthew's Gospel.

Mark includes two pericopes that are found here in Luke and absent from Matthew (the Demoniac in the Capernaum Synagogue and Jesus Prays Alone). Large sections of this part of Matthew's Gospel are omitted altogether, chief among them being the Sermon on the Mount, together with Healing the Centurion's Servant, Healing Two Blind Men, Healing a Dumb Demoniac, part of Matthew's Mission Charge, John the Baptist's Question and Jesus's Answer, Jesus's Testimony Concerning John, and some sayings. Some narratives that are found in this section of Matthew (Mt 8:14-17; 8:23-34; 9:18-26; 10:1-16) occur elsewhere in Mark, where they are placed according to their position in Luke's Gospel.

As noted above, Mark has drawn upon Matthew as a source for two pericopes that he uses (The Call of the First Disciples, 1:16-20; and Rejection at Nazareth, 6:1-6), but clearly he has adopted Luke here as the framework for his pericope order.

It is even possible to essay a reason for this: the Lukan order allowed Mark to steer around the Sermon on the Mount, which it was not his purpose to use.

One small point can be elucidated here. In following Luke, Mark reverses the order of the Appointment of the Twelve (Lk 6:12-16) and Lakeside Crowds and Healings (Lk 6:17-19). An explanation for this can be offered:

For the section Plucking Grain/Healing the Withered Hand, all three Synoptics are together (Mt 12:1-14//Mk 2:23-3:6//Lk 6:1-11). This is followed in Matthew by Lakeside Crowds and Healings, but in Luke by the Appointment of the Twelve and **then** Luke's version of Lakeside Crowds and Healings. Matthew's Appointment of the Twelve had occurred earlier in his Gospel.

Mark chooses to use both what Matthew and Luke each give next, but he is faced with this divergence in the order of his sources. He has solved this by taking **first** what comes in Matthew and **then** what comes in Luke after The Healing of the Withered Hand, as 6:17-19 is Luke's equivalent of Mt 12:15-21. This allows him to include all of Luke's material up to 6:19 with minimum dislocation of his sources.

Lk 6:20 is the commencement of Luke's Sermon on the Plain, and in keeping with his policy of restricting the teaching that he includes, Mark chooses to leave Luke at this point. Continuing from the same position in Matthew (12:22)—but placing at this point two additional verses of his own (Mark 3:20-21)—he now inserts into his framework a section from Matthew (12:22-13:23).

This procedure has steered him around the Sermon on the Plain (and taken him past some other pericopes as well) and has brought him back to a pericope—the Parable of the Sower—where Matthew and Luke are once again parallel. In the process of thus following Matthew, Mark has, *inter alia*, included the story of Jesus's True Family, thus moving it from the end of Luke's parable section (Lk 8:19-21) to a position in front of the parables (i.e., where Matthew has it), where it forms the climax to the verses that Mark had himself introduced (3:20-21), about the attitude of Jesus's family towards him.

Mark now follows Luke closely again to Lk 9:9, using the order of this Gospel as his framework, and including in his own Gospel all the pericopes that Luke contains (he has, as was just mentioned, already used Lk 8:19-21) and omitting much that Matthew contains. Into this framework he also inserts the short parable unique to his Gospel (4:26-29), the Parable of the Mustard Seed and Jesus's Use of Parables (4:30-34, from Matthew at this point), and Rejection at Nazareth (6:1-6)—in this regard, as mentioned above, Mark has chosen to use Matthew's version, and he places it in the position that Matthew gives it.

Thus after their "Parables" material Luke has several miracle stories (Lk 8:22-56E) and Matthew has the visit to Nazareth (Mt 13:53-58E), and Mark uses both sets of material, taking Luke's first, and then Matthew's—presumably his choice of this sequence being influenced by the way in which the miracles that he has taken over from Luke give added point to the comment by those at Nazareth, "What mighty works are wrought by his hands!" (Mk 6:2b//Mt 13:54b).

After this, Matthew and Luke are parallel in their order again with the account of Herod's Perplexity about Jesus (Mt 14:1-2//Mk 6:14-16//Lk 9:7-9). Here Mark changes from following the framework of Luke to that of Matthew. Mark follows this story of Herod's Perplexity About Jesus with the explanation (from Matthew) about John the

Baptist's death, which Luke lacks, and from this point (as has been seen) Mark retains Matthew's framework to the end of his Gospel.

### 9.6.2 Setout of the Markan Framework

Mark's framework for his Gospel can thus be set out in this way:

NO	SECTION	MATT	MARK	LUKE
1.	John The Baptist		1:2-11	3:2-22
2.	The Temptation		1:12-13	4:1-13
3.	Ministry in Galilee		1:14-15	4:14-15
4.	The Call of the First Disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20	-
	Rejection at Nazareth		-	4:16-30
5.	Demoniac in the Capernaum Synagogue		1:21-28	4:31-37
6.	Healing Peter's Mother-in-law and Others		1:29-34	4:38-41
7.	Jesus Prays Alone, and Then Departs		1:35-38	4:42-43
8.	Preaching Tour		1:39	4:44E
	The Call of the First Disciples		-	5:1-11
9.	Cleansing the Leper		1:40-45E	5:12-16
10.	Paralytic/Call of Matthew/On Fasting		2:1-22	5:17-39E
11.	Plucking Grain/Withered Hand Healed	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11
12.	Lakeside Crowds and Healings	12:15-21	3:7-12	(6:17-19)
13.	Appointment of the Twelve		3:13-19	6:12-16
14.	Jesus Thought to be Mad	-	3:20-21	-
15.	Beelzebul Controversy	12:24-30	3:22-27	
16.	Blaspheming the Holy Spirit	12:31-37	3:28-30	
17.	Jesus's True Family	12:46-50E	3:31-35E	(8:19-21)
18.	The Parable of the Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
19.	Sayings: Lamps, Hearing and Getting		4:21-25	8:16-18
20.	The Parable of the Growing Seed	-	4:26-29	-
21.	The Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	(13:18-19)
22.	Jesus's Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34	-
	Jesus's True Family		-	8:19-21
23.	Jesus Quietens a Storm and a Demoniac		4:35-5:20	8:22-39
24.	Jairus's Daughter/Woman With Hemorrhage		5:21-43E	8:40-56E
25.	Rejection at Nazareth	13:53-58E	6:1-6	(4:16-30)
26.	Mission of The Twelve		6:7-13	9:1-6

27. Herod's Perplexity about Jesus	14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9
28. Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:17-29	
29. The Return of The Twelve	-	6:30-31	9:10a
30. The Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:13-21	6:32-44	9:10b-17
31. Walking on the Water	14:22-33	6:45-52	
32. Healings; Controversies Re Washings	14:34-15:31	6:53-7:37E	
33. The Feeding of the Four Thousand	15:32-39E	8:1-10	
34. Regarding the Pharisees	16:1-12	8:11-21	
35. Bethsaida Blind Man Healed	-	8:22-26	-
36. Peter's Confession/Passion Prediction (1)	16:13-21	8:27-31	
37. Peter's Rebuke	16:22-23	8:32-33	
38. To Deny Oneself	16:24-28E	8:34-9:1	
39. The Transfiguration	17:1-9	9:2-10	
40. The Coming of Elijah	17:10-13	9:11-13	
41. An Exorcism, and Passion Prediction (2)	17:14-23	9:14-32	
42. True Greatness	18:1-5	9:33-37	
43. The Stranger Who Was Exorcizing	-	9:38-41	9:49-50
44. Warnings about Offences	18:6-9	9:42-50E	
45. Marriage and Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12	
46. Blessing the Children/Rich Young Man	19:13-30E	10:13-31	
47. Passion Prediction (3)	20:17-19	10:32-34	
48. Request of the Sons of Zebedee	20:20-28	10:35-45	
49. The Healing of the Blind	20:29-34E	10:46-52E	
50. Entry into Jerusalem	21:1-9	11:1-10	
51. Surveying the Temple	-	11:11	-
52. Cursing the Fig Tree	21:18-19	11:12-14	
53. Cleansing the Temple	(21:12-17)	11:15-17	19:45-46
54. The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire	-	11:18-19	19:47-48E
55. The Fig Tree is Withered	21:20-22	11:20-26	
56. The Question About Authority	21:23-27	11:27-33E	
57. The Parable of the Wicked Farmers	21:33-46E	12:1-12	
58. Questions Re Taxes, Resurrection	22:15-33	12:13-27	
59. The Greatest Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34	
60. David's Son; Woes to Pharisees	22:41-23:36	12:35-40	
61. The Widow's Gift	-	12:41-44E	21:1-4
62. Eschatological Sayings	24:1-22	13:1-20	

63. False Christs and Prophets	24:23-28	13:21-23
64. Coming of the Son of Man; Watch	24:29-25:46E	13:24-37E
65. The Plot to Kill Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2
66. Jesus Anointed	26:6-13	14:3-9
67. Betrayal Made/Passover Preparations	26:14-20	14:10-17
68. Jesus Foretells his Betrayal	26:21-25	14:18-21
69. The Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25
70. Peter's Denial Predicted	26:30-35	14:26-31
71. Gethsemane; Jesus Arrested	26:36-58	14:32-54
72. False Witnesses before The Sanhedrin	26:59-62	14:55-60
73. Jesus Questioned by The Sanhedrin	26:63-66	14:61-64
74. Jesus Maltreated/Peter's Denials	26:67-75E	14:65-72E
75. Jesus before Pilate	27:1-14	15:1-5
76. Jesus or Barabbas?	27:15-26	15:6-15
77. The Mockery of the Soldiers	27:27-31	15:16-20
78. The Road to Golgotha	27:32	15:21
79. The Crucifixion to the Burial	27:33-61	15:22-47E
80. The Women at The Empty Tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8

### 9.6.3 Explanation of Synoptic Pericope Order

Thus it is now possible to make this fuller explanation to which the study of the pericope order of the Gospels has led. All the phenomena of pericope order observed in the Gospels can be explained on the basis of three simple propositions:

1. Within a general chronological framework, Matthew arranged the order of his Gospel (especially in its first half) on the basis of adding like-to-like, while Luke aimed to arrange the material of his Gospel logically or chronologically, and Mark used Matthew and Luke as his written sources and ***always*** followed the pericope order of one or the other.

2. In adopting a framework for the order of his Gospel, Mark wished to avoid the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, and Luke's Central Teaching Section. Therefore he followed the framework of Luke's Gospel to Mk 6:14-16, and from there to the end he followed the framework of Matthew's Gospel.

3. Into his Lukan framework he added four sections from Matthew: two pericopes for which he preferred the Matthean to the Lukan versions (Mk 1:16-20; 6:1-6), a parable and a comment on parables (Mk 4:30-34), and a section that took him around the

Sermon on the Plain (Mk 3:22-35E//Mt 12:24-50E). Into his Matthean framework he added four short sections drawn from Luke, consisting of material not paralleled anywhere in Matthew (The Return of the Twelve, Mk 6:30-31//Lk 9:10a; The Stranger Who was Exorcizing, Mk 9:38-41//Lk 9:49-50; The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire, Mk 11:18-19//Lk 19:47-48; The Widow's Gift, Mk 12:41-44//Lk 21:1-4). In all cases these insertions were placed in Mark's narrative at the same point at which they occurred in the source (Matthew or Luke) from which he had taken them.

It should be noted that if Mark was following Matthew or Luke at a given point, then in the nature of the case it would happen that he was **automatically** in parallel with the other Gospel whenever it agreed in pericope order—there was no need for Mark to take any specific action in order to achieve agreement with the other two Synoptic Gospels (i.e. three-fold Synoptic agreement in pericope order).

Not only does the Markan Dependence hypothesis provide a basic principle by means of which the divergence in Synoptic pericope order can be accounted for, and a rational explanation for why the order of each Gospel is what it is, but it is possible to see the great simplicity of the plan that Mark adopted for his framework (following Luke to Mark 6:14-16, and Matthew thereafter), and of his use of other material (four insertions from Matthew into his Lukan framework and four insertions from Luke into his Matthean framework). Moreover it is straightforward to see in large measure the reason for this procedure (to steer around the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, and Luke's Central Teaching Section, indicating his policy decision that he would only include certain limited and specific instances of Jesus's teaching).

How does this explanation of the phenomena of Synoptic pericope order compare in reasonableness, logic, and explanatory power with the Markan Priority alternative?

## 9.7 EVALUATION OF THE MARKAN PRIORITY CASE

### 9.7.1 The Argument for the Requirement of a Common Source

It has become a commonplace of Synoptic scholarship that Matthew and Luke each derive their structure from Mark: it is argued that Matthew and Luke would not agree in pericope order to the extent that in fact they do unless they were deriving their order in large measure from some common source, and this common source is identified as Mark. Streeter contends (1924: 208) that the structure of Luke's Gospel is that of Proto-Luke, into which the material that Luke takes from Mark has been added in sections—but still in an order corresponding quite closely with that which they have in Mark's Gospel.



As recently as his 1988 book *The Synoptic Problem—An Introduction* Robert Stein includes “Agreement in Order” as what he terms an “impressive” argument (34) for Markan Priority. Similarly in 1981 J Fitzmeyer, in his very detailed and scholarly Anchor Bible Commentary of Luke (Volume 1, 63) adopts the Two-Document (Markan Priority) viewpoint, which “maintains the priority of the Greek text of Mark over both Matthew and Luke (mainly because of the order of the common passages)”. He adds (66) that

the sequence of episodes in the Third Gospel closely follows that of Mark, even when Luke otherwise adds or omits something. The relatively same order of pericopes is even more crucially apparent when one considers the sequence of episodes in the Triple Tradition. The episodes which Matthew and Luke have in common with Mark generally agree with the Marcan sequence; when Matthew and Luke depart from this sequence, each differs from the other as well, pursuing an independent course.

Thus where Matthew and Luke agree, they are both following Mark, and where they differ it is because one or other of them has deserted Mark’s order.

The basic argument is presented along these lines:

There are extensive agreements in pericope order between Matthew and Luke, yet none that are not also shared with Mark. This points to the fact that Matthew and Luke agree with each other precisely because they agree with Mark, which means that Mark is first, and Matthew and Luke have derived their order from Mark. The only alternatives to this explanation are either that Luke derived his order from Matthew (which is highly unlikely in view of the extent of disagreement in order between these two Gospels when viewed apart from Mark), or that Matthew and Luke are independent (which is ruled out by the extent to which they **do** agree in order, which is too high a level of agreement to result from coincidence and which would not have come to exist if there were no relationship between them). Thus the agreements of order between Matthew and Luke point to Markan Priority, as Mark must be the source of their agreed order.

This can adequately explain the phenomenon of Synoptic order. But it has a number of weaknesses. This is a form of The Argument from Common Order, which was set out in §5.4.1, Argument 3, where these weaknesses were noted.

It has not been mentioned by Stein or Fitzmeyer (or Streeter, or others who present this Argument from Pericope Order as pointing to Markan Priority) that exactly this observed phenomenon of order that is found is **just what would result** in the case of Markan Dependence, i.e. if Mark were third to write, and were following the common

order of pericopes where the Major Synoptists agree, and of one or the other of them when they differ. It therefore does not in itself provide an indicator between Markan Priority and Markan Dependence: for that, we will need to compare how the observed features of order are best explained on each hypothesis.

To provide a specific response to the contention that Mark's order provides a framework for the additions inserted by the Major Synoptists:

The argument rests upon the assumption that the sequence of pericopes in Matthew and Luke is of such a nature that a common source (identified as being Mark) is required in order to account for it. Thus the conclusion is drawn that Mark provided the framework of pericope sequence into which Matthew and Luke each inserted their other material and from which on some occasions they each departed to follow their own specific designs.

The basic weakness of the argument is its assumption that the degree of correspondence in order between Matthew and Luke requires a common source to account for their common order. This argument (correctly) draws attention to the extreme improbability that correspondences in sequence could all be attributed to such sequence information being transmitted in the oral tradition, but it substantially overestimates the extent of the correspondence in pericope sequence between Matthew and Luke, and underestimates the existence of inherent sequence factors (absolute and relative) in the material, and quite ignores the possibility of pericope clusters circulating in the churches in written form.

The material of the common tradition may be categorized as of three kinds: (a) material that contains an absolute dating factor, which determines where it must appear in the overall sequence of Jesus's life; (b) material that contains a relative dating factor, which requires that it appear before or after some other pericope; and (c) material lacking any inherent dating factor, and that therefore is not tied to any point in the chronology of Jesus's life. (Pericopes with an inherent or relative sequence were discussed in §8.3.3; and see §9.9.1.)

Pericopes can also be categorized on another basis: essential or peripheral. Essential pericopes are those essential to the telling of the total story of Jesus as conceived in the Synoptics, and peripheral pericopes are those that are illustrative of Jesus's ministry in many ways and help to fill out the overall picture of his life and teaching but that are not a basic part of the Synoptic framework. There may be a divergence of opinion concerning the classification of some pericopes as **essential** or **peripheral**, but there will I think be general acceptance of the distinction in principle. Thus the Confession at

Caesarea Philippi is, on this definition, an essential pericope, while the healing of a dumb demoniac is a peripheral pericope.

A combination of those pericopes with inherent dating and the essential pericopes allows the construction of a rudimentary framework for the Synoptic Gospels. Within this framework in Matthew and Luke are then found the pericopes containing no sequential factors and, with one kind of exception, this material occurs in Matthew and Luke in mostly different places—certainly there is no high correlation of order between this material in Matthew and in Luke such as would require a common source to account for it.

The one exception that I mentioned is the presence in Matthew and Luke of clusters of pericopes that are often unrelated and within which the pericopes have the **same** order although the clusters as a whole occur in **different** positions in the two Gospels. These clusters can be accounted for as groups of pericopes circulating together in writing prior to the composition of any of the Synoptic Gospels, and then incorporated into both Matthew and Luke as a cluster.

This situation is considered in detail below, in §9.9; here it will suffice to note that ***the nature and extent of agreement in pericope order between Matthew and Luke does not require a common source (such as Mark or Q) to account for it.***

### 9.7.2 The Weakness of Explanations of

#### Why Matthew and Luke Desert Markan Order

Markan Priority itself does not explain **why** Matthew and Luke would choose to leave Mark's order when they do. Further explanations are proffered for this (as we have seen), but they do not provide an overall, cohesive principle of explanation that can cover the whole situation comprehensively. Principles such as "miracles are grouped with miracles" may account (in part) for groupings, but do not account for the actual order of pericopes; and explanations of divergences in order are needed (and not always forthcoming) on a pericope-by-pericope basis. The *ad hoc* nature and general inadequacy of these explanations has been noted above (§9.3.2).

### 9.7.3 The Coincidence that Matthew and Luke

#### Never Leave Markan Order at the Same Point

A further weakness of the Markan Priority explanation is its heavy dependence upon coincidence.

It has been pointed out by Markan Priorists as totally logical that both Matthew and Luke are engaged in improving upon Mark's **wording** and that in the nature of the case

there will be times when they will decide upon the same change of wording as being an improvement. This explanation is used to downgrade the significance of numbers of places where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in wording (e.g., see Streeter, 1924: 295-297).

Now, Matthew and Luke are also, it appears (on the Markan Priority view), engaged in improving Mark's order. At any rate, on numbers of occasions they each **alter** Mark's order, and it is reasonable to deduce that they consider the alteration an improvement, else they would not make it. Several writers have made a point of agreeing with the judgement of Papias that Mark has not written an orderly Gospel and that Matthew and Luke were moved to seek to make it more "orderly". One writer to develop this theme is Gundry, *Matthew*, 1982: 618-619, where he says:

In his statement quoted by Papias, the elder shows concern over Mark's style, particularly over the disorderly way the single points concerning Jesus' ministry appear in the Gospel of Mark. This concern favors a similar frame of reference in the statement about Matthew, whose writing, by contrast, exhibits orderliness. ... Matthew's orderly arrangement of the Lord's oracles makes them easier to understand than those in Mark, where disorder prevails.

Similarly, it is commonly accepted by many that Luke's Gospel is better-ordered than Mark's. Some sixty years earlier than Gundry, Streeter (1924: 19) had interpreted Papias's meaning thus:

Of Mark, Papias, or rather the Elder his informant, says in effect "the facts are correct—that follows from Mark's connection with Peter—but, as Mark had only his memory to rely upon, he has got them in the wrong order".

Now, if both Matthew and Luke are thus engaged in improving upon the order of Mark, then (even if they are not working necessarily from the same presuppositions as to what constitutes an improvement), one would expect that in the nature of the case there would be times when they both decide upon the same change—or at the very least, when they both decide upon the **same place** in Mark as needing alteration even if they made the alteration in different ways. But the extraordinary fact is that in **every** place where Matthew changes Mark's order, Luke preserves it, and in **every** place where Luke changes Mark's order, Matthew preserves it. This seems very unexpected, and hardly provides supporting evidence for the assertion that there is something defective about Mark's order.

Mt 14:22-16:12 is the Great Omission in Luke—where Luke does not fully parallel any of these Matthean stories. Mark on the other hand parallels **all** these Matthean peric-

opes and has them in **exactly** the same order (while differing from Matthew at several points **within** some pericopes, most notably in Mt 15:29-31//Mk 7:31-37).

The links between these pericopes are often very tenuous, frequently—especially in Mark—consisting simply of *kai*, “and”. Further, these pericopes are not all of a comparable kind, nor united by any similarity of theme or subject matter, but are a very disparate bunch of episodes: Jesus walking on the sea, healing many at Gennesaret, arguing at length with the scribes and Pharisees, instructing the people and his disciples, journeying to the district of Tyre and Sidon and exorcizing a demon, healing many others, feeding a crowd of four thousand, responding to the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ request for a sign, and warning his disciples against the teaching of the Pharisees.

If Matthew is writing after Mark and using Mark’s Gospel, then in the earlier part of his (Matthew’s) Gospel he has frequently rearranged successions of Markan pericopes of this very kind, and there would be nothing inherently improbable about him rearranging the order of these pericopes to group the teachings with other teachings, the conflicts with other conflicts, the miracles with other miracles (or even to group them together here in this section).

I am not aware of any specific reason (on the Markan Priority explanation) why here, instead of adopting this kind of procedure that he has used earlier, Matthew has chosen instead to follow Mark’s order precisely—and that reason, whatever it could be conjectured to be, is certainly not related to the fact that Luke is not here using Mark at all (for such a reason would imply deliberate Matthean/Lukan collusion, an idea that is universally rejected). Now, if Matthew **had** departed from Mark’s order in any way in this entire section 14:22-16:12, then we would have had a place where Mark’s pericope order was not supported by either Matthew or Luke.

So it can be noted that wherever Matthew has deserted Mark’s pericope order it has been in places where Luke continued to follow it, and that here, in a place where Luke is **not** using Mark’s material, Matthew **might well** have departed from Mark’s order but did not do so—for a reason (whatever it may be) that is totally unconnected with Luke’s use of Mark. The consequence is that Matthew’s (unknown) reason for closely following Mark’s order here (when Luke is not using Mark) means that the fact of Mark always being supported by at least one of Matthew and Luke is due to **coincidence**. It is coincidence (and not purpose or design, nor related to the content of the material) that Matthew did not here, in this lengthy and diverse section, desert Mark’s order when Luke was not using him.

Similarly there is no direct Matthean parallel for Mark between Mk 1:20 and 1:39, nor

between Mk 4:34 and 6:1; in between these two sets of verses, Mark is closely paralleled in sequence by Luke, but the sections in Matthew that parallel Mark in **content** occur in a different place in his **structure**. If at any point in these sections, or at any other place where Mark is only paralleled in sequence by Luke's Gospel, Luke had chosen to alter the order that Mark uses, then it would not have been true to say that Mark's order was always supported by at least one of Matthew and Luke. And in view of the extent to which (on the Markan Priority view) Luke **does** transpose or more drastically alter the order found in Mark it would most certainly have been possible that he could have done so here. What reason or argument can be adduced that would preclude such a possibility? Again then it becomes necessary to invoke **coincidence**. It is coincidence (and not purpose or design, nor related to the content of the material) that Luke did not desert Mark's order when Matthew was not following Mark.

Both Matthew and Luke, then, are found to be in agreement that Mark's order is in need of alteration. But they are in 100% disagreement concerning the alterations required, so that everywhere that Matthew alters Mark's order Luke adheres to it and everywhere that Luke alters Mark's order Matthew adheres to it.

In order to place this in perspective, let us note the number of occasions involved: of the eighty sections in the Synoptic Table (§9.2.1, where they may be counted), there are four separately-listed occasions when Mark has a pericope not used by either Matthew or Luke (3:20-21; 4:26-29; 8:22-26; 11:11), thirty-six occasions when Mark is supported in order by both Matthew and Luke, and forty occasions when Mark is supported by only one Major Synoptic (either because the other one omits the pericope or has it in a different place in his narrative)—that is, **forty places out of the total of eighty where the support for Mark would have failed if the one Major Synoptic supporting Mark at that point had chosen to include the material in question at a different place in his structure**. Yet that has not occurred. Now, as both Matthew and Luke are engaged in altering Mark in conjunction with their own independent, and different, schemes of assembling Mark's material in sequence, there are no factors that have operated to prevent the one who is following Mark's order from abandoning that order **on any number of those forty occasions where he was Mark's sole support**. Why did it not happen? Not purpose, not design, not intention to ensure the support of another Synoptic for Mark. Coincidence. On every one of those forty occasions out of eighty.

#### 9.7.4 Matthew and Luke Always Return if the Other is Deserting Mark's Order

It is not merely that at least one of the Major Synoptics is always found to be

supporting Mark, improbable as that is. There is the additional factor of **how** they are seen to do it. What is observed is that if only one Gospel is supporting Markan order in a given place and that Gospel is about to desert Mark, then **at that very point** the other Major Synoptic comes back to rejoin Mark's sequence in the nick of time so that Mark's Gospel is never left unsupported. The extent to which and the way in which this happens should be noticed.

Let us look therefore at the first part of the Synoptic Table given in §9.2.1 from the perspective of what (if Markan Priority is correct) Matthew and Luke must have done in their use of Mark: that is, let us look at when they omit a pericope that Mark contains, desert Mark's order, or resume following Mark's order after either deserting it or omitting a pericope. In this Table:

**"omits"** indicates "omits altogether the pericope that is found in Mark at this point";

**"deserts"** means "deserts the pericope order that is found in Mark at this point; i.e. the Gospel in question **does** contain the pericope that Mark gives here, but in that Major Synoptic this pericope and the previous one do not follow in sequence, as they do in Mark"; and

**"resumes"** means "resumes following the sequence of Mark's Gospel after not having been parallel with Mark in the pericope previous to this one".

NO	MATT	MARK	LUKE	
1.	3:1-17E	1:2-11	3:2-22	
2.	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
3.	4:12-17	1:14-15	4:14-15	
4.	4:18-22	1:16-20	(5:1-11)	Lk deserts
5. Mt omits	-	1:21-28	4:31-37	Lk resumes
6. Mt deserts	(8:14-17)	1:29-34	4:38-41	
7. Mt omits	-	1:35-38	4:42-43	
8. Mt resumes	4:23-25E	1:39	4:44E	
9.	8:1-4	1:40-45E	5:12-16	
10.	9:1-17	2:1-22	5:17-39E	
11.	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11	
12.	12:15-21	3:7-12	(6:17-19)	Lk deserts
13. Mt deserts	(10:1-4)	3:13-19	6:12-16	Lk resumes
14. Mt omits	-	3:20-21	-	Lk omits
15. Mt resumes	12:24-30	3:22-27	(11:15-23)	Lk deserts
16.	12:31-37	3:28-30	(12:10)	

17.	12:46-50E	3:31-35E	(8:19-21)	
18.	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15	Lk resumes
19. Mt deserts	(various)	4:21-25	8:16-18	
20. Mt omits	-	4:26-29	-	Lk omits
21. Mt resumes	13:31-32	4:30-32	(13:18-19)	Lk deserts
22.	13:34-35	4:33-34	-	Lk omits
23. Mt deserts	(8:23-34E)	4:35-5:20	8:22-39	Lk resumes
24.	(9:18-26)	5:21-43E	8:40-56E	
25. Mt resumes	13:53-58E	6:1-6	(4:16-30)	Lk deserts
26. Mt deserts	(10:5-16)	6:7-13	9:1-6	Lk resumes
27. Mt resumes	14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9	
28.	14:3-12	6:17-29	(3:19-20)	Lk deserts
29. Mt omits	-	6:30-31	9:10a	Lk resumes
30. Mt resumes	14:13-21	6:32-44	9:10b-17	
31.	14:22-33	6:45-52	-	Lk omits
32.	14:34-15:31	6:53-7:37E	(11:37-41)	Lk deserts
33.	15:32-39E	8:1-10	-	Lk omits
34.	16:1-12	8:11-21	(12:1)	Lk omits
35. Mt omits	-	8:22-26	-	Lk omits
36. Mt resumes	16:13-21	8:27-31	9:18-22	Lk resumes
37.	16:22-23	8:32-33	-	Lk omits
38.	16:24-28E	8:34-9:1	9:23-27	Lk resumes
39.	17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36	
40.	17:10-13	9:11-13	-	Lk omits
41.	17:14-23	9:14-32	9:37-45	Lk resumes
42.	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48	
43. Mt omits	-	9:38-41	9:49-50	
44. Mt resumes	18:6-9	9:42-50E	-	Lk omits

Beyond this pericope (#44), this feature of the data continues, but is not so marked..

Let us review what is happening (on the Markan Priority perspective). After Mk 1:20 Matthew ceases following Mark's order. But at Mk 1:21, Luke (who has not paralleled Mark for the previous pericope) resumes paralleling Mark and does so down to the pericope cluster 2:23-3:6, which is also in Matthew. From 3:7 to 12 Mark is paralleled by Matthew (12:15-21) and from 3:13 to 19 Mark is not paralleled by Matthew but is parall-



eled by Luke (6:12-16). At this point Mark has unique material (3:20-21) and then is picked up by Matthew again (3:22//Mt 12:24), and continues with Matthew to the Parable of the Sower (4:1-20), which is also in both Matthew and Luke (Mt 13:1-23//Lk 8:4-15). Mark (4:21-25) is paralleled by what Luke has next (Lk 8:16-18, which is not paralleled here in Matthew). Then there occurs Mark's second unique pericope (4:26-29), and then (4:30-34) Mark is paralleled by Matthew (13:31-35; which is not paralleled here in Luke).

At Mk 4:35 Matthew ceases following Mark's order, and precisely at this verse Luke begins to follow Mark's order again, as far as 5:43E. At that point Luke ceases to parallel Mark, but Matthew starts to do so, down to 6:6. At that point Matthew ceases to parallel Mark, but Luke starts to do so, resuming at the point previously reached (Lk 9:1).

From 6:14-16 Mark is paralleled in both the Major Synoptics (Mt 14:1-2//Lk 9:7-9), and then Luke ceases following Mark's order but Matthew parallels Mk 6:17-29, and at precisely this verse Matthew omits what Mark has (6:30-31) while Luke has it.

Mt 14:13-18:5 parallels Mk 6:32-9:37 (sometimes accompanied by Luke), and then Matthew ceases to parallel Mark (9:38-41) but Luke continues to do so; and then at Mk 9:41 Luke ceases to parallel Mark, but Matthew now parallels Mark and continues to do so from there on until Mk 11:14, at which point Matthew ceases to parallel Mark: but Lk 19:45-48E resumes and then parallels Mk 11:15-19; and after this Luke ceases to parallel Mark, but Mt 21:20-22 then parallels Mk 11:20-26, and Matthew and Mark continue in parallel as far as Mk 12:40. At this point Matthew ceases to parallel Mark but Luke 21:1-4 parallels Mk 12:41-44E, then all three are parallel for Mt 24:1-22//Mk 13:1-20//Lk 21:5-24, then Luke ceases following Mark's order for Mk 13:21-23 while Matthew continues to do so. Thereafter Matthew and Mark have the same order to the end, and this order is for the most part also paralleled in Luke.

It certainly looks on the face of it as if Matthew and Luke are alternating in deserting Mark's order and rejoining it. And on a not insignificant number of occasions, as can be seen from the Table, the one rejoins and the other deserts Markan order at precisely the same point. And **never** have both Major Synoptics deserted Mark's order at the same time. Yet we cannot seriously entertain the proposition that Matthew and Luke were working in collusion in treating Mark's sequence thus. So there is a very high order of coincidence involved here.

Or are we to postulate a miraculous supernatural intervention, for some obfuscate divine purpose, to ensure that each Major Synoptist returned to Markan order just where the other was deserting it, and thus to prevent Markan order being left at any time unsupported by a second Synoptic Gospel?

Numerous writers have referred disparagingly to the Griesbach (Markan Dependence) view of Synoptic order as Mark zigzagging back and forth from following Matthew to following Luke and back again. One writer, Beare (1965: 296), has dismissed this aspect of the Griesbach view with the comment,

We are asked to suppose that Mark wiggled back and forth from Matthew to Luke in a fashion that is quite incredible.

What Beare (and those others who have taken a similar line) have not confronted and seriously considered is that this alternating of support for Mark from Matthew and Luke is **there** in the Synoptic Gospels: it is a part of the Synoptic data; it can be observed from the Table of the eighty sections of Mark's Gospel by noting the parallels at each point (or the absence of parallels) in the Major Synoptics. From the Markan Priority perspective one is faced with believing that Matthew and Luke are alternating in deserting Markan order and then rejoining it—and at each point where one Major Synoptic departs from Markan order, the other one continues to adhere to that order (if already following it) or else returns to support Markan order (if not already supporting that order in the previous verse). This alternating of support for Mark is just as striking and arresting from the Markan Priority perspective as the “zigzagging” that the Griesbach (Markan Dependence) view says would have occurred; but with this difference:

The Markan Dependence view maintains that this correspondence of Mark with first one of the Major Synoptics and then the other is the result of **design**, the execution of a policy by an intelligent mind (it is the result of Mark's choice, following a deliberate policy that can be identified).

On the other hand, this alternation of support for Mark cannot on the Markan Priority theory be attributed to purpose or intelligence (for neither Matthew nor Luke is held to have acted this way deliberately, so as to ensure support for Mark's order at all times) and therefore it can only be attributed to coincidence.

If Mark's zigzag pattern, though the result of a describable policy, is to be termed “incredible”, what descriptive term should be used for what Markan Priorists are required to believe about the way in which Matthew and Luke, all unknown to each other, succeed in alternating in their support for Mark's order in such a fashion as never to leave him unsupported?

### 9.7.5 Assessment

During the course of the discussions at the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium, Tuckett agreed that, on its own, Synoptic order did not constitute an argument for Markan Priority

(as Streeter had taken it) but he strongly resisted the assertions of the Two-Gospel hypothesis proponents that pericope order was best accounted for on the basis that Mark used the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. He several times made the point that the argument from pericope order favoured no Synoptic theory against the others.

The examination of this issue in this chapter does not bring us to the same conclusion as Tuckett. The Markan Priority hypothesis can be clearly seen to be an unsatisfactory explanation of the data.

First of all, the basic argument for it is weak, in that it rests upon an invalid assumption: that a common source (which is identified as Mark) is required in order to account for the agreements in pericope order between Matthew and Luke. This investigation has shown that this is not so.

Secondly, it does not explain *why* Matthew and Luke would choose to leave Mark's order when they do. For this, further explanations are proffered. There is no overall, cohesive principle of explanation that covers what is happening generally. Principles such as "miracles are grouped with miracles in Matthew" may account (in part) for groupings, but do not account for the actual order of pericopes, so that explanations of divergences of order are needed (and not always forthcoming) on a pericope-by-pericope basis. Attention has been drawn to the shortcomings of the explanations that have been advanced.

Thirdly, it depends upon coincidence. When Mark's Gospel is divided into sections on the basis of when the Major Synoptics either do or do not parallel it, then there are eighty sections that result (set out in full in §9.2.1); and of these eighty there are forty where if the Synoptic that is supporting Mark for that section had placed that particular section of his Gospel elsewhere (as he does many times for the *other* forty sections) then it would not have been true that Mark's order is always supported by at least one of the other Synoptics.

Matthew and Luke, each writing independently and each deserting Mark's order when he chose, according to his own preferences, could each have left Markan order at the same point in his structure. Why did this not happen on *any* of these occasions when it may well have done? There is no explanation available; this feature of the data can only be put down to coincidence.

Fourthly, it does not explain the related feature of the data that whenever one of the Major Synoptists has been following a different order and the other one is at the point of leaving Mark's order, the first one thereupon resumes his support for Mark's order. The way in which one Synoptic ceases to accompany Mark and the other one (whichever

one it is) resumes following Mark at **precisely** that same point is one of the most remarkable features of the Synoptic data. That this happens, and then happens again and again as it does, can only be described as incredible.

Finally, it is worth noting that at best Markan Priority offers to explain pericope sequence in Matthew and Luke. It contributes nothing concerning the order of Mark. One is left with the comment of Papias that Mark contains no particular order at all. It can hardly be claimed that Markan Priority is able to go very far in providing a satisfactory explanation of pericope order in the Synoptics. It is an acceptable explanation only if there is nothing better available.

And indeed the Complete Independence theories have not been able to provide a better explanation; and the Successive Dependence hypothesis requires the acceptance of difficulties of explanation about how Mark used Matthew, and even greater difficulties in accounting for the very peculiar policy of Luke in how he ordered his Gospel.

But the Markan Dependence hypothesis can offer satisfactory explanations for each aspect of the data. And how simple is the overall explanation of the observable data:

Up to 6:14 Mark followed Luke (with four insertions that he drew from Matthew and inserted where Matthew had placed them), and from 6:14 Mark followed Matthew (with four insertions that he drew from Luke, and inserted where Luke had placed them).

## 9.8 ACCOUNTING FOR MARKAN OMISSIONS AND INCLUSIONS

### 9.81 Where Matthew and Luke Differ in Order

If indeed Mark is drawing upon Matthew and Luke, how has he gone about the task of including this material in his Gospel?

At several points this situation is found: Mark includes material that is common to both Matthew and Luke, and then this point of correspondence between all three is followed in Matthew and Luke by **different** pericopes both of which **do** occur in Mark. This situation had necessitated an editorial decision by Mark on how to proceed. In all such cases Mark parallels first one and then the other—that is to say, the pericope that occurs next in each of Matthew and Luke occurs in Mark at this point, not **somewhere else** in his structure, and these two pericopes are given one after the other:

NO. SECTION	MATT	MARK	LUKE
9. Plucking Grain/Withered Hand Healed	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11
12. Lakeside Crowds and Healings	12:15-21	3:7-12	(6:17-19)
13. Appointment of The Twelve	(10:1-4)	3:13-19	6:12-16

18. The Parable of the Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
19. Sayings: Lamps, Hearing & Getting	(various)	4:21-25	8:16-18
20. The Parable of the Growing Seed	-	4:26-29	-
21. The Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	(13:18-19)
22. Jesus's Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34	-
23. Jesus Quietens Storm and Demoniac	(8:23-34E)	4:35-5:20	8:22-39
24. Jairus' Daughter/Hemorrhaging Wmn	(9:18-26)	5:21-43E	8:40-56E
25. Rejection At Nazareth	13:53-58E	6:1-6	(4:16-30)
26. Mission of The Twelve	(10:5-16)	6:7-13	9:1-6
27. Herod's Perplexity About Jesus	14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9
28. Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:17-29	(3:19-20)
29. The Return of The Twelve	-	6:30-31	9:10
42. True Greatness	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48
43. The Stranger Who Was Exorcizing	-	9:38-41	9:49-50
44. Warnings About Offenses	18:6-9	9:42-50E	-
53. Cleansing The Temple	21:12-17	11:15-17	19:45-46
54. The Chief Priests & Scribes Conspire	-	11:18-19	19:47-48E
55. The Fig Tree Is Withered	21:20-22	11:20-26	-

In this way Mark includes what is in both Matthew and Luke. Sometimes he takes first from Matthew, sometimes first from Luke: this choice is apparently determined by his assessment of the most appropriate order for the subject matter.

Thus if Mark is going to include both Lk 8:16-18 and Mt 13:34-35, it is clear that the Matthew passage rounds off the whole section, so the Lukan one must come before it.

Similarly: After Mt 14:1-2 Matthew gives a parenthesis to explain Herod's comment regarding John the Baptist, and at the end of this aside Matthew resumes his narrative (14:13) from where he was (14:2). But Mark, copying Luke, has placed the pericope of Herod's Perplexity about Jesus after the story of the Sending Out of The Twelve. Therefore after including Matthew's parenthesis about John the Baptist, Mark follows Luke in recording the Return of The Twelve. This is a very logical way of weaving together what occurs in both Matthew and Luke at this place.

At other points in the various cases listed above, Mark had somewhat more flexibility concerning the order in which he took the pericopes from Matthew and Luke, but he seems still to have been influenced by the appropriateness of the sequence of pericopes that resulted, and by the intention of ensuring a smoothly-flowing narrative.

### 9.8.2 The Influence of Mark's Framework on his Inclusions and Omissions

Once having decided upon his procedure for the utilization of his two sources, Mark follows this with a high degree of consistency. For those pericopes that he uses, he draws upon both Matthew and Luke for the contents of what he says; but not only the order of his pericopes but the choice of pericopes to be included is very largely determined by his overall plan.

As a simplification that is nonetheless largely accurate, it can be said that Mark follows Luke from the beginning to the start of The Sermon on the Plain, at which point he changes to Matthew, following him from Lakeside Crowds and Healings to The Parable of the Sower, switching back to Luke for the section from there to Herod's Perplexity about Jesus, and from there following Matthew to the Resurrection. This procedure gives Mark his framework. Mark omits little that he comes to by following this procedure, and includes little that is not found in these sections of Matthew and Luke respectively.

Thus there is a significant difference between Mark's treatment of teaching that is included in this framework, and teaching that it does not encompass. Mark's plan takes him around The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew's Mission Charge to The Twelve, The Sermon on the Plain, and Luke's Central Travel and Teaching Section—and so Mark includes **none** of the teaching found in those places except to the extent that it occurs in the other Major Synoptic in a place that **does** fall within his framework. (Thus Mark includes Luke's version of the Mission Charge to The Twelve, which occurs within Mark's framework; and some short passages that occur in Luke's Central Section, because they also occur in Matthew in a place that is within Mark's framework—see Sections 15, 16 and 21 in the Synoptic Table.)

However, in contrast, all the other major teaching sections (that is, apart from those that I have just mentioned) occur in a part of Matthew or Luke (primarily Matthew) that Mark **is** following in his framework, and so instead of being completely omitted they are included in Mark in abbreviated form, normally the first part of each teaching section being given in full and the latter part being summarized or omitted altogether.

Material is also curtailed or omitted that does not focus directly on Jesus, who is always central in what Mark includes. At first sight we might therefore have expected Mark to omit the pericope of the death of John the Baptist, as this centres on John not Jesus: but this pericope shows what happened to John when he clashed with Herod, and this pericope follows after the statement that Jesus had just come to Herod's attention and Herod had identified him with "John the Baptist risen from the dead". This

narrative is therefore proleptic of the fate that lies ahead of Jesus, and in this connection it has a point to make about Jesus.

Thus Mark (1:2-11) gives a general introduction about John the Baptist, which leads up to and climaxes in John's preaching about the Coming One, and then the baptism of Jesus; but Mark omits the other introductory material given by Matthew and Luke about John.

The only part of Matthew's Mission Charge to The Twelve (which does not lie within Mark's framework) that Mark includes is that portion that is also found in Luke in a section (9:1-6), which does fall within Mark's framework.

Mark contains but curtails (in the way outlined above) these teaching sections of Matthew: The Beelzebul Controversy; Teaching in Parables; True Greatness and Forgiveness; Riches and Rewards (Mt 19:16-20:16—Mark omits the Parable of the Vineyard Labourers); Teaching in Parables (Mt 21:28-22:14—Mark has one parable out of Matthew's three); Warnings Regarding the Scribes and Pharisees (Mark confines himself to recording the very short version of this given by Luke); The Olivet Discourse. Mark gives four teaching sections at approximately or just less than their length in Matthew: Defilement and the Commandment of God (7:1-23); The Leaven of the Pharisees (8:11-21); Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi (8:27-9:1); Marriage and Divorce (10:1-12). He omits some sections not directly centring on Jesus, e.g. The Blessedness of Peter, Peter Walking on the Water.

In Summary:

It has been noted in Chapter Three that Mark has a much greater interest in recording stories of what Jesus **did** than recording what Jesus **said**. Consistent with this we may now note that when at a given point Mark's account is longer than those of the Major Synoptics, this is almost invariably because he is including additional details in a narrative account; and when at a given point (either a pericope or a section within a pericope) Mark's account is shorter than those of the Major Synoptics, this is almost invariably because he has omitted teaching or comments from Jesus (or, occasionally, words spoken by someone else).

To note in particular:

1. Where for a given teaching, Luke's account is shorter than Matthew's account, Mark tends to accord with Luke's shorter version.

2. Where teaching occurs in the framework that Mark is following (whether that of Matthew or Luke at the time), and that teaching is found in both Major Synoptics, Mark is most likely to include it; but where it is given by only one Major Synoptic Mark is likely to omit it.

3. Where Mark's framework takes him around teaching, that teaching is not given at all in Mark.

4. Into this basic framework Mark inserts a small amount of material from the Gospel he is not following. In addition to his diversion to Matthew to take him around The Sermon on the Plain, where he has inserted Mt 12:22-13:23 into an otherwise Lukan framework, he also takes from Matthew a parable and some comments about Jesus's Use of Parables (Mk 4:30-34), and two narratives where he prefers Matthew's version to Luke's equivalent, and inserts them where they are placed in Matthew's order (Mk 1:16-20; 6:1-6). And he inserts into the Matthean part of his framework four short pericopes drawn from Luke, placing them at the point where they occur in Luke: Return of The Twelve; The Stranger Who was Exorcizing; The Chief Priests and Scribes Conspire; and The Widow's Gift (9:10a; 9:49-50; 19:47-48E; 21:1-4—see the Markan Framework, §9.6.2).

5. Apart from these eight insertions just listed (four each from Matthew and Luke), Mark **only** includes in his Gospel those pericopes, whether of teaching or narrative, that he encounters in his framework:

(a) Seeing that Mark's framework steers him around The Sermon on the Mount, The Sermon on the Plain, and Luke's Central Travel and Teaching Section, he has none of this material in his Gospel (apart from the very limited extent to which material from Luke's Central Section is paralleled in that part of Matthew that Mark is following as his framework).

(b) When Mark's framework from Matthew or Luke includes a section of teaching, that teaching section is included in Mark, but usually in curtailed or abbreviated form; and Old Testament quotations are likely to be omitted.

(c) When Mark's framework includes events and stories about Jesus, these are almost invariably included in Mark. The apparent exceptions to this are short pieces that are specifically Jewish in interest, that record what some person other than Jesus said or did, or that do not focus primarily upon the person of Jesus. These pieces are: Peter Walking on the Water; Payment of the Temple Tax; The Death of Judas; Pilate's Wife's Dream; Pilate Washes His Hands; The Opened Graves; and The Guard at the Tomb.

(d) When Mark's framework bypasses narratives that occur in Matthew or Luke, these narratives are not included in Mark's Gospel. These narratives are: Healing the Centurion's Servant; Healing Two Blind Men; Healing the Dumb Demoniac; A Teaching and Preaching Tour; Raising the Widow's Son at Nain; John the Baptist's Question and Jesus's Reply; Jesus's Testimony Concerning John; Washing Jesus's Feet with Tears; The Ministering Women.



(e) Whatever Mark contains will have been included also in the framework that Mark has been following at the time, i.e. in that section of Matthew or Luke that Mark has adopted as his framework; and it will be placed within Mark in the position that it occupies in the order of the Gospel from which Mark took it. If in a given instance a pericope in Mark occurs in both Matthew and Luke, its placement in Mark's Gospel will correspond with the position it occupies in whichever of Matthew or Luke that Mark was using as his framework at the time when he came upon this pericope.

(f) Mark's overall treatment of narratives is simple: if he comes to a narrative in Matthew or Luke in the course of following his framework, he includes it in his own Gospel; if a narrative is found elsewhere in Matthew or Luke than in those sections that are part of Mark's framework, then it is omitted in Mark's Gospel.

There is thus a highly significant correlation between what Mark finds in the framework he has adopted from Matthew and Luke, and what he utilizes in his Gospel.

## **9.9 ORDER IN MATTHEW AND LUKE**

### **9.9.1 Basic Synoptic Framework**

Jesus's Genealogy and the stories of the infancy, the ministry of John, the baptism of Jesus, the initial temptations, the commencement of ministry and the call of Jesus's first disciples must in the nature of the case go at the beginning of the Gospel. John's enquiry from prison must go after his imprisonment and before his death. The choosing of the Twelve must precede their engaging in specific ministry at Jesus's behest. Jesus must become sufficiently publicly known to come to Herod's attention before the story of Herod's perplexity can be told. The feeding of the five thousand appears to be linked to the account of Peter's declaration, and that pericope is specifically linked by a time note to the Transfiguration, so these are locked into a sequence. And inasmuch as Peter's declaration was the occasion for a change in Jesus's ministry, towards a greater emphasis upon teaching the Twelve and a greater explicitness about the forthcoming Passion, pericopes along these lines will occur after the Caesarea Philippi account.

From the time when Jesus begins to journey southwards from Galilee through Perea and via Jericho to Jerusalem, events connected with these places become automatically placed in sequence, while stories set in Galilee must be placed before the point at which Jesus leaves Galilee for Perea. Once Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the events themselves structure the overall framework of the narrative, with scope only for relatively minor variations of order.

Thus these stories themselves, by their nature, provide a basic framework for the two

Major Synoptic Gospels. That is, if certain stories are to be included at all then they will need to be presented in a fixed sequence or at least at approximately the same point in the sequence (there is for instance some flexibility as to just where you put a genealogy). This framework exists then as a result of the inherent nature of some material, without requiring either that some knowledge of sequence of pericopes had to be transmitted in the oral tradition, or that either of the Major Synoptics knew the order of the other or derived this order from Mark. That is, if they were to use these stories at all they **must** appear in more or less this order.

The minimal framework arrived at on the basis of inherent nature of material is, as found in Matthew and Luke:

MATTHEW		LUKE	
		1:1-4	Preface
1:1-17	Genealogy		
1:18-2:23E	Infancy Narratives	1:5-2:52E	Infancy Narratives
3:1-12	John the Baptist	3:1-18	John the Baptist
		3:19-20	Arrest of John
3:13-17E	Baptism of Jesus	3:21-22	Baptism of Jesus
		3:23-28E	Genealogy
4:1-11	The Temptation	4:1-13	The Temptation
4:12a	Arrest of John		
4:12b-16	Jesus goes to Galilee	4:14	Jesus goes to Galilee
4:17	Jesus begins to preach	4:15	Jesus teaches in their synagogues
4:18-22	Call of the First Disciples	5:1-11	Call of the First Disciples
11:1-18	The Baptist's Question	7:18-35	The Baptist's Question
14:1-2	Death of John the Baptist	9:9	Death of John the Baptist
14:13-21	Feeding of Five Thousand	9:11-17	Feeding of Five Thousand
16:13-20	Peter's Confession	9:18-21	Peter's Confession
16:21	First Passion Prediction	9:22	First Passion Prediction
16:24-28E	Conditions of Discipleship	9:23-27	Conditions of Discipleship
17:1-8	The Transfiguration	9:28-36	The Transfiguration
17:14-20	Healing the Epileptic Boy	9:37-43a	Healing the Epileptic Boy
19:13-15	Jesus Blesses Children	18:15-17	Jesus Blesses Children

### 9.9.2 Pericope Clusters

There are a number of tightly-connected pericope pairs where the link is integral and part of the transmission of the pericopes (for example, Healing Peter's Mother-in-law/Healing the Sick at Nightfall; the Woman With a Hemorrhage/Raising Jairus's Daughter). The ones that require explanation are other pericope groups lacking these close bonds. Prior to Jesus Blesses the Children, the clusters are:

**C1. Across the Sea of Galilee:** Orders to Cross the Lake/Stilling the Storm/Healing of Legion/Return (Mt 8:18-9:1//Lk 8:22-40)

**C2. Events in Capernaum:** Healing the Paralytic/Call of Matthew-Levi/Eating With Sinners/The Question of Fasting (Bridegroom-Old Garment-New Wine) (Mt 9:2-17//Lk 5:17-39E)

**C3. Sabbath Controversies:** Plucking Grain on the Sabbath/ Healing Infirmary on the Sabbath (The Man With the Withered Hand) (Mt 12:1-14//Lk 6:1-11)

**C4. Herod's Perplexity; Jesus Withdraws:** Herod's Perplexity About Jesus/Death of John/Jesus Withdraws/Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mt 14:1-21//Lk 9:7-17)

**C5. From Confession to Transfiguration:** Peter's Confession/First Passion Prediction/Conditions of Discipleship/Transfiguration/Healing of the Epileptic Boy/Second Passion Prediction/True Greatness (Mt 16:13-18:5//Lk 9:18-48).

From the pericope Jesus Blesses the Children onwards, the accounts chronicle the events of Jesus's journey from Perea to Jerusalem, and thence to the Cross.

Thus an examination of the overall order of pericopes in Matthew and Luke discloses that there are numerous places where they differ in order, and yet other places where a group of pericopes retains the same relative order in these two Gospels while differing in absolute order. There are four possible explanations for this:

(a) This is the order of occurrence of the events, knowledge of which fact was transmitted with the pericopes.

(b) They were early arranged into these "clusters" in the tradition, and thereafter these pericopes retained their association when they were transmitted.

(c) There was some perceived link or connection between the pericopes of such a cluster.

(d) The grouping is to be explained by Synoptic literary source: either Matthew and Luke are following Mark's order, or else Luke is following Matthew's order.

The problem with all these explanations is that they are valid only up to a point, but in the last analysis they are all incomplete as explanations, and are therefore invalidated:

(a) The order within the clusters may well be the original order of events, but it remains to be explained why the original order has not been preserved in so many other places (i.e., where Matthew and Luke differ in their sequence) and has been retained **only** in these five instances.

(b) and (c) The perceived link or connection between pericopes in a cluster is no greater (and is sometimes less) than between other pericopes in one Gospel where that link does not exist in the other. Thus there is no perceivable link between the pericopes within C2 (the sequence Healing the Paralytic/Call of Matthew-Levi/The Question of Fasting, Mt 9:2-17//Lk 5:17-39), while there *is* a close link in Matthew between The Question of Fasting (Mt 9:14-17) and Raising of The Ruler's Daughter (for this link, see Mt 9:18ff.), whereas these two pericopes are widely separated in Luke (5:33-39 and 8:41ff.).

(d) Either Markan Priority or the hypothesis that Luke used Matthew will of course provide an explanation for the agreement in sequence **within the clusters**; what is left to be explained is why this limited agreement of order is all that they share of common sequence: an agreement amongst pericopes that do not have an absolute or relative position in the Synoptic sequence (and indeed are placed differently).

The most satisfactory—and eminently reasonable—explanation is a fifth possibility: that at an early stage the pericopes in these clusters were set down in writing, and that they became associated then, and were transmitted as a cluster. In a particular instance, this association of pericopes in a cluster is most likely to derive from the original author, or alternatively it may possibly reflect an early stage of the process (to which Luke refers in 1:1) of compiling the Jesus-tradition into a narrative. In any case, this association in writing antedates the production of the Synoptics, and these clusters were taken over *in toto* into both Matthew and Luke.

However, since each cluster circulated as a separate document and as there was no inherent or relative order indicated or implied between one such document and another, or between these documents and other material used by Matthew and Luke, these five documents (which contain a cluster of pericopes in identical order) appear in different **places** in Matthew and Luke, and in a different **sequence** within these Gospels.

If then, as this evidence indicates, these clusters—and some other pericopes—circulated as separate documents, the following picture emerges:

(a) For the writing of his Gospel, Matthew already had on hand copies of a number of documents that he had produced at an earlier time and that had been in circulation

separately. Luke collected copies of numbers of these documents when gathering material for his Gospel.

(b) For his Gospel, Matthew followed, within a general chronological framework, a practice of assembling his documents on the basis of **similarity of theme or content**, and he subordinated chronology to this principle without abandoning all concern for the sequence in which events occurred. By contrast, Luke arranged his material **in the order in which events occurred**, so far as he was able, in the course of his enquiries in Palestine, to ascertain what this was.

(c) Matthew edited these early documents of his into a complete connected narrative for publication, added in connecting links with other pericopes, and expanded and elaborated on some of them.

There is no reason, for instance, for questioning that “while he was yet speaking” in Mt 9:18 is a genuine reminiscence of what had happened: but it would seem clear that these words did not occur at the beginning of the pericope of The Raising of Jairus’s Daughter when this came to Luke. That is, the connecting phrase is to be attributed to Matthew’s redaction at the time he composed his complete Gospel. So similarly, the comment (Mt 8:1) that links the pericope of The Healing of the Leper to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, and the comment (Mt 12:46) that appends the visit of Jesus’s family to the discourses of The Beelzebul Controversy.

Matthew regarded the events described in the document “From Confession to Transfiguration” (C5, above) as the turning-point in Jesus’s ministry. In editing this document he adds in the mention of Peter’s Rebuke, The Charge to Secrecy and The Coming of Elijah. The document common to Matthew and Luke continues with the connected events that followed immediately upon Jesus’s descent from the Mountain (Healing of the Epileptic Boy/Second Passion Prediction/True Greatness), and Matthew expands the latter with further teaching on connected themes (18:6-35E). Then Jesus leaves Galilee (19:1) never to return before his resurrection, and therefore from this point onwards Matthew includes only what happened in Perea and on the way to Jerusalem and the Cross. Thus all the other (Galilean) material that he had must in these circumstances be included prior to the “From Confession to Transfiguration” document.

Matthew’s “early period” pericopes, which have to be placed first, end with The Call of the First Disciples (4:18-22). Matthew follows this immediately (4:23-25E) with what is virtually a Table of Contents for the Galilee section that follows: “And he went about all Galilee [so this covers the Galilee period], teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the

people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and from the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.”

This is followed in Matthew’s Gospel by the stories of the Galilee period, which run from the beginning of Jesus’s ministry till C5, the last major document of the period, “From Confession to Transfiguration”, which (as has been noted) ends the Galilee ministry and is followed (19:1) by his leaving Galilee on the journey to Jerusalem and the Cross. The pericopes and pericope clusters that Matthew includes here and that are paralleled in Luke have been given in Chapter Eight, §8.3.3. Points to note from the Table (§8.3.3) of the comparison of Matthew and Luke:

The sections of their Gospels where Matthew and Luke differ in sequence are (apart from a few minor transpositions in the Passion story) only those containing the record of Jesus’s Galilean ministry. There is no inherent order within this period; it could in fact be said that the order in which everything took place is largely without significance—it would be quite easy to forget it and there was no reason (or purpose) for remembering it.

After Peter’s Confession and prior to the commencement of Jesus’s Journey to Jerusalem, Matthew contains only the one connected account (most probably a single document, C5, published and circulating prior to the writing of his full Gospel, and into which at that latter time he added some further information). Luke is similar in that in his Gospel he follows this account (9:18-48) with the commencement of Jesus’s Journey to Jerusalem (9:51). But there the similarity ends, for Luke then has Jesus weaving back and forth in an itinerary that has him at Bethany near Jerusalem in 10:38-42, and back on the border of Samaria and Galilee in 17:9. And into this general framework of a journey Luke has woven a considerable amount of teaching, much of it Lukan *sondergut* and most of what does parallel Matthew being found earlier in Matthew than the “From Confession to Transfiguration” cluster (C5).

### 9.9.3 Healings and The Baptist’s Emissage

One pericope that exercises an influence upon the arrangement of material is “Concerning John the Baptist” (Mt 11:1-19/Lk 7:18-35). In this double pericope Jesus draws the attention of John’s messengers to the types of healings he has performed as well as his preaching to the poor. Thus at least one representative healing of each type is given by both Matthew and Luke *prior* to this reference that Jesus makes to them. These signs that Jesus performed (they are listed in identical order in Mt 11:5 and Lk 7:22), and the Synoptists’ record of such events, are:

<b>Mt 11:5//Lk 7:22</b>	<b>MATT</b>	<b>LUKE</b>
the blind receive their sight	9:27-30	7:21
the lame walk	(8:5-13; 9:2-8)	(5:17-26)
lepers are cleansed	8:1-4	5:12-16
the deaf hear	-	-
the dead are raised up	9:23-26	7:11-17
the poor have the good news preached	5-7 (cf. 5:3)	6:20-49E (cf. 4:18)

Note: The passages Matthew 8:5-13; 9:2-8 and Luke 5:17-26 refer to paralysis rather than lameness alone, but the result of the healing was that one who previously could not walk was then enabled to do so.

It is to be seen also from the above table that both Matthew and Luke include the statement “the deaf hear”, yet there is no record in either of these two Gospels of such a miracle. It is reasonable to believe that if either of these Synoptists had access to the account of such a miracle they would have included it, in validation of this statement in Jesus’s message to John, just as they have recorded the other types of miracles to which Jesus refers.

But in contrast, Mark has two accounts of the restoration of hearing to a deaf person. The first is Mark 7:32, the man who was both dumb and deaf (Jesus put his fingers into his ears)—the crowd acknowledges this miracle in 7:37. Matthew’s parallel to this episode (Mt 15:31) contains only general statements about healings. Mark’s second reference to a deaf person hearing is Mark 9:25, in the account of the boy whom Jesus healed when coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Both Major Synoptists contain this same pericope, but neither of them includes any mention of Mark’s detail that the boy was deaf. If (as Markan Priority holds) both Matthew and Luke drew their accounts from Mark, then they edited his Gospel so as to remove the one reference to a miracle of restoring hearing to the deaf that they would otherwise have in their respective Gospels. This would be a truly incredible thing for them to do. The logical explanation of the data is: Markan Dependence upon the Major Synoptists together with Peter. Mark has here supplemented his two written sources (as he has so often done) with his recollection of details from a story as told by Peter in his preaching.

Matthew’s material between his first (preview) summary of Jesus’s Galilean ministry and the account of John the Baptist’s Question can be summarized thus:

4:23-25E	First Summary of Galilean Ministry (“Table of Contents”)
5, 6, 7	Jesus’s teaching ministry

- 8:1-9:34     Jesus's healing ministry
- 9:35         Second Summary of the Galilean Ministry
- 9:36-38E    Exhortation to prayer for more labourers
- 10:1-42E    Instructing the Twelve to go out as labourers to teach and heal
- 11:1         Third Summary of the Galilean Ministry
- 11:2ff.      Emissage from John the Baptist

This could be further simplified as:

#### First Summary

Jesus's Teachings

Jesus's Healings

#### Second Summary

Jesus's Teachings

#### Third Summary

In Matthew's "Jesus's Healings" section (8:1-9:34), what is included consists exclusively of (a) pericopes of healings and (b) two pericope-clusters, C1 and C2, which include a healing together with some non-healing pericopes.

In our consideration of these pericope clusters earlier we saw that the most reasonable and logical explanation for them is that they existed and circulated as written documents prior to their respective incorporation into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This explanation throws further light upon the question of why we find the inclusion of other (i.e., non-healing) material in Matthew's "Healings" section: these clusters had become established and fixed before the time of the writing of our Synoptic Gospels, and Matthew had them as two documents (8:18-9:1 and 9:2-17). Each document contained a healing appropriate for inclusion in his "Healings" section. Matthew did not choose to dismember these existing documents so as to take out only the healing; so instead into his Gospel's "Healings" section he placed the **whole** document as it stood.

In this connection it is highly significant that there are no non-healing pericopes between the end of the "Teachings" section (7:29) and the Summary (9:35) apart from what occurs in these two clusters; and these two clusters (it will be recalled) were identified by noting what contiguous pericopes had the same relative order in both Matthew and Luke, and then seeking for an explanation of this.

Matthew's "Jesus's Healings" section consists of these eight pericopes and pericope clusters:



NO	MATT	PERICOPE UNIT	IN LUKE
1.	8:1-4	Healing of a Leper	5:12-16
2.	8:5-13	Healing the Centurion's Servant	7:1-10
3.	8:14-17	Capernaum Healings (Double pericope 1)	4:38-41
4.	8:18-9:1	Across the Sea of Galilee (Cluster 1)	8:22-39
5.	9:2-17	Events in Capernaum (1) (Cluster 2)	5:17-39E
6.	9:18-26	Events in Capernaum (2) (Double pericope 2)	8:40-56E
7.	9:27-34	Healings on the Way (Double pericope 3)	-
8.	9:35	Summary of Jesus's Healings and Ministry	8:1

The following comments can be made about the order for these pericope units: Matthew says specifically (8:1) that the Cleansing of the Leper occurred as Jesus descended from giving the Sermon on the Mount. Even if it is argued (as some believe—and it may well be) that the Sermon on the Mount is an agglomeration of teaching spoken on many occasions, there is no justification for the gratuitous assertion that there was **no discourse at all** on a mountain. There is in fact no reason for declining to accept Matthew's words at face value: the Healing of the Leper is narrated here because, as Matthew says, it occurred when Jesus descended the mountain after the Sermon on the Mount and thus it provides a highly appropriate bridge from his "teachings" section to his "healings" section.

Matthew's second and third pericope units (8:5-13 and 8:14-17) are both set in Capernaum, which would explain the one following the other. Luke also sets both of them in Capernaum but he has them in reverse order and widely separated (Lk 7:1-10; 4:38-41).

In Matthew, pericope units 4, 5 and 6 (see above) are linked together: after the Capernaum healings of Unit 3, Jesus sails from Capernaum across the Sea of Galilee, heals Legion, returns to Capernaum (Unit 4, Cluster 1) for the events of Unit 5 (Cluster 2), and then there follow, while he is still in Capernaum, the linked events of the healing of the hemorrhaging woman and the raising of Jairus's daughter (Unit 6; i.e., pericope units 5 and 6 are tied closely together by the "While he was thus speaking to them" of 9:18). Luke has the fourth and sixth of these pericope units in consecutive sequence (Lk 8:22-39, 40-56E) and the fifth unit is placed much earlier (Lk 5:17-39E).

Why does Matthew place the fifth unit where he does? Again, there is no valid case against the face value explanation being accepted: that this sequence of events (Mt 9:2-17) is placed here because that is where they occurred. Within this sequence of events is the record of Matthew's own call (9:9). If indeed tradition is correct in ascribing the

authorship of the First Gospel to Matthew the apostle (as I affirm), then it is entirely reasonable to believe that he would remember that his call took place after Jesus's return across the lake and the healing of the paralytic, and just before the interlinked events of the healing of the hemorrhaging woman and the raising of the ruler's daughter from the dead.

The final unit is a double pericope of the healing of two blind men and a dumb demoniac, apparently placed into this "healings" section in anticipation of Jesus's statement in 11:5, "the blind receive their sight".

These comments do not cover every detail of the order of Matthew's "healings" section, but they can certainly clarify some sections of it.

#### **9.9.4 From the Baptist's Emissage Onwards**

Jesus's message to John the Baptist points to his healing and preaching ministry as the signs and the evidence to John that he, Jesus, was indeed the expected Coming One, the Messiah (Mt 11:3-4). From this pericope of the discussion about John to Herod's Perplexity (Mt 14:1), Matthew's grouping of material is a little less clearcut, but there is still evidence of such grouping (particularly in the teaching and discourse sections, 11:7-30E and 13:1-52, as also subsequently in 18:1-35E, 23:1-39E, 24:4-25:46E).

Between these two discourse blocks (11:7-30E and 13:1-52) Matthew places a series of incidents that have a common link, that they are to some extent touched with controversy. The first of these is what has been identified earlier (§9.9.2) as C3, Sabbath Controversies (12:1-14), the two pericopes of confrontations with the Pharisees over working on the Sabbath (plucking grain in the fields) and healing on the Sabbath (the man with the withered hand). Because of the venomous intensity of opposition now aroused (12:14) Jesus withdraws from there (12:15a) but is followed by large crowds, whose illnesses he heals, enjoining silence (12:15b-16)—Matthew describes these events in terms of fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (12:17-21). Then Jesus heals a blind and dumb demoniac, and this becomes the occasion for the confrontation with the Pharisees regarding their accusation that his power came from Beelzebul the prince of demons (12:22-45).

The final incident related here is the visit of Jesus's family seeking him (12:46-50E), where Jesus's reply gives an indication that there is tension and conflict here also. This leads immediately and closely (13:1, "that same day ...") into the lengthy discourse section Teaching in Parables (13:1-52), where the dominant theme is that of those who

do and those who do not respond to the message of the Kingdom (note how this links with Jesus's words in 12:49-50 concerning his true family). This in its turn leads into and is followed by the Rejection at Nazareth, when Jesus's comment speaks of himself as "without honour ... in his own house" (13:57)—which links back with the pericope of Jesus's family that Matthew placed (12:46-50E) immediately prior to the Teaching in Parables discourse (13:1-52).

Thus Matthew's section from the Emissage of the Baptist to Herod's Perplexity could be summed up as:

- 11:7-30E    Jesus's Teachings
- 12:1-50E    Controversy Stories
- 13:1-52     Jesus's Teachings in Parables
- 13:53-58E   Rejection At Nazareth

Next there comes C4, Herod's Perplexity and Jesus's Withdrawal, leading to The Feeding of the Five Thousand (14:1-2, 13-21), a document that also has been used by Luke, but into which Matthew inserts (doubtless at the stage of final redaction of this material when he was including it into his full Gospel) the parenthetical explanation (14:3-12) of why Herod reacted as he did to hearing about Jesus (14:2). When Jesus hears about Herod's reaction, he cautiously withdraws to a lonely place (14:13), and when the crowds follow him he feeds them (14:14-21).

The next succession of pericopes (14:22-16:12) is absent in Luke (the "Great Omission"), the explanation for this being either that Luke knew them but chose to use none of them or—far more likely—that they did not come to Luke's attention; quite possibly Matthew recorded them in writing only at the time of composing his Gospel. That Matthew would place these pericopes at this point instead of including the various teachings, controversies and miracles in his other (especially, earlier) blocks of pericopes of these types is good grounds for considering that Matthew was aware that these episodes occurred at this stage in Jesus's ministry, that is, between Herod becoming aware of Jesus and the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and the affirmation of Peter at Caesarea Philippi concerning who Jesus was.

The fifth pericope cluster occurring in both Matthew and Luke, From Confession to Transfiguration, marks a turning point in Jesus's ministry. Now that his disciples have come to grasp who he is, he begins to concentrate upon teaching them (see 16:21). The Transfiguration is followed in both Matthew and Luke (and therefore presumably as part of the same document) by the healing of the epileptic boy, the second Passion prediction and the lesson about true greatness. Into the framework of this document Matthew

inserts additionally The Charge to Secrecy and The Coming of Elijah (17:9-13), and The Temple Tax (17:24-27E); and at the end of it he adds a considerable amount of Jesus's further teaching on temptation and forgiveness (18:6-35E).

This completes Matthew's record of Jesus's Galilean ministry: he records now (from 19:1) how Jesus left Galilee and journeyed to Jerusalem and thence to the Cross. The order of events is in general more significant here than it has been hitherto. Pericopes are frequently linked with places, which helps to impose an order upon them in the record of the journey. Then from Palm Sunday onwards the flow of events is largely integral to the story and therefore in general terms the sequence would be the same in any careful record of what occurred. The high level of correlation of order between Matthew and Luke in many places where it could have been different (e.g. the various episodes on the Day of Questions, Mt 21:23-24:1//Lk 20:1-21:5) suggests that the sequence of events was here part of the tradition that was transmitted.

Into this framework for Passion Week, Matthew and Luke each insert some teaching and some narrative that the other does not have.

#### **9.9.5 A Comparison of Luke with Matthew**

Numbers of the pericopes and pericope clusters included by Matthew in his Gospel have also been used by Luke. In some cases the extent of verbal similarity between the Matthean and Lukan accounts indicates that both authors have used the same document, in Greek. For other pericopes, the overall identity of subject matter together with small differences of wording between Matthew and Luke might best be explained on the basis of separate Greek translations or rewritings of the one original Aramaic document. And again, those places where there are considerable differences between accounts of the one episode point to the two accounts being independent reports of what happened (e.g. the Rejection At Nazareth).

Quite a number of accounts cannot at first glance be allocated to these categories with certainty: accounts containing both substantial similarities and significant differences could arise from the same original tradition (whether transmitted orally or in writing) having been used by both Matthew and Luke, with substantial redactional rewriting by one or both authors when incorporating it into their respective Gospels. Or alternatively the two accounts could be two different versions independently transmitted (orally or in writing) of the one event or teaching, or of two different but similar events or teaching occasions. This is an area that will repay further close study to assemble the available evidence for deciding between these alternatives.

The order of pericopes in Luke's Gospel is very extensively different from that of Matthew's Gospel. The extent of this difference can be seen from the column of comparison of order between Matthew and Luke given in Chapter Eight, §8.3.3.

The express statement by Luke (1:3) that his intention was to write an orderly account, and his manifest interest in questions of chronology, sequence, and connection between pericopes (see §4.5.1) strongly suggests that Luke has arranged his pericopes (or pericope clusters) in chronological order, to the extent that he was able to ascertain what that order was.

Now, this is an eminently reasonable explanation of his method of procedure and his plan of arrangement, ***so long as he did not know Matthew's Gospel***. But if we believed that Luke knew Matthew, we face the problem that in numbers of instances Matthew's Gospel gives a clear unequivocal statement of sequence or succession or link and Luke breaks this and places a pericope elsewhere, sometimes giving it the vaguest of settings. A few examples:

MATTHEW	LUKE
4:12 "Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee."	4:31 "And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee." [No link with John's arrest.]
8:1 "When he came down from the mountain ..." (the setting for the Healing of a Leper, specifically placed after the Sermon on the Mount)	5:12 "While he was in one of the cities ..." (Luke's very vague, generalized setting for his account of The Healing of a Leper)
9:1 Jesus recrosses the lake after the healing of Legion. 9:2-17 Matthew inserts here the pericopes of Cluster 1	8:40 Jesus recrosses the lake after the healing of Legion: "Now when Jesus returned ... there came a man named Jairus ... (Luke puts Jairus's Request directly after the Return from healing Legion, and has put this much later in his overall sequence. The pericopes of Cluster 1 have been placed much earlier, Lk 5:17-39E, introduced with the unspecific "On one of those days, as he was teaching ...")
9:18 "While he was thus speaking ..." (Matthew ties the Ruler's [Jairus's] Request to the end of the pericope Concerning Fasting)	

12:46 “While he was still speaking to the people, his mother and brothers ...” (Matthew ties the visit of Jesus’s family to the end of the Beelzebul Discourse, and follows it with his Parables Chapter, thus:) 13:1 “That same day Jesus went ...”

8:19 “Then his mother and his brothers came to him ...” (Luke’s parallels to the Beelzebul Discourse are in his chapter 11; the visit of Jesus’s family is preceded (8:4ff.) by his equivalent Parables material)

If (as indeed the other evidence indicates) Luke is seeking to implement a chronological arrangement of material, it is difficult to see why he would break apart the two pericope clusters that Matthew has joined together in 9:18 with the words “While he was thus speaking”. The way in which Luke introduces the three pericope clusters (8:22, “One day he got into a boat”; 5:17, “On one of those days”; 8:40f., “Now when Jesus returned ... there came a man named Jairus”) hardly indicates that Luke was acting in the light of compelling chronological factors in pulling out the centre one of these three clusters from where it occurs in Matthew (9:2-17), breaking its close links in that Gospel, and placing it in his own Gospel three chapters earlier (Lk 5:17-39E) than its preceding and succeeding clusters (Lk 8:22-39, 40-45E).

[Mark here is parallel with Luke, so if Luke is using Mark (as per Markan Priority) this accounts for Luke’s order at this place, but leaves other difficult questions to be answered concerning the relationship of Mark and Luke.]

Therefore if one were to hold that Luke knew Matthew, it would be necessary to find some other explanation for Luke’s plan of arrangement for his Gospel. But if we accept the implications here from the question of order, reinforced by the evidence of content and wording given earlier (see §8.3 and §8.4), that Luke did not know Matthew’s Gospel **as a whole**, then the evidence can be perceived to point to this simple explanation:

Some pericopes and pericope clusters circulated in writing independently during the period prior to the composition of the Synoptics, and were incorporated into both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; Matthew balanced chronological considerations with his plan of assembling large blocks of material of the same general kind; Luke aimed for the best chronological sequence that he could attain. In one case at least, Matthew’s eyewitness knowledge allowed a more chronologically accurate placement of a pericope cluster (Mt 9:2-17) than was achieved in Luke for this material—for this after all is the pericope cluster in which Matthew’s own call is recorded.

### 9.9.6 Summary And Conclusion

Clearly, a very cogent case can be made out for the independence of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, with the two Synoptists making use of a small number of documents that they had in common. This can be summarized thus:

1. In the period between the events themselves and the writing of the first complete Synoptic Gospel, Matthew the apostle wrote down short accounts of some of the things that Jesus said and did. These written pericopes began to be copied and circulated in the churches, and some small groups of pericopes clustered together. The pericopes of these clusters may have become linked together in the course of their circulation in the churches (cf. Lk 1:1), but more probably the clusters go back to Matthew's original writing-down of the events, and may therefore represent a record of the sequence in which the events occurred—this is the most likely explanation because the pericopes in a cluster have usually no apparent connection with each other and consist of differing types of material, and yet occur together in identical sequence in all three Synoptic Gospels, although the clusters as a whole are differently placed within the structures of these Gospels.

2. Matthew and Luke produced their complete Gospels independently of each other and at approximately the same time, so that neither saw the finished Gospel written by the other before publishing his own. Each incorporated into his Gospel a number of the pericopes and pericope clusters that were then in circulation in the churches, editing these in conjunction with other information known to them about the stories and teachings in the pericopes.

3. Matthew's and Luke's Gospels both have a similar framework, because of the extent to which much of the material itself indicates where it must be placed in the overall story of Jesus, and because they reflect the basic structure provided by the key events in the life and ministry of Jesus. However, much of the material in these two Gospels is differently placed within that basic framework, as this material contained no inherent time or sequence factors, and Matthew and Luke worked upon the basis of different principles of arranging the order of their material: within the overall chronological framework, Matthew grouped like-to-like, while Luke sought to set out everything in chronological order to the extent to which he was able to ascertain what this was.

4. So when Mark began work on his Gospel, the difference in pericope order within Matthew and Luke already confronted him. In keeping with his particular purpose in writing, he sought to restrict the amount of Jesus's teaching he included, confining this to

material that he judged directly relevant to his overall aims, or closely linked with other material that he was using. This intention led him to the adoption of the framework that he used for his Gospel: he followed the order of Luke to Mk 6:14 and thence that of Matthew to the end. By this means he steered around the major teaching sections that he did not choose to use. Into this framework he added a detour around Luke's Sermon on the Plain, plus a few other small pericopes that he drew from the Gospel not being used as his sequence-source at the time, inserting them in each instance at the place in the structure where they occurred in the Gospel from which he took them.

It is striking to notice how close Streeter came to recognizing these implications from the data. Streeter said (*The Four Gospels*, 1924: 161-162),

A curious fact ... is that, while in the latter half of his Gospel (chapter xiv. to the end) Matthew adheres strictly to the order of Mark (Mk. vi.14 to the end), he makes considerable rearrangements in the first half. Luke, however, though he omits far more of Mark than does Matthew, hardly ever departs from Mark's order, and only in trifling ways. On the other hand, whenever Luke substitutes for an item in Mark a parallel version from another source, he always gives it *in a different context* from the item in Mark which it replaces. [*Italics original.*]

Streeter has commented on the "curious fact" than from Mark 6:14 Matthew and Mark run parallel to the end, while Luke "hardly ever departs from Mark's order"—which is especially true of Mark up to 6:14. Streeter's comments are made from the perspective of his view that Matthew and Luke use Mark. It is interesting to speculate on the outcome if Streeter had stood back to look at the data without the mental bias of his commitment to Markan Priority, and had considered the significance of these facts when seen from the perspective, instead, of Markan Posteriority. As noted above, how simple is the alternative explanation of the observable data: Up to 6:14 Mark followed Luke (with four insertions he drew from Matthew and inserted where Matthew had placed them), and from 6:14 Mark followed Matthew (with four insertions he drew from Luke, and inserted where Luke had placed them). Streeter came so close to seeing this!

Conclusion to be drawn from the evidence: That Mark drew his order from Matthew and Luke, with his method of procedure resulting in the circumstance that he was always in agreement in sequence with one or other of the Major Synoptics, and in agreement with both of them in all the places where they were in agreement with each other.

The clarity, the simplicity, and the comprehensive explanatory power of this interpretation of the data of Synoptic pericope order can be compared with the Markan Priority explanation:

(a) Mark's Gospel is placed first: but Markan Priority offers no explanation for the



order of Mark—one is left with the comment of Papias that Mark contains no particular order at all.

(b) And Markan Priority does not really explain the order of Matthew or of Luke, but it offers an explanation only of those places where they are in concord with Mark's order. Then *ad hoc* supplementary explanations have to be tendered for each of the many places where each of them deserts Mark.

(c) And Markan Priority does not explain why Matthew and Luke never happen to leave Mark's order at the same time, but one or other of them is **always** found agreeing with that order. This data is put forward by proponents of Markan Priority as supporting their case, but this assertion is wishful thinking or poor logic. As it is not contended that Matthew and Luke **were** acting in collusion, the fact that they **appear** to act as if they were in collusion when we know that they were not, casts grave doubts upon the validity of the theory that leads to such a result. The only explanation (on the Markan Priority hypothesis) of the way in which Mark is always supported in sequence by one or both of the others is: coincidence. The number of occasions when the sole Synoptic that is supporting Mark might well have also deserted Mark's order and did not in fact do so indicates that coincidence of a very high degree is involved.

(d) And Markan Priority does not explain the alternating nature of the support given to Mark by the other two Synoptics, so that time after time it happens that just at the point where the one Major Synoptic who is following Mark ceases to do so, the other Major Synoptic appears alongside and takes over the role of being Mark's companion in Synoptic sequence. Impeccable timing. Or, incredible explanation.

Truly, the Markan Priority explanation does not explain very much at all.

In contrast, the Markan Dependence hypothesis offers a more complete, more satisfying and more convincing explanation of every aspect of the data of pericope order in all three Synoptics.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OTHER IDEAS**

#### **10.1 INTRODUCTION: SYNOPTIC VIEWS THROUGHOUT HISTORY**

An immense variety of views has been advanced to account for Synoptic similarities and differences—two of them going back to the early church Fathers.

#### **10.2 THE COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

##### 10.2.1 Background

##### 10.2.2 The Nature of the Case

##### 10.2.3 Arguments against the Complete Independence View

##### 10.2.4 Doctrinal Considerations

The view that the Gospels are all independent—none of them used any of the others as sources. First argued by Chrysostom, this still has numerous advocates.

#### **10.3 THE SUCCESSIVE DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS**

##### 10.3.1 Chapman's Change of Mind to Successive Dependence

##### 10.3.2 Butler's Vigorous Support

##### 10.3.3 Assessment

This hypothesis—the initial Augustinian view—was warmly argued in the twentieth century. It makes some convincing points but does have overwhelming weaknesses.

#### **10.4 OTHER HYPOTHESES PROPOSED**

##### 10.4.1 Surveying the Scene

##### 10.4.2 The Farrer Hypothesis

##### 10.4.3 The Lukan Priority Explanation (The Jerusalem School Hypothesis)

##### 10.4.4 The Ur Gospel Explanation

##### 10.4.5 The Multiple Sources Explanations

These are other alternative Synoptic explanations which have been advocated.

#### **10.5 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION**

These hypotheses have identified significant areas of Synoptic data, but upon examination it can be seen that the Markan Dependence hypothesis provides a better explanation of the evidence.

## CHAPTER TEN

### A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OTHER IDEAS

<p>This chapter describes other proposed solutions advanced for the Synoptic Problem, and their shortcomings</p>
--

#### 10.1 INTRODUCTION: SYNOPTIC VIEWS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

There have been various views proposed through the centuries to account for the similarities and differences to be seen in the Synoptics. Our treatment thus far in this dissertation has focused upon two Synoptic explanations, the Two-Source hypothesis and the Markan Posteriority hypothesis, in its various forms—almost as if these two were the only possible solutions to the Synoptic Problem. But there have been other solutions put forward, other views that are firmly held, and it is appropriate now to examine these.

Two of these other explanations are traced back to the times of the early church Fathers, and the others have been developed more recently.

The early church Fathers were not very much interested in the order in which the Gospels were written, or in their interrelationships. Chapter One noted that several of the early church Fathers referred to the authors of the Gospels and even discussed the order in which the Gospels were written, but their comments about an “order of writing” for the Gospels are often vague or incomplete. They do agree in placing Matthew first (one of them does not distinguish between Matthew or Luke being first; no one puts Mark first).

However, until Augustine and Chrysostom, none of them gave consideration to this question of the *interrelationship* between the Synoptic Gospels: if and how (if at all) any Gospel writer made use of the Gospel(s) of his predecessor or predecessors. I mentioned in Chapter One that these two Fathers were the first to address the question of any kind of interrelationship between the Gospels, or the use of one Gospel by another author. They both wrote at about the same time (c.400) and expressed different views.

Chrysostom strongly affirmed the independence of the Gospel authors and considered that the nature and extent of their agreements and differences is “a very great demonstration of the truth” of what they have written. (This is the Complete Independence view.) And Augustine asserted that the order that the Gospels have in the canon—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—was the order in which they had been written, and that each writer utilized the work of his predecessor(s). (The Successive Dependence view.)

These two views have been strongly supported in recent centuries.

## 10.2 THE COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS

### 10.2.1 Background

One of the books about the Synoptic Problem published this century to which I referred in Chapter Five (§5.5.4), *Three Views of the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (2002), sets forth the case for the Complete Independence view. The author, F. David Farnell, describes (255) the essence of this view thus:

In contrast to historical-critical ideology, the Independence View maintains that each Gospel writer worked independently of the other three, each having no need to derive information from the other three. The writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John authored four independent accounts of Jesus' life. The Gospels originated without direct literary interdependency.

This hypothesis is usually referred to simply as the "Independence View". However, I am affirming the independence of Matthew and Luke, in contradistinction from both the Two Gospel hypothesis and the Farrer hypothesis. Therefore to underline this distinction I am referring to the view that all the Gospels are independent as the "Complete Independence" view.

Modern proponents of independence hold it to have been the tacit opinion of the earliest Christian writers that the Gospels were independent of each other. Insofar as the question is discussed at all, there is (they aver) an uncritical acceptance of the four Gospels as being separate accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus and thus, by implication, as being independent of each other in their testimony.

Some exponents of Complete Independence state that this was the only view to be found in the Fathers and the early church. Thus, for example, Farnell (2002: 237) writes,

The Fathers' writings verify a unanimous consensus that Matthew, not Mark, was the first Gospel written and that the Gospel writers wrote independently of each other.

In saying this, these scholars rather too readily discount the comments of Augustine that the second and third writers knew and used the Gospel(s) prior to them (as seen in Chapter One, §1.2.1). Augustine apart, the Fathers do not discuss the nature of the relationship between the Gospels. We cannot infer from the fact that something is not discussed by the Fathers that they therefore held the particular view that we espouse.

I have set out Chrysostom's view in detail earlier, in Chapter One. John Calvin has lent his support to this position—see his *Harmony of the Gospels* (82) for his endorsement of the Independence view. In more recent times the view of independent oral traditions behind the Gospels has been supported by numbers of scholars, including

J G Herder in 1796-1797, J C L Gieseler in 1817-1818, Bishop B F Westcott in books in 1851 and 1860, Arthur Wright in 1896, and R O P Taylor in 1946.

One of the more forceful advocates of Complete Independence has been Henry Alford. His was one of the nineteenth century's major commentary series on the Greek New Testament. The first volume, on the Gospels, appeared in 1849, a second edition in 1854, and is still in print today. Alford carefully investigated the relationships between the Synoptics, and argued strongly for "their independence of one another". He was concerned to concentrate his attention on "the evidence furnished **by the Gospels themselves**" (his italics) and he addressed himself to the various alternative "mutual interdependence" theories that could be adopted to explain the Gospels as we have them, and why they were written. His conclusions are (Vol.1, *The Four Gospels*, 1968: 3-12):

I cannot then find in any of the above hypotheses a solution of the question before us, *how the appearances presented by our three Gospels are to be accounted for*. I do not see how any theory of mutual interdependence will leave to our three Evangelists their credit as *able or trustworthy writers*, or even as *honest men*: nor can I find any such theory borne out by the nature of the variations apparent in the respective texts. ... It remains then that the three Gospels should have arisen *independently of one another*.

### 10.2.2 The Nature of the Case

This view emphasizing the independence of the sources for the Synoptic Gospels continues to be advocated to the present. What exactly is the contention of the Complete Independence advocates today? How do they present the case for their view?

Farnell explains (2002: 257-258) this perspective thus:

The Gospel records are authentic, biographical, and historical accounts of apostolic eyewitness, written during the lifetimes of the apostles. Those records present accurately what Jesus said and did. The Gospels, therefore, reflect the only legitimate *Sitz im Leben* (situation in life) of Jesus, that is, accurate historical reports of what Jesus said and did during His life on earth, bearing witness to His death, resurrection, and ascension.

The Complete Independence hypothesis fully acknowledges the role of Synoptic sources. Farnell notes (2002: 224) that "Matthew, Mark, and Luke drew from eyewitness sources, oral and written, in their accounts ... "

Farnell acknowledges (2002: 223) that "the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark are smaller in number [than agreements of Mark with one or both of the others], but they are, nevertheless, quite substantial in number and very real. Peter's influence accounts for this phenomenon too." He then adds (2002: 224):

Yes, Matthew was written before Luke, but Luke had no knowledge of Matthew's Gospel when he wrote, and the book of Matthew was not among the sources available to Luke in his research.

Farnell notes (2002: 240) that "literary-dependency concepts are absent from the writings of the early church Fathers. Although they had frequent opportunity to mention literary dependence, they never do so." He quotes (2002: 241) from John Chrysostom (Homilies on St Matthew 1:5-6, 10:3):

"What then? Was not one evangelist sufficient to tell all?" One indeed was sufficient; but if there be four that write, not at the same times, nor in the same places, neither after having met together, and conversed one with another, and then they speak all things as it were out of one mouth, this becomes a very great demonstration of the truth.

A number of authors from the twentieth century are then cited: I find their explanations of Synoptic sources particularly interesting in the light of the view to which the evidence has pointed me (as explained in the first two chapters of this dissertation):

Farnell says (2002: 242), concerning Louis Berkhof's view of sources,

Berkhof explained the synoptic origins on the basis of oral tradition and brief written narratives containing especially the sayings of Jesus. For him, such an origin "explains in a very natural way most of the agreements that are found in the Synoptics."

Farnell again (2002:243):

Henry C. Thiessen ... also recognized short-written narratives (e.g., Fragmentary Hypothesis [Schleiermacher]) and oral tradition (Westcott) in the early church as possible partial explanations but as inadequate to explain Gospel origins by themselves.

Farnell (2002: 244-245) cites the writings of Eta Linnemann for her strong and recent support of the Independence view. Then he adds (246),

Robert G. Gromacki (*New Testament Survey*) ...observes that "in all cases the [Gospel] writer consulted sources, both oral and written, scrutinized them, selected material, and wrote under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. These were not merely human compositions: they were the Word of God enscripturated through human penmen."

Then Farnell (2002: 246) notes that Merrill C. Tenney is an "advocate [of] the Independent View to explain synoptic origins." In his *New Testament Survey* (1961: 145-146), Tenney gives this explanation:

1. The Gospel of Matthew represents the notes that Matthew took on Jesus' teaching, with a framework of narrative that closely—and at times verbally—resembles Mark. The resemblance could be explained on the basis of common tradition and living contact quite as well as by appropriation of written work.

2. The Gospel of Mark represents the main line of narrative preaching about Jesus. It was reproduced by a man who had contact with the apostles from the very inception of the church, and it was written while some of them, at least, were still alive. Its content was known at a very early date, whether the actual document had been published then or not.

3. The Gospel of Luke represents the independent account of Paul's traveling companion, who wrote in the seventh decade of the first century, and who incorporated both the narrative framework of apostolic preaching and the results of this own research. ...

Some other aspects of this question deserve consideration. One is that the dates of composition and publication may be widely separated. Matthew, for instance, could have collected his notes during Jesus' lifetime, but they may not have reached the public in organized form until a long time afterward. If so, they could have been used by others in the interim. ...

Finally, the purposes of the Evangelists should be taken into account. Granting that they possessed much material in common, they put it to different uses, and organized it into different frameworks under the direction of the mind of the Spirit.

Farnell refers to a number of other writers who have given support to the Independence view. Behind the Gospels lies the concept of divine inspiration, which Farnell explains thus (2002: 265):

The Bible should not be viewed as **equally** the product of human and divine elements. In inspiration, the divine element overshadowed the human element so as to provide a book that is **qualitatively** separate from all other books in its inspiration and inerrancy. Although the Bible was written by men, God's superintendence of those men in the inspiration of His Word supernaturally overshadowed the product so that the Holy Spirit guaranteed the accuracy of what men recorded. Such precision in composition is without parallel in human historiography.

Farnell's "Compositional Factors of the Independence Approach" (2002: 272-273) includes the following points:

Simply stated, literary independence accounts for the similarities among the Synoptic Gospels by noting that they were accounts of eyewitnesses whose sharp memories, aided by the Holy Spirit, reproduced the exact wording of dialogues and sermons (John 14:26). Literary independence explains the differences between the Gospels by observing that different eyewitnesses reported the same events in different but not contradictory ways. The writers drew upon this combination of eyewitness accounts, which constitute a nonhomogeneous body of tradition without definable limits.

He acknowledges (2002: 282-283) "The probability of brief written sources". He says,

Although oral tradition partially explains Gospel origins, short written accounts probably existed very early alongside oral tradition, accounting for synoptic material. The prologue of Luke's Gospel indicates that Luke was aware that many others had composed written accounts. ... The combination of exacting oral tradition and short written accounts helped not only to ensure the accuracy of the Gospel's records of events and sayings but also to provide a reasonable explanation of why the synoptics have extensive agreement among themselves.

At this point Farnell anchors his presentation of the Independence view in some very dubious argumentation. First (2002: 284), he notes that the contenders for both the Two Source (Markan Priority) view and the Two Gospel (Markan Posteriority) view claim that the question of order in the Synoptics supports their position. This leads him to conclude:

Secondly, if the argument from order is so fluid that both Two-/Four Source advocates and Two-Gospel proponents can tailor the statistics to 'prove' their case, the argument is highly subjective, and the validity of the argument is seriously questionable.

This is equivalent to the proposal that because both genuine and counterfeit coins and notes have been detected in circulation, therefore no coins or notes are trustworthy. This conclusion is a gratuitous *non sequitur*. The right response would be to examine the units in question with a view to assessing which (if any) had a valid claim to be trusted. It is a total cop-out to say that "because the proponents of differing views disagree about which way the argument from order points, therefore **there is** no argument from order, and this pretence to an argument can be dismissed from consideration."

In this connection Farnell quotes (2002: 285) Linnemann's assertions (1992: 85, 91) which conclude,

In other words, when we set aside the narratives that would be expected to follow a similar sequence [because their sequence is inherently determined by the nature of the events themselves], not even one half of the sections in Mark follow the sequence of the other Synoptics.

I would reply to Linnemann: Well, of course this is the case if Mark is following Luke's order half the time and Matthew the rest of the time—and these two Synoptics so often differ in order!! But Mark **always** follows one of them.

Farnell cannot so readily dismiss the serious strength of the relevance of the order found in the pericopes of the Synoptics, which was discussed in full detail last chapter.

Farnell's explanation (2002: 290-291) of the similarities between the Gospels adds,

The phenomenon of varying combinations of agreements and disagreements is readily explainable under literary independence but not under any form of dependency. All three



synoptic writers worked from stereotyped oral tradition and short written sources, readily explaining such agreements of two against one. ... In all probability, Matthew, Mark and Luke had personal contacts with each other; therefore, the writers had ample opportunities to exchange information about the life of Christ, especially during the early days of the church in Jerusalem.

### 10.2.3 Arguments against the Complete Independence View

There are two significant things to be noticed about the modern exposition of the Complete Independence view.

Firstly, it has moved far away from the description given by John Chrysostom (quoted earlier), which attributes the verbal similarities of the Synoptic Gospels to the specific guidance of the Holy Spirit and expressly rules out any contact or collusion or comparing notes on the part of the Gospel authors. Modern exponents of Complete Independence aver, instead, that indeed that is **exactly** what took place.

Secondly, it is significant how closely at times these exponents have come to the Progressive Publication of Matthew view that I have expounded. I note these points: The independence of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke—neither used the other. The role of Matthew's notes of Christ's teaching, actually recorded at the time, and circulating afterwards in some form and to some extent. The role of Peter behind Mark's Gospel, in both content and wording.

Almost I am persuaded to be Completely Independent myself. But not quite. There are two kinds of evidence that totally prevent this.

First of all, there is the evidence at the micro level. The broken sentences exactly the same in two or all three Gospels. The little asides. The wording of some sections of some pericopes in the Synoptics, using unusual expressions or rare words.

And secondly, the evidence at the macro level.

With the emergence of modern Gospel scholarship, the possibility of the independence of the Gospels has been subjected to careful critical evaluation. Strong arguments against this view were set out well over a century ago by George Salmon in his *Historical Introduction to the Books of the New Testament* (1889).

In examining this view, Salmon finds three arguments against it (134-137). In summary, these arguments are:

1. The closeness of agreement between the Synoptic narratives shows that they are different versions of a common account. This closeness of agreement extends not only to substance but to form—to the common use of a parenthesis, or a departure from chronological order in telling the story.

2. A vast number of verbal coincidences between the corresponding narratives. Frequently these coincidences include rare or unusual words that different authors would be very unlikely to use independently.

3. The close agreement in order of pericopes between most of the Synoptic accounts most of the time rules out the idea of separate and independent oral sources for the Synoptics.

Salmon (1889: 137) sums up the force of the evidence thus:

I feel bound, therefore, to conclude that the likeness between the Gospels is not sufficiently explained by their common basis, the oral narrative of the Apostles; and that they must have been copied, either one from the other—the later from the earlier—or else all from some other document earlier than any.

These arguments do not point to any particular hypothesis of literary interrelationship, but they do pose serious problems for the view that there was none. And they are still put forth in books that cover this issue. They are given good coverage in Robert H. Stein's *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (1988). Salmon's and Stein's arguments could be identified as these categories:

### **(a) Parenthetical Material**

This is the first part of Salmon's first argument. Stein (1988: 37) sets out this argument thus:

One of the most persuasive arguments for the literary interdependence of the synoptic Gospels is the presence of identical parenthetical material, for it is highly unlikely that two or three writers would by coincidence insert into their accounts exactly the same editorial comments at exactly the same place. It is furthermore evident in the example below that we can conclude that the common source of the material was *written*, for both Matthew and Mark refer to the "reader" in the comment.

Stein then (37) cites Mt 24:15//Mk13:14, in each of which occurs the parenthesis "let the reader understand" inserted editorially into what Christ is saying: note the addressing of a "reader" of these words, and thereby its presupposition of a written document.

Stein then (1988: 38) points out,

The comment—"let the reader understand"—is a most impressive agreement between Matthew and Mark. That such a comment is not "necessary" in this eschatological discourse is evident in that Luke does not have it. Furthermore, that such a comment could not be due to a common oral tradition is obvious, for it does not refer to the "hearer", but to the "reader". Stein goes on immediately,

Another good example of a common parenthetical comment is found in Jesus' healing of the paralytic.

He sets out the story, which includes the verses Mt 9:6//Mk 2:10-11//Lk 5:24:

"But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic [Luke: man who was paralyzed]—"I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home."

Stein's point is: Would we consider it likely for three totally independent writers, using independent sources, to incorporate an identical parenthesis in the account of a miracle at the same point in the same way? He concludes (1988: 40),

The fact that each of the Evangelists has the same comment (Matthew's and Mark's are exactly the same) at the same place argues strongly for their having used a common written source.

#### **(b) A Departure from Chronological Order in Telling the Story.**

Another type of category (the second part of Salmon's first argument) is where two Gospels break in the same way (and at the same place) from what would be the "normal" chronological flow of telling the story. Salmon (1889: 134-135) draws attention to this phenomenon in Mk 5:8//Lk 8:29, where these two Gospel accounts first relate the story of the Gerasene demoniac, and his cry to "Jesus, son of the Most High God", and the demon's request that Jesus not torment it. Then the two Gospels both add the information that Jesus had instructed the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Salmon says (135),

Now, if the story had been told in the chronological order we should first have Jesus' command to the unclean spirit to depart, and then the remonstrance of the demoniac. So when we find Mark (5:7) agreeing with Luke in the minute detail of relating the remonstrance first, and then adding parenthetically that there had been a command, this coincidence alone gives us warrant for thinking that we have here, not the story as it might have been told by two different witnesses to the miracle, but the form in which a single witness was accustomed to tell it.

This added explanatory verse found in Mark's and Luke's account of what was said is not in the corresponding record of the miracle in Matthew's Gospel.

An instance of this type cited by Stein (1988: 41-42): in Mt 27:18//Mk 15:10: there is an added explanation that at the trial of Jesus before Pilate, the governor was aware that "it was out of envy that the chief priests [Mt: they] had delivered him up." (Luke's account omits this explanation.) Pilate's perceiving of their envy occurred **before** he spoke, but in the narrative it is placed **after** his question.

### **(c) A Vast Number of Verbal Coincidences between the Corresponding Narratives**

This is the first part of Salmon's second argument. It is especially significant to see correspondence of successions of words in narrative, or in comment made by someone other than Jesus.

Where such verbal correspondence occurs in conversations or dialogue or teaching involving Jesus, it is quite legitimate to ascribe this to the fact that here we have the actual words spoken, or the record of an accurate rendering of the traditional oral transmission of such words (either originally as spoken, if in Greek, or—if in Aramaic—of an early Greek translation from that Aramaic).

We can readily recognize the ministry of the Spirit in bringing Christ's words to the remembrance of the disciples apostles, as he promised (John 14:26).

But when such verbal agreement occurs in *narrative*, in connecting and introductory passages, in asides that are made, this raises the very significant question: is it more likely that this corresponding information shared by more than one Gospel was transmitted independently, or, rather, is indicative of a literary relationship?

An example from Stein (1988: 42): the chief priests and their associates are plotting to be able to arrest Jesus and kill him; in Mt 26:5//Mk 14:2, " ... they said, Not during the feast, lest there be a tumult with the people." [Not in Luke's parallel.]

Stein (1988: 42) also mentions as an example the reference in common in Mt 26:14//Mk 14:10//Lk 22:3 to Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve (see also Mt 26:47//Mk 14:43//Lk 22:47).

### **(d) Rare or Unusual Words Which Different Authors Would be very Unlikely to Use Independently**

This is the second part of Salmon's second argument. Such words, he said, must have a common written source. He explains:

[The common source, moreover, must have been in Greek, because] the hypothesis of an Aramaic original does not suffice to explain all the phenomena. For there are very many passages where the Evangelists agree in the use of Greek words which it is not likely could have been hit on independently by different translators. ... The instances of the use of common words [are] numerous. And in order to feel the force of the argument you need only put in parallel columns the corresponding passages in the different Evangelists: say, of the parable of the Sower or of the answer to the question about fasting (Mk 2:18-22; Mt 9:14-17; Lk 5:33-39), when you will find such a continuous use of common words as to

forbid the idea that we have before us independent translations from another language.

[Other examples of words in common are: ἀνάγαιον (Mk 14:15; Lk 22:12); δυσκόλως (Mt 19:23; Mk 10:23; Lk 18:24); κατέκλασε (Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16); κολοβοῦν (Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20); πτερύγιον (Mt 4:5; Lk 4:9); διαβλέψεις (Mt 7:5; Lk 6:42).] ...

The result is, that if an Aramaic original document is assumed in order to account for the verbal variations of the Gospels, a Greek original (whether a translation of that Aramaic or otherwise) is found to be equally necessary in order to explain their verbal coincidences.

[1889: 134-135, 144-145.]

These are all instances of the “micro” approach: looking at the text close-up, and considering how to explain what we see there. In the nature of the way in which traditions are passed on, it is highly unlikely that such identical forms of wording, in such instances, could have been passed on orally so as to end up independently in two or more Gospels. The more reasonable explanation is that it was due to a correspondence between written Gospel sources at this point.

Now to stand back from the detail of the text itself, and take the “macro” viewpoint.

### **(e) The Close Agreement in Order of Pericopes**

This is Salmon’s third argument; also set out in some detail by Stein (1988: 34-37).

Complete Independence advocates tend to dismiss lightly the extent and nature of the Synoptic similarities, especially those in relation to pericope order. Exponents have said, “They agree in order because that is the order in which things happened.” But this ignores in particular the very considerable difference in order between Matthew and Luke up to the pericope Herod’s Confusion about Christ. The Synoptic order cannot be simply the “order of events” because these two Synoptics are totally out of whack here when it comes to the order of things. Except in the Pericope Clusters—where things do have the same order in these groups or clusters, but then these clusters have been placed at totally conflicting points in the sequences of those Gospels: because Matthew and Luke had totally different goals for their respective orders of presentation. Neither is “right”, because both are legitimate and both can be recognized as under the Spirit’s leading.

Salmon cites (136-137) a particular example of the “order of pericopes” argument:

It is because we have not only one but a series of stories common to the Synoptics that the difference between documentary and oral transmission comes to have a practical meaning. The latter supposition contemplates a number of stories preserved independently; the former regards them as already embodied in a document which, even if it did not pre-

tend to be a complete Gospel, contained the narration of more incidents than one, disposed in a definite order. Our choice between the two suppositions can be guided by examining whether the Evangelists agree, not only in their way of relating separate stories, but also in the order in which they arrange them. Now, a careful examination brings out the fact that the likeness between the Synoptic Gospels is not confined to agreement in the way of telling separate stories, but extends also to the order of arranging them. Take, for instance, the agreement between Matthew and Mark as to the place in which they tell the death of John the Baptist (Mt 14:1; Mk 6:14). They related that when Herod heard of the fame of Jesus he was perplexed who He might be, and said to his servants, 'This is John whom I beheaded.' And then, in order to explain this speech, the two Evangelists go back in their narrative to relate the beheading of John. Their agreement in this deviation from the natural chronological order can scarcely be explained except by supposing either that one Evangelist copied from the other, or both from a common source. The order of St. Luke deviates here from that of the other two Evangelists. He relates the imprisonment of John in its proper place (3:19), and the perplexed inquiry of Herod later (9:7); but we are not entitled to infer that he did not employ the same source, for the change is an obvious improvement that would suggest itself to anyone desirous to relate the history in chronological order. And we may even conjecture that it was in consequence of Luke's thus departing from the order of his archetype that he has come to omit altogether the direct narrative of the beheading of John.

I have already given careful consideration to this whole question of pericope order in the last chapter. A comparison there of the disparities between the sequence in Matthew and Luke will totally prevent us from saying, "They are in this order because this is the sequence in which they happened." On the other hand, the common sequence of pericopes within the pericope clusters (these pericope clusters then being placed in totally different spots by Matthew and Luke) completely rules out of consideration the explanation that these "happened" to become assembled that way quite independently. This pushes us towards the explanation: these pericope clusters were the result of a common literary heritage, and then—as assembled documents—they became incorporated independently by Matthew and Luke in different places their Gospels, where they best fitted the authors' respective purposes.

Then (as has been shown last chapter) the evidence indicates how Mark followed initially the order of pericopes that he found in Luke, and subsequently moved over to follow the sequence of Matthew. Overall, this results in a sequence of pericopes that certainly brings out clearly Mark's purpose of showing the disciples' developing understanding of who Jesus was.

#### 10.2.4 Doctrinal Considerations

Some exponents of Complete Independence rule out on dogmatic, even doctrinal, grounds the possibility of literary dependence, as being in itself incompatible with the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the Gospels, and as implying that the later Gospel(s) must be inferior to the earlier Gospel(s) (or vice versa).

I am completely at one with these teachers in their high view of Scripture, and of its full inspiration and authority and reliability as being historically accurate. No quibbles, no hedging around or "making allowances". And I do acknowledge that all literary dependence views have adherents who have a much looser view of the verbal accuracy of the Gospels than I do. But such an attitude does not "go with the territory". This is not the inevitable consequence of literary dependence *per se*. We must acknowledge the literary dependence between Kings and Chronicles, and Jude and 2 Peter. And Luke states (1:1-4) that he has checked out everything carefully from the beginning, and that he knew about earlier documents in existence. This carries, it seems to me, a clear implication that he had made himself familiar with what these documents said. And this indicates that the idea of some kind of literary dependence is not ruled out of court *ab initio*.

The view of literary dependence in the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis is that Luke used numbers of documents of apostolic origin (viz, from Matthew), and used them in such a way as to conform with his overall aim. As indeed Luke himself tells us he did. On this hypothesis, he is not using them in any fashion that conflicts with divine inspiration of his work and the total reliability of his Gospel.

And Mark then took these two rather different Gospels and interwove them together in a manner that largely (and legitimately) minimized the differences (differences due in the main to the independence of eyewitness sources used). And he cast the wording of his whole Gospel into colloquial Greek, reflecting the spoken language both of his third source, the apostolic testimony of Peter upon which he drew, and his intended audience, the unconverted of Rome and its Empire. Tell me now: how is this scenario incompatible with a high view of Scripture, and its inspiration?

If indeed (as I firmly hold) the Scripture is inspired and inerrant, then we may certainly investigate what it says (i.e., the data, the evidence) with confidence that all of this data, this evidence—rightly understood—will be in accord with that inspiration of an accurate Gospel account. But we do not start with a presupposition and allow it to drive our investigation. Though the outcome of our investigation must certainly be tested by the doctrine of biblical inspiration and the promises that the writers will have Spirit-guided

memories and understanding of the truth—that is part of the evidence that is to be taken into account. And there is no *a priori* reason for concluding in advance, by definition, that the activity of the Spirit could not have included the use of one Gospel by the author of another.

There is no reason why adherents of Complete Independence with a high view of Scripture cannot examine the data and become persuaded by the evidence that, in writing his Gospel, Mark drew not only upon the preaching of Peter but also his Synoptic predecessors, Matthew and Luke. The Bible is not like other books and records. It is divinely inspired. But that does not lead us to decide in advance how the Spirit may (or may not) go about his work of inspiring the human authors. We look at what he has **done** to see the evidence of what he intended to do.

After emphasizing the commitment involved in the Complete Independence view to “the plenary, verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Gospels”, Farnell says (2002: 295-296):

In contrast, dependency hypotheses are linked to modern views of errancy and views of either partial inspiration or noninspiration of the Gospels. ... One must hold either to a normative view of inspiration that upholds the orthodox position of divine superintendence of the documents and become a proponent of the Independence View or to literary-dependency theories and abandon a normative view of inspiration. No middle ground exists. ... Only the Independence View provides the necessary safeguards and reflects the orthodox approach to Gospel origins.

Farnell has thus ruled out of consideration all hypotheses that present an explanation involving literary dependency between any Gospels. This is a one-size-fits-all approach to literary dependency hypotheses that declines to trouble to differentiate things that differ. It is my sincere hope (and, dare I say, expectation?) that adherents of the Complete Independence View will consider fairly the explanation that I make of how the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis, with its Markan Dependence extension, is on the one hand completely compatible with their high view of Scripture while on the other it takes account of all the evidence that has led scholars to look for a solution of the Synoptic Problem in terms of some kind of a literary dependence explanation.

And if we are to say, of such instances of correspondence between different Gospel accounts in the ways I have shown, that it is not acceptable to put these down to literary relationships but that they are the work of the Spirit in bringing about such close correspondence between Gospels, the question will arise: “If this is the purpose and intent of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the Gospels, why only on these occasions? Why not on a



great many more? That is, if the accounts are thus made to correspond by the direct intervention of the Spirit in the writing process in this way, why not to a far greater extent? Why not in fact, throughout each Gospel?”

Now, many of the adherents of the Complete Independence school happily accept the role of early written documents of various kinds amongst the sources of our canonical Gospels (as has been noted earlier in this section). Thus they can attribute these Gospel similarities to this explanation—to which I will reply, “That is exactly what I am outlining!!” And then refer them to Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation for the elucidation in more detail of this explanation.

### 10.3 THE SUCCESSIVE DEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS

#### 10.3.1 Chapman’s Change of Mind to Successive Dependence

In Chapter One, in describing the history of views about Synoptic relationships, I outlined Augustine’s original explanation that the Gospels were written in their canonical order, and that each author knew and used the writing of his predecessor(s). During the past century this Successive Dependence hypothesis was propounded by Jameson (1922), Chapman (1936), and Butler (1951).

Chapman gave the most detailed presentation of the Successive Dependence view in his *Matthew, Mark and Luke*. Although Barclay and Stonehouse wrote a response to Chapman (while most other scholars quite ignored his careful and scholarly exposition), they did not directly deal with Chapman’s two most incisive and compelling points.

The first of these was his presentation of the case that Mark had used Matthew, and not vice versa. It was his examination of the evidence in the Matthew-Mark relationship that caused Chapman to decisively abandon the Markan Priority hypothesis. He explains (1936: 1-3) how this came about:

An apology may be thought necessary for any new attempt to elucidate this well-worn subject, and I see no way to make one except by explaining how I came to my present opinions by a complete reversal of my earlier ones. I must give the history of my conversion, because it will show how violently I was torn away by facts from the views to which I clung. This is the excuse for the otherwise absurd egotism of what follows.

I used to think before 1916 that I knew enough about the Synoptic Problem to have a right to a definite opinion on the subject. I held, rather dogmatically, that our Greek St. Matthew depends on St. Mark, and (with somewhat less certainty) that Q, the matter common to Mt. and Lk., was the other source; so that I roughly believed what is called the ‘two-document’ theory. ...

At the end of 1915 I was invalided home from the front, and, when I recovered, was sent for a second time to Salisbury Plain as chaplain to a division with which I soon went out again to France. But on Salisbury Plain I had some idle hours, as one could not be the whole time on foot or horseback, and I procured Rushbrooke's *Synopticon* and a Greek Testament as being the simplest elements for interesting study in a hut.

I started thus: "It is never good to assume one's own opinion to be infallible, without being able to appreciate the reasons for the other side. Therefore I must assume it possible that tradition really meant that St. Matthew's Gospel was written, as a whole, before St. Mark, and that St. Mark's Gospel is actually an extract from it, and must see whether this can be quite easily disproved."

The fact stared me in the face at once that the ordinary bases of the "two-document" theory are just as consistent with the view that Mt. was first and Mk. second, provided Luke is third.

After his explanation of his "conversion" (his own term) to the theory of Successive Dependence or, one might say, **away** from the theory of Markan Priority, Chapman sets out how the observable data can (in his opinion) be accounted for by the different Synoptic theories, and that he proposed a test to decide between them, expecting that the outcome would be the vindication of the view he held: that is, that his test would "set firmly on its feet the 'two-document' hypothesis which was so simple and satisfying and, as it seemed to me at the time, so clearly true" (4).

He describes the test, and its basis, thus (5):

If Mk. abbreviated Mt., omitting much, adding next to nothing, since Mk. is carelessly written, with less literary ability than the other Gospels, wherever it makes long omissions we shall find some signs of the gap—perhaps merely want of sequence, for Mt. is very systematic, or even illogical sequence. If there are no such signs—and *there cannot well be, since nobody has noticed them*—I shall conclude quite securely that Mk. is indeed prior to Mt.

Chapman records the details of his test as he applied it to a series of Synoptic passages in succession. He describes (6) his reaction after the first two passages (Mt 13:3//Mk 4:2 and Mt 13:34-35//Mk 4:33-34):

I wonder whether the reader can imagine my surprise on lighting upon A and B, perfectly familiar passages. *I had proposed a test, and I was already answered.* I had imagined, I suppose, some illogical sequence at most, and I expected to find nothing at all; and I had found (apparently) two definite statements by Mark that he had omitted some outdoor parables and indoor explanations. This was astounding.

He went on to Mt 23:1//Mk 12:38 ("example C"), concerning which he says (1936: 7),

“This coming immediately after A and B, completely bowled me over. No reply is possible. Mk. tells us once more, ‘In the course of His teaching He was saying’. What teaching? Look at Mt.; there it is, shoals of it.” He concludes his first chapter with the comment (8), “I now see that any form of the ‘two-document’ theory is a paradox, unworthy of support. I am much ashamed of having held it to be probable.”

The data that converted Chapman from the Two-Document hypothesis to his view of Successive Dependence can be summarized thus:

1. In many places where Matthew contains and Mark lacks the record of particular teaching by Jesus, Mark contains a reference at that point to other teaching that Jesus gave that he (Mark) does not record (chapter one). Thus in Mark 4:2 and again in Mark 12:38 we read, “And in (the course of) his teaching he was saying to them ...”, which could be paraphrased as, “Included in Jesus’s teaching to them on this occasion was the following.” This is followed in Mark by **some** of the parables or teaching that occurs at that point in Matthew. The explanation that Mark was using Matthew is much more probable than the alternative, namely, that in reading Mark’s Gospel Matthew noticed that Mark referred to more parables than he recorded, or to further teaching by Jesus, “so that Mt. thought this was a splendid place for interpolating a number of additional parables” or other material. (1936: 6.)

2. In other places where Matthew contains and Mark lacks the record of particular teaching by Jesus, Mark has a summary of what Matthew gives much more fully (chapter two). The further examples of these data that Chapman cites are:

D. Mt 24:37-25:46E summarized in Mk 13:33-37.

E. Mt 21:28-22:14 summarized in Mk 12:1-12. (In fact, Mark here gives one parable where Matthew records three, but Mark refers, 12:1, to Jesus speaking “to them” on this occasion “in parables”. This example would have thus been more suited for inclusion in the first category of examples, which Chapman gives in chapter one.)

F. Mt 17:24-27 is presupposed by Mk 9:33.

G. Mt 18:15-22 is represented by Mk 9:50b.

H. Mt 16:4b-12 is presupposed by Mk 8:13-21.

(Chapman proposes the last two examples tentatively.)

3. Mark has the appearance of being “Mt. conversationally retold by an eye-witness and ear-witness of what Mt. had set down” (1936: 21). The stories in Mark are longer and more detailed than in their parallels in Matthew; it is more convincing, on examining them, to explain this as Mark inserting additional eyewitness details (obtained from Peter’s preaching, as patristic tradition affirms) than as Matthew “omitting large chunks”

of Mark (33). “Mt. not only omits a quantity of Mk’s interesting but unessential detail, but even omits detail which in Mk. is essential and his principal point. A good précis writer does not omit the point.” (21.)

Amongst his examples Chapman gives the account of the curing of Legion, and comments (29), “We are calmly asked by the upholders of the priority of Mk. to perceive that Mt’s story is obviously a précis of Mk.! Why, he omits almost everything that interested Mk., including the main point: the sudden transformation of a most extraordinary maniac, who was possessed by two thousand devils, into a humble disciple and apostle!” This third chapter of his book, entitled “Matthew Is Not A Précis of Mark”, shows that Matthew’s account cannot plausibly be explained on the basis that Matthew made a précis of Mark, because Matthew is not a summarizing of Mark, but rather, is like Mark though with sections (“chunks”, to use Chapman’s word) missing from the story. It is much more reasonable to explain the relationship on the basis that Mark is Matthew’s account with additional information added.

By this point in his book Chapman has given the main factors which persuaded him of the priority of Matthew, and the remaining chapters of his Book I are an exposition of his view and an attempt to account for some of the perceived problems. In chapter eight, the last chapter in Book I of Chapman’s volume, he sums up where his investigation has taken him (1936: 89-90). From his survey of the material, two things stand out for him with crystal clarity:

Firstly, Mark’s Gospel makes use of Matthew, and not vice versa—this is the inescapable meaning of the evidence;

Secondly, Peter stands rock-square behind Mark, and the apostle’s touch is to be seen at point after point after point in this Gospel.

The material in Book II is a tracing out of Chapman’s initial hypothesis, outlined above. Chapman’s view of the relationship of Luke to Mark and Matthew is (1936: 130):

Luke had more complications to deal with, for his sources seem to have been multiple, consisting of (a) Mk., (b) a mass of admirable matter accumulated, we know not how, from various sources, oral or written, (c) our Greek Mt., used after the first draft of Lk’s work was complete.

Chapman’s treatment of the relationship of Matthew and Mark, and his argument that Mark used Matthew, was the first of his two compelling points. The second was his devastating critique of Q (98, 126):

And further, Canon Streeter has shown that certain parts of this unknown document must have overlapped Mk.

Hence we arrive at the absurdity that Q is not only all the heterogeneous resemblances (distant or close) between Mt. and Lk. against Mk., but may include any part of Mk. also (why not the whole of Mk.?) and any part of Mt. peculiar to him and any peculiar to Lk.

Hence *there is no part of the three Synoptic Gospels which may not quite well be derived from Q! ...*

[After further analysis he continues:] Consequently these passages have shown that Q, as a source of Mt. and Lk., independent of Mk., is impossible, since it must include Mk.

I hope the absurdity of all this is clear to the reader. It merely means that *the assumption of a common source for Mt. and Lk. always leads us to find this source to be the common source of three Gospels*. This is not a two-document hypothesis, but a one-document hypothesis, and it is simply a *reduction ad absurdum*. ...

Q is not a collection of discourses, independent of Mk., *but a name to cover any source one meets with*, and might have included any part, or the whole, of Mt., Mk., or Lk. In fact, it might be the whole Bible.[Italics original]

Chapman's Book III deals with Matthew's Gospel. In it he explains that Matthew was written by the apostle Matthew in Jerusalem, primarily for Jews (256), and "his Gospel mainly consists in the teaching he heard and wrote down in his notebooks" (258).

Apart from the responses of Barclay and Stonehouse (§1.2.4), Chapman's book was largely ignored. Bernard Orchard (*Matthew, Luke and Mark*, Manchester: Koinonia Press, 1977: 125) attempts to explain this neglect of Chapman's work thus:

It failed to make any impression, firstly because it was published posthumously (Chapman had died in 1933); secondly because the script had been left in an incomplete state at the author's death; and thirdly because it was assumed to be a Roman Catholic apologetic effort rather than a scientific exposition.

### 10.3.2 Butler's Vigorous Support

Then 1951 saw the publication of B C Butler's *The Originality of St Matthew*. This book also supports Successive Dependence, taking the same basic view as did Chapman, and following a somewhat similar line of argumentation for it.

Butler commences with a discussion of the primary problem for those who hold to Markan Priority—that this view *on its own* is inadequate to account for what is actually found in the Synoptic Gospels, and has to be supplemented by subordinate theories.

His first four chapters are devoted to an assessment of Q against the text of Matthew and Luke, and a comparison of the Q explanation with the idea that Luke knew and used Matthew. Butler's assessment, at the end of chapter four (1951: 60), is:

The implication is that the Lucan Q passages are derived from Matthew. In chapters III and IV we have tested this conclusion, first in the Lucan parallels to sections of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere. We have found abundant support for the theory of direct dependence and little evidence tending against that theory.

Chapter five, which Butler entitles "The Lachmann Fallacy", considers the five "heads of evidence" or arguments given by Streeter for Markan Priority. In Butler's rebuttal of Streeter's position he sets out to show that "Mark is necessarily the connecting-link between Matthew and Luke in these passages ... The data adduced by Streeter in the 'heads of evidence' referred to at the beginning of this chapter and by Burkitt in the above quotation are quite incapable of giving any indication leading to a more precise determination of the relations obtaining between the three documents than that [just] stated" (1951: 65-66). He then gives three diagrams showing the three possible relationships all of which (he states) could equally account for the evidence to which Streeter and Burkitt refer.

These show: (1) Matthew used by Mark, used by Luke (Successive Dependence with Matthean Priority); (2) Mark as source of Matthew and Luke (Markan Priority); (3) Luke used by Mark, used by Matthew (Successive Dependence with Lukan Priority). [Butler does not include as a possibility the relationship that Mark used both Matthew and Luke (Markan Dependence, the Griesbach hypothesis) as he has already considered this and concluded (3), "This is not a solution, because it does not explain the agreements between *all three* documents, which are part of the assumed data."]

Butler continues (67-68), concerning Streeter's five "heads of evidence": "The fifth turns out to contain no evidence in proof of Streeter's theory, but a series of deductions from it, with a rather closer examination than that hitherto attempted in *The Four Gospels* of the placing of the 'Marcan tradition' in Matthew and Luke. Thus only the fourth head of evidence contains any argument tending to support the theory of Marcan priority to the exclusion of all other solutions. Not five convergent sets of evidence, but one only." Butler then proceeds to his rebuttal of Streeter's fourth argument.

Butler's chapter six addresses the question of the priority of Matthew or Mark, and a comment made (75) upon one of the many passages he considers is representative of his conclusion in relation to them all: "The conclusion must be accepted that Mark is here excerpting from Matthew."

In chapters seven to eleven—his final chapter—Butler considers a wide range of other points raised in support of Markan Priority. Numbers of his rebuttals of these are similar to points I have made in relation to Markan Priority in this dissertation.

### 10.3.3 Assessment

The careful critique by Chapman and Butler of Markan Priority in the light of the evidence of the Synoptic text continues to have great validity. These points should be noted in particular:

1. Chapman has drawn attention to evidence that Mark often summarized material that he did not include but that is found in Matthew; and at other times Mark refers to the fact that he is giving only some of the teaching of Jesus and at that point Matthew contains further teaching, additional parables, etc.

2. Chapman shows it is more reasonable to explain the extra information in Mark that is lacking in Matthew as “Mark inserting additional eyewitness details from Peter’s preaching” rather than as Matthew “omitting large chunks” of Mark.

3. Chapman examines the passages that Matthew and Luke have in common and sees it as far more reasonable to accept that Luke had seen Matthew than that one must invoke, to explain these, an unattested Q that “may include any part of Mk. also (why not the whole of Mk.?) and any part of Mt. peculiar to him and any peculiar part of Lk. Hence there is no part of the three Synoptic Gospels which may not quite well be derived from Q! ...”

While I do not agree that the **best** answer to this situation, in the light of all the evidence, is that Luke saw Matthew (discussed further below), Chapman certainly gives (as quoted above) a trenchant critique of the Q theory!

Butler addresses himself to the standard arguments for Markan Priority and in particular much of his book is directed to making a case against Q, asserting that Q is an unnecessary hypothesis, unsupported by the evidence and contrary to probabilities. (He points to Luke’s knowledge of Matthew as the explanation of the non-Markan material that they have in common—I discuss this below.) His major arguments in support of Successive Dependence are along the same lines as those of Chapman, above, and in addition they cover one further area:

4. Butler provides further evidence for concluding that Mark had used Matthew rather than that Matthew had used Mark.

These four points from Chapman and Butler are worthy of the most careful noting, and they have not been answered by Markan Priority advocates. The fatal flaw in the Successive Dependence hypothesis is its putting Luke third. This can be clearly seen when we consider the objections against Chapman and Butler which were raised.

Their books drew responses from William Barclay (<sup>1</sup>1966, <sup>2</sup>1975), G M Styer (1962)

and N B Stonehouse (1963)—I have set these out in Chapter One. The arguments that have been put forward in refutation of their viewpoint can be summarized:

1. Their case presented for why, if he was using Matthew, Mark omitted so much valuable material that Matthew contains, is totally unconvincing.

2. The order of pericopes in Matthew, Mark and Luke cannot be satisfactorily explained on the Successive Dependence view.

3. It strains our credulity to conceive of why, upon encountering such well-organized material as contained in the early chapters of Matthew (particularly including the Sermon on the Mount), Luke would break up this material and place snippets of it scattered through his own Gospel.

4. Luke has made no use of substantial and significant sections of Matthew, e.g. of the Nativity stories and Resurrection appearances. It is not merely that Luke does not **use** this material from Matthew (it is reasonable to say that it was impractical, from length considerations, for Luke to use **everything** he saw in Matthew), but rather that he writes his Nativity stories and Resurrection accounts, and numerous other pericopes, as if **completely unaware** of what was in Matthew. This is a weighty argument that has considerable force and cannot be lightly dismissed.

The first of these objections is that Chapman and Butler did not identify a convincing reason for Mark's omissions from the material he would have had access to. A comment by Streeter himself (1924: 168-169), written concerning "Matthew or Luke purposely omitting any whole section of their source" applies equally if Mark followed Matthew:

Very often we can surmise reasons of an apologetic nature why the Evangelists may have thought some things less worth reporting. But, even when we can detect no particular motive, we cannot assume that there was none; for we cannot possibly know, either all the circumstances of churches, or all the personal idiosyncrasies of writers so far removed from our own time.

However, I offer an explanation of Mark's motivation and policy in Chapter Three.

The other three criticisms all derive from the feature of Successive Dependence putting Luke last, with its corollary that Luke had Matthew in front of him.

It is indeed really impossible, as the objectors claim, to find a coherent explanation of what Luke (on the Successive Dependence theory) would have done in relation to the order of pericopes that he found confronting him in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels. For sometimes they agree and sometimes they do not. He would have had to choose always to follow Mark when Mark's order differed from that of Matthew (thus creating a Mark-Luke agreement in sequence whenever Mark would otherwise have been on his own),



while feeling quite free to desert Markan order in those sections—and **only** in those sections—where Mark is adhering to Matthew’s order (as there are places where there is a Mark-Matthew agreement in pericope sequence, with Luke departing from it). And Luke is **never** found agreeing with Matthew’s order where Mark does not (else there would be a Matthew-Luke agreement against Mark—which there never is) or else going off totally on his own (which also never happens).

This situation could never have arisen by accident: that would be far too improbable to imagine. But the mind boggles to conjecture a reason for such a bizarre procedure as the Successive Dependence theory requires Luke to have adopted.

Secondly, also inexplicable is Luke breaking up Matthew’s teaching (and, occasionally, ministry) blocks and then selecting extracts from these sections to redistribute in small snippets in other contexts throughout his Gospel.

Thirdly, the places where Luke shows an unawareness of what Matthew says also rule out the theory of Successive Dependence (and all other hypotheses which include Luke knowing and using Matthew), as I have explained in Chapter Eight.

A variant possibility could be: that Luke was third, but used only Mark, and not Matthew. But this leaves all the problems of Matthew-Luke agreements in the so-called Q material, and does nothing to solve the enigma of pericope order.

No, these problems with this feature of Successive Dependence are too conclusive. Yes, Mark used Matthew, as this theory says. But Luke cannot be put third, after Mark. Therefore this theory fails as an adequate Synoptic explanation. Yet the case which its exponents have advanced in supporting Mark’s use of Matthew, and in demolishing the basis for the hypothetical Q, remains cogent.

The weaknesses in the Successive Dependence hypothesis are fully resolved in the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis.

## 10.4 OTHER HYPOTHESES PROPOSED

### 10.4.1 Surveying the Scene

Since the nineteenth century, just about every combination and permutation of sources that human imagination can devise has been proposed to explain the relationship of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Apart from those already evaluated—which have been far and away the most influential—there are several others that should be given consideration for the sake of completeness, and in recognition of those who hold, or have held, them.

And beyond those that I specifically mention, there are other combinations and variations of all these hypotheses, virtually without limit.

The number and variety of these is some indication of the complexity of the Synoptic Problem. The development and exposition of these proposals over the years represents the investment of a very considerable amount of time and effort by a vast army of diligent scholars committed to the search for a convincing answer. It must be remembered that, even when some line of investigation may lead to what is now seen as a dead end, that very fact is itself a valuable contribution to the sum total of our knowledge of the whole matter. Here then are four other explanations that are worthy of mention, even if ultimately I suggest that they are among the dead-ends.

#### 10.4.2 The Farrer Hypothesis

In 1955 Austin Farrer, an Oxford scholar, published an article “On Dispensing With Q”, which proposed a new Synoptic theory: that Q was an unnecessary hypothesis, and was contrary to the evidence, when that evidence was rightly understood. This theory was developed and further publicized by Michael Goulder (and can therefore be referred to as the “Farrer-Goulder Theory”). Its most able current proponent is Mark Goodacre, who has expounded it in *The Synoptic Problem—A Way Through The Maze* (2001). Goodacre comments thus (22) concerning the Farrer Theory,

Michael Goulder, originally a pupil of Austin Farrer, has become the key advocate for this theory, devoting two books and many articles to arguing the case with vigour. Over the years, the theory has gathered a handful of prominent supporters. In Great Britain it is this thesis that has become the Two-Source Theory’s greatest rival.

Goodacre explains the theory (2001: 123),

Q has no part to play in the Farrer Theory, which is also known as ... “Markan Priority without Q”. ... The Farrer Theory affirms Markan Priority but suggests that Luke also knew and used Matthew, which enables one to dispense with Q.

Goodacre’s book sets out first of all to demonstrate the validity of the Markan Priority explanation. Mark is recognized as prior because of its simplistic and less-than-reverential view of both Jesus and the disciples (2001: 27, 60), because of its primitive nature (2001: 62), and because it would be difficult and unconvincing to seek to explain the contents of this Gospel (both what it contains and what it omits) if it were written after, and drawing upon, Matthew (2001: 59, 67).

Matthew and Luke have written to improve Mark’s language and to correct some errors that his Gospel contains. Both Matthew and Luke are guilty themselves of

“inconsistencies” (2001: 74) and “continuity errors” (2001: 75)—and these actually disclose the fact that they were “working from a source” (2001: 74), viz, Mark.

The Farrer Theory then investigates the case for Q and finds it lacking. Instead, all the Double Tradition in Luke can be accounted for readily and simply on the basis of Luke’s knowledge of Matthew. Why then is Luke’s order so different from Matthew’s, particularly in the first half of his Gospel? Goodacre (2001: 125) explains,

The answer is that Luke is highly unlikely to have wanted to follow this more rigid arrangement that we find in Matthew, in which one cannot help thinking that the narrative flow is severely and frequently compromised. From what we know of Luke’s literary sensitivity and artistic ability, we are bound to conclude that Luke would not have found Matthew’s restructuring of Mark congenial.

Luke similarly dislikes Matthew’s “lengthy discourses” and breaks them up. Indeed (2001: 127),

... on the Farrer Theory ... Luke is making it clear that he is critical of his predecessors’ work and that his radical reordering of Matthew is in Theophilus’s best interests.

Furthermore (2001: 127),

Matthew provided the direct catalyst for Luke’s reworking of Mark. He sees what Matthew has done: he has reworked Mark by adding birth and infancy narratives at one end of the Gospel, a resurrection story at the other end, and added lots of sayings material in the middle. Perhaps, Luke thinks, *he can do the same thing, but do it better*. [Italics in the original.]

Goodacre has clearly stated (2001: 108) the possibilities as he sees them:

The Double Tradition material of this kind might be explained in any of three ways:

1. Matthew used Luke
2. Luke used Matthew
3. Matthew and Luke both used a third document now lost to us.

And Goodacre has an “all or nothing” approach to deciding between these options. He says (2001: 112), after quoting some Synoptic sections,

And if Luke was ignorant of Matthew in passages like these, he was ignorant of Matthew everywhere, and so the Q hypothesis becomes necessary in order to make sense of the Double Tradition.

But Goodacre has seen evidence throughout Luke that the author knew Matthew. Thus the conclusion is drawn: therefore Luke must have known the entire Gospel of Matthew as we now have it. And he must have reworked both it and Mark into his own pattern, as this was “in Theophilus’s best interests”.

The Farrer theory is refuted in this dissertation: as to its dependence upon Markan Priority, in Chapter Five; and as to its proposition that Luke knew the whole Gospel of Matthew, in Chapter Eight, by the explanation that Luke collected and used early documents written by Matthew.

#### **10.4.3 The Lukan Priority Explanation (The Jerusalem School Hypothesis)**

In 1766—two years after Henry Owen proposed his Markan Posteriority explanation (with Matthew prior)—Anton F Büsching, in Germany, advocated his alternative order Luke-Matthew-Mark. It made little impact on New Testament scholarship in the following years.

Then In 1963 Robert Lindsey, a Baptist pastor in Jerusalem, published the outcome of research that led him to the view of the priority of Luke's Gospel. For the following details I am indebted to information on the Internet:

Lindsey reached his solution to the Synoptic Problem independently. He proposed a theory of Lukan priority that argues that Luke was written first and was used by Mark. ... This theory postulates two non-canonical documents that were unknown to the synoptists—a Hebrew biography of Jesus and a literal Greek translation of that original—and two other non-canonical sources known to one or more of the synoptists.

Lindsey arrived at his theory unintentionally. Attempting to replace Franz Delitzsch's outdated Hebrew translation of the New Testament, he began by translating the Gospel of Mark, assuming it to be the earliest of the synoptic gospels. Although Mark's text is relatively Semitic, it contains hundreds of non-Semitisms, such as the oft-repeated "and immediately," that are not present in Lukan parallels. This suggested to Lindsey the possibility that Mark was copying Luke and not vice versa; with further research Lindsey came to his solution to the Synoptic Problem.

This Lukan Priority explanation was adopted by Prof. David Flusser of the Hebrew University, and a number of other scholars, now collaborating as the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research.

The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research is actively engaged in developing and promoting its viewpoint of Synoptic explanations, and considers that its studies can make a significant contribution to Synoptic scholarship.

There is scope for further research into the possibility of Hebrew/Aramaic sources behind our Greek Gospels (the comments of Papias about *τα λόγια* are relevant here). This does not call into question the hypothesis I am propounding for the origins of the Greek Synoptic Gospels.

#### 10.4.4 The Ur-Gospel Explanation

One of the most widely-held Synoptic hypotheses developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the Ur-Gospel theory, the thesis that all three Synoptics are dependent upon a common original source, from which in particular they drew their order of pericopes.

Now (it is explained), as Mark's order always accords with that of either Matthew or Luke (or both, where they agree) it can be seen that Mark's is the basic order from which Matthew or Luke may from time to time depart. This points to a prior Ur-Gospel, the order of which Mark reproduces most exactly. Matthew and Luke reproduce it most of the time. Mark's order must be the order of the Ur-Gospel, because if Matthew's Gospel reproduced the order of the Ur-Gospel we would be faced with the necessity of saying that when Mark and Luke agreed with each other but differed from Matthew it was because each of them had independently but in identical fashion departed from the Ur-Gospel order at each such point, and this is not credible. Similarly if Luke had reproduced the original Ur-Gospel order, we would be required to believe that Mark and Matthew had deserted that order to adopt, quite independently, an identical alternative order. These factors thus indicate that all three Synoptics derive their basic order from the one original source, an Ur-Gospel, and that that order is now preserved for us in Mark.

But Mark is the common term between Matthew and Luke not only in pericope order but also in content and wording. An application of the same line of reasoning to this feature demonstrates that Mark similarly preserves best the content and wording of the Ur-Gospel.

So in this way the Ur-Gospel was recognized as an original source used by all three Synoptists but most accurately reproduced in Mark.

Salmon (1889) avers that the use of such an original Gospel by the three Synoptists would provide a complete explanation of all the similarities in their Gospels. And it would pose no problem to account for the minor differences between them. Salmon explains these (133) with some care. He sums up his own conclusions in this matter in this way (155-156):

Does it follow, then, that Mark's was the earliest Gospel of all, and that it was used by the other two Evangelists? Not necessarily; and the result of such comparison as I have been able to make is to lead me to believe that Matthew and Luke did not copy Mark, but that all drew from a common source, which, however, is represented most fully and with most verbal exactness in St. Mark's version.

Numerous scholars have during the last century examined carefully the Ur Gospel hypothesis and very effectively refuted it. Their major objections against it were:

1. The Ur Gospel that was proposed was an Aramaic document, but, as Stoldt points out (1980: 4), the Synoptic correspondence in the New Testament is between Greek documents. And there is no original Aramaic Gospel to be found!

2. The Ur-Gospel hypothesis can account for Synoptic similarities; but to account for the differences between the Synoptic accounts, very unconvincing complexities have to be introduced. Stoldt (1980: 4) explains the nature of this difficulty:

The main difficulty of the written ur-gospel hypothesis was how to offer a credible explanation of the extensive divergences, which at times cover complete chapters, while still insisting on a *common* written basic text, namely the ur-gospel. If the representatives of this theory were going to solve these manifold problems, there was no other way than to take refuge in numerous auxiliary hypotheses in the form of several assumed revisions or translations of the alleged Aramaic original text. What this ultimately meant was that they had to construct an artful, ingeniously-reasoned super-structure of hypotheses that embraces about twenty auxiliary theories. With their aid it was then possible to “explain” almost all of the phenomena of concordance and of discrepancy between the individual synoptic Gospels. “Exceptions” were acknowledged which were made to appear harmless, but, due to the real impossibility of the over-refined pyramid of hypotheses, this approach to the problem generated its own *reductio ad absurdum*. Thus research of the previous century rejected both the oral and the written ur-gospel solutions—and justifiably so. They belong to the misinterpretations of the Gospels.

3. The Ur-Gospel hypothesis requires that this Primal Gospel contained many things that were not taken over by each of the Synoptists as in his turn he derived his material from it. Thiessen (1979: 103f.) makes the point,

The theory cannot account for the omissions in the several Gospels of materials that were pertinent to their evident purpose. If the writers had all these materials before them, why then did they not include all in their source that furthered their objectives?

4. The supreme objection is how such a comprehensive Gospel as this Ur-Gospel could exist, be utilized as a source by our three Synoptists, but never be described or even actually mentioned by the early church writers, and then disappear totally without trace. “If there was such a gospel, it would be very odd that there is no trace of it” (Barclay, 1975: 173). “The theory of an Urevangelium has no historical support and is improbable to a high degree. If our Gospels are but excerpts from this ‘source,’ why was not the source itself preserved?” (Thiessen, 1979: 103.)

5. The most popular version of the Ur-Gospel hypothesis was that it was a “first draft” of Mark, or a source from which Mark drew heavily, the Ur-Markus proposal. Kümmel (1975: 61-63) outlines the case for this view and after examining it briefly comes to this conclusion:

Since none of the arguments for an *Urmarkus* or for a document used also by Mk is convincing, by far the most probable conclusion is that in the form handed down to us Mk served as a source for Mt and Lk.

The most extensive treatment of the Ur-Gospel (or, specifically, the Ur-Markus) hypothesis is that given by Burkitt in his *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, 1911: 33-64—Stephen Neill, in his *Interpretation of the New Testament 1861 to 1961* says (1966: 118-119) that the best disproof of the Ur-Gospel theory is Burkitt’s *Gospel History*.

Burkitt’s assessment is (58):

These passages afford the strongest evidence that can be found against the supposition that Matthew and Luke used our Mark much as it has come down to us. It appears to me that the evidence is extremely weak, and that we are not compelled by it to imagine a hypothetical *Ur-Marcus*, a Gospel very much like our Mark, only slightly different here and there, differing, in fact, very much as a first edition of a modern book may differ from the second or subsequent editions.

This allows him to come now to his conclusion (1911: 59-64):

We have looked well over this [material], and found no irresistible argument for an *Ur-Marcus*, for an earlier edition of our Mark. ... All these things tend to demonstrate the originality of our Mark, and therefore to shew that “Ur-Marcus” either never existed or was almost indistinguishable from the Mark we possess.

Thus Burkitt looked for evidence of a difference between our Gospel of Mark and what the Ur-Markus must have been like, and found none, and drew the conclusion that the Ur-Markus and Mark are one and the same. That is to say, that canonical Mark is the source of the common material it shares with Matthew and Luke, and there is no original Gospel that was used by all three Synoptists as a source. In this manner Burkitt moved Gospel scholarship from an Ur-Gospel explanation to Ur-Markus, and then removed the Ur-Markus so that we have ended up with Mark as the source for Matthew and Luke: i.e., we have arrived at Markan Priority.

What is now to be said of this theory?

There is no doubt that an Ur-Gospel explanation can be given for the phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels. What is not so easy to explain is why, given such an Ur-Gospel, our Synoptic Gospels would be written at all, why such a significant document would not

be quoted from or even referred to (Lessing's identification of it with the lost *Gospel of the Nazarenes* lacks any evidence to support it), and why it would have been permitted to vanish without trace.

In brief, there is no actual evidence in support of the existence of an Ur-Gospel—it is at best a hypothetical possibility—and there are quite a few weighty arguments against this hypothesis. It is only to be expected that, as Stoldt says (1980: 4), “research of the previous century rejected ... ur-gospel solutions—and justifiably so. They belong to the misinterpretation of the Gospels.”

In view of this modern rejection of the Ur-Gospel or Ur-Markus hypothesis, it may well be questioned why in this dissertation it needs to occupy our attention at all.

The significance of this has been explained in considerable detail by Butler. One of the major arguments that has been propounded in support of the Markan Priority theory is the relationship of the order of pericopes in Mark to that of the other two Synoptics. In Lachmann's original exposition of this feature, he showed how the relative order of Matthew, Mark and Luke could be effectively explained on the basis that all three derived their material from an Ur-Gospel, and that Mark adhered to its order more consistently than the other two. But modern scholarship has successfully removed the Ur-Gospel from this explanation—and yet many adherents of Markan Priority can be found who continue to hold to the outcome of the Argument from Order as if the Ur-Gospel were still there.

One is reminded of a farmer's explanation of the mysteries of the telephone and the radio to his young son. The working of the telephone, he explained, is like if you kick a bull at one end, and it bellows at the other. “And radio, dad?” “It's exactly the same, son, only without the bull.” The original theory was that Matthew and Luke did not derive from Mark but rather, with Mark, from an earlier Ur-Gospel which Mark followed more closely than the others. The Synoptic connections were to this original document, and *not* to each other. But in the later form of the theory, as has been seen, this Ur-Gospel is not there: Mark is the source of Matthew and Luke, and the separate derivations of all three from a common earlier source have gone. No change in the basic logic of the argument is detected. “It's exactly the same, son, only without the bull.” But is it indeed exactly the same?

Butler devotes several pages to a careful explanation that after you identify Ur-Markus and Mark as the same, and then remove Ur-Markus from consideration, you have totally changed the terms—and thus the validity—of the argument. He spells this out in considerable detail (63-65), and this exposé of the faulty logic of this form of the



Argument From Order proved to be a very effective rebuttal of Streeter's claim that the Synoptic order of pericopes pointed to Markan Priority—and this is a point that Styler and all serious Synoptic scholars have acknowledged ever since Butler pointed it out.

So the Ur-Gospel hypothesis has been put to rest. But it has left this legacy with us: the idea that the order of pericopes points to Markan Priority. This error also, as Stoldt puts it, belongs to the misinterpretations of the Gospels. And should also now be put firmly to rest.

#### 10.4.5 The Multiple Sources Explanations

The original form of the Ur-Gospel hypothesis is now regarded as dead in the water. However, in its more developed form, as has just been seen, from Stoldt (4), its advocates needed

to construct an artful, ingeniously-reasoned super-structure of hypotheses that embraces about twenty auxiliary theories. With their aid it was then possible to “explain” almost all of the phenomena of concordance and of discrepancy between the individual synoptic Gospels “Exceptions” were acknowledged which were made to appear harmless, but, due to the real impossibility of the over-refined pyramid of hypotheses, this approach to the problem generated its own *reductio ad absurdum*.

Without these extremes, but having ideas in common, as a variant version of a form of the Ur-Gospel hypothesis, is a Multiple-Stage or Proto-Gospels hypothesis, currently advocated by M.-E. Boismard and Philippe Rolland.

We should note that there are varieties of Multi Source theories or explanations, with significant features in common. Boismard's theory was published in 1972. It is set out in Volume II of the *Synopse des quatres évangiles en français* (Benoit and Boismard, Le Cerf, Paris, 1972). This Volume is an Introduction and Commentary on the Gospels. It postulated seven hypothetical documents that lie behind, and the interrelationships of which explain, the canonical Synoptics (17). These comprise four original source documents, together with earlier versions of each of the canonical Synoptic Gospels (which Boismard called respectively Intermediate-Matthew, Intermediate-Mark, and Proto-Luke).

The four original source documents and their interrelationships are:

Document Q: source for Intermediate-Matthew and Proto-Luke;

Document A: source for Intermediate-Matthew, Intermediate-Mark, and Document B;

Document B: source for Intermediate-Mark and Proto-Luke;

Document C: similarly, source for Intermediate-Mark and Proto-Luke;

Intermediate-Matthew: derived from A and Q, and used by Matthew and Mark;

Intermediate-Mark: derived from A, B, and C, and used by Matthew, Mark and Luke;

Proto-Luke: derived from B, C, and Q, and used by Mark and Luke;

(Canonical) Matthew: derived from Intermediate-Matthew and Intermediate-Mark;

(Canonical) Mark: derived from Intermediate-Matthew, Intermediate-Mark, and Proto-Luke;

(Canonical) Luke: derived from Intermediate-Mark and Proto-Luke.

It can be seen that anything that occurs in Mark can be a source for anything in Matthew or Luke (by attributing it to Intermediate-Mark, which was used by Matthew, Mark and Luke), and this gives the hypothesis some features in common with Markan Priority. But further, it can be seen that anything in Matthew or Luke can be a source for anything in Mark (by attributing it to Intermediate-Matthew and/or Proto-Luke, both of which were sources for Mark), and this gives the hypothesis some features in common with Markan Dependence. This makes it possible to encompass in support of this theory virtually anything that has been adduced in support of Markan Priority or Markan Dependence. However, it should be noted that all relationships occur at a Proto-Gospel stage; there are no **direct** relationships between the canonical Synoptics Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The details of the hypothesis have been worked out in considerable detail by Boismard in his Commentary on the Synoptics, but the general scholarly response has been that the theory is too complex (and unnecessarily so), and that it postulates rather specific hypothetical documents for which there is little direct evidence. In response to these criticisms, at the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium Boismard reduced the complexity of his seven hypothetical documents to a pre-Matthew, a pre-Mark, and a pre-Luke, and underlined its distinctiveness from the Markan Priority and Markan Dependence hypotheses (see further, below).

Philippe Rolland, a colleague of Boismard's, has put forward a Proto-Gospel hypothesis that has a number of significant points of difference from that of Boismard but that overall is rather like a simplified version of it. In 232-244 of his book *Les Premiers Evangiles: Un Nouveau Regard Sur Le Problème Synoptique* (Les Editions Du Cerf, Paris, 1984), Rolland delineates the differences between his theory and Boismard's.

The starting point of Rolland's discussion is the statement in Lk 1:1-3 that others before him had taken it in hand to record Gospel narratives.

In his book Rolland shows (1984: 25-27) that Matthew cannot have known Luke or Luke Matthew, and concludes that this rules out (*inter alia*) the Griesbach view.

He discusses "confluence" [conflation], says he has noted 82 examples in his article

“Mark, the First Gospel Harmony?” (“Marc, première harmonie évangélique?”), where he also lists 31 places where Mark contains a combination of two ideas or concepts, one of which is found in Matthew and the other in Luke.

Boismard and Rolland were the two major speakers at the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium presenting the Multiple-Stage or Proto-Gospels viewpoint. These extracts from the first two pages of their opening Position Paper (in French) can be rendered as follows (in translation):

The diverse theories of Multiple Stages have in common the following fundamental principle, by which they are distinguished from both the Two-Gospel and the Two-Source hypotheses: in all the material common to the three Synoptics, the agreements between the Gospels are to be explained, not by direct dependence, but by appealing to older, hypothetical sources from which they are derived. For example, the literary contacts between Matthew and Mark would be explained not by direct dependence of Matthew upon Mark where they agree (the Two-Sources hypothesis) nor of Mark upon Matthew (the Two-Gospel hypothesis), but by dependence upon one or several hypothetical sources that are postulated to have existed, whether a Proto-Matthew, or a Proto-Mark, or some further anonymous documents.

The Synoptic Problem is a complex problem; it can only be resolved by a complex solution. The Two-Source hypothesis and the Two-Gospel hypothesis are too simplistic to account for *all* the literary data that are to be observed. It is too simple to affirm the absolute priority of Mark in its agreements with Matthew and Luke; it is too simple to affirm the absolute priority of Matthew in its agreements with Luke and Mark. Priority must sometimes be accorded to Matthew, sometimes to Mark, and sometimes to Luke, according as the one or the other of these Gospels will have remained more faithful than the others to their common sources.

When they presented their views at the Jerusalem Symposium, the difference was particularly noticeable between their approach and that of the Two-Source Hypothesis team. Frans Neirynck was the leader of the Two-Source team, and Christopher Tuckett was one of the team's most active and able spokesmen. Neirynck's main 122-page presentation to the Symposium is noteworthy in that only a very small part of it is occupied with general discussion of issues, and he moves as quickly as possible to the consideration of actual pericopes and what can be learned from their comparison: the explanation of differences between two Synoptic authors is to be found in the redaction of one by the other, and at this level of investigation one can learn in which direction the copying and redaction has occurred.

It was interesting that during one of the Symposium discussions between Neirynck and Boismard, one of the participants sitting near me leant over and commented, “When Boismard sees a difference between two Synoptic passages he cries, ‘Different sources!’, and when Neirynck comes across a difference he cries, ‘Redaction!’”

The Multi Sources approach has not commended itself widely. However, if instead of the range of particular hypothetical documents postulated by Boismard (as above), one were to recognize that the evidence is pointing towards multiple documents from apostolic—and other eyewitness—sources, one has come very close to the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis set out in this dissertation. This in fact is the logical conclusion of the Multi Source theories (and one, moreover, that is less requiring of hypothetical sources). I invite adherents of Multi Source theories to give consideration to this.

## 10.5 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

These different views have played a significant role in the history of Synoptic studies. Some of them, in their variant forms, continue to be strongly advocated in the present day. They cannot be said to be without any basis. They have each derived from some aspect of Synoptic data which has been identified: an area of data which is well and validly explained by this particular view or that. But though this is so, in the last analysis these views are all inadequate as an explanation of Gospel relationships, for each of these views leaves too many unexplained problems for it to be accepted as a satisfactory explanation. There are too many aspects of the data that they do not cover or cannot adequately account for.

I have shown that those areas where one view or another has duly identified important data needing to be taken into account are equally well explained (indeed in most cases, better explained) by the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis, including Markan Dependence. And this hypothesis presented here is able to clarify and resolve those places where the various other views lead down a blind alley.

The Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis accords with each of these other views where that view includes some valid insight into an aspect of the Synoptic Problem, and it provides a better explanation where these other views are inadequate or unconvincing. In fact, it is possible to say that the hypothesis presented in this dissertation represents a development of the insights of these other views, a development that offers an explanation of the data where these earlier views have fallen short.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **NOW TAKE THE CASE OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN**

#### **11.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT**

Tuckett's Test: the "criterion of coherence" - that is, which theory best explains the actual phenomena. Applying this test to the Synoptic data

#### **11.2 DETAILED CASE STUDY:**

**THE RICH YOUNG MAN** (Mt 19:16-30//Mk 10:17-31//Lk 18:18-30)

11.2.1 The Significance Accorded by Scholars to This Pericope

11.2.2 The Comparison of Matthew and Luke

11.2.3 The Comparison of Mark with The Major Synoptics

11.2.4 Redactional Procedures According to

the Markan Priority and Markan Dependence Hypotheses

11.2.5 A Preliminary Consideration: Verbs of Speaking

11.2.6 Probing the Markan Priority Explanation of the Differences

11.2.7 Probing the Markan Dependence Explanation of the Differences

11.2.8 The Question of the Good

11.2.9 Assessment

#### **11.3 SAYINGS TO WOULD-BE DISCIPLES**

11.3.1 Differences in the Synoptic Record

11.3.2 From the Markan Priority Perspective

11.3.3 From the Markan Dependence Perspective

#### **11.4 TUCKETT'S DISCUSSION OF MARK-Q OVERLAP PASSAGES**

Tuckett seeks to answer the Griesbach hypothesis, but "in the form advocated by Farmer". His critique does not answer the Markan Dependence presentation. And due recognition must be given to the role of Peter's preaching.

#### **11.5 TUCKETT'S DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC PASSAGES**

Tuckett examines "some particular texts". But his rebuttal is really of the view that Luke used Matthew - and Markan Dependence agrees with him in rejecting this view.

#### **11.6 ASSESSMENT**

The careful examination of the details of several pericopes shows that the Markan Dependence explanation best satisfies the criterion of coherence.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### NOW TAKE THE CASE OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN

This chapter is a detailed examination of a key pericope and some other passages from the perspectives of both Markan Priority and Markan Dependence

*It is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatsoever for supposing it true.*

*Bertrand Russell (quoted by James Reston,  
in the Sydney Morning Herald, January 25, 1985).*

#### 11.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT

One of the most important contributions to Synoptic scholarship during the past century has been *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis* (1983) by C M Tuckett. A major part of that importance derives from the way in which this book delineates the specifications of the new battleground where the conflict between the rival Synoptic theories will be decided. Tuckett's position in this regard was clarified and amplified by his contributions to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium, where he was one of the foremost advocates of Markan Priority. He acknowledges that the “classical proofs” adduced for Markan Priority establish only the existence of a literary interrelationship between the Synoptics without demonstrating which direction that relationship runs, and he holds that the basic question is how well each theory accounts for the observable data in the text: what he calls ***the criterion of coherence***.

The wheel has turned full circle from the presentation of Streeter's proofs. As we have seen (primarily in Chapter Five), the major proofs upon which Streeter relied are still being set forth by some Markan Priority advocates as reasons for adhering to that hypothesis. But—as we have also seen in that Chapter—those same “proofs” are now acknowledged by experts in the study of the Synoptics and the Synoptic Problem to have no compelling validity in themselves: they would point to Markan Priority only when the other relationships with which they are also consistent can be eliminated on other grounds. The actual comparison of Synoptic passages and the consideration of the explanations advanced for their differences, according to the different Synoptic theories—which Streeter included in his treatment of the subject but can hardly be said to have majored upon—is now perceived as a crucial issue in the deciding of the matter.

Tuckett explains (1983: 12ff.):

Any source hypothesis can in fact be proposed. There is no logical law which excludes any theory of synoptic interrelationships with the degree of finality which would be attained if it could be shown that such a hypothesis led to a self-contradiction of the kind  $0=1$ . One can, therefore, postulate any hypothesis and then make a list, in a purely mechanical way, of the changes which the later writer must have made to his source(s). For example, if Luke were prior, Mark second, and Matthew a conflation of both, then one could go through a synopsis showing that Mark must have omitted this from Luke, added that, changed this, retained that, etc.; then Matthew must have taken this from Luke, that from Mark, ignored Luke here, preferred Mark there, etc. What is then required, if the hypothesis is to be made credible, is a presentation of the reasons why the later writers made the changes they are alleged to have done. The application of a "criterion of coherence" would then demand that these reasons form a reasonably coherent whole: they must be rational, consistent with each other and also consistent with the facts as they are. With this in mind, the gospel texts can be examined at a number of different levels: one can consider small grammatical changes, the changes of words and phrases with wider theological implications, and the changes involving the choice and ordering of whole pericopes. Any proposed source hypothesis must then give a reasonably coherent and self-consistent set of reasons why these changes occurred in the way that the hypothesis claims if the theory is to be seriously considered. The extent to which an hypothesis gives a coherent, consistent picture of the total redactional activity of each evangelist will then be a measure of its viability.

Tuckett (1983: 193) cites Fee in "Modern Text Criticism", *Griesbach Studies* (1978: 168), who has said,

The real question is not whether it [the Griesbach hypothesis] can be falsified, any more than whether the two-source theory can (if indeed either could be; then of course we must look elsewhere). The real question is, which theory best explains the phenomena. ... Although all things are theoretically possible, not all things are equally probable.

Tuckett's own study leads him to the conclusion that when the actual data is examined in this way the Two-Source hypothesis is far superior in explanatory power (that is, on the criterion of coherence) than the Griesbach (Markan Posteriority) hypothesis. Thus his "Conclusion" (1983: 186-187) states,

In the study of the Synoptic Problem, no conclusions can have complete certainty, and any solution is theoretically possible. One can never prove with mathematical rigour that one solution is right, or that another is wrong. Nevertheless, various phenomena considered in this discussion have suggested that the Griesbach hypothesis is considerably less viable as a solution to the Synoptic Problem than the Two Document hypothesis. ... In all this, it is

a matter of weighing probabilities. The Griesbach hypothesis can give an explanation of the texts at one level, but it fails to account for the reasons why the changes allegedly made by the later writers (i.e. Luke and Mark) were made in the way in which the hypothesis must assume. Insofar as the Two Document hypothesis can often apparently give a more coherent and consistent set of explanations of why the later changes were made (i.e. by Matthew and Luke on the Two Document hypothesis), that hypothesis is to be preferred. ... If the Griesbach hypothesis is to continue to be a serious rival to the Two Document hypothesis as a viable solution to the Synoptic Problem, then its adherents must give a more detailed explanation for Luke's and Mark's behaviour. Clearly Luke and Mark could have done what the hypothesis claims: what is still lacking is a detailed explanation of why they might have done this. Until this is shown convincingly, there seems little reason for reviving the hypothesis. The conclusion of this study, therefore, is that there seems to be no good reason for abandoning the traditional Two Document hypothesis, i.e. the theory of independent use by Matthew and Luke of Mark and Q; in addition, perhaps more attention should be given to the distinctive features of Q than has traditionally been the case in past study of the gospels.

It must be agreed at once that in assessing the claims for acceptance of any particular Synoptic hypothesis, the issue raised by Tuckett—what he calls the “criterion of coherence”—is indeed of primary importance. This is the extent to which that hypothesis can provide a credible, coherent, and self-consistent set of reasons for the text of the three Synoptic Gospels, including why the later writers would have made the changes to their sources that the hypothesis assumes they have.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the Synoptic text, and lay out the relevant factors that arise in the various passages, and make an evaluation of the alternative explanations in terms of their coherence, their explanatory power.

Ideally, this study should encompass the whole text of all three Synoptics. Nothing less will ensure the complete coverage in objective fashion of passages that may be considered to favor one hypothesis against another. Such a detailed study is needed; it is however a major undertaking, and impractical at this point. What can be done in this Chapter is to examine in full what may be judged to be a representative pericope; next, to note similar features in other passages (including the passages raised by Tuckett and others); and then to assess what may be learnt from this approach.



## 11.2 DETAILED CASE STUDY:

### THE RICH YOUNG MAN (Mt 19:16-30//Mk 10:17-31//Lk 18:18-30)

#### 11.2.1 The Significance Accorded by Scholars to This Pericope

One pericope is frequently referred to in the literature and is dealt with at some length in one of the books on Synoptic origins, and it is therefore an appropriate place to commence. I shall turn to an detailed examination of the triple-tradition pericope of the Rich Young Man (usually so designated; Mt 19:16-30//Mk 10:17-31//Lk 18:18-30).

This pericope receives frequent mention primarily because of the differences between Matthew and Mark-Luke in the form of the question asked by the man and in Jesus's reply. The detailed treatment that is given to this pericope is by N B Stonehouse in his *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, where he devotes a complete chapter of twenty pages (his Chapter Five) to its consideration. Stonehouse commences his chapter (1983: 93):

This study of the Synoptic accounts concerning the rich young man who, according to Mk 10:18, asked Jesus, "Why callest thou me good?", is initiated because of its supposed bearing upon the subject of the priority of Mark.

He notes (1983: 94) that

it is this passage, along with Mk 6:5 as compared with Mt 13:58, which Streeter singles out as a conspicuous illustration of his claim that Mark used "phrases likely to cause offense, which are omitted or toned down in the other Gospels" [Streeter, 151f.]. Streeter's intent, however, is clearly not to rest his entire case upon these two passages. To say the least, he must have in mind the long list which, according to Hawkins, "may have been omitted or altered as being liable to be misunderstood, or to give offense, or to suggest difficulties," and especially the first main section which lists twenty-two "passages seeming (a) to limit the power of Jesus Christ, or (b) to be otherwise derogatory to, or unworthy of, Him" [Hawkins 117-125]. The claim cannot be made accordingly that this line of reasoning for the priority of Mark is being adequately weighed here. Nevertheless, I believe that to an extent the argument as usually advanced may be rather fairly tested by the examination of this single passage. In being so selective there is at least the advantage of doing justice to the context in which the crucial supposedly discrepant words are found.

I shall then, as Stonehouse invites us, give attention to this entire passage so that any (supposed) alterations to parts of it may be seen in relation to the whole context.

This pericope contains a complex net of agreements and disagreements between each pair of the three Synoptics, in every possible combination, together with sections where all three are in agreement and other places where each goes his own way. It commences with the discussion of "good" in which Matthew differs very significantly from

Mark and Luke, and which is (as we have noted) much discussed in Synoptic literature. But Mark and Luke agree against Matthew in numbers of other significant places in this pericope as well; and Matthew and Mark also agree against Luke in many elements. There are agreements too of Matthew and Luke against Mark, though these consist only of a scattering of words and word-forms.

Advocates of Markan Priority see the difference between the way the story begins in Matthew and in the other two as an example of Matthew smoothing the unacceptable wording of Mark. Thus Allen (1907: xxxii) attributes the change from “Why do you call me good?” to “Why do you ask me about the good?” to a “feeling of reverence”. Similarly, Hawkins 1909: 120; Streeter 1924: 162; Taylor *Mark* 1966: 120; Kümmel 1975: 61; and so forth. But what needs to be noted is that this is but one instance of a whole series of occasions in this pericope where Mark agrees *with* one of the Major Synoptics *against* the other.

What has not, it seems to me, been given adequate recognition is the extent to which in this pericope it is Mark, as the common link between the others, who holds the three of them together. Matthew and Luke, when compared with each other, can be seen to have very few points of agreement; and Mark is found to be in agreement with them alternatively. From the Markan Priority perspective, then, it is a question needing answering as to why Matthew and Luke did not agree with each other more often in taking the same things from Mark's account: it is almost as if they were operating on the principle that when Matthew agreed with Mark, Luke would feel free to differ, and when Luke agreed with Mark, Matthew would go his own way. There is of course an alternative explanation: that Mark used Matthew and Luke as his sources, and when he came to them he found them already differing from each other in most particulars, and he deliberately sought to draw his account from both of them, and he did it in such a way that he has largely succeeded in reconciling those differences and bringing them together.

These are the issues we shall need to explore by means of a careful and thorough-going examination of the text of the pericope.

### 11.2.2 The Comparison of Matthew and Luke

The starting point of an examination of the text, therefore, will be to consider the extent of the agreements and disagreements between Matthew and Luke. This is facilitated by placing the text in four columns, two for each Gospel, in such a way that when they differ their text is in the outside columns and when they agree their text is placed in adjacent centre columns.

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF THE TEXT OF MATTHEW AND LUKE**

<b>Mt 19:16-30</b>		<b>Lk 18:18-30</b>	
<b>Differs from Luke</b>	<b>Same as Luke</b>	<b>Same as Matthew</b>	<b>Differs from Matthew</b>
16. Ἰδοὺ εἷς προσελθὼν αὐτῷ εἶπεν,	Καὶ	18. Καὶ	ἐπηρώτησέν τις αὐτὸν ἄρχων λέγων,
	Διδάσκαλε,	Διδάσκαλε	ἀγαθέ,
	τί	τί	ποιήσας
ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω ἵνα σχῶ	ζωὴν αἰώνιον;	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	κληρονομήσω;
17. ὁ	δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ,	19. εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ	ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
	Τί με	Τί με	λέγεις ἀγαθόν;
ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ;	εἷς	ἀγαθός	οὐδεὶς
ἐστὶν ὁ	ἀγαθός.	εἷς	εἰ μὴ ὁ θεός.
εἰ δὲ θέλεις εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν, τήρησον	τὰς ἐντολάς.	20. τὰς ἐντολάς	οἷδας·
18. λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποίσας;			
ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν,			Μὴ μοιχεύσης,
Τὸ Οὐ φονεύσεις,			Μὴ φονεύσης,
Οὐ μοιχεύσεις,			Μὴ κλέψης,
Οὐ κλέψεις,			Μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις,
Οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις,			

19.	Τίμα τὸν πατέρα	Τίμα τὸν πατέρα	
			σου
	καὶ τὴν μητέρα,	καὶ τὴν μητέρα.	
	καί, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν		
	πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.		
20. λέγει			21. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν,
αὐτῷ			
ὁ νεανίσκος,			
	Πάντα ταῦτα ἐφύλαξα· Ταῦτα πάντα ἐφύλαξα		
			ἐκ νεότητος.
			22. ἀκούσας δὲ
τί ἔτι ὑστερῶ;			
21. ἔφη			
	αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,	ὁ Ἰησοῦς	
			εἶπεν
		αὐτῷ,	
Εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι,			Ἔτι ἓν σοι λείπει·
ὑπάγε			
			πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις
	πώλησόν	πώλησον	
σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα			
	καὶ	καὶ	
δοῦς			διάδος
	πτωχοῖς, καὶ	πτωχοῖς, καὶ	
	ἐξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν	ἐξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν	
	οὐρανοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο	οὐρανοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο	
	ἀκολούθει μοι.	ἀκολούθει μοι.	
			23.· ὁ δὲ
22.	ἀκούσας	ἀκούσας	
δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος			
τὸν λόγον			ταῦτα
ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος,			περίλυτος ἐγενήθη,
	ἦν γὰρ	ἦν γὰρ	
ἔχων κτήματα πολλά.			πλούσιος σφόδρα.

			24. Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν
23.	Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς	ὁ Ἰησοῦς	
			περίλυτον γενόμενον
	εἶπεν	εἶπεν,	
τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ,			
Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν			
ὅτι πλούσιος			Πῶς
	δυσκόλως	δυσκόλως	
			οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες
εἰσελεύσεται			
	εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν	εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν	
τῶν οὐρανῶν.			τοῦ θεοῦ
			εἰσπορεύονται·
24. πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν,			
	εὐκοπώτερόν	25. εὐκοπώτερον	
			γάρ
	ἐστὶν κάμηλον διὰ	ἐστὶν κάμηλον διὰ	
τρυπήματος ῥαφίδος			τρήματος βελόνης
διελθεῖν			εἰσελθεῖν
	ἢ πλούσιον	ἢ πλούσιον	
	εἰσελθεῖν		
	εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν	εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν	
	τοῦ θεοῦ.	τοῦ θεοῦ	
		εἰσελθεῖν.	
			26. εἶπαν δὲ οἱ
25.	ἀκούσαντες	ἀκούσαντες,	
δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ			
ἐξεπλήσσοντο			
σφόδρα			Καὶ
λέγοντες,			
	Τίς	τίς	
ἄρα			
	δύναται σωθῆναι;	δύναται σωθῆναι;	

26. ἐμβλέψας

ὁ δὲ

27. ὁ δὲ

Ἰησοῦς

εἶπεν

εἶπεν,

αὐτοῖς,

Τὰ ἀδύνατα

Παρὰ ἀνθρώποις

παρὰ ἀνθρώποις

τοῦτο

ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν,

παρὰ

ὁ δὲ

θεῷ

πάντα

δυνατά.

δυνατὰ

παρὰ

τῷ

θεῷ

ἐστιν.

27. Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς

28. Εἶπεν

ὁ δὲ

ὁ Πέτρος

ὁ Πέτρος,

εἶπεν

αὐτῷ,

Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς

Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς

ἀφήκαμεν

ἀφέντες

πάντα καὶ

τὰ ἴδια

ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι.

τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν;

28.

ὁ δὲ

29. ὁ δὲ

Ἰησοῦς

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι

ὕμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντές

μοι, ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ,

ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ  
 ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου  
 δόξης αὐτοῦ, καθήσεσθε  
 καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ δώδεκα  
 θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς  
 δώδεκα φυλὰς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

<sup>29</sup>. καὶ πᾶς ὅστις

ἀφήκεν

ἀφήκεν

οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὃς

οἰκίας

οἰκίαν

ἢ γυναῖκα

ἢ ἀδελφοὺς

ἢ ἀδελφοὺς

ἢ ἀδελφὰς

ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα

ἢ γονεῖς

ἢ τέκνα

ἢ τέκνα

ἢ ἀγροὺς

ἔνεκεν

ἔνεκεν

τοῦ ὀνόματός μου,

τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ,

<sup>30</sup>. ὃς οὐχὶ μὴ

[ἀπο]λάβῃ

ἐκατονταπλασίονα

πολλαπλασίονα

λήμψεται

ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ

καὶ

καὶ

ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι

τῷ ἐρχομένῳ

ζωὴν αἰώνιον

ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

κληρονομήσει.

<sup>30</sup>. Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται

πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι

καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.

The text used is that of Aland/United Bible Societies; there are quite a few textual variants in the pericope but none of the points made here is affected by them to any material extent and therefore it has not been judged profitable to discuss these variants in detail (though a small number are in fact mentioned below at appropriate points).

A careful consideration of Matthew's Gospel and then of Luke's Gospel makes us aware of the considerable number of differences of every kind between the two accounts - as can be seen from this Table, there are 36 points of difference between them.

The questions to be considered in relation to this pericope are, Does the data suggest that the accounts of Matthew and Luke can readily be explained as derived from that of Mark, by redactional modification?, and, If they did not both derive from Mark, is it possible that one of them has been taken from the other?

The extent of the differences between the two Gospels is very evident. It would have taken a very large number of changes to Mark's Gospel by Matthew and Luke (**whatever** the wording of Mark's Gospel) to create such a tally of differences. And a comparison of these two versions, given above, indicates that the similarities between Matthew and Luke in the Greek of the whole pericope (Mt 19:16-30//Lk 18:18-30) are not such as to suggest (and certainly not such as to require) a common literary source for both, or that either one derives from the other. On the contrary, the agreements between Matthew and Luke outside of direct speech are almost non-existent and consist of: εἶπεν five times (Mt 19:17, 23, 26, 27, 28); δέ four times (Mt 19:17, 23, 26, 28); αὐτῷ twice (Mt 19:17, 21); ὁ Ἰησοῦς twice (Mt 19:21, 23); and once each for: καί (Mt 19:16), ἀκούσας (Mt 19:22), ἀκούσαντες (Mt 19:25), ἦν γάρ (Mt 19:22), ὁ Πέτρος (Mt 19:27), and αὐτοῖς (Mt 19:28).

The significance of this can best be appreciated by looking at the extent to which in the narrative sections of Matthew and Luke, though they are basically saying the same thing, their wording does **not** agree.

For example, a verb of speaking occurs in parallel material in both accounts nine times, and while five times they both use εἶπεν (as above), on the other four occasions (Mt 19:16, 20, 21 and 25) they do **not** use the same word. The extent of their verbal agreement is slightly higher in the speech sections, but is identical only in one place, Mt 19:21b=Lk 18:22b. The wording is fairly close in Mt 19:24=Lk 18:25, but with significant differences. None of the similarities are of a kind to require literary dependence. The differences speak strongly against such dependence.

First, there are extensive differences of wording, even when the same information is being conveyed:

Mt 19	Lk 18
16. have [eternal life]	18. inherit [eternal life]
17. keep [the commandments]	20. you know [the commandments]
21. [sell] your possessions	22. [sell] all that you have



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 22. [hearing] the saying   | 23. [hearing] these things   |
| 22. he was sorrowful (λυπούμενος)  | 23 he was sad (περίλυτος)  |
| 22. [for he] had many possessions  | 23. [for he] was very rich   |
| 23. with what difficulty a rich<br>man will enter the<br>the kingdom of the heavens. | 24. With how much difficulty those<br>who have possessions are going<br>into the kingdom of God. |
| 24. to go through the eye of a needle<br>τρυπήματος ῥαφίδος διελυεῖν                 | 25. to go through the eye of a needle<br>τρήματος βελόνης εἰσελυεῖν                              |
| 26. With men this is impossible, but<br>with God all things are possible.            | 27. What is impossible with men<br>is possible with God.   |
| 27. [we have left] everything  | 28. [we left] our own things   |
| 29. And everyone who has left ...  | 29. there is no one who had left ...   |
| 29. or father or mother  | 29. or parents   |
| 29. [for the sake of] my name  | 29. [for the sake of] the kingdom of God   |
| 29. will receive a hundredfold   | 30 would receive many times more   |

There are also numerous differences in word order and grammatical construction; to list these would be virtually to reproduce the whole passage again, and they are best observed by going through Table 1 and comparing the two Gospels. But attention should be drawn to one of the most significant of these divergences. In Mt 19:18, the Commandments are given in the form οὐ plus the future, and the order of the first two in the list is, “You shall not kill” and “You shall not commit adultery”, and then those from the Decalogue are followed by “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”; in Lk 18:20 the Commandments are given in the form μή plus the aorist subjunctive, and the order of the first two in the list is, “Do not commit adultery” and “Do not kill”; and the commandment to love one’s neighbor is not given.

Then there are numerous differences of perspective and viewpoint, and details in Matthew not in Luke (or vice versa). Again, these are all best noted by a careful comparison verse by verse of the accounts of Matthew and Luke, in Greek (from the above Table 1) or in English. These features can be noted in particular:

### Mt 19

The person in the story is a man who is described as “young” (20 and 22)

He says, “Teacher, what good thing

### Lk 18

The person in the story is described as a “ruler” who has kept the commandments **from** (ἐκ) his youth (21)—and thus is no longer young.

He says, “Good teacher, what thing

must I do to have eternal life?"	must I do to inherit eternal life?"
Jesus replies, "Why do you ask me about what is good?"	Jesus replies, "Why do you call me good?"
One there is who is good."	No one is good but God alone."
Jesus adds, "If you would enter life, [This is lacking; the man is simply keep the commandments."	reminded, "You know the commandments.]"
The man asks, "Which?"; Jesus replies.	[This is lacking.]
Jesus adds, "Love your neighbor."	[This is lacking.]
The man asks, "What do I still lack?"	Jesus says, "One thing you still lack."
Jesus says, "If you would be perfect ..."	[This is lacking.]
When he hears what Jesus says, the young man goes away sorrowful.	The man becomes sad, but is <b>not</b> said to go away, and apparently remains there. Jesus speaks, still looking at the man, who is apparently still included in the conversation.
Jesus speaks to his disciples.	
Jesus says, "Truly I say to you ..."	[This is lacking.]
Jesus says, "Again I tell you ..."	[This is lacking.]
The disciples are greatly astonished.	"Those who heard it" respond.
Peter says, "What then shall we have?"	[This is lacking.]
Jesus says, "... in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."	[This is lacking.]
"... will receive a hundredfold [This is lacking.] and inherit eternal life."	"who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."
"But many that are first will be last, and the last first."	[This is lacking.]

It may be noted that only in Matthew is this man called "young", and only in Luke is he called a ruler.

These 36 differences of detail fall short of being contradictions and it is easy to conceive of how they could exist in two independent reports of the incident from two

different eyewitnesses; what is not easy to conceive is how they could arise from the redaction of a single account, whether that one account be Mark's or any other.

Thus an examination and comparison of what is said would lead us to conclude that these two accounts ***cannot have been derived one from the other or from any common document***, but that they are separate accounts deriving independently from two different eyewitnesses of the actual event.

Let us then consider how they compare with Mark.

### 11.2.3 The Comparison of Mark with the Major Synoptics

When we place Mark's account alongside the versions of this pericope in the two Major Synoptists, it is possible to see the extent to which it corresponds with (and differs from) each of them. In this Table, when Mark corresponds with Matthew (in wording or meaning), its wording is positioned to the left, alongside Matthew's column; when it corresponds with Luke (in wording or meaning), its wording is positioned to the right, alongside Luke's column; and when it corresponds with both or neither, its wording is positioned centrally between that of the two Major Synoptics. Small differences in word order are ignored.

**TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF MARK WITH MATTHEW AND LUKE**

<b>Mt 19:16-30</b>	<b>Mk 10:17-31</b>		<b>Lk 18:18-30</b>
	<b>SIMILAR TO</b>		
	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Both/Neither</b>	<b>Luke</b>
<sup>116</sup> Καὶ		<sup>17</sup> Καὶ	<sup>18</sup> Καὶ
		ἐκ πορευομένου αὐτοῦ	
		εἰς ὁδὸν προσδραμῶν	
ἰδοὺ			
εἶς	εἶς		
προσελθὼν		καὶ	
		γονυπετήσας αὐτὸν	
		ἐπηρώτα	ἐπηρώτησέν
			τις
αὐτῷ		αὐτόν	αὐτὸν
			ἄρχων
εἶπεν,			λέγων,
Διδάσκαλε,	Διδάσκαλε		Διδάσκαλε
		ἀγαθέ,	ἀγαθέ,

τί	τί	τί
ἀγαθὸν		
ποιήσω ἵνα	ποιήσω ἵνα	ποιήσας
σχῶ		
ζωὴν αἰώνιον;	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	ζωὴν αἰώνιον
	κληρονομήσω;	κληρονομήσω;
17. ὁ δὲ	18. ὁ δὲ	
εἶπεν αὐτῷ,	Ἰησοῦς	19. εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ
	εἶπεν αὐτῷ,	ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
Τί με	Τί με	Τί με
ἐρωτᾷς	λέγεις	λέγεις
περὶ τοῦ		
ἀγαθοῦ;	ἀγαθόν;	ἀγαθόν;
	οὐδεὶς	οὐδεὶς
εἶς	ἀγαθὸς	ἀγαθὸς
ἐστὶν ὁ	εἰ μὴ	εἰ μὴ
ἀγαθός.	εἶς	εἶς
	ὁ θεός.	ὁ θεός.
εἰ δὲ θέλεις εἰς τὴν ζωὴν		
εἰσελθεῖν, τήρησον		
τὰς ἐντολάς.	19. τὰς ἐντολάς	20. τὰς ἐντολάς
	οἶδας·	οἶδας·
18. λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποίσας;		
ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν,		
Τὸ Οὐ φονεύσεις,	Μὴ φονεύσης	Μὴ μοιχεύσης,
Οὐ μοιχεύσεις,	Μὴ μοιχεύσης,	Μὴ φονεύσης,
Οὐ κλέψεις,	Μὴ κλέψης,	Μὴ κλέψης,
Οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις,	Μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσης,	Μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσης,
	Μὴ ἀποστερήσης,	
19. Τίμα τὸν πατέρα	Τίμα τὸν πατέρα	Τίμα τὸν πατέρα
	σου	σου
καὶ τὴν μητέρα,	καὶ τὴν μητέρα.	καὶ τὴν μητέρα.
καί, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν		
πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.		

<p>20. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ νεανίσκος,</p>	αὐτῷ	ἔφη	20. ὁ δὲ	21. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν,
<p>Πάντα ταῦτα ἐφύλαξα,</p>		Διδάσκαλε,	ταῦτα πάντα	Ταῦτα πάντα
		ἐφύλαξά μιν	ἐκ νεότητος	ἐφύλαξα
τί ἔτι ὑστερῶ;		μου.		ἐκ νεότητος.
			21. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς	22. ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς
		ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ		
		ἠγάπησεν		
		αὐτὸν καὶ		
<p>21. ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,</p>		αὐτῷ,	εἶπεν	εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
			Ἔν σε	Ἔτι ἐν σοι λείπει·
	ὑστερεῖ·			
<p>Εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι, ὑπάγε</p>	ὑπάγε			
			ὅσα ἔχεις	πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις πώλησον
<p>πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα</p>		πώλησον		
καὶ		καὶ		καὶ
δοῦς	δοῦς			διάδος
[τοῖς] πτωχοῖς,		[τοῖς] πτωχοῖς,		πτωχοῖς,
καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν		καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν		καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν
ἐν οὐρανοῖς,		ἐν οὐρανῷ,		ἐν οὐρανοῖς,
καὶ δεῦρο		καὶ δεῦρο		καὶ δεῦρο
ἀκολούθει μοι.		ἀκολούθει μοι.		ἀκολούθει μοι.

22. ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος	22. ὁ δὲ στυγνάσας ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἦν γὰρ ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα ἔχων κτήματα πολλά. πολλά.	23. ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας
τὸν λόγον ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά.	ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἀπῆλθεν λυποῦμενος, ἦν γὰρ ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα ἔχων κτήματα πολλά. πολλά.	ταῦτα περίλυτος ἐγενήθη, ἦν γὰρ πλούσιος σφόδρα.
	23. Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος	24. Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν
23. Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πλούσιος	ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πλούσιος	ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, περίλυτον γενόμενον εἶπεν,
δυσκόλως	δυσκόλως	Πῶς δυσκόλως
	οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες	Πῶς οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες
εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.	εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ	εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ
	24. οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς	εἰσπορεύονται·
24. πάλιν	πάλιν	
δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν,	λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τέκνα, πῶς δύσκολόν ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν,	
εὐκοπώτερόν	25. εὐκοπώτερόν	25. εὐκοπώτερον

ἐστιν κάμηλον διά  
 τρυπήματος  
 ραφίδος  
 διελθεῖν  
 ἢ πλούσιον  
 εἰσελθεῖν  
 εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν  
 τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>25</sup>. ἀκούσαντες  
 δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ

ἐξεπλήσσοντο  
 σφόδρα  
 λέγοντες,

Τίς  
 ἄρα  
 δύναται σωθῆναι;  
<sup>26</sup>. ἐμβλέψας

δὲ  
 ὁ Ἰησοῦς  
 εἶπεν  
 αὐτοῖς,

Παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
 τοῦτο  
 ἀδύνατόν  
 ἐστιν,

παρὰ δὲ θεῷ

ἐστιν κάμηλον διά  
 [τῆς] τρυμαλίδας  
 [τῆς] ραφίδος  
 διελθεῖν  
 ἢ πλούσιον  
 εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν  
 τοῦ θεοῦ

περισσῶς  
 ἐξεπλήσσοντο  
 λέγοντες

πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς,  
 Καὶ  
 τίς  
 δύναται σωθῆναι;  
<sup>27</sup>. ἐμβλέψας

αὐτοῖς  
 ὁ Ἰησοῦς  
 λέγει

Παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
 ἀδύνατον,  
 ἐστιν,

ἀλλ' οὐ  
 παρὰ θεῷ

εἰσελθεῖν.

<sup>26</sup>. δὲ οἱ

γὰρ  
 ἐστιν κάμηλον διά  
 τρήματος  
 βελόνης  
 εἰσελθεῖν  
 ἢ πλούσιον  
 εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν  
 τοῦ θεοῦ  
 εἰσελθεῖν.

<sup>26</sup>. εἶπαν

δὲ οἱ  
 ἀκούσαντες,

Καὶ  
 τίς  
 δύναται σωθῆναι;

<sup>27</sup>. ὁ δὲ

εἶπεν,

Τὰ ἀδύνατα  
 παρὰ ἀνθρώποις

πάντα	πάντα		
δυνατά.		γὰρ δυνατὰ	δυνατὰ
		παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.	παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστίν.
27. Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς		28. Ἦρξατο λέγειν	28. Εἶπεν
ὁ Πέτρος		ὁ Πέτρος	ὁ Πέτρος,
εἶπεν			
αὐτῷ,	αὐτῷ,		
Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς		Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς	Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς
ἀφήκαμεν	ἀφήκαμεν		ἀφέντες
πάντα καὶ	πάντα καὶ		τὰ ἴδια
ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι·	ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι.		ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι.
τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν;		29. ἔφη	
28. ὁ δὲ		ὁ	29. ὁ δὲ
Ἰησοῦς	Ἰησοῦς		
εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,			εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,
Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν	Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν		Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν
ὅτι			ὅτι
ὕμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντές			
μοι, ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ,			
ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ			
ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου			
δόξης αὐτοῦ, καθήσεσθε			
καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ δώδεκα			
θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς			
δώδεκα φυλὰς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.			
29. καὶ πᾶς ὅστις			
ἀφήκεν	ἀφήκεν	οὐδεὶς ἐστίν ὃς	οὐδεὶς ἐστίν ὃς
οἰκίας		οἰκίαν	ἀφήκεν
			οἰκίαν
			ἢ γυναῖκα



ἡ ἀδελφοὺς	ἡ ἀδελφοὺς	ἡ ἀδελφοὺς
ἡ ἀδελφὰς ἡ	ἡ ἀδελφὰς ἡ	
πατέρα ἡ μητέρα	πατέρα ἡ μητέρα	ἡ γονεῖς
ἡ τέκνα	ἡ τέκνα	ἡ τέκνα
ἡ ἀγροὺς	ἡ ἀγροὺς	
ἔνεκεν	ἔνεκεν	ἔνεκεν
τοῦ ὀνόματός μου,	ἐμοῦ	τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ,
	καὶ ἔνεκεν	
	οὗ εὐαγγελίου,	
	<sup>30.</sup> ἐὰν μὴ	<sup>30.</sup> ὅς οὐχὶ μὴ
	λάβῃ	[ἀπο] λάβῃ
ἐκατονταπλασίονα ἐκατονταπλασίονα		πολλαπλασίονα
λήμψεται		
	νῦν	
	ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ	ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ
	οἰκίας καὶ	
	ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἀδελφὰς	
	καὶ μητέρας καὶ τέκνα	
	καὶ ἀγροὺς	
	μετὰ διωγμῶν	
καὶ	καὶ	καὶ
	ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι	ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι
	τῷ ἐρχομένῳ	τῷ ἐρχομένῳ
ζωὴν αἰώνιον	ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	ζωὴν αἰώνιον.
κληρονομήσει.		
<sup>30.</sup> Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται	<sup>31.</sup> Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται	
πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ	πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ	
ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.	[οἱ] ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.	

There are 96 words in the centre columns of Table 1, i.e., that are common to Matthew and Luke. A comparison with Mark (Table 2) shows that 85 of these words are also found in Mark's Gospel. The words that are not, that is, the eleven words in which Matthew and Luke agree here against Mark, are: ἀκούσας and ἀκούσαντες, ὅτι, δέ (three times), and εἶπεν (four times, once with αὐτοῖς).

Table 2 shows the comparison of Mark with the other two Synoptics. In addition to the

high level to which the significant words that are common to Matthew and Luke occur also in Mark, the two features that stand out are the additional points or details found in Mark, and the extent to which Mark parallels first one and then the other of Matthew and Luke. Of the 36 points of details where Matthew and Luke differ (Table 1, §11.2.2), for 18 of them Mark agrees with Matthew and for the other 18 he agrees with Luke.

#### **11.2.4 Redactional Procedures According to the Markan Priority and Markan Dependence Hypotheses**

This section compares the redactional procedures followed by Matthew and Luke on the hypothesis of Markan Priority (MP), and by Mark on the hypothesis of Markan Dependence (MD). Each verse of Mark's account (and parallels) is examined in turn from the two perspectives.

##### **Mark**

**10:17 MP:** Both Matthew and Luke ignore Mark's introductory setting, "And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him ..." Luke keeps close to Mark, but changes: (a) "a man" (εἷς) to "a certain ruler"; (b) the tense of "asked" from imperfect to aorist; (c) the form of "do" from future indicative to aorist participle; and adds (d) "saying". Matthew changes (a) "ran up" to "came up"; (b) "asked him" to "said to him"; (c) "good" from applying to "teacher" into something to be done; (d) "might inherit" to "might have"; and adds (e) "behold".

**10:17 MD:** From his third source, P, Mark adds the circumstances of the man's approach; he omits Matthew's "behold" (Mark never uses this in narrative); follows Matthew for εἷς, Luke for "asked him" (but changes the tense to imperfect), Luke for "Good teacher", Matthew for the future of "do in order that", and Luke for "inherit".

**10:18 MP:** Luke corresponds with Mark exactly, but Matthew changes Mark's point completely from "Why do you call me good?" to "Why do you ask me about what is good?", and also "No one is good but God alone" to "There is one who is good". Matthew also adds in, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments".

**10:18 MD:** Mark follows Luke exactly.

**10:19 MP:** Initially, Luke corresponds with Mark exactly; then Luke alters the order of the first two commandments on the list, so that they are no longer in the order of Exodus 20/Deuteronomy 5; and he omits Mark's "Do not defraud" (which is not part of the Decalogue). Matthew adds in, "He said to him, 'Which?' And Jesus said, ..."; and changes the form of the Commandments from μή plus the subjunctive to οὐ plus the future (the word-

ing of the Septuagint). However, Matthew also deletes Mark's "do not defraud", which is not part of the Decalogue, and also "your", σου, from "Honor your father and mother"—which *is* found in the LXX (and the Hebrew) of both Ex 20:12 and Deut 5:16. And, further, Matthew inserts "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18).

**10:19 MD:** Mark follows Luke exactly in his wording for this verse, except that he adopts Matthew's *order* for the Commandments (thus conforming their order to that of the Old Testament), and he also adds in "Do not defraud" (in Mk 7:21-22 he similarly expands the Mt 15:19 list of sins).

**10:20 MP:** Luke follows Mark exactly except for: deleting "to him", "Teacher" and "my" (in "my youth"), and changing ἔφη to εἶπεν and ἐφυλαξάμην (middle) to ἐφύλαξα (active). Like Luke, Matthew changes ἔφη (to λέγει), ἐφυλαξάμην to ἐφύλαξα, and omits "Teacher". He also reverses the word order of ταῦτα πάντα, omits the conjunction ὃς, and adds in "the young man" and "what do I still lack?"

**10:20 MD:** Mark uses a different word (ἔφη) from the other two for "he said", follows Matthew in "to him" and Luke for the initial ὁ ὃς construction and for "from my youth", and therefore rejects Matthew's "the young man". He changes the voice of ἐφύλαξα to middle and adds in "Teacher" (a favoured form of address for Jesus) and "my" (in "from my youth").

**10:21 MP:** Luke strikes out "[Jesus] looking upon him loved him", replacing it with ἀκούσας, "hearing [this]"; deletes Mark's "Go ..."; inserts ἔτι, "still", and πάντα, "all"; and also makes these changes: (a) σε ὑστερεῖ, "is lacking for you", for a synonym σοι λείπει, (b) the simplex δός, "give", for the compound form διὰδος, "distribute", and (c) the singular οὐρανῷ, "heaven", for the plural οὐρανοῖς, "heavens". Matthew also omits "And [Jesus] looking upon him loved him", together with "One thing is lacking for you" (he earlier has the young man ask, "What do I still lack?"). He adds in, "If you would be perfect"; and he makes these changes: (a) εἶπεν, "he said", to its synonym ἔφη; (b) ὅσα ἔχεις, "whatever you have", to σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, "your possessions"; (c) and also, like Luke, the singular οὐρανῷ, "heaven", for the plural οὐρανοῖς, "heavens".

**10:21 MD:** Mark adds from P "[And Jesus] looking upon him loved him", has εἶπεν, "said", like Luke, and ὑπάγε, "Go", like Matthew, then follows Luke with ὅσα ἔχεις, "whatever you have", and then again Matthew with δός, "give", and has what is common to both of them with "sell" and "to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me"—except that he departs from both of them in preferring to use the singular form οὐρανῷ, "heaven". The statement "One thing is lacking for you" is given by

Mark in the position where it occurs in Luke (spoken by Jesus to the young man) but does not use Luke's word λείπει—instead, he uses Matthew's synonymous verb, ὥστερεῖ, but in Matthew this occurs in the words of the young man to Jesus.

**10:22 MP:** Luke departs from Mark almost totally in this verse: the only words in common are the initial ὁ δέ, which are standard for marking the transition where the narrator refers again to the other party in a conversation, and ἦν γάρ—but here the construction is different, the ἦν being an auxiliary in Mark, part of a periphrastic imperfect with ἔχων, but a full verb in Luke. Thus for each point where Luke corresponds with Mark in meaning, “at that saying”, “sorrowful”, “many possessions”, Luke has a synonym. Luke does not however follow Mark in saying that the man went away. Matthew inserts again “the young man”, changes Mark's στυγνάσας, “becoming sad [at that saying]”, into ἀκούσας, “hearing [that saying]”, with a consequential change in the case of τῷ λόγῳ. From that point he takes over Mark's wording unaltered.

**10:22 MD:** Mark omits Matthew's reference to a “young man”. Luke says, “he became sad” and Matthew has “he went away sad” (using related but different words for “sad”). Mark's account includes both of these points: the first by means of an aorist participle from another word, the verb στυγνάζειν, to be sad or saddened, with consequential change in the construction for “that saying”; and then Mark takes over the rest of Matthew verbatim.

**10:23 MP:** Luke changes Mark's “And looking around Jesus said to his disciples” to “And looking at him Jesus said” (in Mark the rich man has left them; in Luke he has not been said to have left, and apparently Jesus's remarks would still be—and would be intended to be—audible to him, if indeed not still addressed to him). Numbers of manuscripts have the reading here, “And when Jesus saw that he became sad he said”, which would also imply the continued presence of the rich man with Jesus at this stage. Luke (and also Matthew) use here εἶπεν, “said”, for Mark's λέγει. From this point onwards Luke copies Mark exactly, except that he changes Mark's εἰσελεύσονται, “will enter”, to εἰσπορεύονται, “are going in”: that is, a change from future to present tense and from the verb εἰσερχομαι to εἰσπορεύομαι. Matthew omits “looking around”, adds in “Truly I say to you”, retains Mark's “with difficulty” and “will enter εἰσελεύσονται, but made singular) the kingdom” but reverses Mark's order to place “will enter” in front of “the kingdom”; and changes “of God” to “of the heavens” and “those who have riches/possessions” to “a rich man”, and alters the whole grammatical structure of the sentence by exchanging πῶς for ὅτι.

**10:23 MD:** Mark takes “looking” from Luke but, while retaining the aorist participle form, changes the verb to “looking around”; and then takes in from Matthew “[said] to his disciples”, so that this is a conflation of the points made in Luke and Matthew. Next, he copies Luke's wording and order for the balance of the verse, except that he adopts Matthew's verb form “will enter” instead of Luke's “are going in”—but he places it where Luke has his verb rather than where it occurs in Matthew.

**10:24 MP:** Luke omits entirely Mark's record of the response of the disciples to Jesus's words: “And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, ‘Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!’” Matthew turns “But Jesus said to them again” into direct speech, “But again I tell you”.

**10:24 MD:** Mark inserts the reaction of the disciples to Jesus's words, and Jesus's further comments, from his source P.

**10:25 MP:** Luke takes over exactly the form of this saying, but substitutes synonyms for three key words: τρήματος for Mark's τρυμαλιᾶς, “opening, hole”; βελόνης for ῥαφίδος (needle); and εἰσελθεῖν (go into) for διελθεῖν (go through). Matthew takes over this saying, but makes two alterations to it: he alters the position of “to enter” to in front of “into the kingdom of God”, and he changes Mark's τρυμαλιᾶς, “opening, hole” into the synonym τρυπήματος.

**10:25 MD:** Mark takes over everything in this saying that is common to Matthew and Luke. He follows Matthew in using ῥαφίδος and διελθεῖν, and Luke in placing εἰσελθεῖν as last word in the saying; and where Matthew and Luke differ in their word for “opening, hole”, that is, the eye of the needle, he uses his own, τρυμαλία.

**10:26 MP:** Luke omits the great astonishment of the disciples and “to him” after “said”, replacing Mark's words with “Those who heard it said”, so that it becomes the people in general around Jesus who hear his comments and who respond. The content of what is said is taken over unchanged. Matthew makes Mark's implication explicit by inserting “disciples” as the subject; and like Luke Matthew also adds in ἀκούσαντες, “hearing”. Matthew also changes Mark's περισσῶς, “exceedingly”, for σφόδρα, a word he prefers (περισσῶς only in Mt 27:23[//Mk 15:14]; σφόδρα occurs seven times in Matthew); and changes Mark's καί for ἤρα. Apart from this, he takes over Mark's wording.

**10:26 MD:** Mark, finding here that Matthew attributes what was said to the disciples and Luke to the crowd (“those who heard it”), adopts the neutral “they” as his subject. He changes Matthew's σφόδρα to περισσῶς, but follows Matthew in speaking of the

astonished reaction (ἐξεπλήσσοντο) and in including λέγοντες, “saying”, and he follows Luke in using καί rather than ἄρα.

**10:27 MP:** Luke rewords the first part of this verse, condensing it somewhat (including the omission of “Jesus” as the subject, and the fact that Jesus looked at them), but follows the wording of the second half, “are possible with God”. Matthew changes λέγει to εἶπεν and adds in τοῦτο, “this thing”, and is otherwise close to the first half of Mark’s verse, but lacks Mark’s repetition of “with God”.

**10:27 MD:** Mark conflates the two Major Synoptics, taking Matthew as the first part of his verse and Luke as the second part, with some grammatical adjustments to make them flow together.

**10:28 MP:** Luke omits Mark’s “began” and “to him”, and changes (a) from λέγειν to εἰπεῖν, (b) the verb form of “we have left” from perfect indicative to aorist participle, (c) “everything” (πάντα) to “our own things” (τὰ ἴδια), and (d) the tense of “we have followed” from perfect to aorist. (The only words in Luke that remain the same as in Mark are: ὁ Πέτρος ... ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ... σοι.) Matthew has changed Mark’s “began to say” (λέγειν) to “Then answering said” (εἶπεν), and the perfect tense of Mark’s “we have followed” to aorist; and has added Peter’s question, “What then will there be for us?”

**10:28 MD:** Mark decides to spare Peter by not recording his question “What then will there be for us?”, and therefore rewords Matthew’s “Then answering Peter said” to “Peter began to say”, that is, “Peter began (ἄρχομαι) by saying”, the wording reflecting that Mark here is only recording the *beginning of* and not *all of* what Peter said. Otherwise Mark records what is common to Matthew and Luke and follows Matthew where they differ; except only that he alters the aorist tense of “we followed” in his two written sources to the perfect tense, “we have followed”, thus underlining the permanent nature of the following and its consequences rather than simply the fact of beginning to follow Jesus. Taylor (*Mark*, 1966: 433) comments, “The distinction of tenses in ἀφήκαμεν and ἠκολούθηκαμεν is noteworthy; the decisive renunciation in Peter’s mind stood out against the permanent following. In Matthew and Luke this detail is lost.” The form of Taylor’s last sentence reflects his presupposition of Markan Priority. But it is more likely by far that Mark *inserted* this additional level of meaning (from his source P) than that Matthew and Luke, both having this detail in front of them in Mark, each independently chose to alter the text to *remove* it.

**10:29 MP:** Luke and Matthew both make these same alterations: (a) change ἔφη to εἶπεν; (b) add in αὐτοῖς, “to them”; (c) add in ὅτι; and (d) omit “and for the sake of the gospel”. Further, Luke again omits the subject “Jesus” (as also in 10:27//Lk 18:27) and also omits “or sisters” and “or fields”, adds in “or wife”, and changes “or mother or father” to “or parents”, and “for my sake” to “for the sake of the kingdom of God”. Matthew inserts a new saying concerning the twelve disciples sitting upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, changes (a) Mark's construction “there is no one ... who will not” into “everyone ... will”, (b) “house” into “houses”, (c) “or mother or father” into “or father or mother”, (d) and “for my sake” into “for my name's sake”.

**10:29 MD:** Mark departs from both Matthew and Luke in (a) using ἔφη rather than εἶπεν, (b) omitting αὐτοῖς, “to them”, and (c) omitting ὅτι. He amplifies the “for the sake of”, ἕνεκεν, phrase (which differs as between Matthew and Luke) into “for my sake and for the sake of the gospel” (from source P); and changes Matthew's order “or father or mother” to “or mother or father” (possibly thus highlighting “mother” because in what he will say in the next verse he mentions only “mothers” but not “fathers”). For the rest, he adopts what is in Matthew or Luke: he adopts Luke's “there is no one ... who will not receive” rather than Matthew's different wording, and Luke's “house” rather than Matthew's “houses”; but for the rest he follows Matthew's, not Luke's, list of those who have been left.

**10:30 MP:** Luke alters Mark's way of saying “who will not receive”; and changes “a hundredfold” into “many times more” (πολλαπλασίονα); omits “now” (νῦν), adopts Mark's “in this time” but omits Mark's listing of what one will receive, including the “with persecutions”, and then follows Mark verbatim for “and in the age to come, life eternal”. Matthew alters Mark's way of saying “will receive” to a simple future, retains “a hundredfold” but omits “now in this time” and the listing of what one will receive, including the “with persecutions”, and then follows Mark in “life eternal”, and adds in “will inherit”.

**10:30 MD:** Mark conflates here all his three sources: he alters Luke's ὃς οὐχὶ μὴ το εἶν μὴ and Luke's compound ἀπολάβῃ (if indeed this is the right text: manuscripts B, D, and a few others accord with Mark) to the simplex λάβῃ, as his way of saying “will not receive”; takes “a hundredfold” from Matthew and “in this time” from Luke, adds in (from P) “now ... houses and brothers”, etc, and takes verbatim from Luke “and in the age to come life eternal”.

**10:31 MP:** Luke omits Mark's closing saying of Jesus; Matthew adopts it verbatim.

**10:31 MD:** Jesus's saying occurs in Matthew but not in Luke; Mark adopts it verbatim.

### 11.2.5 A Preliminary Consideration: Verbs of Speaking

First, to note the words for “speak” that are used in this pericope:

<b>Mt 19</b>	<b>Mk 10</b>	<b>Lk 18</b>
16: εἶπεν	17: ἐπηρώτα	18: ἐπηρώτησεν λέγων
17: εἶπεν	18: εἶπεν	19: εἶπεν
[17: ἐρωτᾷς	18: λέγεις	19: λέγεις]
18: λέγει		
18: εἶπεν		
20: λέγει	20: ἔφη	21: εἶπεν
21: ἔφη	21: εἶπεν	22: εἶπεν
23: εἶπεν	23: λέγει	24: εἶπεν
[23: λέγω]		
[24: λέγω]	24: ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει	
25: λέγοντες	26: λέγοντες	26: εἶπαν
26: εἶπεν	27: λέγει	27: εἶπεν
27: ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν	28: ἤρξατο λέγειν	28: εἶπεν
28: εἶπεν	29: ἔφη	29: εἶπεν
[28: λέγω]	29: λέγω	29: λέγω]

Discourse usages are shown in square brackets—see the following verses of Matthew (and parallels, where applicable): 17, 23, 24, 28. In the nature of the case, this discourse requires the use of a present tense, and in the pericope under review this is always a form of λέγειν, with the single exception of Mt 19:17, ἐρωτάω, “ask”.

Leaving the use in discourse on one side, we find the number of times each word for speaking is used in each Gospel is as follows:

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
ἀποκρίνεσθαι	1	1	-
εἶπεῖν	7	2	8
ἐπερωτᾶν	-	1	1
λέγειν	3	5	1
φημί	1	2	-
Totals:	12	11	10

In Luke the story begins with ἐπηρώτησεν λέγων, “[a certain ruler] asked, saying”; from this point onwards Luke, with total consistency, uses only forms of εἶπεῖν in narrative. Matthew has a preference for εἶπεῖν and Mark for λέγειν, but each is willing to



depart from his preferred form to use others, and this without there being any apparent relationship to what either of the other Gospels uses at a given point. Thus we may note how Matthew and Mark ring the changes:

Mt 19	Mk 10	Lk 18
20: λέγει	20: ἔφη	21: εἶπεν
21: ἔφη	21: εἶπεν	22: εἶπεν
23: εἶπεν	23: λέγει	24: εἶπεν

Mostly, Matthew and Mark differ from each other in the words they use; once (Mt 19:17//Mk 10:18) they agree in using Matthew's preferred word, εἶπεν, and once (Mt 19:25//Mk 10:26) in using Mark's preferred word, λέγειν. In Mt 19:18, where the words are not paralleled in either of the other two Gospels, Matthew once uses λέγειν, and once εἶπεν.

It does indeed happen that all three use the same word (εἶπεν) on one occasion, in Mt 19:17 and parallels; but then all three use a different word in Mt 19:20 and parallels. Matthew and Mark agree against Luke in Mt 19:25 and parallels; Mark and Luke agree against Matthew in Mt 19:16 and 21 and parallels; and Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in Mt 19:23, 26, 27, and 28 and parallels. But these agreements are of no real significance because as (after his first verse) Luke uses εἶπεν in narrative throughout his pericope they simply represent the places where Matthew and Mark use this word or agree in using some other word.

We are already aware (from our previous consideration of the historic present) of Mark's preference for the present form, λέγειν, a preference that is not as fully shared by Matthew, and not at all by Luke. This is reflected in our present pericope. But if there is any other pattern, if there is any significance for Synoptic studies, in the use of the verbs of speaking in this pericope I confess that I cannot detect it. The use of these various words here seems to be completely neutral in relation to the questions of alternative hypotheses of Synoptic relationships.

We may therefore turn our attention now to other—and more significant—similarities and differences between the Synoptics in this pericope.

### 11.2.6 Probing the Markan Priority Explanation of the Differences

Exposition of the pericope from the perspective of Markan Priority will be found in the standard commentaries, e.g. Allen on Matthew, Vincent Taylor on Mark, Marshall on Luke; also, in considerable detail, in Gundry's *Matthew—A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, and cf. Chapter Five (1983: 93-112) in Stonehouse. As a generaliz-

ation it could be said that the commentaries simply describe the alterations that would have been made to Mark by Matthew or Luke (as the case may be) if indeed they each were using Mark as their source. Only occasionally are explanations attempted for *why* one or the other would have acted thus.

The first thing that we may note is the **exceedingly extensive amount of explaining to be done**, if it were to be attempted: that is, the very great extent to which Matthew and Luke have departed from what they had before them in Mark. Indeed (we may ask), why should they not do so? They are independent authors, writing from their own perspectives and for their own reasons, and simply drawing upon Mark for their information. But this comment, while completely true, does not come to grips with what is at issue. It is indeed legitimate to ask what could possibly have led to this or that alteration being made, and then look at the overall probability that either Matthew or Luke would have made *all* the alterations that the Markan Priority hypothesis postulates of them.

All three Gospels give this pericope at the same point, viz, after the pericope Jesus Blesses the Children. Why would both Matthew and Luke excise Mark's setting, and the fact that the man ran up to Jesus and knelt to him to ask his question? Then why does Mt 19:16 alter Mark's "asked" into the more general "said"? Mark's word ἐπερωτάω, used here also by Luke, is well established in Matthew's vocabulary, being used by him eight times in his Gospel, comprising three times where it is paralleled in Mark (Mt 17:10//Mk 9:11; Mt 22:35//Mk 12:28; Mt 27:11//Mk 15:2), twice paralleled in both Mark and Luke (Mt 22:23//Mk 12:18//Lk 20:28; Mt 22:46//Mk 12:34//Lk 20:40), and three times where Matthew introduces it into his narrative when it does not occur in the parallel in his (presumed) source Mark (see Mt 12:10; 16:1; 22:41). Under these circumstances it is difficult to see any specific reason why Matthew would reject the word here.

Similarly we may enquire, why does Mt 19:16 change Mark's "inherit" to the more colourless "have" eternal life? This word κληρονομέω is inserted by Matthew at the end of this pericope (Mt 19:29) where it is not used by either Mark or Luke, and is also used by Matthew in Mt 5:5 and 25:34 in passages unparalleled in either of the other Synoptics. "Inheritance" is a common Jewish metaphor to express participation in the blessings of the future" (Allen, 1907: 208); all the stranger then that it is Matthew, the **Jewish** Gospel, which omits this term here while Mark and Luke have it, and doubly strange if Matthew has the term in front of him in his source at the time of writing.

As noted earlier, a theological explanation is proffered (cf. Allen 1907: 208; Taylor *Mark* 1966: 427) for Matthew's change to Mark's text concerning "good"; and his deletion of Mark's "Do not defraud" can "be explained as assimilation to the wording of the

Decalogue” (Tuckett 1983:166; cf. Taylor *Mark* 1966: 428). The first comment is a reasonable one from the Markan Priority perspective; the second suggestion is possible, but leaves one with the question, If Matthew is here concerned for conformity with the Decalogue as such, why would he delete (v.19) Mark’s σου, “your” [father and mother], thus moving the wording **away from** the text of the Septuagint, which has this word; and how can **he** insert (v.19b) an addition of his own to the Decalogue with his “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”—if he were going to make an insertion, would it not be more reasonable that it would be something else from the Decalogue not already in Mark (from the first four Commandments, or the Tenth)? Again, why leave the Fifth Commandment in last position? This explanation is thus not self-consistent.

There are, as we have seen, several places where Matthew has altered Mark’s text to substitute a synonym, where we again can ask why. Or why he has changed the word-order of Mark (e.g., εἰσελθεῖν in 10:25) or the number (οἰκίαν, “house”, to οἰκίας, “houses”, 10:29), or altered the grammatical structure of Mark’s wording (e.g., Mt 19:23; and the “there is no one who ... will not receive” of Mk 10:29-30 to “everyone ... will receive”)? So also we may ask concerning the parts of Mark that Matthew omits (including primarily Mk 10:21, 24, 29c [“for the sake of the gospel”] and 30), and concerning the additions that Matthew makes to Mark—and here we may also enquire whence Matthew obtains them, for the Markan Priority hypothesis itself does not supply a source for them.

Now there is no difficulty in accepting that it is **possible** for Matthew to have done these things to Mark’s account in using it. But no purpose seems to be served by most of these alterations so that for the most part one is completely at a loss to see the point of them being made at all.

Furthermore, there is the overall perspective of Mark’s account, which says that the rich man has kept the commandments from (ἐκ) his youth (Mk 10:20), this indicating that he is no longer **in** his youth; whereas Matthew alters this perspective by omitting this reference and substituting instead two statements (10:20 and 22) that he is still a youth. The significance and the deliberateness of these alterations is explained thus by Gundry (*Matthew*, 1982: 387ff.):

Mark’s later phrase “from my youth” supplies Matthew with a descriptive identification of Jesus’ interlocutor as “the youth”. Thus, in the interests of the church’s accepting young people, a grown man who looks back on his youth becomes a lad still in his youth. ... Since Matthew has made the grown-up a youth, ‘from my youth’ naturally falls from the end of the statement “All these things I have kept”. ... That νεανίσκος has a semantic range falling

within *modern* boundaries of adulthood in no way makes Matthew's designation compatible with Mark's and Luke's ἐκ νεότητός μου at the historical level; for νεότητός covers the period of being νεανίσκος ... and Matthew's dropping ἐκ νεότητός μου, inserting νεανίσκος, and adding τέλειος for a contrast with νεανίσκος shows he intends to reduce the age of the rich man. Correspondingly, in Mark and Luke ἐκ νεότητός μου puts the period of having been νεανίσκος in the past.

The motive that Gundry supplies for Matthew's alteration to the age of the rich man—"in the interests of the church's accepting young people"—is quite fanciful and lacks any support in evidence or logic. But if we are to accept that Matthew based his account on Mark's Gospel, the differences between Matthew and Mark-Luke call for some kind of explanation and Gundry's imaginative speculation, above, is the type of explanation that one finds that it is then necessary to offer.

In similar vein, Gundry explains the additional material in Matthew as the composition of the author (e.g., on Mt 19:17b, Gundry says, "For further emphasis on keeping the law as doing the good, Matthew composes the sentence 'But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments'"; Mt 19:28 he sees as Matthew's extensive reworking and adaptation of Lk 22:28-30 for insertion here). Gundry's overall judgement upon Matthew's redaction is (*Matthew*, 1982: 623). "Matthew's subtractions, additions, and revisions of order and phraseology often show changes in substance; i.e., they represent developments of the dominical tradition that result in different meanings and departures from the actuality of events."

If we pursue the same kind of enquiry concerning Luke's redaction of Mark as a source we are led to similar questions. Why does Luke substitute synonyms for several of Mark's expressions? (Cf. "many possessions", 10:22; "are going in" for "will enter", 10:23; "left our own things" for "left everything", 10:28; "or parents" for "or mother or father", 10:29; "many times more" for "a hundredfold", 10:30.) Why does he delete small details (such as "Teacher", 10:20; "Go", 10:21; "looking at them", 10:27; "sisters" and "lands", 10:29) and some larger points that Mark is making (such as the initial setting, the reference to the great astonishment of those who heard him, 10:26, and many others, including Mark's final saying, 10:31)? And why does he then add in small details of his own ("ruler", 18:18; "all", 18:22; "or wife", 18:29)? Why does he change "for my sake and for sake of the gospel" (10:29) into "for the sake of the kingdom of God"?

The changes in Mt 19:29/Mk 10:29/Lk 18:29 are worthy of further comment overall. In this passage the grammatical construction of Mark and Luke is identical ("there is no one who has left house", etc.) while Matthew has a different construction ("every one

who has left houses”, etc.); the list of what has been left contains the same items in Matthew and Mark (there is one minor change of order) while Luke's list differs in several ways (“sisters” and “lands” deleted, “parents” substituted for “mother or father”, and “wife” added in). The Markan Priority view requires us to accept that Luke retained Mark's **grammatical form** but changed numerous details in the list (the only ones identical in Mark and Luke are “house ... brothers ... children”) while Matthew changed Mark's grammatical form (“there is no one who” to “every one who” and “house” to “houses”) but used **all the items on the list!** Compare here the Markan Dependence explanation, given below.

And then why does Luke reverse the order of the Commandments “Do not kill” and “Do not commit adultery” (Mk 10:19)? (Marshall [*Luke* 1978: 685] notes, and it is indeed true, that “Whatever be the right order of the commandments is a matter of indifference”. But if so, then even greater is one's surprise that Luke found cause to alter it from what he had in his source.)

Some changes in particular leave one wondering. So minor as to be insignificant: which makes all the greater the mystery of what the motive for change could have been. In 10:21 Mark uses ὑστερέω, “to be missing or have a lack”. Matthew uses the same word in 19:20. It is not a common word; these are the only occurrences of the word in the first two Gospels. Luke himself uses it in 15:14 and 22:35; it occurs otherwise twelve times in the Epistles, a total of 16 occurrences in the New Testament. Yet when Luke comes across it in Mk 10:21 he does not accept it here, but chooses instead to use a synonym, λείπω, a word that occurs nowhere else in his writings and indeed nowhere else in the Gospels (there are two occurrences in Titus and three in James, a total of six in the New Testament).

Again, when Luke comes to Mark's τρυμαλιᾶς ῥαφίδος, “the eye of a needle”, τρυμαλία only here in the New Testament; ῥαφίδος only here and in the parallel in Matthew), he rejects both words and substitutes the synonymous expression τρήματος βελόνης (τρήμα only here in the New Testament—unless one accepts the variant reading for the parallel, Mt 19:24—and βελόνη only here in the New Testament, and neither of them used in the Septuagint). Why would Luke make such changes as these? Rare words like these for “lack”, “hole” and “needle”, especially in Jesus's sayings, tend to be transmitted in the tradition without change. To change one such word in a saying of Jesus for another equally rare word for no apparent reason is very odd indeed. For it to be done **several times** in the one passage calls for explanation. In addition there are in the passage the other changes for a synonym.

And then there is “heaven” to “heavens” (10:21).

“Heaven” (οὐρανός) occurs “in classical Greek almost without exception in the singular” (TDNT V, 497). In the Septuagint οὐρανός is used to translate the Hebrew *shamayim*, a dual form. Thus the plural form is a Semitism and especially common in Matthew, where it is found in 58 out of the 84 occurrences of οὐρανός (TDNT V, 513). The plural is rare in Mark (found in 5 out of 18 occurrences) and rarer still in Luke (3 out of 37 occurrences; and in Acts, 2 out of 26 occurrences).

[TDNT states that there are 37 occurrences in Luke, 5 of them in the plural; but in Moulton and Geden's *Concordance* (1974) I can only locate 3 in the plural, plus the one in the textual variant at Lk 11:2. Morgenthaler only gives (*Statistics of New Testament Words*, 1971: 127) a total of 34 occurrences of the word in Luke's Gospel.]

Apart from the passage under consideration, the other two plurals in Luke are 10:20 and 12:33—the latter being a context that also mentions “treasure in the heavens”. Neither of these passages has Markan parallels; the second is paralleled in Mt 6:20. (The two occurrences in Acts are 2:34, where Peter is discussing David in a context full of Old Testament associations; and 7:56, where Stephen, using wording that is reminiscent of Mt 3:16, speaks of seeing the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.) Wherever else Luke parallels οὐρανός used in the plural in Mark or Matthew, he uses the singular.

Why then **in this one instance** should he come across a singular in Mark and alter it to the plural? It is unlikely in the extreme that he would deliberately make a change in this word from a singular into a plural. The only reason that makes sense why Luke would have the plural of οὐρανός here in his Gospel would be **that it was plural in his source**. And as it is singular in Mark, this is a strong indicator that **Mark is not Luke's source**. Matthew has the plural οὐρανός here, but could not be Luke's source for this pericope because of all the differences of wording and viewpoint that prevail throughout the pericope. Therefore Luke's source is L, his private source distinct from Matthew, Mark or Q.

Finally, why would Luke alter Mk 10:22 so that in his account the man no longer went away but apparently remained in the immediate vicinity during what followed; and also delete all reference to the disciples here in this pericope so that in Luke's account Jesus speaks only to the rich man or to the people in general (cf. 18:26)?

We can make an attempt at some explanations of these matters; in most cases they are very hard to explain, because they make no sense and we can see no point in the change—therefore if we adopt the Markan Priority position there is little more that we can do than echo afresh the words of Streeter (1924: 169):

But, even when we can detect no particular motive, we cannot assume that there was none; for we cannot possibly know, either all the circumstances of churches, or all the personal idiosyncrasies of writers so far removed from our own time.

### 11.2.7 Probing the Markan Dependence Explanation of the Differences

According to the Markan Dependence explanation, the accounts in Matthew and Luke differ in all the various ways that they do because ***they derive from independent eyewitnesses of the event***. The apostle Matthew is himself the source of all that is found in Matthew's Gospel, and it reflects the way in which the incident impressed itself upon him. Luke's account has come down to him from some other eyewitness, possibly another of the twelve disciples but more likely not, as the disciples are not mentioned at all in Luke's version of the pericope (excepting that Peter speaks in 18:28).

The difference between the perspective of the two accounts is thus readily understandable. The man is a "young man" in Matthew, and in Luke he is an older man who has kept the commandments from his youth and is now a ruler. This difference could simply reflect the different ages of the eyewitnesses who were the sources of the two accounts—whether for example a forty-year-old man is considered "young" or not depends somewhat on the age of the person making the assessment! Similarly, whether the man went away (as in Matthew's account) or is not said to have done so, could also depend upon ***where the witness himself happened to be standing***. If the man indeed moved away from where he had been standing near Jesus, but hovered nearby, still attempting perhaps to listen to what else was said and still in sight of the witness who was Luke's source, this difference is explained.

Some of the minor differences in the two accounts would be due to a question of which details impacted upon the two eyewitnesses (which is why one account will be the only one to contain some particular detail, and the second account contains something else that is not in the first). Other differences may possibly result from the way in which one person and another rendered the incident into Greek from Aramaic (if it happened that the original discussion took place in that language): this could well be the explanation for some of the different words used for the same ideas.

The accounts of Matthew and Luke bear the stamp of being two completely accurate and quite independent records of a given incident.

When Mark wrote up this story for his Gospel, he drew heavily (and primarily) upon the information in Matthew and Luke, but there were some additional details that he had learnt from his source P, and these were interwoven with the others in several places.

In many cases Mark found one expression in Matthew and a synonym in Luke's parallel. This hardly lent itself to assimilation or conflation. On two such occasions Mark substituted his own word or phrase (10:25, *τρυμαλιᾶς*, eye [of a needle], and 10:29 in his *ἕνεκεν*, "for the sake of", phrase); he has conflated the two "impossible with men/possible with God" versions (see below); and on the other occasions he has chosen to adopt the wording either of Matthew or of Luke. In order that what Mark has done can be seen, the list of synonymous wordings is repeated here from above (§11.2.2), but with those words adopted by Mark given now in capitals.

**Mt 19**

- 16. have [eternal life]
- 17. keep [the commandments]
- 21. [sell] YOUR POSSESSIONS
- 22. [hearing] THE SAYING
- 22. HE WAS SORROWFUL (*λυπούμενος*)
- 22. [for he] HAD MANY POSSESSIONS
- 23. with what difficulty  
a rich man  
WILL ENTER  
the kingdom of the heavens.
- 24. to go through the eye of a needle:  
*τρυπήματος ραφίδος διελυεῖν*
- 26. With men this is impossible, but  
with God all things are possible.
- 27. [we] HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING
- 29. And everyone who has left
- 29. OR FATHER OR MOTHER
- 29. [for the sake of] my name
- 29. will receive A HUNDREDFOLD

**Lk 18**

- 18. INHERIT [eternal life]
- 20. YOU KNOW [the commandments]
- 22. [sell] all that you have
- 23. [hearing] these things
- 23 he was sad (*περίλυρος*)
- 23. [for he] was very rich
- 24. WITH HOW MUCH DIFFICULTY  
THOSE WHO HAVE POSSESSIONS are going into  
the kingdom OF GOD.
- 25. to go through the eye of a needle  
*τρήματος βελόνης εισελυεῖν*
- 27. What is impossible with men  
is possible with God.
- 28. [we] left our own things
- 29. THERE IS NO ONE WHO HAS LEFT
- 29. or parents
- 29. [for the sake of] the kingdom of God
- 30 would receive many times more

[These points are discussed further in the comments that follow.]

Mark's attitude to the major points of difference between Matthew and Luke can be observed by inspecting what he has done.

He has largely followed the perspective of Luke's account: he has adopted completely Luke's form of the opening question and Jesus's reply, and he has taken over Luke's "from my youth" (10:20); but he has minimized the difference between the two accounts by leaving out both Matthew's "young man" (19:20 and 22) and Luke's "ruler" (18:18).



He has conflated (in 10:22) the points made by Luke that the man became sad and by Matthew that he went away sorrowful; he has included in 10:23 Luke's detail that Jesus "looked" but has made it "around" rather than "at him" [the man], since he has followed Matthew in saying that the man had left, and he has conflated this with Matthew's "[and] said to his disciples".

Several times he has taken a word or other detail from Matthew and placed this into a phrase taken from Luke. Thus he takes ὑστερεῖν from Mt 19:20 and uses it in place of Luke's λείπειν (18:22); he takes εἰσελεύσεται from Mt 19:23 and uses it in place of (and in the same position as) Luke's εἰσπορεύονται (18:24), changing its number from singular to plural to match the new context. He blends the two differing ways in which Matthew and Luke have given the Commandments by adopting Luke's **form** (μή plus the subjunctive) with Matthew's **order** (the Commandment about killing before the Commandment about adultery).

He finds two different grammatical constructions and two different lists and two different reasons, in the sayings about what the disciples have left, and he forms his own account by drawing the grammatical form from Luke and adopting from Matthew the list of what was left, and giving his own double ἕνεκεν, "for the sake of", phrase (Mk 10:29), which has concepts similar to both Matthew and Luke and is identical with neither and could have been adapted from Matthew and Luke but probably reflects his source P.

Another striking example of Mark's conflation is his way of handling the different constructions in Matthew and Luke in the saying about what is impossible (Mt 19:26//Lk 18:27). So the wording which (on the Markan Dependence view) confronted him was:

**Mt 19:26**

παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο  
ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν,  
παρὰ δὲ θεῷ πάντα  
δυνατά.

**Lk 18:27**

τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
δυνατὰ  
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστιν.

Taking δυνατά as the central or pivotal word, Mark has taken over **both** what Matthew has before it and **also** what Luke has after it, thus:

**Mt 19:26**

παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο  
ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν,  
παρὰ δὲ θεῷ πάντα  
δυνατά.

**Mk 10:27**

παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
ἀδύνατόν  
ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ θεῷ, πάντα  
γὰρ δυνατὰ  
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ

**Lk 18:27**

τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις  
δυνατὰ  
παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστιν.

Notice how closely what **precedes** δυνάτά in Mark corresponds with Matthew, and how closely what **follows** δυνάτά corresponds with Luke, even to the use of the singular initially (Matthew says, “this is ...”) and then changing to the plural (Luke is plural throughout the verse, “The things that are ...”), and also the absence of the article with θεῶ prior to δυνάτά (Matthew does not have the article) and the presence of τῶ with θεῶ after δυνάτά (this is what Luke has here).

The other words added in by Mark make the whole saying function as one smooth, two-part sentence.

Whether this overall blending of Matthew and Luke was the result of a deliberate intention to knit the two accounts together or was simply the result of Mark making his personal choices for each of these features in his two written sources, it is not possible now for us to judge. Certainly it shows a complete integration of Matthew and Luke.

Into the structure of Matthew-plus-Luke Mark blends in a few other words and details from his source P. And in a few places Mark uses other words (ἐφυλαξάμην in 10:20; συγγνάσας in 10:22; τρυμαλιά in 10:25; and in particular οὐρανῶ, singular, in 10:21), either from his source P or from his own personal grammatical and vocabulary preference.

### 11.2.8 The Question of the Good

What then is to be said concerning the frequent focus of scholarly attention in this story, the difference about “good” between Matthew and Mark-Luke in their account of the rich man's initial question to Jesus and his reply?

After outlining these differences in the Synoptic accounts Vincent Taylor comments (1966: 425ff.),

The greater originality of the Markan narrative is manifest. ... The secondary character of the Matthean version of the question is generally recognized ... Taking exception to the Markan form on doctrinal grounds, Matthew has recast it.

Stonehouse cites (1963: 94f.) Taylor's commentary, and accords with him concerning the originality of Mark's account (1963: 110f.):

The extensive study of this story as a whole has, in my judgement, presented further support of the view that the Matthean account is more readily understood on the supposition that Matthew knew Mark and utilized his account than that Mark is for the most part an expansion upon Matthew. The latter then streamlines Mark in the interest of a more succinct and somewhat simpler narrative but adds the saying of Mt 19:28.

But Stonehouse argues strongly against the view that says Matthew alters Mark for doctrinal reasons. He says quite firmly (1963: 108-110),

[Matthew] may be understood as having chosen to concentrate at the very beginning upon the foundational theme of obedience to the divine commandments. Recognizing these factors, and keeping in view the broader aspects of interpretation which have been previously considered, one may render the firm judgement that the absence from Matthew of the question, 'Why callest thou me good?', has by no means been established as being due to the factor that Matthew would have found it a stumbling block doctrinally. As has been emphasized above, the story is not concerned with Christological questions. There is rather a preoccupation with the theme of discipleship as that affects the ultimate issues of eternal life. Moreover, the evangelist Matthew does not present an essentially different view of the relationship of Jesus to the Father from that which appears in Mark. ...

The bearing of our discussion of the story of the rich young man for the subject of [Marcan] priority still remains before us. The general thrust of our discussion, however, can only lead to the conclusion that the argument as presented by Hawkins, Streeter, Taylor and many others that a doctrinal modification has taken place is not established. If one studies such a passage as this one in its own setting and in the broader context of the Gospels it appears to be highly precarious to build a substantial argument for the priority of one Gospel or another upon it.

Thus Stonehouse acknowledges (he cannot really avoid it, in view of his judgement in favour of Marcan priority) that Matthew has altered Mark's wording, but he plays down the significance of the alterations, and (as we have seen) he rejects forcefully the usual reasons advanced for Matthew's alterations. That is, he accepts that Matthew has made these alterations to Mark, but he plays down their significance, and says in regard to Matthew's wording of 19:16-17 that the alterations "do not serve to create a contrary impression with regard to the initial thrust of Jesus' teaching. ... It is by no means evident that Matthew says anything that is not implicit in the Marcan account" (1963: 101). Similarly in regard to the Matthean addition to 19:21a, "Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect'": "But again the substance of the matter is not affected since the word 'perfect' underscores the fullness of conformity to the will of God which constitutes the central thrust of Jesus' teaching in the three Synoptic accounts" (1963: 101). He discusses (1963: 104) the Matthean narrative's "introduction of the saying of 19:28" without explaining why Matthew (whose account he describes—1963: 103—as marked by "characteristic succinctness") has chosen here to insert an additional thirty-odd words, nor where Matthew obtained them.

His explanation for the changes that Matthew made in regard to the use of "good" in the opening verses of the pericope is as follows (1963: 108-109):

The foregoing argument for the integrity of Matthew does not however imply that the evangelist could not have exercised a measure of freedom in his literary composition of the narrative. At other points this liberty appears. For example, Mark and Luke report Jesus as saying to the young man, "One thing thou lackest" (Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22), but Matthew records that it was the young man who said, "What do I still lack?" As another example of such freedom one may recall the differences of Matthew and Luke from Mk 10:29: "for my sake and the gospel's sake". Here Matthew says nothing of the gospel and has simply: "for my name's sake", while Luke, omitting any specific reference to Christ himself, reads: "for the sake of the kingdom of God". It is obvious therefore that the evangelists are not concerned, at least not at all times, to report the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. And on this background one must allow for the possibility that Matthew in his formulation of 19:16, 17 has not only been selective as regards subject matter but also that he used some freedom in the precise language which he employed. The singular use of the adjective "good" might then be a particularly clear example of his use of that freedom.

To compress his explanation to briefer compass: Stonehouse says that Matthew was, as an author, quite entitled to "have exercised a measure of freedom in his literary composition of the narrative", for "the evangelists are not concerned, at least not at all times, to report the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus" and so "Matthew in his formulation of 19:16, 17 has not only been selective as regards subject matter but also ... he has used some freedom in the precise language which he employed." But this explanation (and it is the only one Stonehouse gives) does not in fact attempt to explain **why** Matthew should have made such changes but only asserts the possibility that he did so.

How is the matter viewed from the perspective of Markan Dependence?

First, one will recognize a major shift in emphasis between the two ways of looking at the issue. On the Markan Priority hypothesis, Matthew had Mark's account in front of him, and must have deliberately altered it. Therefore (a) there must be some ground for why Matthew objected to what Mark's account says or at least he must have considered his altered wording to be more desirable for some reason; and (b) we do not have in Matthew an account of what actually took place on this occasion but a reinterpretation and rewriting of it in line with Matthew's overall views and purposes: as Gundry (*Matthew* 1982: 623) has put it, "Clearly, Matthew treats us to history mixed with elements that cannot be called historical in a modern sense. ... Matthew's subtractions, additions, and revisions of order and phraseology often show changes in substance; i.e., they represent developments of the dominical tradition that result in different meanings and departures from the actuality of events."

On the Markan Dependence view, ***no such deliberate alteration of one Gospel by another author occurred***, and we are not required to consider ***why*** it would have been changed, nor are we obliged to regard one account or the other as, in Gundry's phrase, a "departure from the actuality of events". On the Markan Dependence view, Mark had in front of him, in Matthew and Luke, two accounts of the event, and chose to adopt that of Luke. What we have in Matthew and Luke are two traditions of what took place, both going back to the actual occurrence itself. The differences between the wording of Mt 19:16b-17a and Lk 18:18b-19a are the differences that exist between two accounts from two different eyewitness who hear the one conversation.

To assess the extent of emphasis being placed upon "good" and therefore the degree of difference to be accorded to the two versions of this conversation, we need to note the overall theme and sequence of thought in the entire pericope.

Jesus in his reply queries the way in which the man used this word, and himself uses the word "good" as the springboard for his own answer to the man. The man has asked what he must do for eternal life. The answer to this question begins with a recognition that God is the source of all goodness, for only God is truly good. And this God who is good has given the Commandments. There is no need and no justification for taking Jesus's comments about "good" and about the Commandments as unrelated, as if Jesus is speaking to the man about two totally different matters one after the other. Jesus moves deliberately from the rich man's "good" to the question of the Commandments, and the transition or link between the two is the absolute goodness of God, which is revealed and expressed in the Commandments.

Jesus's reply thus means, "Why do you speak of good in this way?", leads into the goodness of God and thence into the Commandments which embody that goodness and through which we are enabled to know what it means to live a life of goodness—and that in fact is the nature of eternal life: a life of goodness, a life conformed to the Commandments.

Stonehouse (1963: 98) says that the rich man made the "claim that he had kept the whole law". This is not accurate. The man did not claim to have kept the whole law. He was not asked about the whole law. Jesus's reply to the rich man lists the Commandments of the Second Table of the Law. He does not refer to the Commandments of the First Table, the first four Commandments—these are not here raised as being at issue. The rich man was reminded of Commandments 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9—that is, all the Commandments of the Second Table, ***except the Tenth!*** And he said (and Jesus did not query the truthfulness of it), "All ***these*** I have kept." He could not truthfully answer

thus about the Tenth Commandment because **he was not keeping it**.

That is the whole point of this section of the story. When Jesus says “There is one that you lack” he is not adding some **further** requirement to those already given in the Commandments, as if the man were already fulfilling what Jesus had said thus far, and so more must now be asked of him. Rather, Jesus has deliberately omitted the Tenth Commandment from his initial list so that he could now use it to puncture through the man's pride of achievement to his real problem.

When Jesus says “There is one that you lack” his words mean “There is one Commandment that you are failing to keep”—and he is referring to the Tenth Commandment. It is no coincidence that Jesus's listing of the Commandments of the Second Table leaves out this one only, that after the man says he is keeping all those that Jesus lists Jesus tells him there is one missing, and that we perceive from subsequent developments in the story that the man is beset by covetousness. Jesus's instructions to him are not requirements **additional** to the Commandments, but a way for the rich man to break free of his addiction to covetousness so that he can begin keeping the **one that he is lacking**: the Tenth Commandment.

The thesis of the rest of the discussion is: It was an axiom of the day that the rich were more able to meet the requirements of goodness and godliness because of the increased leisure and opportunities afforded them by their riches, which also were in themselves a sign of God's blessing and favor upon them. Jesus turned this traditional wisdom upon its head. Riches, far from being an aid, were a fatal hindrance to entering the kingdom of God. (Attempts to water down the starkness of Jesus's conundrum of a camel and a needle's eye are not only unhelpful but quite miss the point: which was to use an illustration of the impossible.)

Hence the disciples' amazement. If a rich person (with, as it would appear, all the advantages in his favor) cannot be saved, who then can? Their question now allows Jesus to make his point in the teaching of his followers. Entering and having eternal life has been stated to consist in living in accord with God's Commandments. Riches are a blockage to entering the kingdom. An impasse is reached: under these circumstances no one can be saved.

Jesus explains: What is impossible with men is possible with God. That is (as the total context makes plain), living out the Commandments in one's life is impossible by human effort—irrespective of who one is; but it **is** possible by God's help. Inheriting eternal life, entering the kingdom of God (the context shows that the terms are synonymous) is possible only by the sovereign grace of God; but the Commandments have not now at

this stage of the discussion been abrogated as the basis of the life of the members of the kingdom—rather, life lived in conformity with them is recognized as possible only through God's help.

Now it will be observed (a) that this progression of thought is clear in all three Synoptics, (b) that it is unaffected by the differences in their initial wording, which are unimportant to this thought, and (c) that in fact no point is being made in any of the Synoptics about “good” except what is common to them all: the man's question and Jesus's reply are steps towards the point that all goodness has its source in God, and the Commandments are an expression of that goodness.

Thus in Matthew's version, “what good thing” = “what is the good that I am to do to have eternal life?” The thought in Jesus's reply is, “You don't need to ask me about the nature of the good (as if I have something new and different to say). Good only has one source, God (and hence it can never change its nature, because God's moral character does not change). The way to the life that is good (= eternal life) remains the same as it always has been: live according to the Commandments.

This is not a doctrine of salvation by works: “keep the Commandments and thereby you will earn the right to be permitted to enter eternal life”. Rather, it is an explanation of the *nature* of eternal life. Eternal life is life lived in accord with goodness, life lived in accordance with the revealed will of God—and the will of God is revealed in the Commandments: for goodness has its source in God alone, and his will and character are expressed in the Commandments. To enter (aorist) eternal life therefore is to keep (aorist) the Commandments. Eternal life is life lived in harmony with the will and nature of God.

The same implications come from Luke's version. The man calls Jesus “good”. Jesus queries this: “What do you mean by calling me ‘good’?” From here he leads the man to the goodness of God, and the Commandments.

Thus the differences in the opening verses are not in contrast, or set off against one another. In each version they fulfill *the same role*. They do not arise from any Synoptic author deliberately making alterations to another author's Gospel whether from doctrinal motives (Hawkins, Streeter, Taylor, and most Markan Priority advocates) or not (Stonehouse). Such magnifying of the difference between the accounts to the level of deliberate purpose elevates it to an importance that it does not have in its context. This difference is of the nature of those minor discrepancies between the accounts of independent witnesses to which Chrysostom refers (see quotation, §10.2.1) when he says that if the Gospels “had agreed in all things exactly even to time, and place, and to the

very words” this would be much less convincing concerning their testimony to the truth than what is observed, which is “that discordance that seems to exist in little matters”.

Both Matthew's and Luke's records of the rich man's initial enquiry, and of Jesus's reply, represent reports of all that transpired, each reflecting the impression of the conversation that was made on the hearer, with each account being a slightly abbreviated record of the event. The explanation of the difference may simply be that the conversation between the rich man and Jesus took place in Aramaic, and Matthew and Luke give two accounts in Greek from two different eyewitnesses: Matthew's tradition understood “good” to be applying to what the man was to do, while Luke's tradition understood “good” to be applying to Jesus himself. In any case, the opening verses are not in contrast in the two accounts, but in each version the opening conversation fulfils exactly the same role of raising for discussion the rich man's use of “good”, which Jesus immediately uses to lead to the supreme goodness of God, from which the line of thought of the pericope then proceeds.

### **11.2.9 Assessment**

This pericope is frequently cited by scholars as providing support for the Markan Priority viewpoint. A detailed examination of the pericope in the three Synoptics shows that the Markan Priority hypothesis requires believing that Matthew and Luke have made a substantial number of changes to Mark, some major and significant, some minor and (as far as I can judge) pointless. A very considerable amount of explanation is therefore required, on the criterion of coherence, under this theory, and it is not easy to suggest a reason for most of the changes involved.

But from the perspective of Markan Dependence, Matthew and Luke can be recognized as being separate accounts from independent eyewitnesses; and Mark has then conflated these accounts. In the nature of the case, far fewer changes to sources have been made according to this hypothesis, because where Matthew and Luke differ Mark usually is in accord with one or the other. What is not drawn from either Matthew or Luke is most readily explicable upon the basis of Mark's third source P, or (in a number of instances) of Mark's redactional choice, such as his liking for particular tenses.

Thus on the Markan Priority hypothesis a very considerable amount of redaction has taken place, so that there is a great deal of alteration to be explained. However, on the Markan Dependence hypothesis, Matthew and Luke are independent accounts from different eyewitnesses and Mark has drawn upon the two of them for his material which he has carefully woven together, and there is very little in his account which cannot be



attributed to one or the other of the Major Synoptics. Thus this does not call for explanation as it is not the altering of what is in his source(s) but simply the choosing between what is in one or the other of them, and the amalgamating of both of them where Mark finds this best.

What does not come from either Matthew or Luke is mostly readily explicable upon the basis of his source P—and the existence of at least one source in addition to Matthew and Luke must be accepted because of the extent to which in his Gospel overall Mark has material which goes beyond what is in the two Major Synoptics (see Chapter Three).

It may seem that P is being invoked a little arbitrarily to deal with any difficulties, viz where the text of Mark cannot be accounted for solely upon the basis of what is in Matthew and Luke. But part of the very essence of the Synoptic Problem is that it is recognizably not possible to account for all that is in Matthew, Mark and Luke solely on the basis of relationships between them—the nature of the data is such that there *must* be some other sources.

Thus the Markan Priority hypothesis invokes Q for what is in Matthew and Luke and cannot be accounted for by Mark; and somewhat similarly the Markan Dependence hypothesis invokes P for what is in Mark and cannot be accounted for on the basis of Matthew and Luke.

There is, however, this difference: Q is a purely hypothetical source arrived at by deduction (in both senses of the word)—by deducting what is in Mark from what is common to Matthew and Luke, and as a source it is not attested independently in any way, whereas P represents primarily Peter, a known eyewitness, in known association with John Mark, and whose role as a source for Mark's information is attested in church history. This places the sources P and Q upon somewhat differing levels of attestation. See further the discussion in Chapter Three.

A very small number of word changes are attributable to Mark's redactional choice, and many of these correspond with known trends seen elsewhere (e.g. a liking for the imperfect tense, and for καί rather than ὅτι, and so on), and can be recognized as Markan preferences quite irrespective of any particular relational hypothesis. The number of items in Mark which are not covered by the above, and which therefore may remain to be explained, are negligible compared with all that needs to be explained on the basis of the Markan Priority hypothesis. The Markan Dependence hypothesis accounts simply and comprehensively for the data of the text in a way that the Markan Priority hypothesis does not.

To me, the puzzle of the century (last century, that is) is how Ned Stonehouse, and all these various other scholars, could look at the Greek of this pericope and come to the conclusion that it told in favor of Markan Priority.

For this conclusion flies in the face of the facts. Matthew and Luke have differences between them, on my count, in 36 points of detail. (These are set out in Table 1, §11.2.2.) But it happens that in 18 of these instances, Matthew and Mark are in agreement, while in the other 18 Mark and Luke are in agreement (shown in Table 2, §11.2.3). If Markan Priority, then Matthew had Mark in front of him and decided to make 18 minor changes. We can speculate about the motives he might have had for doing this. But that is what it is: plain unabashed speculation. And Luke also had Mark in front of him, and he also made 18 minor changes: **but a different 18!** So between them they created the situation of having 36 points of difference between them, but each only having 18 differences from Mark. How can a Markan Priorist account for the fact that in “editing” Mark they each chose 18 details—different details!—to alter? This is to be compared with the simple, straight-forward Markan Dependence explanation that I have given.

### 11.3 SAYINGS TO WOULD-BE DISCIPLES, AND STILLING THE STORM

#### 11.3.1 Differences in the Synoptic Record

I turn next to consider the Synoptic passages Sayings to Would-be Disciples, and Stilling The Storm (Mt 8:18-27//Mk 4:35-41//Lk 9:57-62; 8:22-25).

Mark (4:35-36) contains the setting into which Matthew places the Sayings to Would-be Disciples (8:18), but not the Sayings themselves. Matthew contains two Sayings (8:19-22) and follows these with his account of Stilling The Storm (8:23-27).

Luke contains both these pericopes, Sayings To Would-be Disciples, and also Stilling The Storm, but in different contexts, in reverse order, and separated by a considerable amount of other material (9:57-62; 8:22-25). Luke has an extension to Matthew's second Saying (9:60b) and a third Saying in addition to Matthew's two (9:61-62). His pericope of the Storm occurs in the same position as Mark's (Matthew is out of sequence with Mark-Luke here); he lacks any mention of the crowd, and he records Jesus as giving the instruction to go across to the other side of the lake **after** getting into the boat (8:22).

All three Synoptics follow Stilling the Storm with The Exorcism of Legion and then the Return of Jesus Across the Sea (Mt 9:1//Mk 5:21//Lk 8:40).

#### 11.3.2 From The Markan Priority Perspective

From the Markan Priority perspective: Matthew obtained the story Stilling the Storm

from Mark and, after the instruction to go across to the other side and the mention of the crowds (in which there is a considerable amount of Matthean redaction), he inserted into Mark's story, from Q, the account of the man who came up to talk to Jesus, and the discussion that ensued.

Matthew's redaction of Mark consists of the following:

1. Moving the pericope out of its position in Mark (where it follows the parables pericopes) to a much earlier place.
2. Deleting "On that day, when evening had come".
3. Changing the direct speech of Jesus's instruction to go across to the other side into indirect speech.
4. Moving Mark's reference to Jesus "leaving the crowds" to the beginning of the story, so that the crowds become the reason for Jesus embarking in the boat: "Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him ...".
5. Changing the emphasis upon the disciples' concern for Jesus ("they took him with them in the boat, just as he was") into the rather different "And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him."
6. Deleting the reference (Mk 4:36b) to other boats being with him.

This is **very** extensive redaction by Matthew; there is no part of Mk 4:35-36 that is not affected by it.

Matthew has then inserted Sayings to Would-be Disciples between the mention of Jesus giving orders to cross over and his actually getting into the boat. Why would Matthew wish to insert his block of Q teaching at this point in Mark? There is absolutely nothing in Mark's text to suggest this as a place for such an insertion. And this is out of character for Matthew, who normally agglomerates such material as these Sayings to Would-be Disciples into larger accounts, joining like to like (as Streeter 1924: 166-167 has pointed out).

Luke's redactional procedure is also quite extensive and similarly puzzling: the reasons for these changes are not immediately apparent. Luke's redaction of Mark consists of the following:

1. Moving the pericope Jesus's True Family from the **beginning** of Mark's parables pericopes (which in general he parallels) to the **end** of them (Lk 8:19-21), so that it precedes the Storm pericope.
2. Changing Mark's specific setting ("On that day, when evening had come") into a very general one "One day").
3. Deleting all mention of the crowd.

4. Moving Jesus's instruction to go across to the other side from **before** Jesus got into the boat until **after** it, and adding to it the words “of the lake”.

5. Changing the emphasis upon the disciples' concern for Jesus (“they took him with them in the boat, just as he was”) into the rather different “And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.”

6. Deleting the reference (Mk 4:36b) to other boats with him.

This is **very** extensive redaction by Luke; there is no part of Mk 4:35-36 that is not affected by it.

### 11.3.3 From The Markan Dependence Perspective

From the Markan Dependence perspective: Mark omits the Sayings to Would-be Disciples (this is in keeping with his overall policy of using only some of Jesus's sayings that are recorded in the Major Synoptics), he conflates Matthew and Luke, almost always following one or the other, and he adds in several minor details from his own knowledge of this story from the preaching of Peter.

Thus Mark's redactional procedure consists of the following:

1. He follows Matthew in placing Jesus's True Family immediately prior to the parables pericopes rather than where Luke has it.

2. He follows Luke in placing the Storm pericope after the parables pericopes rather than where Matthew has it.

3. He follows Matthew in mentioning the crowd (though he refers to it after Jesus gives his instruction about going to the other side).

4. He follows Luke in giving Jesus's instruction in direct speech (Mark's record of Jesus's words is identical with Luke's, except that he omits “of the lake”—like Matthew he implies the lake without mentioning it).

5. He follows Matthew in saying that Jesus gave his instruction **before** he boarded the boat, rather than **after**.

6. He adds in several minor details: The alteration of the emphasis, in that the disciples took Jesus with them in the boat, “just as he was”; plus “On that day, when evening had come”, and “And other boats were with him”.

Thus Mark's procedure here can be explained entirely in terms of following a pattern noted throughout: viz, he omits some sayings in his sources; he conflates what he finds in Matthew and Luke; and he adds in further details from his other source, P.

Here then, in Mk 4:35-41, Mark has the **setting** for what is found in Matthew (the Sayings to Would-be Disciples), but the Matthean pericope for which it is the setting is

absent, so that it thus becomes instead the setting for the **following** pericope that occurs in Matthew.

On the criterion of coherence, Markan Dependence provides a much better explanation of the data than does Markan Priority.

#### 11.4 TUCKETT'S DISCUSSION OF MARK-Q OVERLAP PASSAGES

Tuckett has a detailed study of the passages that are usually explained on the basis of Mark-Q overlap, concerning which he says (1983: 92), "the synoptic interrelationships are very difficult to explain by the Griesbach hypothesis in the form advocated by Farmer".

Tuckett's case is based upon two main arguments: (a) The evidence is against Luke having known Matthew's Gospel (with this we can concur); and (b) It is frequently difficult to see how Mark's text could be derived from what is in Matthew and/or Luke.

But when assessing the explanatory power of the Griesbach hypothesis, Tuckett has limited himself—as he himself acknowledges—to the version of this view advocated by Farmer, and has not taken account of the third source (Mark's knowledge additional to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke) to which Griesbach himself specifically drew attention (cited in §7.13). And Mark's text can readily be explained upon the basis of Mark's use of this third source P or of his redaction of his material in accord with his attested preference of particular words and constructions. It is the Markan Priority hypothesis (not Markan Dependence) that has the greater difficulty accounting for such factors in the Synoptic text. Tuckett's explanations have been considered in detail in §7.13.

#### 11.5 TUCKETT'S DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC PASSAGES

In Part III of his study, Tuckett gives detailed attention to what he calls "Some Particular Texts". These are of two kinds, "Selected Markan Passages" and "The Double Tradition" (i.e., the relationship of Matthew and Luke). In his first Section, Tuckett examines seven passages:

1. The Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand (Mt 12:9-14//Mk 3:1-6//Lk 6:6-11)
2. The Synoptic Tradition on Uncleaness (Mt 15:1-20//Mk 7:1-23)
3. Cleansing the Temple (Mt 21:12-13//Mk 11:15-19//Lk 19:45-48)
4. Tribute to Caesar (Mt 22:15-22//Mk 12:13-17//Lk 20:20-26)
5. The Double Commandment of Love

(Mt 22:34-40//Mk 12:28-34//Lk 10:25-28; 20:39f.)

## 6. The Woes against the Scribes and Pharisees

(Mt 23:5-7//Mk 12:38-40//Lk 20:45-47)

## 7. The Widow's Gift (Mk 12:41-44//Lk 21:1-4)

In his second section, Tuckett then considers a number of passages occurring only in Matthew and Luke. In all the passages in this latter group, and also at times in relation to passages in the former group, Tuckett is directing his rebuttal to the proposition that Luke is dependent upon Matthew. Thus for example in his discussion of The Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand he says (1983: 102), “The Griesbach hypothesis must presumably assert that Luke is dependent upon Matthew here.” Such a relationship of Luke to Matthew was *no part* of Griesbach's hypothesis, but was an extension upon Griesbach's view that was made by Farmer, and one with which Markan Dependence does not agree, as shown earlier (see Chapter Eight).

If then we attend to what Tuckett says in rebuttal of **Griesbach's** hypothesis (as distinct from Farmer's extension of it, which I concur with Tuckett in rejecting), we find that this rebuttal depends primarily upon one point: How can Mark's text be seen to be derived from Matthew and Luke? To the extent that this can be demonstrated to be difficult, Tuckett considers his point made: the Two-Document view gives a more coherent explanation of the text than does the Griesbach view.

Thus for example, regarding Mk 12:15//Mt 22:19//Lk 20:24 (Matthew and Luke, “Show”; Mark, “Bring [me a coin]”), Tuckett says (1983: 124) “there is no clear reason why Mark should have avoided the use of δείκνυμι (or a compound) in both his sources, when he uses the verb twice elsewhere (1:44; 14:15)”.

Now Matthew here (22:19) uses ἐπιδείκνυμι, which he uses on three occasions altogether, and which Luke also employs on a total of three occasions (Lk 17:14; Acts 9:39; 18:28)—between them, six out of the seven New Testament occurrences; the word does not occur in Mark at all. Luke here (20:24) uses the simplex form δείκνυμι, which occurs thrice in Matthew, five times in Luke and twice in Acts—and twice in Mark. One occurrence (Mk 1:44, “go, show yourself to the priest”) is in a passage closely paralleled in both Matthew and Luke (in citing the words of Jesus in this verse, Mark's wording corresponds exactly with Matthew and Luke where they agree, and exactly with one or the other in the minor points where they differ—with the sole exception that Mark has ἃ where Matthew has the singular ὃ). The other place (Mk 14:15, “he will show you a large upper room furnished ...”) is paralleled in Luke and δείξει is one of eight consecutive words in Luke that also occur in Mark. In both these places the context requires “show” and “bring”, φέρω, would hardly be a possible substitute.

But in 12:15 Mark adopts φέρω, a verb more frequent in his own Gospel than in either of the other Synoptics (φέρω, together with its suppletive forms, occurs four times in Matthew, fifteen times in Mark, and four times in Luke). So in the one context that permitted it, Mark replaced “show” with a verb he used more often, “bring”. Mark’s preference for φέρω thus provides a perfectly valid explanation for Mark’s redaction here of Matthew and Luke.

It leaves Tuckett moreover facing the difficulty, on his own terms, of explaining this passage from the Markan Priority perspective: Why should **Matthew and Luke**, in using Mark, have **both** rejected Mark’s perfectly legitimate use of φέρω, a verb that **they** each use twice as often as does Mark δείκνυμι, and why should they have each chosen to insert here a form of δείκνυμι, that is, substituting for Mark’s φέρω a verb that they use less often than (Matthew), or the same number of times, this passage apart (Luke, four times) as, they use Mark’s φέρω? Realistically, one must say that what Mark has done (on the Griesbach hypothesis) is much “more coherent and self-consistent” than the explanation that must here be postulated for Matthean and Lukan redaction on the Two-Document hypothesis.

Tuckett’s consideration of these passages merits a much more detailed examination than is required here for our present purposes. It is sufficient for us to note that his conclusion that the Two-Document hypothesis explanation is more coherent is answered by (a) the earlier discussion concerning P, the other material additional to what is contained in Matthew and Luke that Mark could—and did—draw upon in the wording of his Gospel, and (b) a recognition that Mark is engaged in putting the wording of his sources into what was his own more familiar and somewhat more colloquial vocabulary, and that it would seem was also the normal style of Greek of his intended readership.

## 11.6 ASSESSMENT

Tuckett has drawn attention to the one fundamental criterion by which Synoptic explanations are to be assessed: that is: Which hypothesis gives the most reasonable and coherent explanation of the pericopes in the Synoptic texts? He himself has examined a number of passages with the aim of assessing Synoptic explanations by this criterion. The passages he looks at are of three kinds: the so-called Mark-Q overlaps, seven selected Markan passages, and some from the Matthew-Luke (“Q”) tradition.

Tuckett has in every case concluded that the Two-Document hypothesis offers an explanation of the data equal to or (more usually) superior to that explanation that can be offered by the Griesbach hypothesis. However, we have had occasion to note that

Tuckett makes his comparison with “the Griesbach hypothesis in the form advocated by Farmer” (92). This, it will be recalled, included an extension upon Griesbach that derived Luke’s Gospel from Matthew.

We have considered the comparison of the Two-Document hypothesis with Markan Dependence, the form of the Griesbach hypothesis as set out in the present study, which recognizes in particular (a) the independence of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in their canonical form; (b) the use by both Matthew and Luke of some early documents written by the apostle Matthew and in circulation in the church; and (c) the importance of Mark’s P source in influencing his point of view and his wording in how he tells the stories that he parallels in Matthew and Luke. When this comparison is made, the problems that Tuckett perceives for the Griesbach hypothesis evaporate, and it can be seen that the Markan Dependence hypothesis provides a more coherent and self-consistent explanation than is possible upon the basis of the Two-Document approach.

In particular, we have found confirmation (see §7.13) that the so-called Mark-Q overlap theory is not a satisfactory explanation of the passages for which it is used. Moreover, as I said there, once the door is opened by this stratagem there is no way in which the size of Q can be contained, but it can be the source for anything in the Gospels and thus instead of a Markan Priority or Two-Document hypothesis we have instead, *de facto*, an Ur-Gospel explanation.

A very detailed examination in this chapter of one oft-cited pericope, the Rich Young Man, has enabled us to see how much superior is the explanation of the data provided by the Markan Dependence hypothesis and this has been noted also in briefer consideration of other material. Overall, it can be concluded that the ultimate assessment must be made, as Tuckett has perceptively said, on the basis of which hypothesis gives the most reasonable and coherent explanation of the pericopes in the Synoptic texts. And we should note that the hypothesis that consistently provides this better explanation is that of Markan Dependence.



## **CHAPTER TWELVE: IN CONCLUSION**

### **12.1 SUMMARY**

- 12.1.1 Introduction
- 12.1.2 Historical Survey
- 12.1.3 Complete Independence
- 12.1.4 Successive Dependence
- 12.1.5 Other Theories: An Ur-Gospel; Lukan Priority; the Farrer View
- 12.1.6 The Two-Gospel Hypothesis
- 12.1.7 Markan Priority

### **12.2 ASSESSMENT**

The great majority of scholars who have worked on the Synoptic Problem have been right in most of what they have affirmed. Where they have come to contradict each other is oftentimes in the deductions that they have drawn from the data, and in the extrapolations in extension of what could be known that they have proceeded to make, reaching “conclusions” that were matters of pure speculation.

### **12.3 CONCLUSIONS**

### **12.4 OVERALL: THE SOLUTION TO THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM**

The progressive publication of Matthew, with Markan Dependence upon sources Matthew, Luke, and Peter, provides the best explanation of the Synoptic Problem.

### **12.5 IN MORE DETAIL: HOW THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN**

- 12.5.1 Early Production of Short Accounts by Matthew
- 12.5.2 Compilation of a Narrative from Short Accounts
- 12.5.3 Matthew Produces a Complete Gospel
- 12.5.4 Luke Writes his Gospel as “Part One” of his History
- 12.5.5 Mark Produces his Special-Purpose Gospel
- 12.5.6 Dating

### **12.6 THE RELIABILITY OF THE SYNOPTIC RECORD**

One consequence of this Synoptic explanation is that no author is postulated to be “correcting” or “altering” another. The Synoptic accounts are reliable, authentic, historically accurate records of eyewitness testimony of what Jesus said and did.

## CHAPTER TWELVE IN CONCLUSION

This chapter draws out the conclusions arrived at  
from the whole investigation

*If I wished to deter you from forming any theory as to the origin of the Gospels, and to persuade you that knowledge on this subject is now unattainable by man, I should only have to make a list for you of the discordant results arrived at by a number of able and ingenious men who have given much study to the subject. Yet patient and careful thought has so often gained unexpected victories that we incur the reproach of cowardice if we too easily abandon problems as insoluble. ... There is a preliminary caution which is by no means unnecessary to give, viz. that in our choice of a solution we ought to be determined solely by a comparison of each hypothesis with the facts.*

- G Salmon, 1889: 128-130.

### 12.1 SUMMARY

#### 12.1.1 Introduction

Any person who begins to write about the Synoptic Problem is aware, with a sense of awe, of the immense labour that has been expended upon this one issue by many great stalwarts of scholarship down the ages, primarily in the past two to three centuries. Any progress that we can make today is possible in large measure because of the work of our predecessors. The very extent of their differences from one another—and these certainly have been considerable—enables us to refine and clarify our thinking about these specific problems.

Even a pygmy can see further than a giant—when he is standing on the giant's shoulders. It will not therefore be inherently a matter of surprise if we today—from our vantage point—can see morasses and bogs, blind alleys and dead ends, into which the work of our predecessors has been taking Gospel scholarship. Vincent Taylor (*Mark*, 1966: 76-77) has ended his chapter on “The Markan Sources” with these comments:

The study of the hypotheses which have been examined is barren if it ends in purely negative results. We may feel compelled to reject all known forms of the Ur-Markus Hypothesis, but there is something unseemly in an investigation which ends with *Requiescat Urmarcus*. The same may also be said of the rejection of redactional and

compilation hypotheses. There is no failure in Synoptic criticism, for, if we reject a particular suggestion worked out with great learning and ability, we are compelled to reconsider the evidence on which it is based and seek a better explanation, knowing that a later critic may light upon a hypothesis sounder and more comprehensive still.

Furthermore, we today, from our vantage point, are also able to see where paths that to our predecessors seemed completely separate and diverging will in fact come together just up ahead and lead forward to a solution of one aspect or another of the overall problem.

This perhaps more than any other is the impression made upon me by examining what others have already said about these Synoptic issues. Again and again I have found that solutions to which my research has led me and that I had thought to be original have turned out to be foreshadowed in the writings of some commentator or writer whom subsequently I have come across.

There is therefore little that is totally new in the proposed solution to the Synoptic Problem presented in this dissertation. In very many cases it could however be said that the insights of many careful students of the Gospels in past decades have not received the thoughtful consideration that they merited, because those insights were overshadowed by difficulties left unresolved, or were simply overlooked because they did not easily accord with the currently fashionable theory.

But in quite a few cases a steady accumulation of evidence and attestation has so consistently drawn attention to one issue or another, one proposal or another, that it is not easy for it to continue to be ignored by mainstream research and current Synoptic orthodoxy.

And in these insights from the labours of many scholars it may be that we can find the resolution of the perplexities that, for any of the currently-held Synoptic theories, still remain.

To survey and summarize what this present dissertation has covered:

### **12.1.2 Historical Survey**

Papias's comments do not give attention to the order of the Gospels. Clement of Alexandria says: First, those Gospels with genealogies, then those without. Irenaeus gives this order: First, Matthew; then Mark and Luke (without an order for these two being specified); finally John. There is one order (and one only) that accords with both Clement and Irenaeus, viz, *Matthew, Luke, Mark, John*. Origen mentions the Gospels in the order *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*; but he does not say that he considers this to be

the order in which they were **written**, and his comments can be taken as in fact implying that this is the order in which they are best **read**. Prior to Chrysostom and Augustine, these are the only Fathers who discuss the question of the order of or the relationship of the Gospels. However, it should be noted that none of these early church Fathers implies the use by any Synoptic author(s) of any prior Synoptic Gospel.

Chrysostom and Augustine were the first to comment on this question of inter-relationship, at approximately the same time (the end of the fourth century). Chrysostom asserted most emphatically that each of the four Gospels was written completely independently of any of the others. By contrast, Augustine averred that each Gospel writer used the work of his predecessor, in the order *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*. After this time, any who referred to the matter of Gospel relationships at all accepted the judgement of Augustine, upon his authority.

Neither Chrysostom nor Augustine refer to any authorities for their views, and they give no evidence of having any specific basis for them. Augustine has adopted here the order in which the Gospels were arranged in the canon, and appears to have accepted (without evidence or indeed any specific investigation) that this order was intended to, and did, reflect the order of writing. There is no reason for judging that this view is better based than, or should be preferred to, that of Clement and Irenaeus.

We need moreover to note the carefully worked-out case presented by Peabody that by the time he had completed his work on the Synoptics Augustine had altered his earlier opinion in favor of the conclusion that the order of writing was Matthew-Luke-Mark.

The evidence of the Fathers, then, is not totally conclusive, but insofar as it does point in any specific direction, it is to the order *Matthew, Luke, Mark, John*; unless one believes that there is good (even if unstated) evidence behind the first conclusion that Augustine reached, supporting the canonical order as the order of writing. There is no **stated evidence** at all from any of the early Fathers that bears upon the question of any **interrelationship** between the Synoptics, that is, any use made by any of the Synoptic authors of any one or both of the other Synoptic Gospels.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century were developed the first formulations of the major explanations of Synoptic interrelationships that have been added to those of Chrysostom and Augustine. And it can be noted further, however, that through the past two centuries there have also been not a few scholars who have held that behind the present Synoptic Gospels were numbers of other written documents of various lengths, which were used by the authors of the canonical Synoptic Gospels, in whatsoever order they may happen to have written them.

### 12.1.3 Complete Independence

Some scholars have advocated and further developed Chrysostom's view, that the Gospels were written in complete independence of each other. But the investigation in this dissertation has confirmed the virtually universal recognition that the Gospel of Mark is indubitably the link in some way between Matthew and Luke. The factors considered in Chapter Ten lead to the conclusion that the Complete Independence theory cannot account for Mark's position as the middle term between the Major Synoptics; nor can any Complete Independence theory explain adequately the close similarities that exist between Mark and the others in overall contents, in detailed wording, and in order of pericopes.

### 12.1.4 Successive Dependence

The evaluation in Chapter Ten of the evidence for the Successive Dependence hypothesis will lead, similarly, to the rejection of this theory as an adequate Synoptic explanation. Especially significant here are (a) the inexplicable way in which Mark deals with the contents and order of Matthew if he is using it as his source, and (b) the virtually impossible procedure that must be predicated for Luke in ***always following*** Mark in sequence where Mark ***deserts*** Matthew, and in feeling free to ***desert*** Mark's order himself in those places (and ***only*** those places) where Mark is ***adopting*** Matthew's order.

### 12.1.5 Other Theories: An Ur-Gospel; Lukan Priority; the Farrer View

There is a complete lack of any evidence for an all-embracing Ur-Gospel containing all that is found in the three canonical Gospels: as shown in Chapter Ten, it cannot be accepted that if such a Gospel had existed it would have been passed over by the church in favour of our Matthew, Mark or Luke (which on this hypothesis would each be only a partial replica of its contents), and certainly it cannot be accepted that it would have disappeared without mention and without trace. In any case, while adequate to explain the Synoptic ***similarities***, this theory leaves the ***differences*** as inexplicable.

The Jerusalem School (Lukan Priority) hypothesis does not really impact upon the case I am putting forward. The Farrer hypothesis—a combination of Markan Priority and Luke's use of Matthew—is refuted by what is said concerning the Two-Source and Two-Gospel hypotheses.

So this survey leaves just two theories that are capable of propounding a strong and persuasive explanation of Mark's relation to the other Synoptics: the Markan Priority/Two-Source hypothesis (Chapter Five) and Two-Gospel/Markan Dependence (Chapter Six).

### 12.1.6 The Two-Gospel Hypothesis

With his revival and development of the Griesbach hypothesis, Farmer has been responsible for reopening the active consideration of the Synoptic Problem in the present generation of New Testament scholarship (Chapter Six). However, he has not been very persuasive with his explanation of why, given the existence of Matthew and Luke, Mark would have been written at all. And he has tied his presentation of the view of Markan Posteriority to the assertion that Luke used Matthew as a source: whereas the evidence is completely against Luke having known Matthew in its canonical form, as Chapter Eight has shown.

### 12.1.7 Markan Priority

All the arguments of Streeter's classic case for Markan Priority have been completely exploded: Streeter's first three arguments, and his fifth, by Chapman and Butler; and Streeter's fourth, in its various ramifications, by Sanders and Stoldt. A careful consideration of all the arguments that have been or are being advanced in support of Markan Priority has been set out in Chapter Five.

The only argument that survives this detailed assessment is one that was implied at times by Streeter and his followers but not separately identified or developed by them in detail. This is Tuckett's argument of cohesion: that at the level of pericope-by-pericope and indeed verse-by-verse comparison, Markan Priority is the better explanation. Tuckett's argument has been considered in Chapters Seven and Eleven, where the grounds have been set out upon which one may challenge Tuckett's conclusion.

Now it must be emphasized that the rebutting of the arguments for Markan Priority, as set out above, does not prove that Markan Priority is *impossible*, or *not correct*, and most certainly does not in itself establish any alternative theory. What has been shown is that the arguments being propounded as establishing Markan Priority (or even as simply supporting it) do no such thing.

Insofar as these "arguments for Markan Priority" are objective (dealing with facts as distinct from interpretations and opinions), they establish no more than the high probability of some kind of literary relationship existing between the Synoptics. To the extent that they are matters of interpretation or opinion, or based upon presuppositions that have not been (and cannot be) established (e.g., that better Greek indicates a later document, or that greater frankness about the shortcomings of the disciples indicates an earlier document), they are ways in which different aspects of the data would or could be viewed in the event that Markan Priority had been established on other grounds. They

are valuable in showing us what the Synoptic data looks like from the perspective of the Markan Priority hypothesis. But in themselves they provide no definite and specific evidence for the Markan Priority hypothesis as against any other hypothesis.

This needs to be fairly faced. If one can provide as good a ground for rejecting a particular presupposition as for accepting it, or for adopting an alternative presupposition, then he can legitimately examine what the data looks like when viewed from that perspective, and can consider the alternative way in which the data can be interpreted. These other interpretations will be as legitimate as those from the perspective of Markan Priority. But it is of very great importance that we do not confuse opinions and interpretations of this kind with evidence or proof.

This is what seems to have happened: The Augustinian (Successive Dependence) and Griesbach (Markan Posteriority) views were ruled out of consideration *ab initio* on the grounds that Mark lacks important material that Matthew contains and that these views would require the belief that Mark left it out deliberately, and only a lunatic would act like that (Streeter, 1924: 158), and Mark was clearly not a lunatic. Next, the Ur-Gospel theory is rejected as an unnecessary hypothesis. The first three arguments (from content, language, and order) establish that a literary interrelationship exists between the Synoptists, and this rules out the oral hypothesis. Other possible alternatives such as Lukan Priority were then excluded for lack of adequate supporting evidence. So the only hypothesis left is Markan Priority. This is thus accepted upon the basis of Streeter's first three arguments, after the alternative possible hypotheses have been rejected. Then his remaining arguments are adduced as additional support for the proposition that has been established in this way.

Now this approach can be noticed in Streeter himself (1924, 151-152) where he marks off the first three arguments on their own, taking it that they establish the position. He says,

this conjunction and alternation of Matthew and Luke in their agreement with Mark as regards (a) content, (b) wording, (c) order, is only explicable if they are incorporating a source identical, or all but identical, with Mark.

He then presents his next arguments in language that presumes that Markan Priority has been established and that what follows is providing further strengthening for this position ("The primitive character of Mark is further shown by ...").

So also Barclay (1975: 86-87): he presents the data, acknowledges the existence of other views, opts for Markan Priority, and then sets out "further arguments" that will "confirm this position":

This would lead us to the strong possibility that Mark was the basis of the other two gospels. We shall shortly adduce other arguments for this, but it may be laid down here and now that the priority of Mark is one of the most widely accepted principles of the modern study of the gospels. ... Let us see what further arguments may be found to confirm this position.

Similarly Metzger (1969: 80-81): he too presents the data, acknowledges the existence of several possible relationships, opts for Markan Priority, and then sets out the other arguments "in support of this view".

It is obvious from these data that there is some kind of literary relationship among the synoptic Gospels. Of several possible relationships, the one which has approved itself to most scholars is the priority of Mark. ... In support of this view it is customary to point not only to the implications of the data set forth above, but also to the following features which suggest the primitive character of Mark's Gospel.

Again, Vincent Taylor (*Gospels*, 1930: 38-39) gives first of all the arguments of contents, language and order and then follows this with an argument in which he states that "Instances of *stylistic* or *grammatical* change are also significant", and which he concludes with the statement, "These facts considerably strengthen the argument that Matthew and Luke use Mark as a source." His next argument commences, "Further support is given by instances of what appear to be *conscious alterations* of Markan statements which might be misunderstood or raise difficulties."

A great many further examples could be adduced from other major scholars.

But the fact is that this presentation of the case for Markan Priority does not at all establish what it has been almost universally taken to establish.

What I am asserting is that this methodology is fundamentally invalid as a means of establishing a conclusion. It *is* acceptable (indeed, it is normal) to test a hypothesis by examining the data from the perspective of that hypothesis, to ascertain if what one sees will disprove the hypothesis. This is the standard procedure of *reductio ad absurdum*, for example, and the method of procedure in many scientific investigations. This approach can determine whether the hypothesis is possible or impossible. If a hypothesis is shown to be impossible, we abandon it and examine another. But if a hypothesis is not shown to be *impossible*, that means it has been recognized as *possible*, not that it has been *proven* or *established* or even that it has been shown to be probable. Methodologically, it is invalid to take it that the data establishes Markan Priority, that all the other arguments support Markan Priority, and therefore that Markan Priority is confirmed as the correct explanation of Synoptic interrelationships.

These various arguments either provide grounds for accepting that there is a literary



relationship between the three Synoptics ***without showing in which direction it travelled***; or they are reversible, and can be used for supporting other hypotheses as much as (or possibly even more than) Markan Priority; or they are matters of subjective opinion without objective supporting evidence; or they are in fact not ***arguments for*** the Markan Priority hypothesis at all but, rather, ***explanations of*** how that hypothesis would account for the data if that hypothesis had been established upon other grounds. If the Markan Priority hypothesis is held, it is an opinion unsupported by any identifiable evidence that points unequivocally in that direction.

It needs to be recognized, further, that the relationship of Markan Priority on its own will explain only a relatively small part of the Synoptic data: viz, the material of the Triple Tradition that is sufficiently close in wording and scope that the form of given pericopes in Matthew and Luke can legitimately be considered to be derived from Mark. But this leaves substantial sections of the Major Synoptics to be explained on the basis of other sources: Q for the areas of agreement between Matthew and Luke that do not occur in Mark, and M and L (however these are conceived) for the unique material (*sondergut*) in Matthew and Luke. These of course (with Mark) are the sources in Streeter's Four-Document or Four-Source theory. But there are other passages that the above scheme does not in itself cover.

First, there are the pericopes that occur in Mark but in such a form that Mark's account cannot have been the source for Matthew and Luke. These are of two kinds: where Mark's wording differs from Matthew and Luke but the latter are rather closer to each other (the prime example being the Parable of the Mustard Seed) and, secondly, where Mark's account is significantly shorter than Matthew and Luke and where the latter agree in what they add to Mark (the main examples are the Preaching of John the Baptist, the Temptation, and the Beelzebul Controversy). The standard explanation is that in these pericopes there was an overlap of Mark and Q, and that both Major Synoptics made use of the Q account. One alternative approach is that Mark knew Q (which in a sense is an explanation of how Mark came to overlap Q); and another is that Luke knew Matthew.

Another major area of Synoptic data is the passages in which there is significant and often extensive agreement in Matthew and Luke against Mark. The approach to this that was followed by Streeter was to identify different types of agreements and discuss them separately, a methodology which, as Farmer (and others) point out, atomizes the evidence and makes it appear less significant than it is, so that the problem this data poses for Markan Priority is sidestepped rather than dealt with. The Two-Document (or

Four-Document) approach does not adequately account for such agreements of the Major Synoptics against Mark, so these agreements must be attributed to such factors as Matthew and Luke lighting upon the same “corrections” to make to Mark, to textual distortion, or to coincidence. Upon examination of numerous occurrences of such agreements against Mark, these explanations appear to provide a flimsy case, particularly in view of the fact that many of these agreements are of a kind such that it is difficult if not impossible to see them as redactional modifications made to Mark independently by both Matthew and Luke.

In these issues then we can identify three specific arguments **against** Markan Priority. These arguments, and two others noted earlier, can be summarized as:

**1. The nature, extent, and significance of the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark.** These agreements are such that it is highly improbable that they could all have arisen by coincidence or independently of each other. They occur in material that is part of the Triple Tradition and they point to the existence of a common source for the material in question that is used by Matthew and Luke—a common source that was **not** Mark.

**2. The vagueness, dubiousness, and insubstantial nature of Q.** This hypothesized documentary source is invoked to account for one particular class of Matthew-Luke agreements against Mark, viz those where Matthew and Luke agree in the inclusion of substantial material not in Mark. There is not (and in the nature of the case, could hardly be) unanimity about the scope and extent of Q, because each scholar decides the contents of Q upon his own criteria. As an article by C Stewart Petrie pointed out (and as numerous others have reiterated), “Q is only what you make it.” There is a sizeable gap between postulating a Q, and adducing any **objective evidence** in support of its existence. And if one depends upon logical argumentation, then that logical argumentation will, if carried through fully and consistently, establish in fact a different conclusion, because of the Mark-Q overlaps.

**3. The Mark-Q overlaps.** There are numbers of places where Matthew-Luke positive agreements are so many and so significant in a Markan context that the Two-Source hypothesis is led to conclude that Q and Mark overlapped at the point, i.e. both contained an account of the same pericope, and accordingly, Matthew and Luke each (in his own way, and to varying extents) conflated Q and Mark. But if some events recorded in Mark are thus acknowledged also to have been in Q, on what basis (other than pure arbitrariness) can it be decided that all the various other pericopes in Mark could not also be in Q? In other words, if Q exists at all, on what objective basis can its boundaries

be drawn so as to exclude the rest of the Markan corpus? There is no way in fact that Q can be confined to being merely a “sayings source”. Once we face the significance of the recognition of Mark-Q overlaps, we find that carrying the argument for Q to its logical conclusion leads us to Q being a full Ur-Gospel, used by Matthew and Luke. It would seem that the argument for Q “proves” rather too much! But in any case, it is clearly invalid to conclude that something cannot have been in Q simply upon the grounds that it happens also to be in Mark.

Thus the argument for Q removes the necessity for seeing Mark as a source for Matthew and Luke. **All** the common material in Matthew and Luke can be attributed to the Q source, and not merely material that happens not to be in Mark. Thus the way is open to view Mark as also derived from the Q Ur-Gospel, or from Matthew and Luke. In practice, Q advocates will not follow the logic of their arguments to this conclusion. Rather, they argue for Q from the existence of material that is common to Matthew and Luke but that is not in Mark, without justifying their basis for deciding that other common Matthew/Luke material could not also be in Q if it happens to be in Mark as well. The recognized Mark-Q overlaps will continue to point to the deficiency in their reasoning.

**4. The order of the pericopes in the Synoptics.** The Markan Priority hypothesis entails belief in a very high level of coincidence, viz, that it did not happen that both Matthew and Luke left Mark's order at the same point, and that when one of them was about to desert Mark's order the other Major Synoptic would always continue with Mark's order (if already following it) or return to Mark's order at that same point (if prior to that point he had been following another order).

**5. The extent to which Matthew and Luke have rewritten Mark.** If Markan Priority is true, then both Matthew and Luke have engaged in a deliberate, extensive, and (so far as we now can judge) frequently quite pointless rewriting of what Mark has said, breaking up the pattern and organization of Mark's narrative, making numerous dubious “corrections” to his account and excising a great deal of the vivid detail with which his Gospel abounds.

## 12.2 ASSESSMENT

Attempting an objective assessment of the evidence on an impartial basis is difficult. The difficulty really is coming to grips with what people perceive as being evidence, and why. On the one hand, there are those like Kümmel (1975: 60) who look at the data (in this case, a couple of examples of “the colloquial or Semitic text of Mark” and the “better Greek” of Matthew and Luke) and conclude with absolute confidence, it seems, “That in

every case Mk is primary cannot be doubted.” And I am left still doubting—which is something that I have just been informed by Kümmel that I cannot do. Worse still, I find the data with which I have been presented to contain **no argument whatsoever** to support Markan Priority. If this is so, how then can Kümmel be so confident that this same data convincingly demonstrates Markan Priority?

Then on the other hand there are those who write in much more restrained fashion, giving a clear and comforting impression of a judge who reaches the right verdict after a careful and thorough-going weighing of all the evidence. Thus Stonehouse (1963: 82) says, with judicious caution, “On our part, however, we acknowledge that the linguistic phenomena which have been noted create a strong presumption in favor of the view that the less literary Gospel is the earlier.” There has not however been any attempt made to substantiate his basic assumption that invariably a later writer, working from the material of an earlier writer, will employ better grammar and vocabulary than that used by that earlier writer.

To me, this seems to be arguing in a circle. I can see no factual grounds of any kind whatsoever for drawing Stonehouse’s “strong presumption”: the conclusion rests upon the unstated, untested and unverified assumption that a later writer will certainly and inevitably use better Greek than an earlier writer.

Other scholars, cited earlier, refer to the freshness of Mark’s narrative and the wealth of circumstantial detail with which he packs it, which is taken to indicate he is prior. And scholars refer also to his continuous, unified portrayal of historical developments, while in Matthew the original sequence of the individual narratives is broken up—and this Matthean disruption of Mark is seen as a clear indicator that Mark is prior. But yet again. Mark is considered to be full of colloquialisms and grammatical clumsiness; his style abounds in repetitions and redundancies. In all these areas Matthew and Luke improve on Mark’s style and grammar. In these features Matthew and Luke are better than Mark. This too is seen as a reason for Mark’s priority.

Thus we note that in a number of ways Mark is viewed as being better than Matthew or Luke. This is seen as an argument for this Gospel’s priority. In a number of other ways Matthew and Luke are seen as being better than Mark. And this too is seen as an argument for Mark’s priority. Whether in a given instance Matthew or Luke have overlooked or broken up something in Mark, and thus lost something that Mark had, or have improved on Mark; whether Matthew and Luke are better than Mark or in regard to a particular matter Mark is better than Matthew and Luke, the deduction that is drawn, the verdict that is given, is always the same: it **all** goes to demonstrate the priority of Mark. Heads I win, tails you lose.

But the response to this objection will be, “Ah, but it all depends on the issue. In some matters the Gospel that is better would be prior, and in others the Gospel that is better would be a later Gospel.”

Perhaps so. But where are we to find an objective, impartial scale on which we can measure these things and decide which is which? There is absolutely no law of literature (or knowledge) that says that freshness and wealth of detail is evidence of priority to (and use by) a document with less of each. There is absolutely no law of literature (or knowledge) that says that a less colloquial style and more formal grammar is evidence of posteriority to (and use of) a document that is more colloquial and less formal.

What then constitutes genuine evidence for a resolution of the Synoptic Problem? Where can we turn to find a firm foundation for a decision as to the order of writing of the Synoptics, and the question of which author(s) used which other document/documents?

Is there in fact no hypothesis that can be found that is able to explain all the observed data of the Synoptics? The opinion was voiced by a number of scholars at the Jerusalem Symposium on the Gospels in April 1984, and voiced again at the Southeastern Baptist Seminary’s Symposium of New Testament Studies in April 2000, that the question of the interrelationships between the Synoptics is beyond the possibility of now being solved. How could all the labours of so many scholars from around the world over so extended a period lead to so inconclusive a result as this?

But this gloomy conclusion is **not** the result to which the present study has led. Rather, it is to be recognized that the great majority of scholars who have worked on the Synoptic Problem have been right in **most** of what they have affirmed.

Now, seeing that scholars are espousing views that in their final form are mutually exclusive, it is a truism that these scholars cannot all be right. There is no means by which all the various points of view can be fully reconciled.

But the scholars whose work underlies the different Synoptic theories have had many completely valid insights into the nature of the Synoptic phenomena and what those phenomena indicate concerning what actually happened in the first century. And they have therefore reached numbers of perfectly accurate conclusions from their study of the evidence. In fact, what has surprised me in my investigation of these various issues is not the extent to which so many learned and dedicated scholars have been **wrong**, but the extent to which they have been **right**. The major problems have resulted from their extension of their insights from particular issues and instances so as to become overall generalizations, when the evidence did not justify this. Where they have come to contradict each other is oftentimes in the deductions that they have drawn from the data,

and in the extrapolations they have proceeded to make in extension of what could be known into “conclusions” that were matters of pure speculation.

Chrysostom (Chapter One, Chapter Ten) was correct in his assessment of the nature of the similarities and differences amongst the Synoptics, and in his judgement that each of the Synoptists was an independent and valid witness to the truth of what he wrote. It does not follow, though, as he thought, that the independence and veracity of their witness would be compromised if they were interrelated in such a way that one (or two) of them made use of their predecessor(s) as a source.

Augustine (Chapter One, Chapter Ten) was correct in recognizing that each later writer had known and made use of the work of whoever wrote before him, and this insight has become foundational in Synoptic studies. But Streeter was correct also when he showed that Augustine, lacking the tools for Synoptic studies that we have available, was in error in regarding Mark as but an epitomizer of Matthew.

Streeter was correct, further, in recognizing the importance of the Argument from Similarities which provides a strong basis for holding to the existence of **some** form of literary interrelationship between the Synoptics, but he was unaccountably short-sighted (in view of the extent to which the aspects of this Argument had been used beforehand in support of other theories) in asserting that the Argument from Similarities pointed to (and only to) Markan priority. Again, Streeter perceived that the distinctiveness of Mark's style of writing was due to the fact that that Synoptist was using the colloquial spoken Greek of his day, but he was mistaken in concluding that this data was incompatible with Mark being other than the first Gospel written.

The many who have advocated some kind of Ur-Gospel approach were correct in recognizing that **some written document or documents** must lie behind the three Gospels as we have them, but were mistaken in concluding that such document(s) must be entire Gospel(s) of some kind.

Griesbach (Chapter Six) was correct in perceiving how much of the Synoptic data could be satisfied upon the assumption that Mark was the third Gospel written; Chapman in detecting that when Mark lacks teaching that is given in Matthew, his Gospel contains at that point some kind of reference to Jesus's other teaching; Schleiermacher, Knox, Guy, Dufour (and a host of others) in noting the evidence for small written sources lying in the prehistory of the Synoptics; Gundry and Kennedy in their perception of the use of notebooks by Matthew and other eyewitnesses during Jesus's earthly lifetime; Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson in their explanations about the way in which tradition could be transmitted in fixed form during the “oral period”; Farmer for his overall assessment of

the Synoptic situation and perhaps especially for his presentation of how Mark's use of Matthew and Luke can account for the textual data; Farrer, Parker, Petrie, Albright & Mann, and Dungan for their respective treatments of the shortcomings of the Q hypothesis; Neiryndck and Tuckett in their recognition that the most significant argument for Markan Priority or any other theory is its power to explain the data at the level of individual pericopes and indeed verses.

And so one could continue, outlining the contribution to our fund of knowledge of the issues that has been made by a range of scholars down the decades of the last two to three centuries.

But overall, these men have not agreed with each other's conclusions. I am reminded of the fable of the investigations of the six blind men:

It was six men of Indostan, To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant (Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant, And, happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side, At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk, Cried: "Ho! what have we here  
So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal, And, happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands, Thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand, And felt about the knee:  
"What this wondrous beast is like Is mighty plain," quoth he;  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, Said, "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most; Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun About the beast to grope,  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right And all were in the wrong!

So, oft in theologic wars, The disputants, I ween,  
Tread on in utter ignorance, Of what each other mean,  
And prate about the elephant, Not one of them has seen!

*John Godfrey Saxe (1816 -1887)*

Now, which of them came nearest to a true understanding of what an elephant is like? The answer of course, as Saxe says, is that all of them were right, within limits; and all of them were wrong, overall. Each man was right in assessing what his groping had encountered. Where he was in error was in assuming that what he had encountered was in some meaningful way typical or representative of the whole animal, so that all of it was the same as the part of it that he had come to understand. For a total understanding of the elephant, each man needed to add the insights of the others to his own. Then and only then would they all be enabled to understand accurately and in its entirety the nature of the beast. Whilever they generalized and extrapolated exclusively on the basis of what each of them individually had discovered they were bound to continue at loggerheads in their opinions about elephants and, in terms of their overall understanding of the full facts, they were, all of them, bound to be wrong.

I do not mean to say that it is possible to proceed to devise a convincing (let alone accurate) theory of Synoptic interrelationships by making a compilation out of the views of the scholars who have already worked on this issue—that is most certainly *not* the way in which my conclusions were reached. But it would be reasonable to expect that a fairly comprehensive theory will be needed to cover all the complexities of the phenomena, and that none (or very few) of the constituent elements of such a theory *will actually be new*. If they are genuine deductions and justifiable extrapolations from the data, then it is virtually certain (given the incalculable amount of time that innumerable scholars have expended upon the Synoptic Problem) that such insights will also have been perceived by scholars already.

Now, this is not to assert that from the present time onwards we can expect nothing new to emerge in this area; rather it is a recognition that probably most of what we will ever know about the issues involved in the Synoptic Problem has already been perceived by some scholars. We have all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle (or if not all, as many as we can realistically expect to get), and it is now our task to put them all together



in the right way to see the correct picture which they convey. We have the clues. The evidence is in. Like the detective investigating a crime or tracking down a missing person, like the physicist seeking to understand some aspect of the material world, we need now to interpret the clues aright, and discern where the evidence points.

### 12.3 CONCLUSIONS

Mark is recognizably the middle term between Matthew and Luke. The most reasonable explanations of how this has come about are: either that Mark is prior, and was used by Matthew and Luke, or else that Mark is last, and is dependent upon Matthew and Luke. There are no objective reasons for accepting the priority of Mark, and there are several weighty reasons against this (Chapter Five). In fact, Markan Priority is an invitation to believe quite a few impossibilities (Chapter Seven). As explained in the foregoing chapters, the case for Markan Dependence is: (a) there are a number of reasons that favour Markan Dependence; (b) there are many passages of the Synoptics that are most readily and reasonably accounted for on the basis of Markan Dependence; (c) Markan Dependence provides a valid and adequate explanation of all the Synoptic data, there are no places that it is impossible to account for on the basis of this perspective, and it is overall a much better explanation of the wording of the Synoptics as a whole than any other alternative; (d) there are no compelling arguments against it, and those arguments that have been advanced can be satisfactorily answered.

The most influential arguments against Markan Dependence have been:

i) ***If Mark were writing third, he would not have omitted so much of the valuable material that he would have had in front of him in Matthew and Luke.*** This argument has been answered decisively in Chapter Three, in which it has been shown that ***whenever*** the author of Mark's Gospel wrote, and ***whoever*** he was, he would have a knowledge of Jesus's life and (especially) his teaching that went far beyond what is included in the Second Gospel. Once this is acknowledged, it can be seen that it is far more likely that Mark would omit this material if he knew that it was readily available elsewhere for the church than if there were no other Gospel in existence when he wrote, so that he was aware that what he knew and did not record would not be available at all (at that time) to the church. Thus the absence of valuable material from Mark is not an argument for Mark being ***first***, but for Mark being ***last***.

ii) ***Mark's Gospel cannot be last, for if Matthew and Luke already existed there would be no reason for it to be written at all, as it contains almost nothing not***

***already to be found in one or both of the other two.*** This also has been answered in Chapter Three, in which an examination of the nature of Mark's Gospel has led to an explanation of its rationale that well accounts for why it would have been written when Matthew and Luke already existed.

iii) ***Mark's Gospel cannot be last, for if so this would require that it was a conflation of Matthew and Luke, and it is not possible for Mark to have produced such a conflation.*** This assertion has been answered in Chapter Three, where there is set out a pseudo-Markan pericope, a "Markan" version of The Capernaum Centurion. If this can be written now, by treating the accounts of Matthew and Luke in the way that Markan Dependence indicates Mark has done, it is hardly cogent to argue that it was impossible for Mark himself to have done precisely this from the other two Synoptic Gospels in front of him.

What of the relationship between the two Major Synoptics? The simplest explanation, and the one favored by Farmer and his associates, is that Luke used Matthew, for Luke's Gospel contains evidence of a knowledge of Matthew. However, a careful comparison of Matthew and Luke provides evidence, set out in Chapter Eight, which indicates that Luke cannot have known Matthew in its canonical form. There are innumerable places where in large matters and small Luke writes as if completely unaware of what Matthew has said (as distinct from simply not choosing to use a pericope or a detail that Matthew includes).

Indeed, the part of Matthew that the evidence points to as known to Luke is in fact quite small and would not qualify as a Gospel on any normal definition of "Gospel". Thus the evidence indicates that Luke knew ***some parts*** of Matthew, and not others. The "parts" of Matthew known to Luke will encompass most of what is commonly assigned to Q (excluding those sections where Matthew and Luke agree in subject matter but are not so close in wording as to indicate copying between them). They will also include those sections of the Triple Tradition where a comparison of Matthew and Luke gives evidence for holding that one directly used the other.

Those places where Matthew and Luke are similar (whether in Q-sections or Markan-sections) but not so similar as to indicate direct literary dependence are to be attributed to the two lines of tradition used respectively by Matthew and Luke, the similarities between them (in that they fall short of identity between the two accounts) being the result of traditions deriving from independent eyewitness testimony to the same event or teaching of Jesus, and/or to the careful transmission of the traditions within the church from the days of Jesus onwards, and/or to the fact that to the extent that two lines of

traditions (or parts of traditions) would become known to the same persons in the church there would be assimilation taking place between them.

The foregoing indicates that the form in which Luke knew Matthean material was not as a short Gospel, a Proto-Matthew, but rather as separate sections or “tracts” of various lengths comprising teaching or narrative or combinations of both; so that the better explanation of the data is that Luke used such written material that he had collected that subsequently also became embodied in canonical Matthew.

We may express this by saying that there was a progressive publication of Matthew's Gospel. At first there were numbers of separate sections that would have varied in length from a few lines to documents of a few pages, originally written down by Matthew most probably not for circulation so much as for use as private notes (*hypomnēmata*), but in due course added to and made available for the use of new churches that had few (or no) eyewitnesses. Then in due course these documents were supplemented by Matthew with a great deal of other material that he wrote, and this was published as our present Gospel of Matthew.

Luke had collected many of the separate documents produced by Matthew and then in due course these documents were supplemented by a great deal of other material that he gathered and wrote up, and this was published as our present Gospel of Luke.

Those occasional passages in the two Major Gospels that contain simultaneously evidence that what was in Matthew was known and not known to Luke can be accounted for by the (completely reasonable) proposition that in combining some of his earlier pericopes for inclusion in his fullscale Gospel, Matthew made some revisions of what he had previously said and of these revisions Luke of course would know nothing. Minor differences between Matthew and Luke in a section where (on this hypothesis) Luke used a Matthean document are explainable on the basis either of Matthew revising his original document for his fullscale Gospel or of Luke adapting his source at the point of using it.

There are some things that this hypothesis makes no attempt to explain and that will remain a matter of conjecture: for example, when (amongst his other διήγησεις) Luke collected documents that had been written by Matthew, was he or was he not aware of their authorship?

There are other things that remain as matters for empirical investigation and appraisal. In particular these include, Which sections of Matthew and Luke containing common subject matter are to be assigned to Matthean documents used by Luke and which to two similar but independent lines of tradition transmission? The answer here will

come from the close comparison of Matthew and Luke in such passages (this comparison unbedevilled by the question of whether or not there is a Markan parallel), as the result of which a judgement can be made. I have given indications in appropriate places of my own preliminary assessments about numbers of these passages, but I do not put these forward as the final word. There is room here for differences of opinion and for discussion of such judgements in exactly the same way as there has been discussion of the scope and contents of Q between those who believe in this source.

## **12.4 OVERALL: THE SOLUTION TO THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM**

Where has the evidence led? Let us sum up the conclusions reached.

The evidence indicates that Mark's Gospel is the middle term between Matthew and Luke, and that the three Synoptic Gospels stand in some kind of literary relationship. The two hypotheses that can best account for this situation are Markan Priority and Markan Dependence. The foregoing examination of the evidence and of these alternative explanations offered for that evidence has shown that Markan Dependence is better able than Markan Priority to account for the actual data of the Synoptics, their similarities and differences of content, wording, and order, and their other features.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke are largely independent of each other, embodying two separate lines of transmission of the Jesus-tradition from earliest times. Behind each of them lie numerous sources, some oral and some written. The oral traditions incorporated in Matthew and Luke agree to a very considerable extent with each other because of the care that was taken in the first century in passing on such information accurately. The differences that occur at times between them are due to combinations of factors, including: different lines of tradition about the same event or teaching, with some conflation and/or assimilation of these different lines of tradition; and the redaction of their material by Matthew and Luke in relation to their overall purposes in writing, for incorporation of it into their respective Gospels. Some of the written "tracts" that Luke collected and used in his Gospel were written by the apostle Matthew and were also subsequently incorporated by Matthew into his Gospel when it was published: this accounts for the high degree of correspondence between the wording of some pericopes in these two Gospels (without reference to whether or not they are also in Mark).

Some of these accounts were originally written in Aramaic, and then separately translated by Matthew and Luke for their respective Gospels (or possibly Luke may have come across a Greek translation that had been made previously by someone else of an originally Aramaic document). This could explain those places where Matthew and Luke

are very close in subject matter but unaccountably different in wording, especially in those places where Luke's version appears more "original" than Matthew's.

Mark then wrote his Gospel, using Matthew and Luke as his main sources, supplemented by P (private knowledge, primarily Peter's preaching).

## **12.5 IN MORE DETAIL: HOW THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN**

The data and discussion hitherto have been primarily concerned with the relationship between the three Synoptic Gospels, and have provided substantial grounds for recognizing this relationship as being: the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were written independently of each other, with Luke making use of material that had been written earlier by Matthew and had been published progressively over a period of time; Mark wrote last, and used the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the composition of his own Gospel. This position is sustainable on the basis of the evidence taken from the Gospels themselves, and is quite independent of other considerations such as the authorship of the Synoptics, the reason for their writing, and the date of their composition and publication. It is possible for scholars to differ amongst themselves concerning these matters and still agree with the basic proposition that, according to the evidence, Markan Dependence is a much more satisfactory explanation of the data than Markan Priority.

However, it is my judgement that various aspects of the evidence that was presented do point to particular solutions for these other questions of authorship, date, and provenance. In this section I wish to draw attention to these elements in the evidence, and offer an assessment of their significance, and thus propose an overall explanation of how the Gospels were written. This section summarizes the full Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis.

### **12.5.1 Stage 1: Early Production of Short Accounts by Matthew**

During the time of Jesus's earthly ministry, the apostle Matthew made numerous written notes, particularly of what Jesus taught. Whatever form these notes may have taken, they acted as mnemonics of what that teaching had been, and to this extent were similar to the notes that in the first century were commonly made by pupils from the teaching of their rabbis. In accordance with the attested practice of the day, other listeners also made similar notes for their own use, as memory aids.

As the church spread after Pentecost, representatives from various congregations, visiting Jerusalem, asked the apostles for a record of their teachings that could be taken back to their own churches. Matthew provided them with short written accounts, some-

times of Jesus's teaching, sometimes a narrative of something Jesus did; sometimes very short, sometimes running into some hundreds of words; sometimes (according to the need) in Aramaic and sometimes in Greek. Over the years Matthew thus produced a considerable number of these separate accounts, based upon his own notes of the events and teachings of Jesus, and the recollections of the other apostolic eyewitnesses as these things were discussed together and preached in evangelism and ministry in the early congregations.

Copies of Matthew's short accounts—pericopes, as we would call them now—circulated in the churches, and began to be collected together in some places; and those in Aramaic were translated for the benefit of Greek-speaking Christians, who were less at home than the Hebrews with a tradition of oral transmission. These accounts include the *logia* to which Papias refers, written in Aramaic and being translated into Greek as the occasion required.

### **12.5.2 Stage 2: Compilation of a Narrative from Various Short Accounts**

Numbers of such accounts, some produced by Matthew and some written down by other eyewitnesses, were being sorted into order by various collectors, and thus made into a connected narrative. (Lk 1:1-4 refers to this stage.)

### **12.5.3 Stage 3: Matthew Produces a Complete Gospel**

#### **1. Explanation of Matthew's Procedure**

Matthew himself was motivated to assemble together the material he had already written, and thus to produce a full account of Jesus's ministry and teaching. In doing this, he added in further material that had not circulated separately, and supplied “heads and tails” for his pericopes—introductions, conclusions, and connecting links—as he judged these expedient. Where the original account was written in Aramaic, he now translated it into Greek, or simply rewrote it in Greek; and on occasion may also have rewritten the wording of some part of what he had said earlier, to make it more suited to its place in his overall record.

The apostle Matthew is thus both the author of the original sources used in his Gospel, and the redactor of the Gospel as it was finally composed and published. In this respect his position is somewhat analogous to that of a modern scholar who produces a substantial quantity of notes about his subject, publishes some of his material in the form of articles short and long, and subsequently rewrites and edits his own material into a connected account suitable for publication as a whole. To postulate this about Matthew

is not “reading back” into Matthew’s time something that is distinctively of the modern world: the kind of procedure as outlined is a completely logical way in which the writing of an extensive volume can develop, and is particularly likely for apostolic times in view of the high cost of writing materials in the first century and the immense labour involved in producing books by hand-copying, and the complete continuum that existed between private circulation of records and fullscale publishing.

## **2. Explanation of Matthew’s Order**

He used as his framework the general chronology of Jesus’s life, certain pericopes taking their natural position at the beginning or latter part of his Gospel; but after the opening stories and prior to the sequence of events that led up to Passion Week, he assembled his material on the basic principle of connecting like with like. His explanation of what happened during this period of Jesus’s life (Mt 4:23-25; cf. also Mt 9:35) constitutes in fact the outline of that part of his Gospel. Matthew may possibly have been indifferent to questions of chronology, he may have had no precise recollection or other information about the sequence in which various teachings, healings, and other miracles took place, or he may (and this is the most probable) have judged that for didactic purposes the grouping of like material into the one section would be advantageous; in any case, between Mt 4:25 and 14:1 (some would say, 19:12) the primary principle of arrangement is the grouping of similar material. However, this is not to the total disregard of chronology, and where he was aware that other incidents had occurred within context with something else that he was recording, he was willing on occasion to include these at the appropriate point (e.g., Mt 8:18-22, “he gave orders to go over to the other side. And a scribe came up and said to him ...” —a pericope of short sayings follows, included in a lengthy section of various miracles), and where he knew of a time or sequence factor that linked incidents together, he inserted this (e.g., Mt 9:18, “While he was thus speaking to them”).

## **3. Explanation of Matthew’s Style**

Matthew’s style in narration tends towards brevity, and at times it hints at brief notes made at the time of the event (or shortly afterwards) and minimally expanded when written up. Thus, for example, to compare Matthew’s version with those of the other Synoptic Gospels for the pericopes of:

Pericope	Matt	Words	Mark	Words	Luke	Words
Healing of the Paralytic	9:2-8	115	2:1-12	196	5:17-26	213
The Healing of Legion	8:28-34	135	5:1-20	325	8:26-39	293
Jairus's Daughter and the Hemorrhaging Woman	9:18-26	138	5:21-43	374	8:40-56	280
Death of John the Baptist	14:4-12	117	6:18-29	224	-	
Feeding Five Thousand	14:13-21	158	6:30-44	236	9:10-17	164
Healing the Epileptic Boy	17:14-20	110	9:14-29	270	9:38-43	110

[Figures derived from Morgenthaler's *Synoptic Statistics*, 1971: 33ff., 235.]

Matthew's brevity in these succinct and condensed reports can account for such things as Jairus's daughter being already dead at the beginning of his narrative (Mt 9:18; contrast Mark and Luke), and his general lack of detail. They are consistent with what one would expect from a former government official who was used to producing terse, factual reports that summarized a situation clearly and concisely. However, it should be noted that from the commencement of Jesus's Journey to Jerusalem (Mt 19:1//Mk 10:1) the parallel pericopes of Matthew and Mark are much closer to each other in length, and while there are differences in wording between them (frequently matters of style or clarification of meaning) there are few details in one Gospel that are not also in the other.

#### 12.5.4 Stage 4: Luke Writes His Gospel as “Part One” of his History

##### 1. Explanation of Luke's Procedure

While traveling with Paul, Luke kept a notebook or diary of their experiences, and then at some stage conceived the idea of writing this up into a full record of the expansion of the gospel in the early church, and prefixing it with an account of the life and teaching of Jesus. Luke began collecting information for this projected work. He was in Palestine for two years while Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea, and was thus in a position to add considerably to his collection of material, both oral and written, and to interview participants and eyewitnesses of the events.

Amongst the traditions that he collected for this purpose were numbers of pericopes and pericope-clusters that had been composed earlier by Matthew, some written in Greek, some written in Aramaic and subsequently translated into Greek, and some still in Aramaic (and therefore translated into Greek by Luke).



## **2. Explanation of Luke's Order**

Luke, according to his announced purpose (Lk 1:1-4), set out to produce an “orderly” (that is to say, a chronological) account of all that had taken place, and assembled his material into chronological order to the extent that this was known to him. This explains why his order differs from that of Matthew.

## **3. Explanation of Luke's Differences**

For much of his material, Luke had received independent accounts of teachings and events, which had come down to him through separate lines of tradition, some originally written by Matthew and some coming from other eyewitnesses, and these differ from the accounts of similar matters in Matthew's Gospel in the same way that any two recollections of the same speech or event, while both accurate, will always differ from each other.

All this material Luke edited into a connected narrative, reworking it in line with his purposes in writing, adding in extra details or clarifying points in the material he received, on the basis of the further information that he was able to obtain from interviewing eyewitnesses, with whom he discussed the events and teachings of Jesus's life and ministry. Thus, as he himself informs the reader in his prologue, what is recorded in his Gospel goes back to the apostles and other eyewitnesses, and therefore can be accepted as wholly trustworthy (Lk 1:4).

The extent of agreement and differences between Matthew and Luke can be explained thus:

### **(a) Minor Verbal Differences**

These are due to (either or both) Lukan editing of a short account originally written by Matthew and collected by Luke, or minor rewriting by Matthew of the material when incorporating it into his complete Gospel.

### **(b) Similarity of Subject Matter but Numerous Verbal Differences**

For some pericopes, Luke made a Greek translation of the Aramaic pericope written by Matthew (or the pericope may have come into his hands in the form of a Greek translation made by Luke's informant), and in these pericopes the variations between Matthew's and Luke's versions exhibit the differences that exist between any two translations of the one document.

**(c) More Extensive Differences, and Greater Detail in Luke**

In other cases, the differences between Matthew's account of an incident and Luke's are the result of Luke discussing the account that had come to him with other people who had been present, and expanding it accordingly.

**(d) Significant Differences Too Extensive  
to be Compatible with a Common Source**

Where the accounts in Matthew and Luke differ to a greater extent, the account that Luke has used has come to him independently of Matthew, from some other eyewitness source, and the differences between them are those that exist between two independent accounts of the one speech or event.

**(e) Similarity of Subject Matter and Differences of Setting, etc.**

Where the centre of a pericope is very similar in Matthew and Luke, but it has differences in the introduction or conclusion or setting, this is an instance of a story that circulated (and that came to Luke) without this information being part of it. Luke has provided the story with such information of this kind as he was able to obtain, bearing in mind its position and purpose in inclusion in his Gospel, while Matthew at the time of producing his complete Gospel has similarly added the "heads and tails" to pericopes that had not hitherto needed them when they were circulating on their own.

However, there would also have been occasions when Jesus repeated parables or other teaching that he had given elsewhere, frequently with differences that reflected the differing circumstances in which the teaching was given, and audiences to whom it was given. In several instances Matthew's Gospel contains the account of one such occasion and Luke that of another, and in the nature of the case there will be similarities and differences between the accounts of the same kind as there would be if we were to give the same basic talk twice and in different circumstances.

**4. Explanation of Luke's Style**

The approach, the detail, and the wording of Luke's pericopes are consistent with what one would expect from a person trained as a physician, a careful observer, and one who was experienced (because of his profession) at questioning people to elicit and elucidate the facts.

### 12.5.5 Stage 5: Mark Produces his Special-Purpose Gospel

#### 1. Explanation of Mark's Procedure

Mark drew upon both Matthew and Luke when writing his special-purpose Gospel for evangelism, leaving out most of the purely *didache* material that was intended for the edification of Christians, and that was already available to the church in the same Gospels that he himself was using.

Where he found Matthew and Luke in agreement in relation to something that he planned to use, he frequently used that agreed material (hence the relatively small number of places where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark); but on occasion he was willing to depart from both of them to use a word (such as his κράβαττον for *bed*) or a construction (for example, his preference for the historic present, and for paratactic constructions with καί) when this accorded better with his own style or intended readership. He also at times departed from his sources in some places where they had a particularly Jewish interest (e.g. he omits many of Matthew's references to purely Jewish perspectives, such as "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel", Mt 15:24; "for any cause", Mt 19:3; and "the fringe of", Mt 9:20/Lk 8:44).

Where he found Matthew and Luke lacking exact agreement, Mark often wove the two accounts together into one, using the details and ideas from both, and thus frequently resolving the apparent differences between the two. On some occasions he simply chose to follow one or the other of his two written sources. This is why the material in Mark seems to alternate in agreement with Matthew and Luke, and also seems very frequently to express the thought that is in each of them.

#### 2. Explanation of Mark's Additional Detail

The hypothesis of Mark's use of Matthew and Luke is not sufficient to account for the content of the Second Gospel.

We saw in Chapter Four (§4.2.1, §4.3.6) that more than 25% of the content of Mark's Gospel is not paralleled in either Matthew or Luke. Now, some of this consists of (to use Streeter's expression, 1924: 158) "purely verbal expansion" of what is in the Major Synoptics, and thus represents Markan redaction of the tradition found in Matthew and Luke. But a substantial proportion of it (as can be seen from inspection of the material in §4.2.1, §4.2.2) could not have been derived in any way from what is in the other two. Therefore we are compelled by the data to recognize that if Mark is dependent upon Matthew and Luke, he must also have had a third source.

That source could be his own imagination. Lacking any information beyond what is in

Matthew and Luke, and wanting to enliven his narrative further, he may have simply invented all the additional detail that his Gospel contains.

This explanation is favoured in particular by those scholars who do not accept that the author of the Second Gospel is the John Mark of the New Testament, and who ascribe a later date to the Gospel. But even if a late date were valid, it does not necessarily follow that the additional material in Mark's Gospel is invention. To have had access to Matthew and Luke, and to have any motivation for and purpose in writing a Gospel at all, the author of Mark must have been a part of the Christian community, and even if one were to hold that the Gospel was written late first century or in the second century, there would still be in existence oral tradition of the deeds and saying of Jesus that contained information not in the two Major Synoptics.

It is quite unrealistic to contend that as soon as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke began to circulate in the churches, all those who were eyewitnesses of the events that are described (the apostles included) thereafter ceased to speak of what they knew from their own experience and henceforth restricted themselves to the story as related in those Gospels. On the contrary—the appearance of such accounts of what had happened would stimulate great discussion amongst those who had been present on this or that occasion, and comparison of their recollections with the new written record. We are aware of this in our own day: if (for example) a book is published telling the story of some military campaign in which we fought, or some political or business drama in which we ourselves were involved, we compare what it says with what we remember, and share our comments with others. The publication of the book means that the matter becomes discussed *more*, not *less*: as we tell our tales or recount additional details that are not in the published record, our anecdotes will have for a time a currency alongside the book itself, and be passed on by some of our hearers.

Thus even if the author of the Second Gospel was not John Mark, and wrote this Gospel many decades after the events themselves, he came from within the stream of church life and he heard its tradition, from which he would be in a position to learn considerable amounts of further (and quite accurate) detail not in Matthew and Luke, just as many a youngster of today can remember numerous details of what his grandfather told him—details not in the official histories—when he began reminiscing, "Now I myself saw General So-and-so do such-and-such, right after the battle of ..."

However, the strong evidence that points to John Mark as author of the Second Gospel has led most commentators to accept his authorship.

I have had occasion to note earlier that the New Testament records how John Mark

was in the centre of the events of the early church. He would therefore have had knowledge of his own about Jesus to draw on, from the circulating traditions of the church. In particular would have constantly heard the preaching of his colleagues, particularly Peter, who was an eyewitness *par excellence*.

There is strong support both within the New Testament and from early church history for holding that Mark would have been in a position to hear Peter's own telling of what Jesus said and did. When therefore Mark was using the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as sources for the stories that he was including in the Gospel that he was writing, he would find that their accounts of one incident or another would bring back to his mind recollections of the many times he had heard these same stories told by Peter in the course of his teaching.

So it is hardly wild speculation to imagine that under those circumstances, working from the written record in front of him, Mark would recall details and circumstances, and even specific words and phrases, from what Peter had said. And this would affect his own telling of the tale in numerous ways—vocabulary, grammatical constructions, emphasis, point of view, additional details. To deny this would be to assert that Mark learnt nothing and remembered nothing from all the preaching by Peter that he heard during his period of close association with the apostle—a possibility that cannot be rated as very likely, nor an easy position to substantiate.

Thus the evidence of the contents of Mark's Gospel compels us to see that if indeed Mark was the third to write, and used the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as his sources (as I have been engaged in showing), he had another source or sources for all that he said that did not come from the Major Synoptists. There is no need to attribute this extra information to Mark's imagination, which would imply that Mark lived and worked in an ecclesiastical vacuum—something that is in conflict with all the known evidence. Rather, the main source for the further information that is contained in Mark is the apostle Peter. Thus the vivid touches of extra detail that are so characteristic of Mark reflect his third major source—the teaching ministry of Peter—in which, according to the traditions of the early church, Mark himself played an ancillary part.

That is, Markan Dependence holds that Mark was dependent not only upon the Gospels of Matthew and Luke for his material, but also upon Peter. For the data requires also a third source. That third source was oral tradition. And the evidence points to the main source of that oral tradition as being Peter.

Therefore all Mark's material comes into the Bible upon fully reliable authority, and can be accepted as thoroughly accurate.

### 3. Explanation of Mark's Order

Mark had before him the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, with their different order of pericopes on numerous occasions. His intention was to extract from them the material he wanted, and to blend his two sources together. In keeping with this, he **always** followed the joint order of Matthew and Luke when they agreed, and he **always** followed the order of one or the other when they differed between themselves—his choice of which Major Synoptic's order to follow was guided by which gave him the best sequence for the material he chose to use, and which did not take him through large teaching sections that he did not intend to include.

### 4. Explanation of Mark's Style

Mark's presentation of his material, in form, wording, and content, is consistent with what one would expect from a storyteller who sought to tell his story in vivid and colloquial language so as to capture the interest, stir the imagination, challenge the will, and motivate a decision to respond to the person upon whom all the stories were centred (for which, of course—as has just been noted—he drew very substantially upon the way those self-same stories had been told by Peter).

#### 12.5.6 Dating

It is not my purpose to canvass here the evidence for an early or late dating for the Synoptics; it will suffice to say that although the hypothesis of Markan Dependence is completely compatible with either approach to dating, the evidence **in favour of** early dating and **against** late dating is very impressive. The 1911 treatment by Harnack (*The Date of the Acts and of The Synoptic Gospels*) is still persuasive; the more recent studies by J A T Robinson (*Redating the New Testament*) and E E Ellis ("Dating The New Testament") complement each other in their examination of the grounds for holding an early date.

In particular, the best explanation for the ending of Acts is that this book was written at the close of the two-year period that it mentions in its final paragraph. Further, there is no need to call into question the patristic tradition that Mark was written at about the time of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. Now, if neither Matthew nor Luke knew the other's Gospel (as this present study has maintained), this indicates that they were published at approximately the same time in different places. The evidence is best satisfied by the conclusion that Luke completed his Gospel and published it in Rome within the first year after Paul's arrival there, that is, approximately AD 60. Acts would then have been

written and published at the end of the period it covers, that is, AD 62. Matthew's Gospel was published in Jerusalem in the same year as Luke's, that is, in AD 60. The publication of Mark's Gospel can be dated at approximately AD 65.

## 12.6 THE RELIABILITY OF THE SYNOPTIC RECORD

This enquiry has sought to be a rigorous investigation of the Synoptic data and an even-handed assessment of the various hypotheses that have been tendered in explanation of that data. Doubtless there are shortcomings in both of these areas—which of us can fully comply with our own standards? But its purpose has been to see which Synoptic explanation can most adequately and most completely account for that data, and it draws attention to that explanation that seems to account for it very fully indeed.

This view—i.e., Markan Dependence—is compatible with late dates for the Synoptics, and with the work of form and redaction criticism. (Some of the present conclusions of such studies however, insofar as they presuppose Markan priority, would require radical rethinking.) However, it is my personal judgement that (as indicated above) the data points to an early date (pre-70 AD) for all three Synoptics, and to their authorship respectively by the Apostle Matthew, the John Mark of the Acts and the Epistles, and Dr Luke the companion of Paul. This view gives a “best fit” to all the details of the New Testament text, taken at its face value, and in fact makes it unnecessary and unjustified to take the data otherwise than at its face value.

The methodology of this enquiry has been totally academic and from a scholarly perspective, not dogmatic or doctrinaire. But now that the enquiry has been completed and the results set forth, their implications can be assessed. In particular, these implications are:

1. Each Synoptic author is allowed to be his own man. Each had a distinct and in large measure separate purpose in writing. Each author marshaled his data, chose the Jesus-traditions he intended to use, and arranged them in the sequence that best fulfilled that purpose in writing. Each Gospel is therefore to be examined on its own, within its own terms, as a work of authorship in its own right. And this examination should precede the assessment of each Gospel's overall contribution to our knowledge of “Jesus Christ, Son of God” (to use Mark's descriptive term).

2. Each Synoptic Gospel gives a wholly authentic and reliable account of the life and teaching of Jesus (and where they differ they supplement and do not contradict each other):

- (a) Matthew's Gospel is written by the apostle, written from his own personal

experience and that of his fellow apostles, based upon notes made by Matthew of what happened and what was said, notes that were taken down at the time these things occurred. These notes then provided the guide and stimulus to memory when in due course a fuller account of an incident or a teaching was produced.

(b) Luke's Gospel is the ministry and message of Jesus that was known to Paul, supplemented by all that Luke was able to discover in the course of his own thorough-going enquiries about everything that had taken place, as he himself explains in his preface. In every way his account goes back to the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and Luke's records were pieced together in a painstaking investigation of "everything from the beginning". This resulted in an ordered account the aim of which was to give complete certainty about these things to those who read his account. His Gospel is largely independent of that of Matthew, although he has incorporated into it several "tracts" written by Matthew in earlier years and circulating in the churches.

(c) Mark's account takes the stories of Matthew and Luke, selected according to Mark's own purpose in writing, and retells them in the popular colloquial idiom, with an abundance of added insight and detail that came from Mark's own awareness of the content of the Jesus-traditions in the church and in particular from the preaching of the apostle Peter, whose associate Mark was. Those places therefore where Mark reflects a perspective distinct from that of Matthew and Luke—and although the differences in perspective are usually slight, the places where they occur in Mark are very numerous—represent the distinctive testimony of Peter, whose witness is thus added to that of Matthew and Luke. What Mark says therefore is also authentic and accurate, deriving from Matthew, from Luke, and from Peter.

3. The evidence does not require, or support, any view for any part of the Synoptic text as being the result of subsequent redaction in the church by other than the authors Matthew, Mark and Luke; nor of rewriting or reworking or imaginative addition by the church of a later time to reflect and meet the needs of its own *Sitz im Leben*; nor of any Synoptic author deliberately altering the writing of one (or both) of the other Synoptic authors so as to correct him or improve upon him in any way whatsoever. These things are all **possible**, but they are not required by anything that exists in any part of the actual evidence, either in the text of the New Testament itself, or in anything known to us from church history. And in fact in my judgement to say that these things are highly unlikely is actually to understate the direction and strength of the evidence, which I myself would consider rules them out altogether. The form of the Synoptics as they



came from the pens of the apostle Matthew, John Mark, and Dr Luke, is the form in which those authors recorded what happened, as selected and arranged in the light of their overall purposes in writing (which in no way implies any intention to “correct” one another, nor any distortion of the facts). And that also is the form in which the Synoptic Gospels were circulated, copied, and transmitted down the centuries.

4. The main conclusion that has been reached, then, on the basis of an investigation of the evidence, viz Markan Dependence, has as an ancillary conclusion the result that the Synoptics may be accepted as being independent and wholly reliable accounts of what they record. This agrees with the full doctrine of biblical inspiration, but these are two independent and parallel issues.

That is to say, it is not valid to come to a conclusion about the relationship between the Synoptics on the basis of or because of or in order to agree with our acceptance of a doctrine of biblical inspiration. To do so would be in some measure to prejudge the outcome of an enquiry and in fact to preclude to that extent the possibility of it being a free enquiry. Similarly, we do not found our doctrine of biblical inspiration upon the outcome of investigations into the text of the Bible. To do so would be to make acceptance of a doctrine dependent upon the outcome of human investigatory labours: which is *not* the basis upon which Christian doctrine is to be accepted. The two, then—the outcome of investigation, and the doctrine of inspiration—are parallel but distinct issues.

It is something of a contrast to consider the implications of the Markan Priority/Two-Source hypothesis.

The Two-Source theory, and scholarship that has flowed from it, has taken the Synoptic Gospels and examined them according to its lights, and handed them back to the church greatly diminished in every way—in historicity, in accuracy, in reliability, in integrity.

I find in reading the literature that it has become standard for scholars to see the existence of the Synoptic differences as evidence for the development of these stories over many decades, so that it comes to be concluded (by some Markan Priority supporters, though not by all) that the stories owe more to the imagination of the church responding to the needs of the day than to the authentic teaching and deeds of Jesus.

When our thinking is structured by the Markan Priority hypothesis we come across a passage that states, “Jesus said”, and we have to hesitate and say to ourselves, “Ah well now, did he really? Or is this something that was constructed this way by the later church? Or does its wording go back no further than the Synoptic author himself?” We become then very cautious about how much weight we can rest upon what the wording

of the Gospels actually says. There is engendered a scepticism that has brought us to the place where we are hesitant to accept anything as it stands—we can take nothing at face value. Yet this Book is the source of our faith and the foundation of our life. There are other books around where we may not accept the author's viewpoint, but yet we are willing to accept that the author is saying what he is saying. We do not come with this attitude of scepticism towards other books, ancient or modern—but we are encouraged to develop such an attitude towards the Gospels.

And when we reflect upon why we have this caution, this hesitation, this uncertainty about accepting the wording in front of us in the Gospels, and ask ourselves for the reason for such skepticism, we find that it is not produced by any actual **evidence** there in front of us; it is the consequence of a theory. And when we examine the foundations of that theory—as has been done in this study—we come to see that it rests upon the flimsiest and most inadequate of grounds. Not on solid evidence or sustainable argument. But upon feelings and opinions and circularities, and upon assertions without justification that cannot stand up to sober, objective scrutiny; upon the insubstantial sands of dogmatic theological presuppositions, of assumptions that go well beyond the warrant of the evidence, and of argument that marches around in a circle. Upon **this** basis we have renounced our right to accept as valid and genuine what is said in the Gospel narratives that have been passed down to us. We have sold our inheritance for a mess of pottage.

To consider some specific examples.

1. I have drawn attention in this dissertation to the way in which the Markan Priority position asks us to believe that Matthew and Luke altered the text of Mark out of motives of increased reverence. Thus on two occasions (Mk 1:32, 34; 3:10; and parallels) Mark says Jesus healed “many” and Matthew and Luke say he healed “all”, and Barclay (1975: 92) in commenting on this says,

It is significant that regularly Matthew and Luke change Mark's *many* into *all*. Such is their reverence for Jesus that they cannot think of his power as being anything less than totally effective.

That is to say, Mark's account was deliberately altered by Matthew and Luke to avoid giving the impression of “tentative miracles” (Hawkins, 1909: 117), i.e., that out of a great number of attempts at healings, some succeeded.

I have shown that this “interpretation” must be completely rejected, not on dogmatic or doctrinal grounds, but because it contradicts the evidence. It simply is not so. The evidence must control the theory, and not vice versa. These passages were discussed in

§5.4.3, Argument 9, which set them in their context and showed that Mark was making a different point from the other Synoptists, emphasizing the large size of the total numbers healed. (From the perspective of Markan Dependence, one is able to see what happened thus: Matthew and Luke have shown that not one person needing healing went away unhealed. Then Mark, with these accounts in front of him, writes so as to bring out an additional facet of the event, drawing upon the description of it that he had heard, probably many times, in the preaching of Peter: the total number healed was very great.)

I specifically draw attention now to the attitude to the text of the Gospels that is seen in the comments of Hawkins and Barclay, and those others who adopt this “argument”.

Reflect upon Barclay's comment. He is explaining that, on Markan Priority, the text was altered by Matthew and Luke from “many” to “all” ***not because it is actually true that all were healed*** but ***because Matthew and Luke cannot bear to think that perhaps not all were healed***. Thus the text of Matthew and Luke does not bear witness to ***the truth*** of what happened but bears witness to ***the wishful thinking*** of the two authors about what they hoped had happened. We have surrendered a reliable Bible and in its place we have received back from the hands of the Markan Priorists a record of the pious hopings of a couple of later Synoptic writers who are amending the text to accord with, and to express, their best wishes for what Jesus might have done.

And what, pray, is the basis for this conclusion about what Matthew and Luke are doing? It has one basis only. It flows from the belief that Mark is first, and is used by Matthew and Luke. It has no other basis. If this Synoptic view were not governing interpretation, this explanation of how and why Matthew and Luke were altering Mark's record of the facts would not be offered, for it does not arise from anything in the text of the Gospels apart from this Markan Priority theory.

2. It is part of the data that Matthew does not correspond with Mark for three words out of every five in Mark, and Luke does not correspond with Mark for three words out of every four in Mark (see the actual word count figures for this in Chapter Four, §4.2.3, Table 2, and the comment in §4.2.7). When this data is viewed from the point of view of the Markan Priority theory, this represents a very substantial rewriting by each of Matthew and Luke of their Markan source material.

3. Quite a number of the arguments for Markan Priority (see Chapter Five) involve as a presupposition that there are deficiencies and shortcomings in Mark that are in need of correction (or at least, of improvement) and that the Major Synoptists then go about engaging in this work of correction and improvement.

4. As Matthew and Luke have Mark as their primary source in the Triple Tradition, a

question mark hangs over all the places where they contain additional detail not in Mark. If the amount of extra material in the Triple Tradition is large and/or significant (and especially if the detail under consideration occurs in both Matthew and Luke), this can be attributed to an overlap with Q, and possibly its authenticity can be thus preserved. Otherwise, it is highly suspect and of dubious veracity. (Thus for example, many scholars call into question the authenticity of the so-called “exceptive clause” on divorce in Mt 19:9 solely on the ground of its absence from the parallel in Mk 10:11.)

However, on the Markan Dependence hypothesis the position is rather different. Markan Dependence is also a theory of relationship. But there is this difference: In itself it does not compel us to any theological position. It does not impose an attitude of scepticism upon us; it does not impose a particular interpretation of the text upon us. It leaves us free to examine and evaluate all of the text without prejudging for or against the authenticity of any part of it. The hypothesis that places Mark last can be affirmed in conjunction with a total scepticism about the historicity of the Synoptic accounts—one thinks of the view of the Tübingen school that Farmer says played a role in causing reaction against the Griesbach hypothesis. Or Markan Dependence can be held in conjunction with a full acceptance of the Gospels at face value, so that each part of each Gospel can speak to us with total authority and with complete authenticity. The hypothesis explains how this can be so, but the message of the text, and its reliability, is not at the mercy of the hypothesis.

This differs from the Markan Priority position, which (if one may judge on the basis of the writings of many of its advocates) involves inherently a sceptical attitude towards the text of the Gospels.

Now it must be emphasized afresh that this study has not proven Markan Priority wrong. This is most certainly not the case. Such a demonstration is in fact impossible. But it has been shown (a) that there are no objective arguments that point exclusively to Markan Priority as the explanation of Synoptic relationships, (b) that there are many substantial problems with the explanations which Markan Priority can offer for the data, and (c) that there is a much better alternative explanation that accords with the data of the text, the external evidence, and what is known to us of the situation of the early church.

In those circumstances the tacit assumption that our approach to interpreting the Synoptic Gospels should commence from the acceptance of the priority of Mark is unjustified, invalid, and unscholarly.

The Markan Dependence hypothesis provides a cohesive and unitary explanation, which is simultaneously simple and rational, for the pericope order of the respective

Synoptic Gospels, and also provides a coherent and straightforward basis for explaining the relationship between the actual wording of the text of the three Synoptic Gospels. This hypothesis accounts for all the data, is compatible with the testimony of church history, and can supply credible answers to the arguments that have hitherto been adduced against it. In all these respects it more satisfactory than other hypotheses offered hitherto. Therefore there is good reason for accepting that Matthew and Luke were written prior to Mark, and that Mark used them in the writing of his Gospel.

And the Progressive Publication of Matthew explains the similarities and differences in order and content between Matthew and Luke in a way that is completely in harmony with, and indeed drawn from, the evidence we have from the Gospels and from church history.

Agatha Christie's Miss Marple once said (Anne Hart, 1985: 137), "If you have a theory that fits every fact—well, then it must be the right one."

Yes, I think that's the truth of the matter.

Here then is the Progressive Publication of Matthew hypothesis for consideration.

The case rests.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*NOTE: Unless the reference would be ambiguous, titles of commentaries are cited by the name of the book of the Bible about which they are written; e.g., Allen's "Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew" appears in this Bibliography with the title "Matthew". GrR is the abbreviation for place of publication Grand Rapids, USA; UP for University Press.*

- Abbott E A. 1879 "Gospels", in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol.x., pp.791ff.
- Aland K. 1975 *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, United Bible Societies.
- Albright W F & Mann C S. 1971 *Matthew*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday.
- Alford Henry 1849/1854/1958/1968 *The Greek Testament Vol. I, The Gospels*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Allen W C. 1907/1912/1965 *Matthew*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- Allen W C. 1911 "The Book of Sayings Used by the Editor of the First Gospel", in Sanday.
- Allen W C. 1911 "The Aramaic Background of the Gospels", in Sanday.
- Anderson Hugh 1976 *Mark*. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Argyle A W. 1961 "Agreements Between Matthew and Luke". *Expository Times* 73, 19-22.
- Argyle A W. 1964 "Evidence For the View That St Luke Used St Matthew's Gospel". *JBL* 83, 390-396.
- Arndt W F & Gingrich F W. 1952/1957 *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. University of Chicago Press/Cambridge UP.
- Atkinson B F C. 1954 *The New Bible Commentary*. London: IVP; GrR: Eerdmans
- Augustine of Hippo c.AD 400 *The Harmony of the Gospels*, Bk I, Chs II & III, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. First Series, Vol VI. GrR: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Baird Wm. 1987 "Luke's Use of Matthew: Griesbach Revisited" *Perkins Journal* XL.3, July 1987, 35-38.
- Barclay Wm. 1975 *Introduction to the First Three Gospels*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Barrett C K. 1943 "Q: A Re-examination". *Expository Times* 54, 320-323.
- Bartlet J. 1911 "The Sources of Luke's Gospel", in Sanday.
- Bauckham Richard (Ed). 1998 *The Gospel for All Christians*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Bauckham Richard. 2006 *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich: See Danker.
- Beare F W. 1965 Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *JBL* 84, 295-297.
- Benoit P & Boismard M E. 1965/1972/1981 *Synopse des Quatre Evangiles en Français* (3 vols). Paris: Les Editions du Cerf.
- Black David Alan. 2001 *Why Four Gospels? Historical Origins of the Gospels*. GrR: Kregel.
- Black D A & Beck D R (Eds). 2001 *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem*. GrR: Baker.
- Bleek F. 1869/1870 E.T. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark (German title: *Einleitung in das Neues Testament*).

- Blomberg Craig. 2001: in Black & Beck.
- Block Darrell. 2001: in Black & Beck.
- Boismard M E. 1980: see Benoit P & Boismard M E. 1965/1972/1980
- Boismard M E. 1984 "Théorie des Niveaux Multiples". Paper presented to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium.
- Branscomb B Harvie. 1937 *Mark*. Moffatt NT Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Brown Colin (Ed). 1975-1978 *Dictionary of NT Theology* (3 vols). Exeter: Paternoster/ GrR: Zondervan.
- Bruce A B. 1897 *The Expositor's Greek Testament, Luke*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Bruce F F. 1951 *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text*. London: The Tyndale Press.
- Buchanan G W. 1974 "Has the Griesbach Hypothesis Been Falsified?" *JBL* 93, 550-572.
- Burkitt F C. 1911 *The Gospel History and its Transmission* 1906 Jowett Lectures. Edinburgh: T & T Clark
- Burney C F. 1925 *The Poetry of our Lord*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Butler B C. 1951 *The Originality of St Matthew*. Cambridge UP.
- Caird G B. 1963/1977 *Luke*. Pelican Commentaries, London: Penguin/SCM.
- Calvin John. ET. 1960 *Harmony of the Gospels*, Edinburgh: St Andrew Press.
- Campenhause Hans von. 1972/1977 *The Formation of the Christian Bible*. E.T., London: A & C Black; Minneapolis: Fortress..
- Carpenter J. Estline. 1890/1906 *The First Three Gospels*. London: The Lindsay Press.
- Casey Maurice. 1998 *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel*. Cambridge UP.
- Chapman John. 1936 *Matthew, Mark and Luke*. London: Longmans Green.
- Chrysostom John. c. AD 400 *Homilies on the Gospel of St Matthew*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. First Series, Vol X. GrR: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Cope Lamar. 1976 "The Death of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew; or, The Case of the Confusing Conjunction". *CBQ* 38, 515-519.
- Cranfield C E B. 1959 *Mark*. Cambridge Greek T.C., Cambridge UP.
- Creed John Martin. 1930/1953 *Luke*. London: Macmillan.
- Cremer H. 1878/1895/1962 *Biblio-Theological Lexicon of NT Greek*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Crook Z. 2000 "The Synoptic Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven". *JSNT* 78:23-48.
- Cutt Samuel. 1966 Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *Theology* 69, 225-227.
- Danker F W (Ed). 2000 *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*. University of Chicago Press.
- Davidson Samuel. 1868/1882/1894 *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*. London.
- Dibelius Martin. 1919/1971/1987 *From Tradition to Gospel*. Cambridge: James Clarke.
- Dibelius Martin. 1935 *Gospel Criticism and Christology*. London: Nicholson & Watson.
- Dodd C H. 1936 *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

- Downing F G. 1965 "Towards the Rehabilitation of Q". *NT Studies* 11, 169-181.
- Dungan David L. 1970 "Mark - The Abridgement of Matthew and Luke", in Miller.
- Dungan David L. 1999 *A History of the Synoptic Problem*. New York: Doubleday.
- Edersheim Alfred. 1883/1950 *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. London: Longmans Green; GrR: Eerdmans.
- Edwards James R 2002 *Mark*. Pillar Commentaries. Leicester: Apollos/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Ellis E E. 1966 *The Gospel of Luke*. New Century Bible. London: Thomas Nelson
- Ellis E E. 1980 "Dating the New Testament". *NT Studies* 26, 487-502.
- Eusebius. c. 324, *Ecclesiastical History* (Trans. C F Cruse). London: George Bell, 1894; \_\_\_\_\_(Trans. A C McGiffert), in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Series, V.I, GrR: Eerdmans, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Church History* (Ed and Trans. Paul L Maier). GrR: Kregel, 1999.
- Evans C F. 1968 *The Beginning of the Gospel*. London: S.P.C.K.
- Farmer William. 1964/1976 *The Synoptic Problem*. New York: Macmillan/Western North Carolina Press.
- Farmer William. 1969 *Synopticon*. Cambridge UP.
- Farmer William. 1973 "A Response to Robert Morgenthau's *Statistische Synopse*". *Biblica* 54, 417-433.
- Farmer William. 1977 "Modern Developments of Griesbach's Hypothesis", *NT Studies* 23, 275-295.
- Farmer William (Ed). 1983 *New Synoptic Studies*. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Farmer William. 1983 "The Patristic Evidence Re-examined", in Farmer 1983.
- Farmer William. 1984 "A Position Paper for the Two-Gospel Hypothesis". Paper presented to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium.
- Farmer William. 2001, in Black & Beck.
- Farnell F. David. 2002, in Thomas.2002.
- Farrer A M. 1955 "On Dispensing With Q", in Nineham 1955.
- Fee Gordon D. 1978 "Modern Text Criticism and the Synoptic Problem", in Orchard and Longstaff.
- Fenton J C. 1963/1977 *Matthew*. Pelican Commentaries. London: Penguin/SCM.
- Filson Floyd V. 1960/1971 *Matthew*. London: A & C Black.
- Fitzmyer J A. 1970 "On the Gospel of Luke, the Priority of Mark, and the Q Source", in Miller.
- Fitzmyer J A. 1981 *The Gospel According to Luke Vol 1*. Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday.
- Focant Camille (Ed). 1993 *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism*. BETL 110, Leuven.
- France R T. 2002 *Mark*. NIGTC. Carlisle: Paternoster/GrR: Eerdmans.
- France R T. 2007 *Matthew*. NICNT. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Friedrich Gerhard: see Kittel & Friedrich.



- Frye R M. 1978 "The Synoptic Problems and Analogies in Other Literature", in Walker.
- Fuller R H. 1978 "Classics and the Gospels: The Seminar", in Walker.
- Gaboury Antonio. 1970 *La Structure des Evangiles Synoptiques*. Leiden: Brill.
- Gamba G G. 1983 "A Further Re-examination of Evidence From the Early Tradition", in Farmer 1983.
- Geldenhuis J N. 1950 *Luke*. NICNT. London: Marshall/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Gerhardsson Birger. 1961/1964/1998 *Memory and Manuscript*. Lund: Gleerup; GrR: Eerdmans.
- Gerhardsson Birger. 1964 *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Gerhardsson Birger. 1977/1979 *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions*. London: SCM.
- Gleason H A 1969. *Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Godet F L. 1886/1971 *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 Vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Goodacre Mark. 2001 *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Goodspeed E J. 1959 *Matthew: Apostle and Evangelist*. Philadelphia: Winston
- Gould Ezra P. 1896 *Mark*. ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Grant F C. 1957 *The Gospels: Their Origin and Their Growth*. London: Faber.
- Grant F C. 1965 "Turning Back The Clock", Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *Interpretation* 19, 352-354.
- Grant R M. 1963 *Historical Introduction to the New Testament*. London: Collins/New York: Harper.
- Greeven H. 1978 "The Gospel Synopsis From 1776 to The Present Day", in Orchard & Longstaff.
- Griesbach J J. 1776 *Synopsis evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci et Lucae*. Halle.
- Griesbach J J. 1783/1825 *Fontes unde evangelistae suas de resurrectione Domini narrationes hauserint: Paschatos solemnia*. Jena: Gabler.
- Griesbach J J. 1789/1794/1978 *Commentatio*, E.T. *A Demonstration That Mark Was Written After Matthew and Luke*, by Orchard, in Orchard & Longstaff.
- Gundry R H. 1967/1975 *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel*. Leiden: Brill.
- Gundry R H. 1982 *Matthew - A Commentary in His Literary and Theological Art*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Gundry R H. 4th Edn 2003 *A Survey of the New Testament*. GrR: Zondervan.
- Guthrie Donald. 1965 *New Testament Introduction*. London: Tyndale.
- Guy Harold A. 1954 *The Origin of the Gospel of Mark*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Harnack Adolf. 1911 *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*. London, Williams & Norgate; New York: Putnam's Sons.
- Hart Anne. 1985 *The Life and Times of Miss Jane Marple*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.
- Hawkins John C. 1899/1909/1968 *Horae Synopticae*. Oxford: Clarendon/GrR: Baker.
- Hawkins John C. 1911 "Probabilities As To The So-called Double Tradition of St Matthew and St Luke", in Sanday.
- Hawkins John C. 1911 "Three Limitations to St Luke's Use of St Mark's Gospel", in Sanday.

- Head P M. 1997 *Christology and the Synoptic Problem*. Cambridge UP.
- Hendriksen William. 1973 *Matthew*. GrR: Baker/London: Banner of Truth Trust.
- Hendriksen William. 1975 *Mark*. GrR: Baker/London: Banner of Truth Trust.
- Hendriksen William. 1978 *Luke*. GrR: Baker/London: Banner of Truth Trust.
- Hengel Martin. 2000 *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press
- Hill David. 1972 *Matthew*. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Honoré A . 1968 "A Statistical Study of the Synoptic Problem". *NovT* 10, 95-147.
- Hughes R Kent. 1989 *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, 2 Vols. Wheaton: Crossway Books.
- Jameson H G. 1922 *The Origin of the Synoptic Gospels*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jeremias Joachim. 1971 *New Testament Theology Vol One, The Proclamation of Jesus*. London: SCM.
- Kennedy George. 1978 "Classical and Christian Source Criticism", in Walker.
- Kittel Gerhard & Friedrich Gerhard (Eds). 1964-1976 *Theological Dictionary of the NT* (10 vols). GrR: Eerdmans.
- Kistemaker S J. 1972/1980 *The Gospels in Current Study*. GrR: Baker.
- Knox Wilfred L 1953, 1957 *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels* (2 vols). Cambridge UP.
- Kümmel W G. 1972/1973 *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*. Nashville: Abingdon/ London: SCM.
- Kümmel W G. 1975/1977 *Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon/London: SCM.
- Ladd G E. 1967 *The New Testament and Criticism*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Lane William L. 1974 *Mark*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Leon-Dufour Xavier. 1963/1968, *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*, first published in a longer version in France in 1963 (French title, *Les Evangiles et l'histoire de Jésus*), E.T., London: William Collins; New York: Desclée, 1968.
- Lightfoot R H. 1950/1962 *The Gospel Message of St Mark*. Oxford UP.
- Lindsay R L. 1963 "A Modified Two-Document Theory of the Synoptic Dependence and Interdependence". *Novum Testamentum* 6, 252-257.
- Lindsay R L. 1992 "A New Approach to the Synoptic Gospels". *Mishkan* 17.18: 87-106.
- Linnmann Eta. 1992 *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* E.T., GrR: Baker.
- Linnmann Eta. 1996 "The Lost Gospel of Q -- Fact or Fantasy?" *Trinity Journal* 17:1 (Spring), 3-18
- Linnmann Eta. 2001 *Biblical Criticism on Trial* E.T., GrR: Kregel.
- Linnmann Eta. 2001 *Historical Criticism of the Bible* E.T., GrR: Kregel.
- Loane Marcus. 1945 *A Brief Survey of the Synoptic Problem* Melbourne: S John Bacon
- Longstaff T R W. 1975 "The Minor Agreements: An Examination of the Basic Argument". *CBQ* 37, 184-192.

- Longstaff T R W. 1977 *Evidence of Conflation in Mark?* Missoula USA.
- Longstaff T R W. 1978: see Orchard & Longstaff.
- Lowe Malcolm. 1982 "The Demise of Arguments From Order For Markan Priority". *Novum Testamentum* 24, 27-36.
- Lowe Malcolm & Flusser David. 1983 "Evidence Corroborating A Modified Proto-Matthean Synoptic Theory". *NT Studies* 29, 25-47.
- Ludlum J H. 1964/65 Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *Christianity Today* 1964/65, 306.
- Maier Paul: see Eusebius.
- Mann C S. 1971: see Albright & Mann.
- Manson T W. 1937/1949/1961 *The Sayings of Jesus*. London: SCM.
- Manson William. 1930 *Luke*. Moffatt's NT Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Marshall I Howard. 1970 *Luke: Historian and Theologian*. Exeter: Paternoster.
- Marshall I Howard. 1978 *Luke*. Exeter: Paternoster.
- Martin Ralph P. 1972 *Mark - Evangelist & Theologian*. Exeter: Paternoster.
- Martin R P. 1975 *NT Foundations Vol. 1, The Four Gospels*. GrR: Eerdmans/Exeter: Paternoster.
- McKnight E V. 1972: see Talbert & McKnight.
- McKnight Scot. 1988 *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*. GrR: Baker.
- McKnight Scot. 2001, in Black & Beck.
- McNeile A H. 1915 *The Gospel According to St Matthew*. London: Macmillan.
- McNicol A. 1984 "The Two-Gospel Hypothesis Under Scrutiny": Paper presented to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium.
- McNicol A et al (Eds). 1996 *Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's Use of Matthew*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press.
- Meeks W A. 1978 "Hypomnēmata From An Untamed Sceptic", in Walker.
- Menzies Allan. 1901 *The Earliest Gospel*. London: Macmillan.
- Metzger Bruce. 1964/1968 *The Text of the New Testament*. Oxford UP.
- Metzger Bruce. 1965/1969 *New Testament: Background, Growth, & Content*. Nashville: Abingdon/  
London: Lutterworth.
- Metzger Bruce. 1971 *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT*. London: United Bible Societies.
- Miller D M (Ed). 1970 *Jesus and Man's Hope* Vol 1. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.
- Mitton C L. 1965 Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *ET* 77, 1-3.
- Morris Leon. 1974 *Luke* Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. London: IVP.
- Morris Leon. 1992 *Matthew*. Pillar Commentaries. Leicester: IVP/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Moule C F.D. 1962/1966/1971 *The Birth of the New Testament*. London: A & C Black.
- Moule C F D. 1967/1968 *The Phenomenon of the New Testament*. London: SCM.
- Moulton James H. 1906/1967 *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol 1. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

- Moulton J H & Howard J F. 1919/1929/1968 *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol 2. T & T Clark.
- Moulton James H A. *Grammar of New Testament Greek* Vols 3 & 4: See Turner Nigel.
- Moulton W F & Geden A S. 1974 *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Morgenthaler Robert. 1958/1982 *Statistik des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes (Statistics of New Testament Words)*. Gotthelf-Verlag.
- Morgenthaler Robert. 1971 *Statistische Synopse (Synoptic Statistics)*. Gotthelf-Verlag.
- Murray Dom G. 1983 "Order in St. Mark's Gospel". *The Downside Review* Vol. 101 No. 344 182-186.
- Neill Stephen. <sup>2</sup>1966 *Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Neirynck Frans. 1975 *The Minor Agreements of Matthew and Luke Against Mark*. Leuven.
- Neirynck Frans & Segbroeck F. Van. 1978 "The Griesbach Hypothesis: A Bibliography", in Orchard & Longstaff.
- Neirynck Frans. 1984 "The Two-Source Hypothesis: An Introduction": Paper presented to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium.
- Neirynck Frans. 1984 "Theoretical Statement - Three Approaches to the Synoptic Problem": Paper presented to the 1984 Jerusalem Symposium.
- Neville D J 1994. *Arguments from Order in Synoptic Sources*. Gospel Studies 7. Macon: Mercer UP.
- Neville D J 2002. *Mark's Gospel - Prior or Posterior?* Sheffield Academic Press.
- Niemelä John H. 2002: in Thomas 2002..
- Nineham D E (Ed). 1955 *Studies in the Gospels*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Nineham D E. 1963/1977 *Mark*. Pelican Commentaries. London: Penguin/SCM.
- Nineham D E. 1977 Review of Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem*, in *JTS* 28, 548-550.
- Nolland John. 2005 *Matthew*. NIGTC. Exeter: Paternoster/GrR: Eerdmans.
- Orchard Bernard. 1976/1977 *Matthew, Luke and Mark*. Manchester: Koinonia Press.
- Orchard B & Longstaff T R W. (Eds). 1978 *J.J.Griesbach: Synoptic and Text-critical Studies 1776-1976*, cited as *Griesbach Studies*, Cambridge UP.
- Orchard B & Riley H. 1987 *The Order of the Synoptics: Why Three Synoptic Gospels?* Macon: Mercer UP.
- Osborne Grant. 2001: in Black & Beck.
- Osborne Grant. 2002: in Thomas 2002.
- Owen H. 1764 *Observations on the Four Gospels*. London: St Martin's.
- Palmer F R. 1971 *Grammar*. Language and Linguistics Series. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Parker Pierson. 1953 *The Gospel Before Mark*. Chicago.
- Peabody David. 1983 "Augustine and the Augustinian Hypothesis: A Re-examination of Augustine's Thought", in Farmer *New Synoptic Studies*, 1983.
- Peabody David, Cope L, McNicol AJ (Eds). 2002 *One Gospel from Two*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press.

- Petrie Stewart. 1959 "'Q' Is Only What You Make It" *Novum Testamentum* 3, 28-33.
- Plummer Alfred. 1896/1922/1969 *Luke*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- Powers B Ward. 1977 "The Progressive Publication of Matthew: A New Explanation of Synoptic Origins", *Tyndale Paper (Australia)* Vol XXII No 1.
- Powers B Ward. 1980 "The Shaking of the Synoptics" *Reformed Theological Review* 39, 33-39.
- Rawlinson A E J. 1925 *Mark*. Westminster Commentaries. London: Methuen.
- Reicke Bo. 1978 "Griesbach's Answer To The Synoptic Question", in Orchard & Longstaff.
- Reicke Bo. 1978 *Introduction to Griesbach's Commentatio*, in Orchard & Longstaff.
- Riesenfeld H. 1970 *The Gospel Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress/Oxford: Blackwell.
- Riley Harold. 1989 *The Making of Mark: An Exploration*. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Rist J M. 1978 *On The Independence of Matthew and Mark*. Cambridge UP.
- Roberts Mark. 2007 *Can We Trust the Gospels?* Wheaton: Crossway.
- Robertson A T & Davis W H. 1908/1931/1958/1977 *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament*. London: Hodder/GrR: Baker.
- Robertson A T. 1919, 1958 *Studies in Mark's Gospel*. New York: Broadman
- Robinson J A T. 1975 "The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: A Test of Synoptic Relationships", *NT Stud* 21, 443-461.
- Robinson J A T. 1976 *Redating the New Testament*. London: SCM.
- Robinson T H. 1928/1960 *Matthew*. Moffat NT Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Rolland Philippe. 1982 "Les Prédécesseurs de Marc". *Revue Biblique* LXXXIX, 370-405.
- Rolland Philippe. 1983 "Marc, Première Harmonie Evangélique?" *Revue Biblique* XC, 23-79.
- Rolland Philippe. 1984 *Les Premiers Evangiles*. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf.
- Rushbrooke W G. 1880 *Synopticon*. London: Macmillan.
- Sadler M F. 1882 *Matthew*. London: George Bell.
- Sagan Carl. 1980/1983 *Cosmos*. London and Sydney: Futura/MacDonald and Co.,.
- Salmon George. 4th Edn 1889 *A Historical Introduction to the Books of the NT*. London: John Murray.
- Sanday W (Ed). 1911 *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Sanders E P. 1969 *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*. Cambridge UP.
- Sanders E P. 1969 "The Argument From Order and the Relationship Between Matthew and Luke". *NT Stud* 15, 249-261.
- Sanders E P. 1973 "The Overlaps of Mark & Q and the Synoptic Problem". *NT Stud* 19, 453-465.
- Sanders E P. 1975 "The Synoptic Problem: After Ten Years". *Perkins School of Theology Journal* 28, 70ff.
- Saxe J G. (nd.) "The Blind Men And The Elephant", in Watt.
- Schürer Emil. 1885/1979 *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

- Schweizer Eduard. 1970 *Mark*. Atlanta: John Knox.
- Segbroeck F Van. 1978: see Neiryneck & Segbroeck.
- Sevenster J N. 1968 *Do You Know Greek?* Leiden: Brill.
- Simpson R. 1966 "The Major Agreements of Matthew and Luke Against Mark". *NT Studies* 12, 273-284.
- Solages de Mgr. 1959 *A Greek Synopsis of the Gospels*. Leiden: Brill.
- Solages de Mgr. 1973 *La Composition Des Evangiles*. Leiden: Brill.
- Stein Robert. 1987/1988 *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*. Leicester: IVP
- Stendahl Krister. 1967 *The School of St Matthew*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Stoldt H H. 1980 *History & Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*. Macon: Mercer University Press/  
Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Stonehouse N B. 1944/1979 *The Witness of the Synoptic Gospels to Christ*. GrR: Baker.
- Stonehouse N.B. 1963/1964 *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*. GrR: Eerdmans/London: Tyndale.
- Streeter B H. 1911 "St Mark's Knowledge and Use of Q", in Sanday.
- Streeter B H. 1924/1930/1951 *The Four Gospels*. London: Macmillan.
- Styler G M. 1962/1966/1971 "The Priority of Mark", in Moule 1962.
- Swete H B. 1913/1977 *Mark*. London: Macmillan/GrR: Kregel.
- Talbert C H & McKnight E V. 1972 "Can The Griesbach Hypothesis Be Falsified?" *JBL* 91, 338-368.
- Talbert C H. 1977/1978 *What Is A Gospel?* Minneapolis: Fortress/London: SPCK.
- Taylor R O P. 1946 *The Groundword of the Gospels*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taylor Vincent. 1930/1967 *The Gospels*. London: Epworth Press.
- Taylor Vincent. 1933 *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan.
- Taylor Vincent. 1952/1966 *Mark*. London: Macmillan.
- Tenney M C. 1961/1978 *New Testament Survey*. GrR: Eerdmans/Leicester: IVP.
- Thiessen H C. 1943/1979 *Introduction to the New Testament*. GrR: Eerdmans.
- Thomas R L. 1976 "An Investigation of the Agreements Between Matthew and Luke Against Mark".  
*JETS* 19, 103-112.
- Thomas Robert & Farnell David. 1998 *The Jesus Crisis*. GrR: Kregel
- Thomas R L. 2002 *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*. GrR: Kregel.
- Thompson G H P. 1972 *Luke*. New Clarendon Bible, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Throckmorton B H. 1948 "Did Mark Know Q?" *JBL* 67, 319-329.
- Trochmé E. 1963/1975 *The Formation of the Gospel According to Mark*. London: SPCK.
- Tuckett C M. 1979 "The Griesbach Hypothesis in the 19th Century". *JSNT*, 3, 29-60.
- Tuckett C M. 1980 "The Argument From Order and the Synoptic Problem". *TZ* 36, 338-354.
- Tuckett C M. 1983 *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis*. Cambridge UP.
- Tuckett C M. 1984 "On the Relationship between Matthew and Luke". *NT Stud* 30, 130-142.

- Tuckett C M. 1984 "Response to the Two-Gospel Hypothesis Documents": Paper presented to the Jerusalem Symposium.
- Turner Nigel. 1959 "The Minor Verbal Agreements of Mt. and Lk. Against Mk.". *Studia Evang. Texte und Unters* 73, 223-234.
- Turner Nigel. 1963 *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol 3. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Turner Nigel. 1976 *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol 4. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Tyson J B. 1987-88 "Order in the Synoptic Gospels: Patterns". *SecCent* 2: 65-109
- Vaganay L. 1951 "L'absence du Sermon sur la Montagne chez Marc". *Revue Biblique* 58, 5-46.
- Vaganay L. 1954 *Le Problème Synoptique*. Paris-Tournai.
- Walker W O (Ed). 1978 *The Relationship Among The Gospels*. San Antonio: Trinity UP.
- Walker W O. 1987-88 "Order in the Synoptic Gospels". *SecCent* 2: 83-97.
- Watt Charles. R. (nd.) *Chosen For Pleasure*. London: Warne.
- Weiss Bernhard. 1861 "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der drei synoptischen Evangelien". *Theol.\_Stud.\_u.\_Krit.*
- Wenham David. 1972 "The Synoptic Problem Revisited". *Tyndale Bulletin* 23, 3-38, Tyndale.
- Wenham John. 1991 *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Westcott B F. 1851/1860 *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*. London.
- Wette Wilhelm M L de. 1826/1842/1848/1860 *Lehrbuch der historisch kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen Bücher des Neuen Testaments (Introduction to the New Testament)*. Berlin.
- Williams N P. 1911 "A Recent Theory of the Origin of St Mark's Gospel", in Sanday.
- Williams Matthew C. 2002: in Thomas 2002.
- Williams Matthew C. 2006 *Two Gospels From One*. GrR: Kregel.
- Woods F H. 1886 "The Origin and Mutual Relation of the Synoptic Gospels", in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* Vol 2, 59-104.
- Wright Arthur. 1896/1903 *A Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek*. London: Macmillan.
- Zahn Theodor. 1909 *Introduction to the New Testament* (3 vols). Edinburgh: T & T Clark.