

**GOSPEL ORIGINS: A
STUDY IN THE
SYNOPTIC PROBLEM**

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Gospel origins: a study in the Synoptic problem by William West Holdsworth

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WILLIAM WEST HOLDSWORTH

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GOSPEL ORIGINS

A Study in the Synoptic Problem

BY THE REV.

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I DEDICATE THIS WORK
TO THOSE BEST TEACHERS
MY STUDENTS
OF THE EAST AND OF THE WEST

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Ἐπειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάσθαι διήγησιν
περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς
παρέδουσάν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται
γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, ἴδοξε κάμοι, παρηκολουθηκότι
ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς, καθεξῆς σοὶ γράψαι, κράτιστε
Θεόφιλε, ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ τῶν κατηχθήσης λόγων τῆν
ἀσφάλειαν.

ST. LUKE.

P R E F A C E

THE chapters which make up this little book are so many studies in the Synoptic Problem. The author makes no claim to originality in dealing with this question. He has made full use of the minute research and laborious work of those who have preceded him ; but he has tried to carry their work on to a further stage in endeavouring to define more closely than they have done the sources used by the three evangelists. In doing so he has given the fullest consideration to the many different theories advanced by modern scholars, and in consequence, though it cannot be claimed that this work is a ' Handbook ' on the subject with which it deals, yet the hope is cherished that students will be able, in following the line of thought advanced, to bring into view the several positions taken up by those who have attempted a solution.

The line followed in treating this subject was first suggested by the distinction made by Dr. Arthur Wright between the three editions of the Markan narrative which appear in the three Gospels as we know them, and Dr. Wright's well-known titles for these editions—proto-Mark, deutero-Mark, and trito-Mark—have been freely used in the pages which follow. The author, however, has ventured to differ from Dr. Wright in an important particular, in that he applies this differentiation not to an oral tradition, but to *documents*, and a study of the Gospels, extending

now over many years, from this point of view, has led him to the conclusion that it offers the most likely solution of the difficult but fascinating problem. Should this conclusion be finally reached by others, the fullest acknowledgment will be due to the distinguished scholar whose *Synopsis* will long remain an indispensable text-book for students of the Gospels.

But the recognition of a deutero-Mark in the first Gospel, and an attempt to separate this element, has led the author to a second conclusion, and this is that the Logia of St. Matthew are not lost, as so many have thought, but actually exist, sandwiched between distinctly Markan sections, in the Gospel which bears St. Matthew's name. This led to an attempt to define the source of the sayings thus compiled by St. Matthew, a source generally indicated by the formula 'Q.' Finally, when, in the case of the third Gospel, the Markan section, or proto-Mark was removed, together with the sections taken from Q thus defined, the remainder appeared to possess so many common features that it seemed possible to bring the whole of it under one designation, and to ascribe it to a single authorship. It is hoped that it may be seen that outstanding features of the three Gospels may be fairly accounted for in this way, and that the sources from which the three evangelists derived their material afford a sufficient guarantee for the deeds and words of Jesus as these appear in the three Gospels.

In the hope that the book may be read by others than students, critical details have been eliminated from the main chapters. They appear, however, in additional notes attached to the several chapters, and it is hoped that in considering the theory here advanced judgment will be

suspended until these last have been examined. Instead of crowding the pages with references to other works on the subject, it has been thought best to give a list of the works which have been freely used by the present author. His indebtedness to his many teachers is hereby fully acknowledged, and if he may venture to mention one name it shall be that of the scholar whose work in this department, as in others, has been both stimulus and example to a host of students unknown to him. The praise of Dr. Sanday is in all the Churches.

In conclusion, the author would express his great indebtedness to his friends, the Rev. J. A. Vane, B.A., and Mr. F. Richards, M.A., for their most helpful suggestions made during the preparation of the work.

W. W. HOLDSWORTH.

HANDSWORTH COLLEGE,

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