

**Evangelical Modernism:**  
A Comparison of Scriptural or Fundamentalist Analysis of the  
Synoptic Gospels with that of the Majority of Modern  
Evangelicalism

by

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Modern evangelicalism, which cannot in these last days even consistently defend the *euangelion*, the gospel, since it is unable to agree upon its definition,<sup>1</sup> certainly does not maintain a faithful orthopraxy of it, and numbers within its ranks a terrible quantity of unconverted theological “conservatives.” Furthermore, in rebellion against the Biblical command to separate from apostates (2 Cor 6:14-7:1) and compromisers (2 Thess 3:6, 14), many evangelicals seem to think it wise, to obtain the favor of the world that hates the Lord whom they profess, and that they may “dialogue” with the enemies of the faith, rather than preaching to them, to require professors in their theological schools to obtain degrees from modernist universities. The demonic doctrines they then imbibe enter their own institutions, and liberalism spreads through their ranks. Bibliological heresy, while especially apparent in the “left wing” of evangelicalism where verbal, plenary inspiration has been officially abandoned,<sup>2</sup> is also rampant

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<sup>1</sup> One may note apostasy such as that of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together,” where such evangelicals as Bill Bright, Chuck Colson, Pat Robertson, J. I. Packer, Max Lucado, Os Guinness, and others agreed that they preached the same gospel as Rome, that Mystery Babylon which replaces the finished work of Christ with its blasphemous and abominable sacrament of the Mass, teaches baptismal regeneration, a special human priesthood, and scores of other heresies. The controversy between Lordship salvation and the antinomianism of the so-called “grace” position is another example.

<sup>2</sup> “The current debates over God, salvation, and the Christian life are, after all, the natural outworking of the decisions of the last generation of evangelicalism to leave the matter of biblical inerrancy as a matter of evangelical ‘consistency,’ rather than evangelical ‘authenticity.’... With biblical inerrancy once a near-consensus for evangelicals of all confessional traditions, many now lament half-jokingly that it is easier to find a creationist at Berkeley than an inerrantist at Fuller Seminary. Might it be that the future will see an entire wing of evangelical churches teaching that God stands helpless in the face of evil, that he can be wrong about the future, or that faith in Jesus is not necessary for those who never hear the Gospel? Or might it be that we are already there?... self-proclaimed evangelicals debate in print questions once rightly seen as foundational to whether or not one is a Christian, much less an evangelical.” (Russell D. Moore, “Christianity and Liberalism at Vacation Bible School,” pg. 12-13 *Southern Seminary Magazine*, Winter 2001) This is the cry of concern about the sad state of evangelicalism from one who is at the school where Robert Stein teaches. Indeed, the same magazine contains an article entitled “Robert Stein: The author is king in biblical interpretation,” by Jeff Robinson. It states that Stein “has established a hermeneutics program [at Southern Seminary] which he hopes to be his enduring legacy within evangelicalism,” (pg. 16). This is the same Robert Stein that, because of his adoption of form critical heresy, states, e. g., that Matthew 20:1-16 should not be considered to have “as intimate a relationship with its immediate context as one would [expect] if dealing with such expository sections of Scripture as Romans 1:16-8:39 or Galatians 1:11-4:31” because “[i]t seems clear that the parable was not originally connected to what precedes it in Matthew’s text.” He further states that “in any collection of parables, pronouncement stories, sayings, and so on, there may not necessarily be any special hermeneutical connection between them other than the fact that Jesus was understood to

among those that profess to hold to a word-for-word God-breathed Bible. In the field of Synoptic studies evangelicals have assimilated much of the modernistic methodologies of historical criticism, and the majority hold to views of gospel origins and employ hermeneutical methodologies directly in conflict with the high view of Scripture they profess.<sup>3</sup>

The godly desire to take all thoughts captive to the truth of the verbally inspired Scriptures leads, in an analysis of the Synoptic gospels, to both literary independence and the conclusion that Matthew wrote first, then Luke, and finally Mark, determinations overwhelmingly supported by available historical facts.<sup>4</sup> The gospel went to the Jew first, then to the Gentile (Rom 1:16, Ac 13:46, 18:5-6, 28:17-29 etc.), and it is obvious to the discerning reader, and is consequently acknowledged by almost all parties, that Matthew's gospel is

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have taught this material... individual pericopes can frequently stand by themselves and are often best interpreted as self-contained units whose connection with the surrounding materials should not be pressed" (pg. 219, *The Synoptic Problem*). This is hermeneutics which has eliminated the Holy Spirit in practice, if not in profession. As evangelicalism does adopt hermeneutics like these, it follows the broad road to Hell trodden by the modernists earlier in this century. May God keep such doctrine from invading the schools, the minds, and the pulpits of God's fundamental Baptist churches!

<sup>3</sup> For example, the absurdity of holding to Markan priority, with Matthew depending upon Mark, while also defending the inspiration of the Scriptures, is apparent from the fact that Matthew was an apostle and an eyewitness to the vast majority of the material in his gospel. To make him lean upon the man Mark for information about Christ's life is foolishness—the liberal who rejects Matthew's authorship of Matthew and Mark's authorship of Mark is consistent with his evolutionism in holding to Markan priority, but the evangelical who believes his source critical theories yet defends the traditional human authorship of the gospels believes clashing doctrines founded upon the antithetical presuppositions of atheism and Biblical fideism.

<sup>4</sup> An examination of the views of early Christianity on the origins of the gospels is found later in this paper. For a refutation of the "Q" hypothesis, see pgs. 18-41, *Biblical Criticism on Trial*, Eta Linnemann, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 2001, and the articles "Bible Criticism" (pgs. 86-91) and "Q document" (pgs. 618-621) in the *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Norman L. Geisler, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999. For an analysis of literary dependence and the synoptic problem that deals with actual facts and data, rather than groundless philosophical speculation, and concludes that dependence is scientifically untenable, see *Is There A Synoptic Problem?* Eta Linnemann, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992 and pgs. 42-73, *Biblical Criticism on Trial*, Linnemann. For a refutation of source criticism, see "Source Criticism: The Two Source Theory" by Thomas Edgar, pgs. 132-157 of *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship*, Robert L. Thomas & David F. Farnell, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel pub. 1998. For a refutation of Form and Tradition criticism, see "Form Criticism and Tradition Criticism," pgs. 185-232, *The Jesus Crisis*. For a refutation of Redaction criticism, see "Redaction Criticism," pgs. 233-267, *The Jesus Crisis*. The body of the argument from Scripture made here on the order of the Synoptics is found on pg. 17 of *The Lord Added to the Church*, Aaron Strouse, Virginia Beach, VA: Tabernacle Baptist Theological Press, 1998. Eta Linnemann's *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990 extensively contrasts the proper presuppositions of the believer and those of historical-critical theology. It also briefly delineates her conversion from a Bultmannian professor of New Testament to a disciple of Christ.

distinctively keyed to a Jewish audience, while Mark and Luke have a more Gentile orientation. Matthew consequently wrote first. Mark's spiritual immaturity during the childhood years of church history, seen in his shirking of the duties of the ministry (Ac 13:13, 15:38), demonstrates that he was not suitable early on for membership in the number of those holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Paul does not say a positive word about him until his final epistle (2 Tim 4:11; but cf. Col 4:10), written c. A. D. 66-67<sup>5</sup> shortly before his martyrdom. However, he cites Luke's gospel as Scripture in the epistle of 1 Timothy (Lu 10:7, 1 Tim 5:18), composed c. A. D. 60-62, which proves it was already in circulation at that point of time. Luke consequently wrote before Mark.

The prologue to Luke's gospel sheds light on the means he employed in composition, and demonstrates that he did not employ another canonical gospel as a source.<sup>6</sup> The prologue states:

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)<sup>7</sup>

Luke could not have employed the gospel of Matthew as a source, because he contrasts the

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<sup>5</sup> A basic overview of dates is found in the *MacArthur's Quick Reference Guide to the Bible*, John MacArthur, Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2001. More detailed discussions are found in the standard New Testament Introductions, such as Carson, Moo, & Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> An extensive examination of 1:1-4 which arrives at this conclusion is "Literary Dependence and Luke's Prologue," Paul W. Felix, in *The Jesus Crisis*, pgs. 271-288. This article is a major source for the conclusions in this paragraph of this paper, although Felix makes arguments in his article which are not reproduced here, and arguments are made here which are not given by Felix.

<sup>7</sup> The Greek Testament has 1 επειδηπερ πολλοι επεχειρησαν αναταξασθαι διηγησιν περι των πεπληρορημενων εν ημιν πραγματων 2 καθως παρεδοσαν ημιν οι απ αρχης αυτοπται και υπηρεται γενομενοι του λογου 3 εδοξεν καμοι παρηκολουθηκοτι ανωθεν πασιν ακριβως καθεξης σοι γραψαι κρατιστε θεοφιλε 4 ινα επιγνως περι ων κατηχηθης λογων την ασφαλειαν.

“many” of v. 1 with the “eyewitnesses” of v. 2, which would certainly have included the apostle Matthew-Levi. Mark,<sup>8</sup> while not an apostle, appears to have been an eyewitness of events in Christ’s life (Mr 14:51-52), and wrote under the auspices of Peter.<sup>9</sup> It is most probable to think that Luke, if he had Matthew or Mark in front of him as a source, would have referred to them as Scripture, as Paul does with the physician’s gospel only a short while later (1 Tim 5:18, Lu 10:7), and as Peter does with the epistles of Paul (2 Pe 3:15-16). Furthermore, were one to assume that the “many” of verse two includes the gospels of Matthew or Mark, or both, it must of necessity refer to other uninspired documents as well, for two are by no means “many.” This would mean that Luke made no distinction between writings that are God’s Words, the canonical gospels, and what were the records of mere man, by lumping them together without any mentioned distinction. Since this is nigh impossible, logic necessitates the conclusion that Luke did not have another canonical gospel before him. Luke’s claim of “perfect understanding of all things from the very first” for his composition, a claim devoid of parallel positive affirmation for the works of the “many,” along with the fact that, despite the efforts of the “many,” Luke’s gospel was still needed, imply, although they do not syllogistically necessitate, the conclusion that the former efforts were inferior and lacking in important ways, which again rules out the employment of any other New Testament gospel. Moreover, if Luke had a copy of Matthew or Mark’s gospel at hand, he could have made another, or lent his own to Theophilus, that he might learn the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed from it— as Scripture and so profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, either Matthew or

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<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that Luke and Mark were co-workers together during Paul’s first imprisonment (Col 4:10, Phm 24). Interaction between them at other times is also possible.

<sup>9</sup> See “The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church,” pgs. 37-84 of *The Jesus Crisis*, Thomas & Farnell, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel pub., 1998.

Mark was able to make him mature and thoroughly furnished for all good works, and so would have met Theophilus' need more quickly and painlessly than the laborious investigation Luke undertook. Finally, Luke's assertion that he wrote "in order," (καθεξἑς), which probably refers to chronological order,<sup>10</sup> would constitute a senseless emphasis if he had Mark before him and followed his timetable, as source critics generally allege— one of the "many" whose writings needed to be supplemented would have written chronologically as well, indeed, more so. The prologue also strongly implies that Luke employed a great variety of sources, oral and probably written, which renders the theory of heavy dependence upon a "Q" document very unlikely. The alterations of this fabled sayings-source alleged to have been made by Luke and Matthew, resulting in conflicting sayings purportedly based upon the same historical event, make the proposition of its existence clash strongly with the truth of the verbal inspiration and perfect accuracy of Scripture. Exegesis of Luke 1:1-4 makes Markan priority, literary dependence by Luke upon canonical gospels, Q, and the bulk of the rest of modernistic scholarly myth that pervades synoptic historical reconstructions fatuous. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," 1 Corinthians 3:19— it is unfortunate that both modernists and the evangelicals that sadly ape them waste their time and resources producing masses of bloviating twaddle which a simple study of Scripture exposes as utter vanity.

The idea that the gospels do not actually record Christ's words, but only his "voice," has also grown to dominate evangelical scholarship— the words which the Bible states that He said are seen as the product of the several evangelists. Those who contend that the gospels actually contain Christ's words hold an *ipsissima verba* position, while those who reject this but still wish

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<sup>10</sup> Compare Ac 11:4, where καθεξἑς, translated "by order," means "in chronological sequence." The word appears elsewhere only in Lu 8:1, Ac 3:24, and Ac 18:23; only Paul's beloved physician uses it.

to abide in the evangelical camp take the “voice” or *ipsissima vox* viewpoint.<sup>11</sup> *Ipsissima verba* is clearly taught in Scripture. It is affirmed every time the NT states Christ “said” something. God means what He says, and if the declaration that the Lord said certain words does not mean that He actually said them, language no longer has meaning. When the Bible declares, “these words spake Jesus” (Jn 8:20, 30, cf. 8:31, 37, 43, 47), who dares conclude He did not say those words, but some “vox” paraphrase of them? The retort that the words of the gospels are the Holy Spirit’s words, so they are authoritative although Christ did not speak them, neglects the fact that He is the Spirit of truth, so He would not inspire a “Jesus said...” which Jesus did not say. Indeed, *ipsissima verba* is essential to spiritual growth, for the saints cannot live by His words if they don’t have them (Mt 4:4). God’s people must hear the words of the Son (Jn 12:47), receive His words (Jn 12:48, 17:8), keep His words (Jn 14:23), have His words abiding in them (Jn 15:7) and remember His words are from the Father (Jn 14:10). Furthermore, were Christ’s words not in the gospels, the declaration of Mt 24:35 (and Mr 13:31 & Lu 21:33) would be false. The penalty for being ashamed of Christ’s words (Mr 8:38) would be irrelevant to today if only His “voice” was preserved. How horrible to say that the wonderful prayer of John 17, which begins “These words spake Jesus...” (v. 1) is really only the words of John the apostle, who paraphrased to give the “genuine voice” of the Great High Priest! Of course, were this the case, the fact that the Saviour, in that prayer, said “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest Me; and

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<sup>11</sup> A comparison of the *ipsissima vox* and *ipsissima verba* viewpoints, namely, the question of whether we only have Jesus’s “voice” in the gospels or if “Jesus said” really means “Jesus said” and we have His very Words recorded for us, which gives strong arguments in favor of, and refutes considerations advanced against a *verba* position, is found on pgs. 367-374 of *The Jesus Crisis*. Those pages mention that Darrell Bock, current president of the Evangelical Theological Society, holds to a *vox* viewpoint. In the recent controversy over the heretical limited foreknowledge view of God’s omniscience in the ETS, Bock, in the November 2001 ETS meeting, also opposed the expulsion of those that held to the “open theism” heresy (p. 7, handout for workshop #24, Jeff Straub, teacher at the 2002 National Leadership Conference at Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, 1380 South Valley Forge Road, Lansdale, PA 19446).

they have received them...” (Jn 17:8) would be irrelevant, since it would only be John’s paraphrase of something else Christ actually spoke which is now irrecoverably gone. God forbid that the saints do not have the “gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth” (Lu 4:22), that they cannot believe “the word which Jesus had said” (Jn 2:22), for it is gone; that the One who “speaketh the words of God” (Jn 3:34) has not preserved these words for His people, that they may believe them (Jn 5:47). Christ declared “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn 6:63). How sad is man’s state if these words of the Son are irrecoverably lost in the expansions and contractions of mortals! Peter asked, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68). A *vox* position means that those invaluable words of eternal life are gone, replaced by whatever the human writers of Scripture apparently thought better met the needs of their community than the actual words of the Christ of God. A recorded example of Peter’s recollection of Christ’s words gives a word for word repetition of what Christ said, not a mere paraphrase (Mt 26:34, 75): “before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (πριν αλεκτορα φωνησαι τρις απαρνηση με) is verbatim (cf. Ac 1:5, 11:16, also verbatim in Greek). John 21:15-17 provides an undisputable example of Christ repeating teaching several times with different words; if He can do it here, why can He not have actually spoken the different words the gospel writers record of Him in the synoptic gospels to convey similar or the same teaching on either the same or different occasions? The Spirit-led recollection of Christ’s words in the composition of the gospels worked in the same manner. Arguments about memories adept at memorization in the first century are interesting, but the fundamental matter is that Christ promised that the Spirit would bring to the minds of the writers of Scripture

“whatsoever I have *said* unto you” (Jn 14:26).<sup>12</sup> Human ability or inability to remember the exact words of long discourses is irrelevant, for the Spirit of Jehovah is omnipotent and omniscient, and He is the Author of Scripture. Finally, the entire notion that God or Christ’s “voice” is not expressed in concrete words which He stated is philosophically and logically tenuous. Thoughts are expressed in words, and a set of words different from those Christ actually spoke simply cannot have exactly the same meaning. Granting that such do not have the same meaning, how are they the Lord’s “voice?” How can the gospels record that He “said” them? The inability to soundly answer these questions makes the *vox* viewpoint, in addition to its explicit anti-scripturality, lean towards the heretical modernistic and neo-orthodox “historical Jesus/ risen Lord” distinction. In truth, are not these substitute words rather distortions of and perversions of that Divine voice? The *vox* evangelical could not, consistent with his synoptic presuppositions, censure Eve for her misstatement of Jehovah’s command in Gen 3:3— nor even the serpent for his subtle bending of God’s commands (Gen 3:1, etc.) Modernists may join with “conservative” degreed infidels to sneer at *ipsissima verba*, and find *vox* more palatable, but this gives God’s people no reason to betray such an essential truth. The day hastens when Christ will say to those who belittle His Word, “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when

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<sup>12</sup> While it is important to seek reconciliation of the gospel accounts for exegetical and apologetical purposes, to argue for a *vox* position because it makes reconciliation of the synoptics simpler is to come at the issue from an improper perspective. The saint must first see what Scripture teaches, and evaluate everything else from the presupposition of the absolute truthfulness of everything found in the Bible; to take the “evidence” first and try to accommodate Scripture to it is to live by sight, not by faith (Hab 2:4), and to suppose that “facts” can exist and be evaluated independently from the truth of the God of Scripture— essentially an unstated presupposition of atheism. Furthermore, traditional non-redactive methods of harmonization are able to solve problems in Scripture without compromise on Biblical statements on inspiration. Scripture records clear instances where Christ repeated Himself in different words within individual gospels on what can hardly be viewed as amalgamations of different sources (cf. Mr 10:23-24, Jn 21:15-17); why cannot verbal differences among the Synoptics be instances of the same sort of repetition, so that the gospels at times record different sets what are with equal truth the words of Christ?

distress and anguish cometh upon you” (Prov 1:26-27). In the day when the blood of those who reject the Word of God stains His raiment (Is 63:6), what evangelical or fundamentalist will prefer having chosen the temporal tents of ease of compromised scholarolotry to a short stand without the camp and the eternal acceptance of Jehovah Sabaoth?

God’s people through the centuries, as well as Christendom in general that has sought the truth as it is in Jesus about the origin of the gospels, have concluded that they were independent, inspired literary productions either composed by an apostle (Matthew and John) or with apostolic authority (Peter with Mark; Paul with Luke). In the early centuries theories of literary dependence were unknown.<sup>13</sup> Explicit testimony of Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and others is consistent with the traditional fundamental and evangelical view that the gospels are independent accounts. The early leaders employed traditional harmonization to reconcile apparent difficulties; proposals of different instances with similar circumstances, or repeated utterances of the same words, were given in defense, and nothing similar to modern redaction is found. That the gospels were independent eyewitness testimonies was used for apologetic purposes, something entirely impossible upon the anti-historical presuppositions of HC.<sup>14</sup> The Patristics were unanimous in their affirmation that none of the synoptic writers had a copy of another canonical gospel before him. Furthermore, in contrast to the evolutionary philosophy which undergirds the widespread affirmation of Markan priority, early Christendom was absolutely unified in its affirmation of Matthean priority, and the great body of early leaders believed Mark was the last of the Synoptic gospels to be given by inspiration. Those who were contemporaries of the apostles, all the generations of the ante-

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<sup>13</sup> See “The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church,” pgs. 37-84 of *The Jesus Crisis*, Thomas & Farnell. Documentation justifying statements about the views of early Christendom in the rest of this paragraph of the paper is found in this source.

<sup>14</sup> The debilitating affect evangelical HC has on apologetics is demonstrated in “Impact of Historical Criticism on Theology and Apologetics,” Robert L. Thomas, pgs. 356-377 of *The Jesus Crisis*.

Nicene era, and, indeed, the united voice of Christendom from the beginning until the rise of Rationalism and Enlightenment philosophy<sup>15</sup> proclaimed the independence of the synoptic accounts, their apostolic roots, and their inspiration. No new facts arose a millenium and a half into the church age to justify the development of literary dependence theories and the rejection of the real historicity of the gospel accounts associated with them; it was simply the *zeitgeist* which the unconverted, professing themselves wise and yet fools, valued above the testimony of God and those who lived in a day when firsthand investigation of the facts was possible to evolve monstrous and mythological revisions of early Christian history. These scholarly fancies became the cordial to wipe the claims of the Lord Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, from His holy and urgent demands upon the conscience of those in the intelligencia that adopted them— in contrast with the fairy-tales of their tender years, *Geschichte* became the entity of choice for fantasmagorical myth-making by mature skeptics.

Honest historical scholarship among those that remembered that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom rejected rationalistic speculations to maintain an affirmation of apostolicity and literary independence for the Synoptics; the Patristic position remained the old-line evangelical opinion. For example, among New World Baptists, the *American Commentary on the New Testament*, general editor, Alvah Hovey, affirmed the traditional view of the synoptics in the 1880's— a sad contrast with the views expressed in *The New American Commentary* series of today, published by affiliates of the neo-evangelical Southern Baptist Convention, which claims to “represent[] the continuation of a heritage rich in biblical and theological exposition... [in] continuity... with an important commentary project published at the end of the nineteenth century called *An American Commentary*.”<sup>16</sup> In the volume on Mark in the

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<sup>15</sup> See “Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” pgs. 85-131 of *The Jesus Crisis*, as well as pgs. 19-42, *Is There A Synoptic Problem?* Eta Linnemann, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992, for an examination of the war against God evident in the development of historical-critical theology.

<sup>16</sup> quoted from the Editor's Preface to a volume of *The New American Commentary*; it is taken from volume

American Commentary, W. N. Clarke states “[t]hat each Gospel is independent of the others is certain.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, George R. Bliss affirms in the volume on Luke that he “probably knew nothing of the writing of Matthew, or of Mark.”<sup>18</sup> Later believers defending the faith in the era of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, such as B. B. Warfield, also affirmed literary independence.<sup>19</sup> Many modern fundamentalists still defend the historic believing position,<sup>20</sup> but the general body of evangelicalism has utterly capitulated to historical criticism, declaring much of its methodology benign, and (hopefully) still affirming verbal inspiration while rejecting only the grosser conclusions of modernist historical critics. A typical example is found in *An Introduction to the New Testament*, composed by D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon

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5, the volume on Joshua by David M. Howard, Jr., but appears in the other volumes as well.

<sup>17</sup> pg. 9, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881.

<sup>18</sup> pg.15, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1884.

<sup>19</sup> Ned Stonehouse, possibly the earliest prominent evangelical departure from literary independence, attempted to find support for his fall away from the traditional standard in Warfield. However, this required misrepresentation of his position. See, e. g., pgs. 24, 357-360, *The Jesus Crisis*.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Dr. Aaron Strouse, former professor at Tabernacle Baptist Theological Seminary when it stood for the verbal preservation of Scripture, stated “There are several strong arguments why this author believes that Mark was not the first Gospel written” (pg. 19, *The Lord Added to the Church: The Theology of Acts*, Virginia Beach, VA: Tabernacle Baptist Theological Press, 1998). Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary in Newington, CT defends the historic orthodox view of gospel origins, as do Bible colleges such as the author’s *alma mater*, Fairhaven Baptist College in Chesterton, IN. Frighteningly, many neo-fundamentalist Baptist institutions, such as Bible Baptist Seminary in Clarks Summit, PA, which is close to the G. A. R. B. C., and strong fundamental schools that reject the verbal, plenary preservation of Scripture, like Bob Jones University, have adopted literary dependence theories in their New Testament faculties. In a phone conversation with Rod Decker, part of the NT faculty associated with the PhD program of Baptist Bible Seminary in PA, he expressed belief in Markan priority, stated that Robert Stein’s work on the Synoptic problem was the best discussion of the issue, and declared that he thought Robert Thomas’ view in *The Jesus Crisis* was an overreaction. In an e-mail of March 6, 2002 from Steve Hankins, dean of the Seminary and Graduate School of Religion at Bob Jones University, to answer the author of this paper’s query on the matter, he states “There are a variety of views among our men without a general consensus, but virtually all of our New Testament professors would argue that their (sic) was literary dependence among the gospel writers.” This acceptance of the leaven of literary dependence is seeping into fundamentalism from evangelicalism. Charity would hope that strong fundamental seminaries that have brethren on their faculty which hold to literary dependence do not recognize the presuppositions against inerrancy they are adopting: Steve Hankins, for example, in another e-mail to the author of this paper in relation to BJU’s position on these matters, stated that “[u]nlike most seminaries, we de-emphasize discussions of source, form, and redaction criticism. Much of the discussion (sic) agenda surrounding these theories is set by protestant liberalism and followed by new evangelicalism, positions on the theological spectrum we reject. While informing our students in these areas so they are conversant about them, our focus is on the preserved text of Scripture and understanding it from an exegetical perspective for the sake of preaching rather than for the sake of purely academic discussion.” Nevertheless, this acceptance of literary dependence displays a dangerous naivete and a lack of discernment about the eventualities of such presuppositions.

Morris, professors associated with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Their forty-one page discussion<sup>21</sup> of the composition of the Synoptics simply ignores the possibility of literary independence— in a book that seeks to discuss the totality of common opinions on all introductory issues and interacts with scores of strange modernistic notions, the traditional believing viewpoint through the ages and the opinion of the totality of early testimony is blithely passed over in silence, to presuppose and put in practice source, form, and redaction criticism, albeit in a diluted “evangelical” form. Historical-critical methodology has led evangelicals to utterly apostate conclusions; the prominent evangelical historical critic Robert Stein illustrates this tragedy.

Stein states that it “is clear that Mark sees the parables of Mark 4:3-32 as a summary collection and not a chronology of consecutive parables that Jesus taught in a single day.”<sup>22</sup> However, the Bible declares in Mark 4:1-36 that Christ “began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto Him *a great multitude...* and *the whole multitude* was by the sea on the land. And He taught *them* many things by parables, and said unto *them* in His doctrine... [the parables of v. 3-32 follow]... And with many such parables spake He the word *unto them* in His doctrine... the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto [his disciples], ‘Let us pass over unto the other side.’ And when they had sent away *the multitude...*” (Mark 4:1-36). It is apparent from the italicized words above that, according to the plain sense of God’s Words as penned by Mark, the series of parables of chapter four of his gospel was taught by the Lord to a specific multitude on a specific day. An “inerrancy” that seeks to void such plain declarations of Scripture as these makes God, who is the Author of these words, a liar, and is heresy, whether

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<sup>21</sup> pg. 19-60, Carson, D. A., Moo, Douglas J., Morris, Leon, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992. The position taken in the textbook is one of Markan priority.

<sup>22</sup> p. 36, *The Synoptic Problem*. Stein also states that the form critical notion that gospel pericopes circulated independently and were bundled together out of chronological (i. e. historical) order by the gospel writers has a great deal of value. He uses this methodology to de-historicize Mark’s chronology on pg. 166 of the same book.

propounded by modernist, neo-evangelical, or so-called fundamentalist. Stein also declares the “exception clause” of Matthew 5:31-32, “... saving for the cause of fornication,” is a statement from the mind of Matthew, not the lips of Christ. “It seems reasonably clear in light of the threefold testimony of Mark, Q (Luke), and Paul, and by the difficulty of the saying when it lacks the exception for unchastity, that this form of the saying (i. e., without Matthew’s ‘exception clause’) is more authentic... [it is by far most likely that] the ‘exception clause’ is an interpretative comment added by Matthew.”<sup>23</sup> He declares: “One lesson that source criticism teaches us, then, is that the gospel writers were not interested in providing us with a strict chronological sequence of the events and teachings of Jesus’ life... To claim as ‘historical’ the chronological sequence found in a synoptic Gospel, or to build an argument upon a certain sequence found in one or more of them, encounters the observation that frequently one gospel writer purposely places an account in a different order for topical or theological reasons.”<sup>24</sup> He states that “the individual Evangelists ‘... do not intend to provide us with a record of the precise literal words of Jesus.’<sup>25</sup> Quite the contrary, they felt free to paraphrase, modify certain terms, and add comments... The Evangelists had no obsession with the *ipsissima verba*... the freedom of the Evangelists in handling the words of Jesus and their relative disinterest in simply attempting to reproduce his actual words should raise the question of *why* we are pursuing the *ipsissima verba*.”<sup>26</sup> Stein, although he holds clearly heretical views, represents the new mainstream view of the Synoptics in evangelicalism.

The field of evangelical historical critics have come to all sorts of abominable anti-

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<sup>23</sup> pg. 152-153, *The Synoptic Problem*. He goes on to state that Matthew 10:37-38 and Luke 14:26-27 are variants of the same saying. However the evangelical HC proponent may protest to the contrary, this makes one or both of these statements manifestly inaccurate and uninspired.

<sup>24</sup> *The Synoptic Problem*, pg. 155.

<sup>25</sup> He here quotes George Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), pg. 121.

<sup>26</sup> *The Synoptic Problem*, pg. 156.

historical conclusions.<sup>27</sup> Robert Guelich, Robert Mounce, and Donald Hagner represent a much wider field of gross compromise in their assertion that the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) was a literary creation of Matthew, rather than a sermon given by the Lord when He “went up into a mountain... and He opened his mouth, and taught them, saying... [the sermon]... [and] ended these sayings... [and] came down from the mountain.” (Mt 5:1-8:1). Will we believe God through Matthew, or wolfish historical critics cloaked in the traditionally orthodox garb of evangelicalism? The commissioning of the twelve in Matthew chapter ten, where Christ “commanded them, saying... [the commission]... [and] made an end of commanding His twelve disciples,” (Mt 10:5-11:1), is viewed by D. A. Carson, Michael Wilkins, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Gundry as a compilation created by Matthew, rather than a statement actually made by the Lord. The parables of Matthew 13 and Mark 4, where the “same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him... and He spake many things unto them in parables, saying... [the parables]... and it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed thence” (Matthew 13:1-53), are declared to be compilations rather than a historical discourse given in one day by the current president of the Evangelical Theological Society, Darrell Bock, as well as James A. Brooks and Robert Stein. Brooks, Blomberg, and Stein also see the Olivet Discourse as a compilation, despite the fact that the Lord God of truth through Matthew states it is an actual discourse given on Olivet (Mt 24:1-4, 26:1). Frederick Bruner, Hagner, and Gundry join Stein in the belief that the “exception clause” of Matthew 5:32, 19:9 are words put into Christ’s mouth which He never spoke. What

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<sup>27</sup> Documentation for the assertions in this paragraph is found on pgs. 13-34 of *The Jesus Crisis*, the article entitled, “The ‘Jesus Crisis’: What is it?” by Robert Thomas. The names mentioned in this paper are, tragically, only representative. The Bible commands God’s people to separate from (2 Cor 6:14-7:1), “mark” (Rom 16:17) and admonish and reject (Tit 3:10) heretics, and “note” compromisers (2 Thess 3:14) and “withdraw” from them (2 Thess 3:6). This includes exposing such by name, as Paul did (1 Tim 1:20, 2 Tim 2:17, 4:14-15). Even those who are children of God, indeed, faithful leaders in Baptist churches, as the apostle Peter was, must be publicly exposed when they compromise (Gal 2:11-14).

sort of decayed, neo-orthodox “inspiration” allows the “But I say unto you” (Mt 5:32) of Jesus to not be His words? Hagner, Guelich, and Gundry, among others, believe Christ never said all the beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12). Evangelical I. Howard Marshall declares Luke’s genealogy of Christ (Lu 3:23-38) inaccurate because of source criticism, while Gundry reaches the same conclusion for the genealogy in Matthew (Mt 1:1-17). Gundry even sees the visit of the Magi (Mt 2:1-12) as a reworking of the visit of the shepherds of Lu 2:8-20! Christ said to the unconverted Jews that “[h]e that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (Jn 8:47). The lost do not receive the Word of God (1 Cor 2:12-16); His Word has no place in them (Jn 8:37, 43). In contrast, God’s sheep hear their Shepherd’s voice (Jn 10:26-30) and receive His Words (Jn 17:8). That Spirit who inspired the Words of Scripture, who has made the saint His holy temple, cries out with the renewed spirit of every blood-washed believer against the blasphemy of this perverse and devilish historical criticism, this defamation and slander of the holy Words of the living God. What sheep of Christ’s flock will say that in such evangelically-regurgitated modernism he hears the voice of His Beloved? Does he not rather cry with the Psalmist, “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Ps 119:128), and so hate historical criticism in all its forms, just as, by grace, he loves the pure Word of God? Let the historical critic, evangelical or otherwise, heed the inspired words of the Lord’s Christ: “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn 12:48). Perhaps the adoption of evangelical historical criticism will, in this world, gain scholarly recognition, sell books, win the approbation of many in Christendom, give one honorable positions in schools and seminaries, and apparently meet a supposed “balance” between “scholarship” and faith— but how will it fare, and how will its disciples stand, in the day when they stand in judgment before the Holy One who has magnified His Word above all His Name

(Ps 138:2)?

These are truly days when men “turn away their ears from the truth,” and are “turned unto fables” (2 Tim 4:4). The historic Baptist fundamentalist, and all others who cherish the Word of God, must beware of the apostasy of historical criticism, which, kudzu-like, has spread from its modernistic taproot to spread a black shadow over and choke the spiritual life from evangelicalism, and now is entering fundamentalist institutions through either a sinful desire to appeal to the “scholarly” world or through ignorance of its awful consequences. God’s people must exercise great caution in their study of modern evangelical commentaries, Testament introductions, and other materials, for the leaven of higher criticism has infested non-militant, non-separatist, “believing” Christianity. They must also avoid the accidental employment of “conservative” historical criticism through misguided apologetic efforts against its more extreme manifestations<sup>28</sup>— it does no good to accept the anti-Christ methodology of Satan to defend the gospels or the Bible in general. Fundamental Bible preachers and teachers should also reject the explosion of new hermeneutical techniques and stick to the old paths of traditional grammatical-historical interpretation. They must, finally, purge their minds of allegiances to historical-critical ideas that have crept in unawares for a godly fideism (Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Heb 10:38, 11:6) that believes that God has given a verbally inspired Book, which includes three Synoptic gospels that preserve the actual words of Christ, are literarily independent apostolistic witnesses, and contain, in the absolute sense a little child or the plain men that make up the overwhelming majority of God’s churches and royal priesthood would understand them, an absolutely accurate historical record— that, with sound doctrine wedded to holiness of heart, they may be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jam 1:22), and receive crowns from their Lord when He comes.

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<sup>28</sup> The New Testament portion (pgs. 185-326) of Josh McDowell’s *Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Volume II* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993) is an example of this.



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