

The Q Hypothesis  
in the Context of the Sermons  
Common to Matthew and Luke  
(on the Mount and on the Plain)

by

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P A R T I      T h e   Q   S o u r c e :

A Hypothesis to Account for the Non-Markan Material Common to  
Matthew and Luke in the Parallel Sermons

There are two accounts in the Gospels of the discourse given by our Lord in the earlier part of his Galilean ministry. The longer one contains 110 verses and is recorded in Matthew 5:1-7:27; the shorter contains 30 verses and is found in Luke 6:20-49. The other two Evangelists have preserved no record of this discourse, although Mark has a few parallels to the Sermon as given by Matthew and Luke.

In regard to the composition of the subject matter, the Sermon can be classified as follows:

1. Material common to Matthew and Luke in their respective discourses.
2. Material common to Matthew and Luke, but placed by the latter in another context.
3. Material peculiar to Matthew or Luke.
4. Material paralleled in Mark.
5. Material paralleled by the same evangelist in another context.

It is our purpose in the first and second parts of this paper to consider the subject matter common to Matthew and Luke in their respective discourses in the context of the Q hypothesis. Our main interest lies in the formal characteristics of this parallel material and not in an exegetical treatment of the same. As we shall see, the question of the source behind the non-Markan material common to Matthew and

\* American practice  
Evangelists: authors of a Gospel  
Evangelists: missionary

Luke goes beyond the scope of the discourses under consideration, but we shall always keep them in mind.

Two basic assumptions of modern New Testament scholarship are taken for granted, at least for the time being, (1) that Mark was the first of our gospels and that it was used by Matthew and Luke, perhaps in a form a little different from the extant work (this may account for the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark); (2) that neither Matthew nor Luke made use of each other's gospel. In the last part of our study we shall consider the present-day challenge to the last assumption and the implications it has for study.

Taking these things for granted, the first question that comes to our minds is: How are we to explain the non-Markan material which is common to Matthew and Luke? The problem is considered in the largest context, for it is the same for the relationship of the common Matthew and Luke discourses as for all the parallel material in both Gospels.

Presumably, the hypothesis of a common oral tradition could be advanced as a possible solution to the problem. This is not to be discarded without further ado, if we take into consideration the retentiveness of Eastern memories and the prominence given to memory training in Oriental education. A common oral tradition could account for the remarkable divergence between some of the parallel passages. On closer examination this theory falls short of explaining the facts. On the one hand, it cannot explain the almost word by word correspondence in a number of parallel passages. Furthermore, the freedom with which Matthew and Luke handled the material that they took over from Mark, rephrasing it and making changes in tense, gender, number,

*gospel = book } = Christian tradition,  
gospel = message*

case, and otherwise, goes a long way to explain the differences between the parallel passages. Both these points argue for a common source behind the parallel non-Marcian passages of Matthew and Luke.

Another factor that strengthens the documentary hypothesis is the fact that "where Matthew and Luke disagree as to order after a period of agreement the divergence is not generally marked by inexactness of parallelism."<sup>1</sup>

Dependence on oral tradition would lead us to expect more divergencies. For example, Matthew 6:22-23 is parallel to Luke 11:34-35. The next verse in Matthew is placed by Luke in 16:13, an entirely different context, yet except for the word *οὐκ ἔστι* the two verses have exact correspondence in word and order. Other cases that present the same striking fact, i.e., divergence in order but exactness of parallelism, are the following: (1) Mt. 11:25-27 // Lk. 10:21-22; (2) Mt. 12:43-45 // Lk. 11:24-26; (3) Mt. 23:37-39 // Lk. 13:34-35.<sup>2</sup>

All these factors show that undoubtedly the most plausible explanation of the parallel non-Marcian passages in Matthew and Luke is the one that postulates that the evangelists had these materials in documentary form before them. This is the generally accepted position among scholars.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horace Marriott, The Sermon on the Mount (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1925), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Harnack, The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke (London: Williams and Norgate, 1908), passim. Marriott, op. cit., pp. 1-12. Frederick C. Grant, The Gospels: Their Origin and Growth (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), Chapter IV.

Whether the subject matter that the evangelists have in common was before them in a single document or several is another matter. The great divergence in order between Matthew and Luke and the apparently disconnected nature of much of the contents of the material argue for a derivation from a number of sources rather than from a single document. However, a satisfactory explanation can be advanced to account for the differences in order assuming a single document as the original source.

For one thing, the fact that this material consists mainly in sayings of Jesus may account for its disconnected character. It is also less probable that the evangelists would use several sources in common than that they would employ one common source. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that several independent sources would overlap each other and that some sayings would be repeated three or more times. Yet there is only one triplet found in Matthew and Luke. It is the short saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," which occurs three times in Matthew (11:5; 13:9, 43). And finally, while "it may not be possible to find any characteristic expressions running through the whole of this non-Marcian matter, yet it seems to have a certain unity of style and subject matter, and behind all the divergencies of order there can be discovered a certain original unity of arrangement."<sup>1</sup>

On the cogeny of these arguments scholars in general have reached the conclusion that a single common source underlies the non-Marcian material common to Matthew and Luke.. This document has been

<sup>1</sup> Marriett, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 90.

given the hypothetical name of "Q" from German word "Quelle" or source. This conclusion does not preclude the possibility that Matthew and Luke may have used different recensions of the same document.

The Order of Q. Once it has been established that a common document underlies the parallel non-Markan material in Matthew and Luke, the following questions come to the fore: What was the order of this document? What was its content? What were its main characteristics? In the next three sections we shall consider these three questions successively.

As to the order in which this document originally existed, both the Matthean and the Lukan sequence have been affirmed. Harnack at the beginning of the century could write:

✱ From the discourse to the disciples (i.e. the subject-matter in St. Matt. X.), and from the fact that in the first gospel the section 33 [Matt. 23:4, 13, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30-32, 34-36 // Lk. 11:46, 52, 42, 39, 44, 47-52] and 43 [Matt. 23:37-39 // Lk. 23:34-35] as well as sections 56 [Matt. 24:26, 27, 28, 37-41 // Lk. 18:23, 24, 37, 26, 27, 34, 35] and 37 [Matt. 24:43-51 // Lk. 12:39, 40] are correctly given in juxtaposition, we conclude that St. Matthew has preserved the order of the source more faithfully than St. Luke.<sup>1</sup>

And in another place he adds:

In St. Luke it [Q] exists, split up and dispersed throughout the gospel in subservience to the historical narrative; in St. Matthew it was treated in more conservative spirit... In most skilful fashion... the first evangelist has made his compilation of discourses subservient to his own special interest in the Christian community, while St. Luke, who has much more frequently altered the wording of his source, has nevertheless kept so closely to it in essential points that its original character is more clearly perceived in his reproduction.<sup>2</sup>

Other scholars, however, have not been impressed by Harnack's

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 251-252.

✱ In Translation.

findings, and after examining the evidence, have reached entirely different conclusions. Marriett affirms that the order of Q as it appears in Matthew is not to be trusted due to the Matthean habit of transposition and conflation for purposes of topical arrangement. The Lukan order, on the other hand, is more reliable. Luke, on the whole, follows that Marcan order and when he drops it, he picks it up later. This same manner of handling the materials is evident in his treatment of Q.<sup>1</sup>

Streeter finds that Matthew and Luke agree at many points in regard to the order of Q. Yet he concludes that if

we consider (1) Matthew's proved habit of piling up discourses compacted from Mark, Q and M; (2) the fact that sayings like "Blessed are your eyes," Mt. 13:16-17, concerning offenses, Mt. 18:7--being imbedded in extracts from Mark--cannot possibly be in their original context as they occur in Matthew, the presumption is plainly in favour of the view that Luke's order is the more original.<sup>2</sup>

A similar conclusion has been reached by Frederick C. Grant. He follows Luke's order in his reconstruction of Q and generally prefers the Lukan wording over against Matthew's. In respect to the Lukan wording, he says the following:

The conclusion has steadily grown stronger, as we have studied the use which Matthew and Luke made of Mark, that Luke as a rule (to which there are, of course, certain obvious exceptions) exercises far greater care in following the exact wording of his sources in relating to the words of our Lord. This is not true of their setting, which he often enough rewrites. But the sayings of Jesus he alters far less, to say the least, than he does the narrative... Matthew, on the other hand, does not scruple to introduce later exe-

<sup>1</sup> Marriett, op. cit., pp. 13-20.

<sup>2</sup> Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Four Gospels (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 275.



gesis into the very formulation of Jesus' word. I prefer, therefore, to follow Luke's wording of Q wherever possible.<sup>1</sup>

From our study of several Lukan passages, it seems to us that Marriott, Streeter, and Grant have the better argument.

Content and Structure of Q. The following is the reconstruction of Q made by Grant.<sup>2</sup> It follows the Lukan order. Passages in square brackets are assigned to Q with uncertainty by the author. There are a total of ca. 242 verses and parts of verses, counting 14:11 = 18:14 but once. Streeter in his reconstruction is more inclusive than Grant, assigning 272 unbracketed verses to Q.<sup>3</sup> He also includes the baptism account in Q, which both Harnack and Grant reject.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Content and Structure of Q

##### The Ministry and Message of John the Baptizer.

Luke 3: 2b, 3a, 7b-9 John's preaching of repentance (cf. Matt. 3:16,17) John's prediction of the coming Judge (cf. Matt. 3:11, 12).

##### The Ordeal of the Messiah.

4:1b-12 The Temptation (cf. Matt. 4:1-11).

##### Jesus' Public Teaching

6:20-49 The Sermon on the Plain (or Mountain, cf. Matt. 5:3-12, 39-48; 7:12, 1-5, 16-27; 10:24, 25; 12:33-35; 15:14).

##### The Response to Jesus' Preaching.

7:2, 6b-10 The centurion's faith (cf. Matt. 8:5-13).  
7:18b, 19, 22-28, 31-35 John's emissaries; Jesus' word about John (cf. Matt. 11:2-6, 7-19).  
9:57b-60, 61, 62 Various followers (cf. Matt. 8:19-22)

##### The Mission of the Twelve.

10:1-16 The mission of the disciples (cf. Matt. 9:37, 38; 10:7-16, 40; 11:21-23).

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<sup>1</sup> Grant, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>3</sup> Streeter, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>4</sup> Harnack, op. cit., p. 254. Grant, op. cit., pp. 56-58.

10:17b-20 The return of the Twelve.  
 10:21b-24 The rejoicing of Jesus (cf. Matt. 11:25-27;  
 13:16-17).

#### Jesus' Teaching About Prayer.

11:2-4 The Lord's Prayer (cf. Matt. 6:9-13).  
11:5-8 The parable of the friend at midnight.  
 11:9-13 Constancy in prayer (cf. Matt. 7:7-11).

#### The Controversy with Scribes and Pharisees.

11:14-23 The charge of collusion with Beelzebul  
 (cf. Matt. 12:22-30).  
 11:24-26 The story of the unclean spirit (cf. Matt.  
 12:43-45).  
 11:29b-32 The warning contained in the "sign of Jonah"  
 (cf. Matt. 12:38-42).  
 11:33-36 Jesus' saying about light (cf. Matt. 5:15;  
 6:22, 23).  
 11:39b, 42, 43, 44, 46-52 The controversy with the  
 Scribes and Pharisees (cf. Matt. 23:4-36).

#### Jesus' Teaching about Discipleship: the Duties of Disciples when Persecuted.

12:2-12 The testimony of disciples among adversaries  
 (cf. Matt. 10:26-33; 12:32; 10:19, 20).  
 12:22-31 On freedom from care (cf. Matt. 6:25-33).  
 12:33b, 34 On treasure (cf. Matt. 6:19-21).  
 12:39, 40, 42-46 Three parables on watchfulness  
 (cf. Matt. 24:43-51a).  
 12:49-53 Messianic division (cf. Matt. 10:34-36).  
12:54-56 Signs of the times (cf. Matt. 16:2, 3).  
 12:57-59 The duty of speedy reconciliation (cf. Matt.  
 5:25, 26).  
 13:18-21 The parable of the mustard seed and the lea-  
 ven: the steady growth of the Kingdom despite opposition  
 (cf. Matt. 13:31-33).  
 13:24-29 The narrow way (cf. Matt. 7:13, 14; 7:22, 23;  
 8:11, 12).  
 13:34, 35 The fate of Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 23:37-39).  
 14:11 = 18:14 On self-exaltation  
 14:16-23 The parable of the great supper (cf. Matt. 22:  
 1-10).  
 14:26, 27 On hating one's next of kin, and on bearing  
 the cross (cf. Matt. 10:37, 38).  
 14:34, 35 The saying on salt (cf. Matt. 5:13).  
 15:4-7 The parable of the lost sheep. (cf. Matt. 18:  
 12-14).  
15:8-10 The parable of the lost coin.  
 16:13 On serving two masters (cf. Matt. 6:24).

#### Sayings about the Law

16:16-18 The Law and the Prophets until John; on  
 divorce (cf. Matt. 11:12, 13; 5:18, 32).  
 17:1, 2 On offenses (cf. Matt. 18:6, 7).

17:3, 4 On forgiveness (cf. Matt. 18:15, 21, 22).  
 17:6 On faith (cf. Matt. 17:20b).

The Coming Parousia

17:23, 24, 26-30, 34, 35, 37b The Parousia (cf. Matt. 24:26-28, 37-39; 10:39; 24:40 f., 28).  
 19:12, 13, 15b-26 The parable of the entrusted talents (cf. Matt. 25:14-30).  
 [22:28-30 The apostles' thrones (cf. Matt. 19:28).]

Characteristics of Q. This is not the place to give a detailed study of the nature of Q but some general remarks concerning the characteristics of this document are in order. A glance at the reconstruction given above will bring out the following points:

(1) Q is largely a collection of the teachings of our Lord. Harnack in his reconstruction found "seven narratives, eleven (twelve) parables (and similes), thirteen groups of sayings, and twenty-seven single sayings of smaller or greater length."<sup>1</sup> The preponderance of teaching over narration is obvious.

(2) Q as a whole dealt with discipleship--the duties and responsibilities of Jesus' disciples. The document presents at the beginning the ministry of John the Baptist and the temptations of Jesus, and later a section is devoted to the controversies with the Pharisees, but almost the rest of it is devoted to a presentation of Jesus' teachings to his disciples. "This is exactly what we should expect it to contain," says Grant, "if it was the kind of document and was compiled for the purposes we assume. It was a guide to the catechists, a manual for the newly converted, a statement of the Christian way of life--a handbook of 'the Way'! It is not, as used to be held, a

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, op. cit., p. 163.

tract for missionary use; instead, its purpose was mainly catechetical."<sup>1</sup>

(3) The arrangement of Q is generally not chronological but according to subject matter, except in the introduction and in the group of eschatological discourses at the close. "The choice of material and its arrangement," says Harnack, "were determined by the needs of Christian teaching--more especially of ethical teaching--though by no means exclusively, for in his sayings and discourses the relation of Jesus to all powers in heaven and earth comes to expression."<sup>2</sup>

(4) Q did not contain a passion narrative. In order to explain this unique characteristic of Q, Streeter advances the following argument:

T The Passion and its redemptive significance could readily be taught in oral tradition. But ethical teaching implies detailed instruction which sooner or later necessitates a written document. Such a document is found in the Didache, which obviously presupposes a general knowledge of the central facts of the Christian story. Similarly Q was probably written to supplement an oral tradition.<sup>3</sup>

From the fact that the Parousia takes an important place at the end of Q, Streeter puts forth the argument, which he considers less weighty than the former, that while for Paul the center of the Gospel was the Cross of Christ, for the other apostles it was the Parousia. For the latter the crucifixion was a great difficulty, as Peter's speeches in Acts amply testify. This could account for the absence of a passion narrative in Q.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <sup>great</sup> Harnack, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>op. cit.</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Streeter, op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

(5) A final point, which is not obvious from a perusal of the outline of Q, is the fact the Q passages, as they appear in Matthew and Luke respectively, have varying degrees of correspondence, namely, (a) those where the agreement is close, almost verbatim; (b) those where differences are more numerous but show general agreement in meaning; (c) those where differences are so great that it is seriously doubted whether they can be assigned to Q. Harnack deals separately with each category.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us down to a consideration of the Q hypothesis in the context of the parallel discourses of Matthew and Luke in their respective sermons (Matthew's on the Mount; Luke's on the Plain.)

P A R T   I I   C o m p a r i s o n  
of the Parallel Discourses by Matthew and Luke in their Respective  
Sermons

(Matthew's on the Mount and Luke's on the Plain)

Our study has consisted in a careful comparison of the Lukan version of the Sermon and its parallel passages in Matthew. We have not considered, on account of the limitations of time, the passages that Matthew puts in his Sermon and Luke places in other contexts. We have not been able either to consider, except in a general way, the question as to which readings are the more original. Our main purpose has been to determine the degree and nature of the correspondence between the two parallel discourses. The results of our study are given in the table below.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, op. cit., passim.

PARALLEL  
DISCOURSES  
in  
MATTHEW  
and  
LUKE

		No. of Words		Largest possibility of agreement*		Exact word agreement		Differences in word forms but not in general meaning		Disagreement		No. of Verses		Harnack's Classification
Mt.	Lk.	Mt.	Lk.			Mt.	Lk.	Mt.	Lk.	Mt.	Lk.	Mt.	Lk.	
5:2	6:20 <sub>a</sub>	8	11	8	1	1	1	6	9	1	1			
5:3	6:20 <sub>b</sub>	12	10	10	7	1	1	4	2	1	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:4	6:21 <sub>b</sub>	6	6	6	3	3	2	0	1	1	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:6	6:21 <sub>a</sub>	10	6	6	4	2	1	4	1	1	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:11-12	6:22-23	35	51	35	10	9	11	16	30	2	2			II
5:39 <sub>b</sub>	6:29 <sub>a</sub>	12	10	10	6	6	4	0	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:40	6:29 <sub>b</sub>	15	12	12	6	4	5	5	1	1	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:42	6:30	12	12	12	3	9	9	0	0	1	1			II
5:44	6:26-27	14	23	14	9	2	1	3	13	1	2			II
5:46-47	6:32-33	33	35	33	9	19	21	5	5	2	2			II
5:45	6:35 <sub>b</sub>	24	13	13	5	9	3	10	5	1	$\frac{1}{2}$			II
5:48	6:36	12	8	8	4	3	2	5	2	1	1			II
7:1,2 <sub>b</sub>	6:37 <sub>a</sub> , 38 <sub>c</sub>	12	13	12	9	3	3	0	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2/3			I
7:3-5	6:41-42	64	69	64	51	12	18	1	0	3	2			I
7:12	6:31	15	11	11	7	8	4	0	0	1	1			I
7:16 <sub>b</sub> -20	6:43-44	36	34	34	9	27	25	0	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2			I
7:21	6:46	25	11	11	2	8	9	15	0	1	1			III
7:24-27	6:47-49	95	83	83	19	73	54	3	10	4	3			II
T O T A L S		440	418	382	164	199	174	77	80	28 $\frac{1}{2}$	21-2/3			

\* Shorter saying

From this study the following facts come out:

- (1) Of the 30 verses of Luke, 21-2/3 are paralleled in 28-1/2 verses in Matthew.
- (2) The 21-2/3 verses of Luke contain a total of 418 words; those of Matthew, 440.
- (3) The following verses of Luke are not paralleled in Matthew: Luke 6:24-26, 34, 35a, 37b, 38a, b, 39, 40, 45.
- (4) Taking the shorter form of the parallel sayings, there are 382 words which can possibly have exact correspondence.
- (5) Out of these 382, only 164 show exact correspondence, or 42% of the total. The 164 words form 37.2% of 440--and 39.2% of 418--the total number of words in Matthew and Luke, respectively. This means that roughly speaking, a little more than one third of each discourse has an exact parallel in the other. Since Luke has less words, the percentage is correspondingly higher.
- (6) There are words in both discourses that do not correspond exactly but show minor modifications in tense, gender, number, or case. The differences in some cases involve new words with similar meanings. In other words, there is disagreement in wording, but general agreement in meaning. There are 199 of these words in Matthew, corresponding to 174 in Luke, that is, 45.2% and 41.6% of the total number of words in each sermon respectively.
- (7) Adding the total number of words of exact agreement to the total number of words of agreement in meaning, we get the following numbers: 363 in Matthew and 338 in Luke, or 82.5% and 80.9% of the total number of words in each discourse respectively.

*a & Dr. Italicized*

(8) There are 77 words in Matthew and 80 in Luke that represent complete disagreement, or 17.5% and 19.1% of each discourse respectively. In some cases these disagreements are minor, but in others they give new meaning to the sayings. This is especially true in the case of the beatitudes.

(9) Only four of the passages under consideration are put by Harnack in his first list, i.e., the list where the agreement is almost verbatim. The remaining passages--with the exception of two--Harnack includes in his second list, i.e. where the agreement is not so close as in the former list. There is only one passage--Mt. 7:21 // Lk. 6:76--which Harnack includes in the third list of his classification, i.e. those passages where the disagreement is so great that it is almost impossible to say that they go back to the same written source. Matthew 5:2 // Lk. 6:20a is not included by Harnack in his list. It is obviously editorial.

From this data we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The first and obvious conclusion is that we are dealing here with literary material. No theory of oral tradition can account for the exact agreements (more than a third of each discourse), nor for the less exact but very close agreements in meaning in 45.7% of the Matthean discourse corresponding to 41.6% of the Lukan. The literary nature of the discourses is further reinforced by the order in which they appear in Matthew and Luke. With few exceptions, the discourses appear in the same order in both Matthew and Luke, in the former, however, broken up by other passages. The disagreements can be explained as the product of the evangelists for the purpose of bringing out the meaning they saw in the specific passage or to further their own theo-



logical point of view.

2. This study does not vindicate the Q hypothesis. This can only be shown to be possible by proving or at least making it very probable that Luke did not use Matthew or vice versa. The only point in favor of the Q hypothesis in this short study is the fact that in many of the sayings of the common discourses Luke seems to have kept the more original form. However, this is just the point that opponents of the hypothesis challenge. It has to be thoroughly investigated, and this we have not done.

3. However, granting that neither Luke nor Matthew used each other, it follows that Q is the hypothesis that best explains the facts. In this case it is obvious that Matthew has used the Q sermon as the framework of his longer sermon. However, although keeping its order, he has broken it up and brought in other materials.

These are the only conclusions that can legitimately be drawn from our brief study.

### PART III      The Present-Day Challenge to the Q Hypothesis

The Q hypothesis is an attempt to explain the non-Markan material common to Matthew and Luke on the supposition that neither Matthew nor Luke was dependent on each other. In the first part of our paper we considered the way in which this hypothetical document has been conceived by modern scholars. In the second part we analyzed a small portion of that common non-Markan material in order to determine the degree of agreement and disagreement and its bearing on the Q hypothesis. Our only positive conclusion was that this material has been

drawn from a literary source and not from oral tradition. The Q hypothesis by itself could not be vindicated on the basis of our analysis. We turn now to a consideration of the present-day challenge to this hypothesis. It is our purpose to determine the nature of the arguments advanced by the opponents of the hypothesis.

Perhaps the most vocal challenger of the Q hypothesis is the British scholar, A. M. Farrer. He sets forth his arguments in the long article, "On Dispensing with 'Q'", which appears in the volume in honor of the late R. H. Lightfoot.<sup>1</sup>

Farrer's arguments can be classified in two broad categories: (1) those of a general character; (2) those that attempt to disprove the specific points advanced to maintain that Luke could not have used Matthew.

The former (pp. 55-63) can be summarized as follows:

1. The most obvious hypothesis for the explanation of the non-Markan material common to Matthew and Luke is the one that postulates that Luke has drawn on Matthew.
2. This hypothesis has to be proven wrong before any other can be considered. This is especially true since Q has not been successfully reconstructed.
3. The Q hypothesis does not compete on equal terms with the Lukan dependence hypothesis because:
  - a. There is no independent evidence for Q. To postulate Q is therefore to postulate the unique, which is against the principle of economy of explanation.
  - b. Early Christians wrote gospels, letters, and homilies.

<sup>1</sup> D. E. Nineham, ed., Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Honor of R. H. Lightfoot (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955). Pp. 55-86.

Q is neither.

4. Since the so-called Q source is basically a collection of sayings of our Lord, it is very difficult to explain the narrative part of Q. This is especially true if one considers the great symbolism present in the preaching of John, the temptation, and the baptism, if this is also included.

5. No satisfactory explanation has been advanced to account for the absence of a passion narrative in Q.

6. The agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark have not been dealt with adequately by Streeter and others. The most satisfactory explanation is the Lukan dependence hypothesis.

In another part of his article (pp. 63-66) Farrer considers five reasons advanced why Luke could not have used Matthew and gives his own rebuttal.

1. If Luke had used Matthew he would not have omitted certain Matthean texts.

To this he answers that if Luke was an author and not just a collector of sayings, then his omissions may be part of a studied presentation of his work.

2. The Lukan wording of many of the sayings of Jesus appears to be more original than the Matthean.

This argument Farrer finds inconclusive, since when it is advanced that a Lukan form is more original, it can be argued in all cases that the Matthean looks more original.

3. St. Luke follows Mark in continuous order over considerable stretches. Why then has he treated Matthew, if he used it, in another way, dividing the text in different pieces and creating new patterns?

Farrer answers that it is very difficult to follow two sources with equal regularity, and, furthermore, that Luke has taken over the Marcan skeleton and has used Matthew as he saw fit.

4. St. Luke places the material that he has in common with Matthew in an order which is less appropriate and coherent than the one it has in Matthew.

Luke, Farrer argues, has created his own arrangement which we may not like but it is his own and we have to examine his own product.

5. "In St. Matthew much of the material common to him and St. Luke alone is placed in the context of Marcan paragraphs. St. Luke, even when he reproduces the same Marcan paragraphs, does not place the material we are speaking of in them, but somewhere else."<sup>1</sup>

What we have to explain, maintains Farrer, is the fact that Luke has taken the Marcan narratives, disencumbered of their Matthean additions, and has placed them by themselves.

Farrer then proceeds to buttress his rebuttal to the last three arguments. He shows (pp. 66-73) how Luke has combined passages in his long non-Markan section (9:51-18:14), taking Matthean passages and combining them in new forms. In each case Luke has made new arrangements to bring out his peculiar points.

Finally, he brings out (pp. 73-86) the typological relationship between Matthew and Luke. According to Farrer, Matthew has consciously arranged his gospel as a counterpart in the new dispensation to the Hexateuch in the Old Testament. The genealogy and the five discourses of Matthew correspond to the first six books of the Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> Farrer, op. cit., p. 63.

Bible. In Luke the same pattern is present, although changed in many ways to suit his own purposes. The most basic change has been Luke's expansion of the Matthean Deuteronomy (Mat. 18). Luke's Deuteronomy is his central section. It is here that he gathers most of the teachings of Jesus. Through the use of this typological relationship Farrer is able to explain the changes that Luke has made in the Matthean composition as logical and what one should expect granting Luke's pattern.

These are in summary form the arguments advanced by Farrer to explain the relation between the non-Markan passages common to Matthew and Luke. He dispenses with Q, as the less likely hypothesis, and argues that Luke has used Matthew.

We find that the issues raised by the general arguments that Farrer advances in the first part of his article are real and that any serious exponent of the Q hypothesis has to deal with them. Furthermore, the question as to which sayings are more original deserves attention. However, we raise very serious doubts as to the validity of typology--which seems to be Farrer's main buttress--as an adequate method to attempt to solve the relationship between the non-Markan passages common to Matthew and Luke. Typology can be used as a handy device to prove anything. We are not discarding the method but pointing out its limitations.

More convincing seem to us the findings of a Graduate Seminar held at Drew University during the fall of 1959.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to the so-called vocabulary of Q, the Abstract reports

<sup>1</sup> An Abstract of the Proceedings of the Graduate Seminar on the Synoptic Problem, Drew University, October 6, 1958-January 26, 1959. (In mimeographed form for private circulation)

that Mr. Lloreda, one of the members of the Seminar, stated that (p.12)

...it was difficult to find a peculiar "Q" vocabulary...  
His conclusion was that "Q" does not have a distinctive vocabulary and that what has been called "Q" vocabulary is really a list of the most frequently used words in the New Testament.

The cumulative evidence of the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark, the Seminar found to be more significant than appears in Streeter's consideration of the matter. Mr. Keech, another of the Seminarists, made a study of this matter and indicates in his report (p. 13):

...that the agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark are far greater than is generally appreciated, and that the widespread notion that Streeter has adequately accounted for these agreements is ill-founded. The most simple way in which to account for these agreements in the triple tradition would be to allow that Luke not only has a copy of Mark, which he tends to follow closely, but that he also has a copy of Matthew, which sometimes influences his text to the point that we have passages in which there are significant agreements amounting in one case as high as 18 consecutive words. This strongly suggests that at some points he was not only influenced by his reading of the text of Matthew, but that he has actually copied it.

A remarkable statement is made by Dr. William Farmer, head of the Seminar in respect to the question of order and the more original sayings in Luke, which because of its importance, we shall quote in full. Says the Abstract (pp. 13-14):

Dr. Farmer stated that in rereading Streeter and Hawkins he had observed that their statements about Matthew and Luke having inserted "Q" material into different Markan context is very misleading. In the first place this statement presupposes the priority of Mark, which to begin with may be a false premise, and in the second place, even granting the priority of Mark, this statement includes a false observation. Actually, Luke has not introduced sayings material from "Q" or Matthew into Markan contexts. There is not a single instance in which it can be shown that Luke has introduced a passage, generally thought of as "Q" into a Markan context. "Q" material in the gospel of Luke occurs in two sections of that document 6:20-

8:3 and 9:15-18:14. An analysis of these two sections indicates that they are made up of material from "Q" (or Matthew) and Luke's special source material. There is no evidence of literary dependence of Luke on Mark in these two sections (cf. Sir John C. Hawkins, "Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem".) A more accurate description of the facts would be to say that Luke, in following Mark, has literally opened up the gospel of Mark at two points, i.e. Mark 3:19 and 9:40, and at these two points in his Markan narrative, he has inseted great blocks of sayings material from his non-Markan sources. Once this is recognized, a great step forward has been made in solving the so-called problem of order. It should be remembered that it has always been the problem of order which has constituted the greatest difficulty for what Streeter acknowledges to be "that obvious suggestion that Luke knew Matthew's Gospel (or visa [sic] versa) and derived from it some of his materials." The only other reason Streeter gives for rejecting this "obvious suggestion" is his notion that "sometimes it is Matthew, sometimes it is Luke, who gives a saying in what is clearly the more original form". This is inexplicable, according to Streeter, if either is dependent on the other. It would be inexplicable if true! But such seems not to be the case. There seems not to be a single instance in which it can be said that Luke when parallel to Matthew "gives a saying in what is clearly the more original form". In every case it is either possible to explain how Luke's form of the material has been derived from Matthew--or where the situation does not obtain, one is left in considerable doubt as to which of the two forms is the more original. With the removal of Streeter's two reasons for not accepting the "obvious suggestion" that Luke copied Matthew, we are left in the position of either finding other serious objections to the hypothesis or accepting it tentatively and testing it scientifically.

The Seminar Group concludes their work with the assertion (p. 14) "that our findings lend significant if not compelling support to the hypothesis that Luke used a copy of Matthew in composing his gospel."

The arguments of the Seminar Group can be summarized as follows:

- (1) There is no evidence of a distinctive Q vocabulary.
- (2) The cumulative agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark are very significant and militate against Q.
- (3) There is no evidence that Luke has introduced a Q passage

(Matthew) into a Marcan context. Therefore, the question of order can best be understood if we see that Luke has opened up his Marcan outline at 3:19 and 9:40 and introduced here his material from other sources.

(4) There are no instances in which it can be said definitely that where Luke parallels Matthew the former has clearly the more original form. It can be argued the other way around in every case.

(5) Therefore, the "obvious suggestion" is that Luke had a copy of Matthew and used it in the composition of his gospel. This hypothesis should be accepted and tested scientifically.

On the whole the methodology followed by the Group at Drew is completely acceptable. They have attacked the issues linguistically and critically. They have studied the lists that Harnack created at the beginning of the century and have found them wanting. They have found inadequate Streeter's treatment of the subject under consideration. Their efforts have scientific validity, as it is their purpose to point out what they consider false premises and conclusions of previous scholars.

### C o n c l u d i n g   R e m a r k s

What shall we say then concerning the whole question of the challenge to Q?

1. The challenge is scholarly and to be taken seriously. The new hypothesis deserves to be tested scientifically.
2. Those that held to the Q source ought now to realize that it is just a hypothesis and that it cannot be advanced--without further ado--as one of the assured results of New Testament criticism. The objec-



tions raised by Farrer and others have to be met on the scholarly level.

3. A serious study should be made of the Gospel of Luke, taking into consideration the fact that Luke is an author in his own right and not merely a compiler. Attention should be given to the possibility that he actually has drawn from Matthew. Hans Conzelmann's work on Luke has a great deal to say concerning the peculiarities of Luke as an author but does not consider this possibility.<sup>1</sup> Does the Lukan arrangement and theological position explain the use Luke has made of the Matthean material? This is the big question that awaits scholarly research.

4. Also attention should be given to the appropriate method in determining the priority of a saying. What constitutes a more original saying? Scholars differ in their judgments as to which saying is more original. Is it possible to devise a scientific method that may give results acceptable to all? Obviously, this is an Herculean task, since it requires knowledge of many fields and sensitiveness to the real genius of each gospel writer.

5. If the thesis advanced by Farrer and others holds true, it would be a Copernican revolution in New Testament research. The work of several generations of New Testament scholars would have to be entirely reviewed.

This is as far as we can go in this paper. Our first purpose was to set before us the Q hypothesis as the acceptable explanation to the relationship between the non-Markan material common to Matthew and

<sup>1</sup> The Theology of Luke (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), *passim*.

Luke. In the second part we endeavored to find out what a comparison of the discourses common to Matthew and Luke in their respective sermons (on the Mount and on the Plain) would reveal in respect to the Q hypothesis. Our only positive conclusion was that these discourses have a common literary source behind them. The Q hypothesis in itself was not vindicated. In the third part of our study we have attempted to present the present-day challenge to the Q hypothesis.

The question of the relationship between Matthew and Luke in respect to their common non-Markan material is today in a state of flux. No positive judgment can be made one way or the other. The matter awaits further scholarly research. It may be that after all is over the Q hypothesis will be more than ever in the saddle.

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