

The Relation of Mark to the Source Q

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A Reply to Mr. B. H. Streeter's Paper in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*

MANY years ago Bernard Weiss presented his view that the evangelist Mark was dependent on an *Apostolic Source* which corresponds roughly to what is designated now the Source Q. For a long time this theory was very slow in winning support, but surely it is gaining adherents rapidly enough to-day. From all quarters they come. Dr. Stanton's recent protest is being drowned in a chorus of assent. The *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, published last year, is the latest addition to the cohorts on Dr. Weiss's side. Mr. N. P. Williams in his paper goes so far as to say that in a general sense the use of Q by the author or final redactor of Mark seems to be now well established. Mr. B. H. Streeter contributes a discussion of the problem which Dr. Sanday regards as "compelling assent." It was difficult to argue with the earlier champions of Mark's use of Q without raising the whole problem of what is meant by the Source Q. Mr. Streeter, however, accepts the very definition of Q which those who oppose this theory have held, "the mass of material common to Matthew and Luke not derivable from Mark." Although he denies any further assumptions in the beginning, he concludes by defining Q as a "single written source." The whole argument shows that he means a source written in Greek. Mr. Streeter attempts to prove that in certain passages where Matthew and Luke evidently had access to a version other than that contained in Mark — where in a word Mark and Q overlapped — "the Q version is not an expansion of the Mark version, but Mark may well

be a mutilation of Q." This certainly strikes at the heart of the problem, and if he has carried his point, then, as Dr. Sanday says, his paper compels assent. But has he done so? I should like to present a few considerations on the other side.

There is at least one case where the two versions overlap, but where the difference is so fundamental that Mr. Streeter makes it an exception. Mark's most extended discourse, ch. 13, he grants, is not derived from Q, but from some apocalypse written about 70 A.D. This judgment has an important bearing on the whole relationship of the two sources. It shows that in their eschatological outlook Mark and Q were radically different. The former shared the apocalyptic hopes of the author of Revelation, the latter condemned all seeking for apocalyptic signs and taught that the future coming of the Lord would be without warning of any sort. If Mark knew Q, he at least abandoned its eschatology. Only the extreme advocates of the eschatological school will deny that Q rather than Mark presents Jesus' own teaching regarding the future. That some trace of this attitude survives in Mk. 13 34-38 is therefore no reason for affirming that Mark is to that extent dependent on Q. Two independent versions of the same saying could hardly be expected to show greater variation than do Mk. 13 34-38 and Lk. 12 37-40 = Mt. 24 42-44. One can only wonder whether they are the same saying at all.¹

Another passage in which the evidence is clear that Matthew and Luke have a non-Marcian Greek source is the Beelzebub controversy in Mt. 12 22-32 = Lk. 11 14-23. Comparing this Q version with Mk. 3 22-30, Mr. Streeter says that Mark "has such close verbal resemblances in what it has in common with Q, and loses so much force by what it omits from Q that we can only regard it as a mutilated excerpt from that source." It is easy to see how one might come to such a conclusion by simply comparing Mk. 3 22-30 with Mt. 12

¹ The reminiscence of the parable of the talents which Mr. Streeter finds especially in the use of *ἀποδότης* loses all weight when one notes that Mark himself used *ἀποδότης* only a little before in 12 1.

22-32, but before any such comparison with Mark is made, Matthew and Luke must first be examined to see what stood in their source Q. Fortunately, it is unnecessary for me to make this literary examination here. Between the same covers with Mr. Streeter's article is another by Sir John Hawkins, in which, with his usual thoroughness and caution, he discusses this very passage, pp. 45-49. I quote his concluding paragraph:

"These eight observations combine to prove almost irresistibly that Matthew conflated his record of this discourse from two sources, which we have substantially before us in our Luke and Mark. And the insignificance of the only three resemblances which could be found between these two latter, and between them only, *shows with almost equal cogency that up to the time of the employment of them by Matthew, they had been quite independent of one another*, though they embody traditions either of the same controversy or at least of the same class of controversies."

The literary argument against Mr. Streeter's position cannot be put in a more forcible way than Sir John Hawkins has put it, but his discussion needs to be reinforced by a statement of the radical difference in the development of thought. So fundamental is this difference that Dr. Von Soden maintained, in a lecture on this subject, that two different events are here narrated. The charge itself is not the same. In Mark, Jesus is accused of being a demoniac possessed with Beelzebul, in Q it is only said that he drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul. The first argument of Jesus in reply is substantially the same in both, but the presentation very different in form. The second argument of Q is not found in Mark. The third argument shows a striking variation in the two versions. Q's presentation makes the *ἰσχυρότερος αὐτοῦ* God. The Kingdom of God is contrasted with that of Beelzebul. In Mark, as we should expect from the form of the charge in 3 22, it is Christ who is opposed to Beelzebul. Q concludes its account with the parable of the seven other spirits, Mark with the saying about the unforgivable sin. This Marcan saying, 3 28-30, has its parallel in Lk. 12 10, Q. Must not the divergence between

the two versions here — Mark has *sons of men* where Q has the *Son of Man* — go back to a different understanding of a common Aramaic text or tradition? Where the difference is so great as it is here, the use of a common tradition is more probable than a mere translation change. At any rate, there is no possible reason for thinking that Mark is dependent on the Greek Q. As in the case of the two versions of Jesus' eschatological message, so again in the accounts of this Beelzebub controversy, there is a deep-seated divergence which strengthens our conviction that Mark and Q give two independent embodiments of early apostolic tradition.

Another illustration of this independence occurs in Mk. 8 11-13. To my mind there is a real difficulty in supposing that Mark would have given this saying in its absolute form if he were dependent on the statement in Q, Mt. 12 38 f. = Lk. 11 29 f.

Again let me call attention to Mark's summary of the temptation in 1 12. 13. It implies, no doubt, a knowledge of more than is told; but when one considers how much divergence from Mt. 4 1-11 = Lk. 4 1-13, Q, is compressed into these two verses, he is not likely to attribute this knowledge to the use of that source. First, Mark speaks of the temptation as continuous through the forty days. Q, on the other hand, places it at their close.² Mark's reference to being with wild beasts is, as Prof. B. W. Bacon points out, paralleled in Ps. 91 13, the same Psalm which is quoted in Mt. 4 6. But we note that it is in a verse of that Psalm not given by Q and nowhere implied in Q's account. Furthermore, Ps. 91 11. 12 is used in opposite ways in the two versions. The ministering of angels is a temptation in Q which Jesus repels, in Mark it is apparently the indication of his conquest. Surely Q's account did not lie before Mark, but some other detailed version probably did, one in which we may conjecture the 91st Psalm had a larger place. This implies, of course, that behind both accounts is a real historical tradition and not a mere invention of Q.

In these four sections, ch. 13, 3 22-30, 8 11-13, 1 12. 13, we have

² Lk. 4 2 conflates both sources. Mt. 4 11 b is also a conflation.

found not only a want of evidence for any literary relationship, but a striking divergence in thought. Here, at least, a theory of dependence has no standing ground. If now Mark had the temptation narrative, the account of the Beelzebub controversy, the report of a demand for signs, and the eschatological message in a form independent of Q, is it not fair to presume that the same will be true in the case of the other points of contact, unless clear proof to the contrary is given?

In no case is the close relation between the two sources more impressive than in the parable of the mustard seed. Sir John Hawkins (p. 51) again points out that Matthew conflates the two sources which are preserved to us by Mark and Luke. A careful comparison of Mark and Q shows noteworthy differences even here. Mark emphasizes the mustard being the smallest of seeds. Q speaks of its becoming a tree upon whose branches the birds can rest. It may be, as Dr. Von Soden has suggested, that their variation is due to familiarity with different varieties of mustard. On the other hand, there are verbal resemblances which command attention. According to the best texts *τὰ πικρὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* occurs only here in Mark, but is found elsewhere in Q. The double question with which both Luke and Mark introduce the parable would have weight if we could be more confident that it stood in Q. It occurs also in Lk. 7:31, but there again the parallel account in Matthew omits it. Still it ought to be allowed that we have in the two versions of this parable some verbal similarity.

There is one other extended passage, which can serve as a basis of comparison, the commission to the disciples, Mk. 6:7-11, Mt. 10:1-14, Lk. 9:1-5, 10:1-12. The same line of reasoning which Sir John Hawkins applied to the Beelzebub controversy makes it clear that here again Lk. 10:1-12 preserves most nearly the original form of Q.⁸ In this case there is no obvious difference of point of view between the two sources. Q did indeed contain substantially

⁸ The introductory setting in 10:1 and the addition in 10:5-7 are doubtful, and one can easily see why Luke should have omitted Mt. 10:5-7, if they stood in his source.

all that Mark gives, as Mr. Streeter says. But when he adds "in much the same language," a protest must be made. He bases his statement not on Lk. 10 1-12, but on coincident variations of Lk. 9 1 and Mt. 10 1 from Mk. 6 7, and of Lk. 9 5 and Mt. 10 14 from Mk. 6 11. Fortunately, in Mt. 10 1 = Lk. 9 1 it can be shown that the coincident variation must have some other explanation than a common use of Q. That Mt. 9 37. 38 are taken from Q is guaranteed by Lk. 10 2. But *καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς*, Mt. 10 1, is explicable after *τότε λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς*, 9 37, only when we recognize that Matthew is here passing from his source Q to his source Mark. The coincident variations from Mark in Mt. 10 1 π. and Lk. 9 1-5 cannot be regarded as evidence for a common use of Q, except when they are supported by Lk. 10 1-12. They are on a par with those found elsewhere in Marcan material, and are to be explained in the same way. All verbal resemblance between the two sources then disappears, and at the same time all basis for theories of dependence of Mark on Q.

Besides the more extended passages in which Mark and Q overlap, there are a number of brief, scattered sayings, found in them both. The following list gives the sayings in Mark and the parallels of Matthew and Luke which may belong to Q :

1. Mk. 4 21	Mt. 5 15	Lk. 11 28
2. Mk. 4 22	Mt. 10 26 f.	Lk. 12 2 f.
3. Mk. 4 24	Mt. 7 2	Lk. 6 38
4. Mk. 4 25	Mt. 25 20	Lk. 19 28
5. Mk. 8 24	Mt. 10 88	Lk. 14 27
6. Mk. 8 26	Mt. 10 30	Lk. 17 32
7. Mk. 8 28	Mt. 10 28	Lk. 12 8. 9
8. Mk. 9 26	Mt. 23 11	Lk. 22 28
9. Mk. 9 37	Mt. 10 40	Lk. 10 16
10. Mk. 9 42	Mt. 18 6. 7	Lk. 17 1. 2
11. Mk. 9 49. 50	Mt. 5 18	Lk. 14 34. 35
12. Mk. 10 10-12	Mt. 5 22	Lk. 16 18
13. Mk. 10 21	Mt. 20 16	Lk. 13 20
14. Mk. 11 28	Mt. 17 20	Lk. 17 5. 6
15. Mk. 11 26	Mt. 6 12	Lk. 11 4
16. Mk. 12 28	Mt. 22 84 f.	Lk. 10 28
17. Mk. 12 28. 30	Mt. 23 6. 7	Lk. 11 48
18. Mk. 13 11	Mt. 10 10. 30	Lk. 12 11. 12

Thus summed up, this may seem to be a formidable array of evidence, but closer examination removes much of its cogency. Many of these sayings are of such a proverbial nature as to be of little value in determining written sources. In fact, Nos. 4 and 5 each occur five times in the Gospels, No. 6 occurs six times. Again, the differences are sometimes more striking than the resemblances. In Nos. 2, 7, 15, the difference between Mark and Q is so great as to point the argument against the dependence of one on the other. In Nos. 6, 8, 11, the parallels in Matthew and Luke differ so widely that it is hard to tell what, if anything, stood in Q. What verbal resemblance there is between Mark and Matthew in Nos. 9, 14, 18, is due to the influence of Mark on Matthew. It is not supported by Luke. Regarding No. 3, it is an unnatural, artificial hypothesis to say with Mr. Streeter that Mk. 4²⁴ is a conflation of Lk. 6³⁸ and 12³¹. The fact that the parallels in Mt. 6³⁸ and 7² are near together does not help in the least, unless Matthew's sequence be accepted as that of Q. This, Mr. Streeter himself denies in his refutation of Harnack, pp. 160 ff. That No. 16 stood in Q is a very doubtful conjecture, but it is included here for the sake of completeness. Speaking of No. 17, Mr. Streeter says that Mk. 12³⁸⁻⁴⁰ "looks like a reminiscence of the long denunciation in Q." But what are the facts? Mk. 12³⁸⁻⁴⁰ consists of two charges, one of which, 12⁴⁰, is not found in Q at all, and the other Mark gives in a distinctive, expanded form.

The evidence from these scattered passages narrows down to this—that Mark and Q had in common a number of sayings substantially alike. No direct relationship has been established in these passages, except on the assumption which Dr. Stanton has condemned, that any sayings in substance the same must have come from the same Greek document. To this list of parallel sayings ought perhaps to be added Mk. 1^{7, 8}, Mt. 3¹¹, Lk. 3¹⁶. That this stood in both Mark and Q should be granted, but it ought also to be remembered that this is the one message of the Baptist which would deeply concern all Christians from the beginning. Just how

great was the difference between Mark and Q here, we can no longer measure on account of the influence of Mark on Matthew and Luke. It is at least possible that while Mark spoke of a baptism with the spirit, Q spoke only of a baptism with fire. Mark's description of John the Baptist (Mk. 1 1-6) is, in truth, consistent with what Q tells about John, and his account is brief and condensed, as Mr. Streeter says. But is this reason for thinking that he must have known Q?

A word ought to be added about another class of passages which is well represented by Mk. 9 43-48. Matthew gives this saying twice. It is common to explain the doublet by assigning Mt. 5 29. 30 to Q. An outstanding objection to such an explanation is the improbability that Luke would omit this saying if it stood in both of his main sources. Moreover, it must be recognized that the occurrence of doublets in Matthew is no proof of the presence of two sources. Sir John Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*², pp. 81 ff., states the possibility of the occasional use of the same source twice over in Matthew, but he does not develop the suggestion. The situation of Mk. 3 7-12 is not merely given in Mt. 12 15-21; it is also anticipated in Mt. 4 23-25. In this case there can hardly be any question of different sources. Even so, in the introduction to the sending out of the twelve, 9 35. 36, Matthew has repeated what he had in 4 23 = Mk. 1 39, and anticipated Mk. 6 34, which is given again in its Marcan context, 14 14. In these instances no looking through Mark and copying of these passages is to be supposed. The First Gospel shows a mastery of its material which makes any such supposition unnecessary. Mr. Streeter is certainly right when he says that Matthew knew his sources almost by heart.

A similar case occurs in 10 40. Familiar with the form of this saying in Mk. 9 37, he preferred that to the Q version of the same saying, Lk, 10 16, and thus anticipated what needed to be repeated in 18 5 = Mk. 9 37. Sir John Hawkins has proposed a similar explanation of the doublets 12 33-37 and 7 18 ff. The theory of separate sources, in this instance, is made particularly improbable by the fact that 12 33-37, and not 7 18 ff., stands in the closest verbal relation to Lk. 6 43 ff.

So, also, Mt. 11 24 repeats 10 15. This repetition is due, no doubt, to the fact that Matthew has separated two Q passages which originally stood together. Sir John Hawkins is probably right in explaining Mt. 9 32-34 = Mt. 12 22-24, in the same way.

With these examples before us, surely we are justified in preferring to believe that Matthew has used Mk. 9 43 ff. twice over, adapting it to the different contexts, rather than to suppose that Luke omitted a passage which stood in his two principal sources. We must remember that Matthew was concerned in making his great discourses as complete as possible. To that end he was willing to sacrifice much narrative material, and to repeat sayings already used.

This point has been set forth in some detail because it explains another passage often used as a basis for theories of Mark's dependence on Q. I refer to Mt. 10 17-22 (23⁷). This did not stand in Q at all. It is an anticipation of Mk. 13 9 b-13 which is repeated freely in 24 9-14. The following table makes this clear :

Mt. 9 27-10 16	Mk. 6 6 b-12	and Lk. 10 1-12
Mt. 10 17-22 (23 ⁷)	Mk. 13 9 b-13	
Mt. 10 (24. 25) 26-28		Lk. 12 2-9
Mt. 10 24-26		Lk. 12 51-53
Mt. 10 27. 28		Lk. 14 26-27
(Mt. 10 29)		Lk. 17 28)

Mr. Streeter himself (pp. 160 ff.) has pointed out that in ch. 10 Matthew read through Q for sayings that belonged under this theme and put them down one by one as he came across them without rearrangement. It ought to be recognized that he used Mark in the same way, adding Mk. 13 9 b-13 after Mk. 6 6 b-11. Mt. 10 23 may well have stood in Matthew's text of Mark and been omitted afterwards. One sentence only of this passage had a parallel in Q, Mk. 13 11 = Lk. 12 11. 12. Accordingly Matthew omitted this verse at the close of Lk. 10 2-12 because he had already used its equivalent from Mark. If I have given a correct presentation of Matthew's method, one of the strong arguments for Mark's use of Q loses its force.

A word now in conclusion. We found in a number of the passages in which Mark and Q overlap a difference so deep-seated as to argue against any dependence of one on the other. We found no instance where the resemblance is so close as to be inconsistent with the independence of the two traditions, nor has Mr. Streeter shown such an instance. The only assumption which needs to be made is that we have to do here with real sayings of Jesus, and that in 75 A.D. all knowledge of these sayings was not limited to one Greek document. For these reasons I cannot accept the Q.E.D. with which Dr. Sanday has stamped Mr. Streeter's paper, and I ask for a reconsideration. Mr. Streeter's attempt makes it clear — does it not? — that the burden of the argument for a dependence of Mark on Q must rest where Bernhard Weiss put it, on the coincident variations of Matthew and Luke in distinctively Marcan material. It was interesting to see how Mr. Streeter fell back on the same line of approach as in his use of Lk. 9 1-5 and of Mk. 1 2 f. When, with the majority of modern scholars, this argument is rejected or at least minimized, the whole case loses its cogency. The points of contact between Mark and Q which can be clearly traced do not show a dependence of the former on the latter. Such dependence does confessedly become more plausible when an Aramaic original of Q is substituted for the Greek manuscript. In nearly every case the Q form of the tradition seems more primitive and original than that of Mark. Wellhausen's attempt to reverse the relationship was a failure. It is this that gives force to such discussions as those of B. W. Bacon, Wendling, and Nicolardot, in which they try to show how the latter version grew out of the former. But granting that in many cases Mark is secondary in relation to Q, even granting that Mark used written sources for this material, it does not follow that he used Q. The two sources are so fundamentally different, the material they both give is so manifestly a part of the common heritage in those early days of oral tradition when written records were just beginning to be made, that any direct relation between the sources seems improbable.