

THE EVANGELICAL AND REDACTION CRITICISM: CRITIQUE AND METHODOLOGY

Grant R. Osborne*

In previous issues of this journal this writer has published two articles that attempted a positive reappraisal of redaction-critical methodology for the evangelical. The first¹ sought to come to grips with the synoptic problem—i. e., the differences in wording and content between the evangelists. As a test case I chose the great commission of Matt 28:16-20, especially the triadic baptismal formula of v 19. The reason for this choice was the fact that it was one of the few *logia Jesu* with parallels in the rest of the NT and therefore had an external control. The second article² attempted to grapple with the critical side of redactional research: tradition criticism. In it I sought to critique the negative presuppositions of the radical critics and to determine both the positive value of the discipline and the controls that the NT itself places on the use of the tools.

Redaction criticism has come to the forefront of evangelical debates on inerrancy. The reason for this is obvious. The synoptic problem (with John) must ever be at the center of any attempt to grapple with the historical accuracy of the Bible. Apart from the Kings-Chronicles corpus no other portion of Scripture presents more than one perspective on a single historical period. Any consideration of a high bibliography has to come to grips with the different ways the evangelists use the same portion of Scripture—e. g., the missions discourse where Mark has “except a staff . . . (and) sandals” (6:8) while Matthew and Luke say, “Do not purchase . . . sandals or a staff” (Matt 10:10; Luke 9:3; 10:4).

I. EVANGELICAL DIALOGUE

1. *Negative Appraisals.* Many evangelicals argue forcefully that any use of criticism at all is a grave danger, for it inevitably involves the acceptance of the negative presuppositions of the higher critics as well as the concomitant dissolution of the authority of Scripture. Harold Lindsell in *The Battle for the Bible*³ seeks to show that a surrender to the historical-critical method inevitably erodes adherence to the inerrancy of Scripture. He illustrates this with successive case studies of the Missouri Synod split, the Southern Baptist debate and “The Strange Case of Fuller Theological Seminary.” In each case a growing openness to higher criticism led to a gradual takeover by an anti-inerrancy stand. This has

*Grant Osborne is assistant professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

¹“Redaction Criticism and the Great Commission: A Case Study Toward a Biblical Understanding of Inerrancy,” *JETS* 19/2 (1976) 73-85.

²“The Evangelical and *Traditionsgeschichte*,” *JETS* 21/2 (1978) 117-130.

³H. Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), esp. chaps. 4-6. See also his *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) for a further development of his position.

often been called the "domino principle," and he develops this in the following chapter ("Deviations That Follow When Inerrancy Is Denied") with respect to such divergent examples as the Unitarians, Bishop Pike, the Church of England, and so forth. His point is that the odyssey from higher criticism to denial of inerrancy to surrender of basic doctrines has proven true in virtually every case—if not in the same generation, then in the next.

John Warwick Montgomery has been even more volatile in his staunch opposition to every attempt at a critical approach to the Scriptures on the part of evangelicalism. Perhaps the best presentation of his arguments for our purpose would be to chronicle his criticisms of my two previous articles.⁴ (1) They attempt to "cleanse" the higher critical criteria "by the waters of evangelical baptism" but they merely serve to "cast a pall doubt over the reliability of the portrait of Jesus in the New Testament." (2) They seek to explain "the redaction and formation of the tradition as Spirit-led" but actually are no different than Hick *et al.* in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, who also use "the Spirit" to justify their mythical approach. (3) The conclusions are destructive to a high Christology, because "one can never be sure when the text is representing Jesus Himself and when it is merely reflecting the diverse faith-experiences of early Christian communities."

An important work for this school of thought is Gerhard Maier's *The End of the Historical-Critical Method*.⁵ In it he shows the invalidity of attempts to establish a "canon within a canon" by separating "spurious" from "genuine" faith: (1) All attempts thus far have ended in failure; (2) the Bible does not lend itself to such a dichotomy; (3) they destroy the Biblical concept of revelation; (4) they presuppose their conclusions; (5) they are impractical as a means of proclaiming revelation; (6) they replace divine revelation with human reason. Radical critics have replaced propositional truth with faith-encounter and statements of Scripture with spiritual experience. Maier argues for a "historical-biblical" method that (1) negates that enforced analogy that replaces a God-centered with a man-centered interpretation; (2) recognizes the sovereignty of God in revelation, which means that Scripture must interpret itself; and (3) accepts the "congregation of Jesus" (not existential experience) as the true goal of the Biblical message.

In short, many evangelicals believe that the employment of any higher critical tool is dangerous and potentially heterodox. It concedes far too much and implicitly (eventually explicitly) affirms a separation between authentic and inauthentic portions of Scripture. To assume that the *Sitz im Leben* of the evangelist's Church determined in any way selection or coloring of the *logia Jesu* is to introduce a canon within the canon—i.e., a difference between the original words of Jesus (the tradition) and the way it has come down to us (the redaction). Thus are authenticity and therefore inerrancy undermined. If the records as we have them constitute the Word of God, then attempts to get behind them to the *true*

⁴See J. W. Montgomery, "The Fuzzification of Biblical Inerrancy," *Faith Founded on Fact: Essays in Evidential Apologetics* (Nashville: Nelson, 1978) 220-221, and "Why Has God Incarnate Suddenly Become Mythical?," paper read at the annual conference of the Evangelical Theological Society, December, 1978. The quotes are all taken from the latter.

⁵G. Maier, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (tr. E. W. Leverenz and R. F. Norden; St. Louis: Concordia, 1977; German ed., 1974).

sayings of Jesus are not only unnecessary but actually dangerous. Attempts to uncover the principles behind the text automatically result in a disbelief in the meaning of the text.

2. *Positive Appraisals.* Not all evangelicals have been so negative toward the use of critical tools. All decry the negative presuppositions of the radical critics (cf. my second article, n. 2), but many are cautiously open to the value of the tools when applied within the controls of a high view of Scripture. Form criticism, for example, when removed from its radical use as a criterion for authenticity, has uncovered the creeds and hymns of the NT (e. g., Rom 1:3-4; 6:2-6; 10:9-10; Phil 2:6-11; etc.). Redaction criticism has led to a new awareness of the Biblical theology of the individual evangelists as well as tools for uncovering such.

Maier's useful work has undergone a certain amount of criticism in many circles, not so much for his identification of the problems but more for the radicality of his solution. In Germany theologian Peter Stuhlmacher⁶ dedicated a lengthy excursus to Maier's work. In it he took Maier to task for the latter's broad strokes in denigrating the whole of modern scholarship and for assuming that a high view of Scripture was a hermeneutical tool in and of itself. Stuhlmacher argued for a "hermeneutics of consent" that takes a positive approach to critical tools and involves an "openness to transcendence" or God's work in history. This has occasioned a long series of dialogues between the two men, chronicled in English in John Piper's recent article.⁷ Piper himself challenges Maier's elevation of faith above knowledge. Rather, Piper asserts, the two must work together as God transforms knowledge via faith. The use of critical tools is not obviated by a high view of revelation. In fact, this may be illustrated by the "growing disenchantment with 'an objective naturalistic view of history' with its 'insolent attitude of control' " in Germany itself.⁸

In his excellent article on "The Meaning of Inerrancy" at the recent International Congress on Biblical Inerrancy,⁹ Paul Feinberg discussed in depth the proper delineation of the concept and its application to hermeneutical issues. At the conclusion of the article he proceeds to enumerate several misunderstandings with regard to the doctrine. The one that is germane to our discussion I will quote:¹⁰

Inerrancy does not demand that the Logia Jesu (the sayings of Jesus) contain the ipsissima verba (the exact words) of Jesus, only the ipsissima vox (the exact voice). This point is closely akin to the one just made before. When a New Testament writer cites the sayings of Jesus, it need not be the case that Jesus said those exact words. Undoubtedly, the exact words of Jesus are to be found in the New Testament, but they need not be in every instance. For one thing, many of the sayings

⁶P. Stuhlmacher, *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (tr. R. A. Harrisville; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977; German ed., 1975) 66-71.

⁷J. Piper, "A Reply to Gerhard Maier: A Review Article," *JETS* 22/1 (1979) 79-85.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁹P. D. Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," paper presented at the International Congress on Biblical Inerrancy, October, 1978. See the forthcoming *Inerrancy*, ed. N. L. Geisler (Zondervan).

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 30.

were spoken by our Lord in Aramaic, and thus had to be translated into Greek. Moreover, as was mentioned above, the writers of the New Testament did not have available to them the linguistic conventions that we do today. Thus, it is impossible for us to know which of the sayings are direct quotes, which are indirect discourse, and which are free renderings. With regard to the sayings of Jesus, what would count against inerrancy? The words in the sense of *ipsissima vox* were not uttered by Jesus, or the *ipsissima verba* were spoken by our Lord but so used by the writer that the meaning given by the writer is inconsistent with the intended meaning of Jesus (*italics his*).

In addition, Stanley Gundry in his presidential address at the annual meeting of ETS argued for a new openness toward issues and the hermeneutics of inerrancy.¹¹ And Kenneth S. Kantzer in a recent article on inerrancy says,¹² "Consistent evangelicals must discover the piece of truth that gives strength to such basically antievangelical methodologies as redaction criticism. But they must also be sufficiently alert and expert to draw the fine lines that inevitably distinguish truth from error." That is exactly what we hope to do in this article.

Several evangelical scholars have noted the presence of both history and theology in the gospels. Simon Kistemaker¹³ argues forcefully for the role of the evangelists as historians and then notes just as definitely their place as theologians. He says, for instance, that "all four evangelists give the readers history interpreted from a theological point of view" and then quotes Leon Morris: "It is increasingly accepted in modern writing that all four Gospels are basically theological documents. None is an objectively written piece of history."¹⁴ The classic presentations of this are in the works of I. Howard Marshall on Luke, Ralph P. Martin on Mark, and Stephen S. Smalley on John.¹⁵ All present convincing cases that in each case the evangelists have used tradition in providing their distinct theological messages to their readers. This blend of history and redaction has not denied authenticity—rather, it has affirmed it. Moreover, in arriving at their positive conclusions, each has used critical methodology and interacted with current exegetical patterns.

Two other works may be examined in this regard, written by two leading British evangelicals. R. T. France in his recent article on the *logia Jesu* says, "All of (the critical schools) have provided materials of inestimable value to conservative scholarship. . . . What is being questioned here is not these disciplines as such, but the skeptical presuppositions which underlie their use by many modern

¹¹S. N. Gundry, "Evangelical Theology: Where *Should* We Be Going?," *JETS* 22/1 (1979) 3-13, esp. pp. 4-7.

¹²K. Kantzer, "Evangelicals and the Doctrine of Inerrancy," in *The Foundation of Biblical Authority* (ed. J. M. Boice; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 153-154; see also his "Evangelicals and the Inerrancy Question," in *Evangelical Roots* (ed. K. Kantzer; Nashville: Nelson, 1978) 97, for much the same statement.

¹³S. Kistemaker, *The Gospels in Current Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 102-103, 110, 116-119.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 119. Quote from L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Eerdmans, 1969) 78.

¹⁵I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970); R. P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); S. S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978).

New Testament scholars.”¹⁶ While his positive development of the tools will be discussed below, we must note here his important delineation of the issues. I. H. Marshall in his *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*¹⁷ says that form (and tradition) criticism

is a tool which must be used with extreme caution in making historical judgments about the traditions in the Gospels. As a method of analyzing the material and showing how it was handed down and used in the early church it has its obvious merits. It can teach us how the early church used the traditions about Jesus—and perhaps suggest how they should be used today. But when it is used as a means of passing negative historical judgments on the tradition, we may be tempted to conclude that it is being put to what is often an illegitimate use.

3. *Conclusion.* Both sides in the above dialogue are in agreement on one basic issue: that critical tools are meant to elucidate the meaning of the text rather than to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic pericopae. The skepticism and negative historiography of the radical critics are unwarranted and invalid. The debate centers on the tools themselves: Are they part and parcel with the negative presuppositions? Those who argue “yes” say that the tools were developed by the negative critics and cannot be used apart from the a priori of their creators. This, however, can be challenged. Perhaps the best example of an evangelical who used the positive tools of redaction criticism before the “school” had developed was Ned B. Stonehouse, whose works were remarkably similar to the redaction critics in style but without the negative bias and who affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy without qualification.¹⁸

It is hoped that the remainder of this article can demonstrate the validity of this second position. The methodologies of form and redaction criticism, when the negative historiography is removed, should not be separated from grammatical-historical criteria. They are tools for a positive appraisal of the intended meaning of the individual writers and can lead to an enhanced understanding of the meaning of the individual texts in light of the overall message of the writer.

II. REDACTION CRITICISM: AN APPRAISAL

So much has been written critiquing form, tradition and redaction criticism that another analysis is hardly appropriate. A perusal of the works mentioned above (especially those of France and Marshall) along with my two previous articles should suffice. The major issue is the direction one proceeds in the investigation of the problems. The radical critic moves from his assumptions to the evi-

¹⁶R. T. France, “The Authenticity of the Sayings of Jesus,” *History, Criticism and Faith* (ed. C. Brown; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977) 102. He notes G. E. Ladd’s *The New Testament and Criticism* (1970) 132-133, where he also separates between the positive value of critical tools and their abuse in many circles.

¹⁷I. H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 177; cf. chaps. 7-9 on the study of the gospels.

¹⁸See N. B. Stonehouse, *The Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); *The Witness of Luke to Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958). On his connection with redaction criticism see M. Sylva, “Ned B. Stonehouse and Redaction Criticism. Part I: The Witness of the Synoptic Evangelists to Christ,” *WTJ* 40 (1977) 77-88; and “Ned B. Stonehouse and Redaction Criticism. Part II: The Historicity of the Synoptic Tradition,” *WTJ* 40 (1978) 281-303.

dence and places the burden of proof on the gospel claim to be authentic. In other words, it is "guilty until proven innocent." The evangelical, however, moves from the evidence to assumptions and places the burden of proof on the critics who deny their genuineness. France especially has an excellent discussion of this and demonstrates (we think conclusively) that the evidence points to the credibility of the gospel records and supports the latter a priori. As France notes, "both views are assumptions" and "what we must both do is to examine our assumptions in the light of the available evidence."¹⁹ The many problems inherent in the radical position make its starting point untenable. Therefore we confidently assert the historicity and infallibility of the gospel records.

Nevertheless, we are required to face the facts of the gospel records honestly. In parallel passages that cannot be called separate incidents in the life of Jesus, we note many interesting and difficult problems. (1) The cry of dereliction is written in Aramaic in Mark (15:34, "Eloi, Eloi") and in Hebrew in Matthew (27:47, "Eli, Eli"). (2) In the parable of the wicked tenants, Mark 12:9-10 and Luke 20:15-16 place the question ("What will the owner of the vineyard do?") and the answer ("He will come and destroy . . .") on the lips of Jesus, while Matthew 21:60-61 places the answer on the lips of his opponents. (3) In the question of the Pharisees and Herodians concerning the payment of taxes, Mark 12:14 phrases the "flattering" introduction in chiasmic order while Matthew 22:16 removes the chiasm and transposes the last element to second. (4) The words of institution at the Eucharist are a famous debate, with Luke and John adding "which is for you; this do in remembrance of me" to Mark's and Matthew's "this is my body"; they also change the latter's "blood of the covenant" to "new covenant in my blood" and Matthew adds "for the remission of sins." These of course are only a few of the difficulties that the NT student faces when studying the synoptic differences, but they will suffice to illustrate the problems.

Many different solutions have been propounded. Several unfortunately seek to place a grid on all the problems and thereby hope to solve them with a single approach. Such, for instance, would be those who simply harmonize all the accounts by stringing them together in a way reminiscent of Tatian's famous harmony. For instance, Peter's confession would be "Thou art the Christ of God, the Son of the living God," and there would in actuality be six denials of Peter in order to account for the cock's crowing once (Matthew and Luke) and twice (Mark).²⁰ Of the four examples listed above plus the one at the beginning of this article, only the second could be eliminated in this fashion, by noting that the opponents probably assented to Jesus' answer.

Others, mainly redaction critics, are arguing more and more for the independence of the evangelists from one another and are asserting that the differences are due entirely to the creative redaction of the oral tradition by the evangelists.²¹ Yet this also is unnecessary and ignores the positive results of harmonization when used moderately (i. e., when the context calls for it). The similarities in

¹⁹France, "Authenticity," 117.

²⁰See Lindsell, *Battle*, 174-176, in answer to Beegle.

²¹See J. M. Rist, *On the Independence of Matthew and Mark* (SNTSMS 32; Cambridge: University Press, 1978); and the forthcoming commentary on Matthew by R. Gundry (Eerdmans).

wording call for some degree of interdependence, and few are willing to abandon it altogether.

The solution that this writer has preferred is to recognize interpretation on the part of the evangelists, who sought to bring out the true meaning of the event or saying for their readers. In adapting the traditions, however, they never altered the saying or event out of keeping with the original occurrence. As we stated in the second article, they were controlled by a desire to remain true to the actual event. France declares:²²

Our conclusion from all this is that while it is undeniable that the evangelists and their predecessors adapted, selected, and reshaped the material which came down to them, there is no reason to extend this "freedom" to include the *creation* of new sayings attributed to Jesus; that in fact such evidence as we have points decisively the other way, to a respect for the sayings of Jesus as such which was sufficient to prevent any of his followers attributing their own teaching to him.

The evangelists recorded Jesus' sayings in a fashion similar to a paraphrase, attempting to bring out the meaning and apply those facets that were meaningful to the situation of their readers. This led to a further method—i. e., the omission or expansion of aspects that would do this very thing. Omission is too obvious to be denied by even the most cursory perusal of a synopsis of the gospels. The principle of expansion, however, has to be carefully defined.

A misunderstanding of my position with respect to this, in fact, has led to widespread dissatisfaction regarding my approach to the triadic baptismal formula of Matt 28:19. There I posited that Matthew had possibly expanded an original monadic formula in order "to interpret the true meaning of Jesus' message for his own day. . . . However, Matthew has faithfully reproduced the intent and meaning of what Jesus said."²³ In my next article mentioned above I clarified this further by stating, "The interpretation must be based on the original words and meaning imparted by Jesus."²⁴ Here I would like to clarify it further by applying the implications of my second article to the first. I did not mean that Matthew had freely composed the triadic formula and read it back onto the lips of Jesus. Rather, Jesus had certainly (as in virtually every speech in the NT) spoken for a much longer time and had given a great deal more teaching than reported in the short statement of Matt 28:18-20. In it I believe that he probably elucidated the trinitarian background behind the whole speech. This was compressed by Matthew in the form recorded. Acts and Paul then may have followed the formula itself from the commission speech, namely the monadic form.

The value of this principle of omission and expansion for redactional purposes is that it allows one the flexibility to deal with the synoptic problem in all its complexity, yet with a positive affirmation of the veracity of the text. We would not separate tradition from redaction in terms of veracity, nor would we wish to advocate a search for the "original words" as if they were somehow more authentic.

Of course, this necessitates a redefinition of tradition and redaction criticism

²²France, "Authenticity," 125.

²³Osborne, "Great Commission," 80, 85.

²⁴Osborne, "Traditionsgeschichte," 128.

for the evangelical. Tradition criticism becomes a delineation of the sources employed by the evangelist for the purpose of highlighting his particular emphases. Redaction criticism becomes the explication of the evangelist's individual emphases for the purpose of highlighting his intended theological message. In neither case are the critical tools employed for the purpose of determining the historical authenticity of the text. That is to go beyond their purview.

Above all, we must deny the skepticism of the radical critics with regard to the basic historicity of the gospel pericopae. This pessimism, we believe, is the result of an erroneous historiography. The historian is not nearly so doubtful regarding the possibility of recovering the original event. J. A. Passmore in an important article²⁵ speaks against the view that the historian, since he cannot truly detach himself from the event he is narrating, cannot produce objective history. He states that the historian, like the scientist, sifts through various hypotheses in order to reconstruct, as much as possible, what objectively occurred as well as what it meant. Moreover, he employs established criteria (like the scientist's "covering laws") to analyze the data in order to do so. The result is accepted as a viable description of the event. Likewise, R. G. Collingwood²⁶ has argued against such skepticism, saying that it results from a false picture of history as an uncertain, transitory search for the past. While the past no longer exists, it can be known, however partially, as the historian sifts through alternative possibilities to determine the probable original events.

The basis for this unwarranted pessimism in NT research is an unrealistic demand for certitude. Tradition-critical criteria seek the "irreducible minimum," or that which can be known as "necessary truth." Several recent articles²⁷ have stated that the word "certainty" can be applied to truth statements only with extreme caution, for one can only "justify" rather than "certify" belief in a truth. There is always doubt in any truth-statement, and a skeptic can always attack either the premises or the conclusion of any truth-claim. The same must be said about Biblical truth-claims; while they can be shown to be empirically adequate, only faith adds certitude. Nevertheless the historian can verify them along the lines of probable facticity, and skepticism is unnecessary.

At the same time there is a certain tension in gospel studies between evidence for a high degree of concern for *ipsissima verba* and the corresponding freedom seen on the part of the evangelists to diverge, sometimes widely, in their record of the sayings/events. Two different approaches have stressed their concern for the actual words. (1) The Scandinavian school of Harold Riesenfeld and Birger

²⁵J. A. Passmore, "The Objectivity of History," *Philosophical Analysis and History* (ed. W. H. Dray; New York: Harper, 1966) 75-94. Also see A. M. Holmes, *Faith Seeks Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 78-84, who seeks an approach along the lines of "interpretive realism"—i. e., grounding historical decisions in "empirical adequacy" and coherent correspondence to the data.

²⁶R. G. Collingwood, "The Limits of Historical Knowledge," *Essays in the Philosophy of History* (Austin, 1963) 90-103. He adds (p. 43) that there is no need for such pessimism, "for skepticism implies that no one opinion is preferable to any other; and it is certainly possible to choose between different historical views."

²⁷G. F. Woods, "The Evidential Value of Miracles," in *Miracles* (ed. C. F. D. Moule; London, 1965) 21-25; R. Firth, "The Anatomy of Certainty," *PhRev* 76 (1967) 3-27; J. L. Pollock, "Criteria and Our Knowledge of the Material World," *PhRev* 76 (1967) 55-60.

Gerhardsson²⁸ noted the strong stress on the accurate transmission of oral tradition (utilizing memory techniques) in rabbinic circles and the parallels with those techniques in the forms of the *logia Jesu* in the gospels. They posited that a similar system was employed in the early Church. (2) Heinz Schürmann and Robert Gundry²⁹ have studied the note-taking techniques of both the Jewish and Hellenistic world and believe that the disciples took notes on Jesus' teaching. Both of these theories have been criticized and to some extent dismissed because they fail to answer the significant differences between the gospel accounts on the same saying or event. Yet they are dismissed far too cavalierly, for they do make their point regarding the similarities between the Jewish concern for accuracy and the milieu of the early Church. As we have stated, there is indeed no creative formulation of new sayings nor any attempt to read the Church's teaching back onto the lips of Jesus. There is, however, a dynamic freedom to apply the meaning (*ipsissima vox*) of Jesus' statements to the needs of their own day.

This explains the differences: The evangelists do not change the sayings of Jesus but rather highlight different nuances of meaning in these sayings. This can be illustrated in the beatitudes. Many have posited two different settings (the mount and the plain) and therefore two different sayings. This may be so but, as Don A. Carson states,³⁰ Jesus could have begun his speech on the mount to the disciples (Matthew) and then, "touched by the needs of the crowd that would not let him alone (Luke 6:18f)," come down to a level place and stood. Moreover, the presence of ten beatitudes in Matthew and four in Luke (set in contrast with four woes) as well as the spiritual emphasis in Matthew ("poor in spirit") and economic stress in Luke ("poor") could be due to the evangelists' purposes. Certainly Jesus' discussion of the poor in the remnant context of the original sermon would have had both spiritual and economic implications for the disciples. The two evangelists may have simply stressed two different aspects of the same saying.³¹

For this reason, the purpose of separating tradition from redaction is not to determine a "canon within the canon." In fact, the value of tradition criticism is threefold. On the negative side there is the apologetic goal, whereby the destructive use of the tools by the negative critics must be answered and the veracity of the text upheld. Evangelicals should be in the forefront of scholarship; we have answers and must supply them. On the positive side, a delineation of redactional emphases will aid the scholar in determining the special emphases of the evangelists. Favorite expressions and aspects of a story that have been omitted or ex-

²⁸H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings* (tr. E. M. Rowley; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); and B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Uppsala, 1961).

²⁹H. Schürmann, "Die vorösterlichen Anfänge der Logientradition," in *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus* (ed. H. Ristow and K. Matthiae; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961) 342-370; R. Gundry, *The Use of the OT in St. Matthew's Gospel* (SNTSMS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1967).

³⁰D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978) 145. See his excellent discussion of the issues in his appendix (pp. 139-149).

³¹Among the many that could be listed see the discussion in Marshall, *Luke*, 246-247; Carson, *Sermon*, 17-18; and C. Brown, "Poor," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2. 824-825.

panded are pointers to the way a story has been used by the evangelist.³² Finally, there is the use of redactional tools in order to answer synoptic problems. This can be illustrated by using them to solve the difficulties enumerated above.

(1) The usual answer given for the staff/no-staff contrast of Mark 6:8=Matt 10:10 is that the two evangelists sought, each in his own way, to say the same thing: that the disciple must take the bare necessities along. Another and perhaps better solution is to note two traditions, one with respect to the sending of the twelve (take only sandals, so Mark 6:8) and one with respect to the sending of the seventy (take no sandals, so Luke 10:4). Perhaps Matthew conflated the two and stressed the negative side, while Luke may have assimilated the two to avoid a seeming contradiction.³³

(2) The discussion of the difference between the Matthean and Markan forms of the cry of dereliction usually centers upon which was original—the Hebraic or the Aramaic. On the whole the Aramaic is to be preferred, with Matthew's perhaps an assimilation to a Targumic reading on Ps 22:1.³⁴ It is possible that Matthew's paraphrase was intentional to emphasize the liturgical nature of Jesus' cry.³⁵

(3) The issue regarding the question-answer format of Mark 12:9 and parallels has already been answered in part on the basis of harmonization. Yet there is another nuance: Matthew was stressing the guilt of the leaders, while Mark and Luke were emphasizing the authority of Jesus over the situation. This fits the structural development and theological purposes of the respective sections.

(4) The difference between the Markan and Matthean forms of the "flattering" introduction can also be explained along the lines of emphases. Each seeks to accent Jesus' truthfulness and impartiality and therefore paraphrases the original logion in its own distinctive way.

(5) The words of institution at the Eucharist can best be explained along the lines of redactional emphases and harmonization. While many think that the Johannine and Lukan emphases³⁶ are a late assimilation to the Pauline tradition of 1 Cor 11:23 ff., it is just as likely that the influence was the other way around.

³²An example of this would be my "Redactional Trajectories in the Crucifixion Narratives," *EvQ* 51/2 (1979) 80-96. By omitting certain scenes and highlighting others, Mark and Matthew stress the horror of putting to death the Son of God, Luke turns it into a scene of awesome worship, and John demonstrates the sovereign control of the royal Messiah over his destiny.

³³I. H. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (New International Greek Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 349-350, represents the majority of scholars who believe that the two traditions are Markan and Q. This writer, however, believes that the explanation herein better covers the facts.

³⁴Here I am indebted to a discussion with my colleague Douglas J. Moo and to his *The Use of the OT in the Passion Texts of the Gospels* (Ph. D. dissertation presented to the University of St. Andrews, 1979).

³⁵We must note here that the fact of two different versions is incontrovertible. None of the textual variants involve a different reading of the transliterations, and there is no evidence for such. Any theory must face squarely that fact, but this does not necessitate "error." It is the view of this study that the solution presented here best answers the issues and removes the problem.

³⁶On the question of "Western noninterpolation" regarding the inclusion or omission of Luke 22:19b-20 in the original text see Marshall, *Luke*, 799-800; Moo, *Use*, 127-130; and B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Society, 1971) 173-177. All accept the longer text as the original.

There is no reason why the Lukan and Johannine emphasis on the "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31 cannot be set alongside the Markan and Matthean suffering servant from Isaiah 53. In fact, Luke has combined the two. In short, all report the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus.³⁷

To summarize our results thus far, we have attempted to show that redaction study is not a divisive tool that dichotomizes the *logia Jesu* into authentic and inauthentic categories. That only accrues when one accepts the negative presuppositions of the radical critics. It is not only possible but necessary to separate the tools from the a priori of certain scholars, for the one does not depend on the other. In fact, the denotation of the positive value of the tools illustrates its place in the scholar's arsenal of exegetical weaponry. As stated before, this method that we conveniently label a "redactional approach" is not really contradictory to evangelical approaches of the past, as illustrated in the methodology of Stonehouse. It does, however, crystallize what he and others were doing and is a step forward in its methodology, for it adds scientific precision to their attempts to delineate the "single intent" of the individual evangelists.

One final question may be discussed here: Since we use "redaction criticism" in a way different from the radical critics, should we seek a different term? While such would serve to differentiate us from their results, it would be unfair, because we do follow the positive aspects of their approach. For instance, while we eschew the negative historiography inherent to G. Bornkamm, G. Barth and H. J. Held in their *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, the Biblical theology that they discover in Matthew's use of the law or the miracles is quite well done, and the techniques they employ to discover those positive results are for the most part correct. Therefore we cannot properly deny the term "redaction" when seeking to determine an evangelical approach. It remains now to work out an evangelical approach to the hermeneutical methodology in our employment of redactional techniques.

III. REDACTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Due to the values and dangers of redaction criticism for the evangelical as developed above, we must delineate carefully the proper approach to the text using these tools. First of all, redaction critics for the most part have assumed the priority of Mark and have determined their delineation of additions and omissions accordingly. This can no longer be considered a given. Recent challenges to the "sacred" two-document hypothesis³⁸ have established problems that cannot be answered by so simplistic a theory. A much more complex grid must be developed, and one must work more openly with, for instance, differences between Matthew and Mark. While this writer still holds to the basic priority of Mark, the data call for a complex theory of overlapping traditions rather than a simple literary dependence. This must be taken into account when one develops a hermeneu-

³⁷For a good discussion of this see R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971) 110-135.

³⁸See Rist, *Independence*, and X. Leon-Dufour, "Redaktionsgeschichte of Matthew and Literary Criticism," *Perspective* 11 (1970) 9-35, among the massive amount of recent literature on the synoptic problem. E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (SNTSMS 9; Cambridge: University Press, 1969) 276-279, also calls for a renewed examination and movement toward a more complex theory.

tical approach utilizing redactional tools.

Another error to avoid is the assumption that the key is to be found in the difference between tradition and redaction. To say this is to ignore two facts: (1) When an evangelist employs tradition, he does not do so woodenly but with a theological purpose. Therefore theological emphases come through both elements,³⁹ and in many cases tradition and redaction are so interwoven as to be inseparable. (2) As we have argued in all three articles, both redaction and tradition are historical,⁴⁰ and we do not believe that the former is of secondary historical interest and primary theological interest while the latter has the opposite value. This radical dichotomy cannot be maintained. To restate our thesis, we believe that the separation of redactional elements in a positive sense demonstrates the writer's emphases and therefore highlights special theological emphases that can then be identified more precisely in the tradition segments. It is a control, a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

We would note two major sets of criteria for a proper redactional study of a passage: the external (how does the evangelist use his sources?) and the internal (what themes does the writer develop throughout his book?). These are interdependent and must be used together before any conclusions are determined. However, in developing a methodology we must first study them separately.

1. *The External Criteria.* Here one compares the work on the basis of possible sources. This is complicated by the difficulty of identifying these sources, either on the basis of a hypothesis of dependence (see above) or on the basis of vague and subjective linguistic criteria.⁴¹ Therefore we propose a cautious blend of several steps, each to be employed while realizing the dangers and limitations of an overzealous acceptance of their usefulness. Moreover, since we can no longer presuppose Markan priority, we will need to use these on all the gospels.⁴²

(1) Study the "seams" that introduce material and provide transitions to further material. Since the early days of form criticism (especially K. L. Schmidt's *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, 1919) it has been assumed that

³⁹This is one of the major breakthroughs of the structuralist school. For all their faults, they have noted the fact that the whole of a gospel, and not merely its redactional segments, carries its theology.

⁴⁰An excellent example of this would be the recent paper presented at the Tyndale Fellowship Conference on the Gospels (July, 1979) by Don A. Carson, "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?" In it he argues that such previously supposed nonhistorical redactions as the Baptist's cry in John 1:29 ("Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world") or the confession of Jesus' messiahship in 1:46, 49 cannot be dismissed simply because of the presupposition that "they could not have occurred" at that stage. Historical contingency is too broad to discount such automatically.

⁴¹The major debate, of course, centers on the posited "signs source" of John. In favor of the theory are W. Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* (NovTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1972), among others; contrast R. Kysar, "Community and Gospel: Vectors in Fourth Gospel Criticism," *Int* 31 (1977) 355-366, and D. A. Carson, "Current Source Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: Some Methodological Questions," *JBL* 97/3 (1978) 411-429. In the opinion of this writer, the cautions of the latter carry the day.

⁴²Note, for example, William A. Walker's programmatic essay, which refuses to adopt such an hypothesis: "A Method for Identifying Redactional Passages in Matthew on Functional and Linguistic Grounds," *CBQ* 39 (1977) 76-93.

these "seams" are not historical. Therefore conservative scholars have overreacted to this and too easily dismissed the value of studying these in order to arrive at the evangelist's distinct emphases. This evaluation is reversing itself in both areas. For instance, recent work on audience criticism by such as J. A. Baird⁴³ has shown that the audiences that Jesus addressed in these very "seams" are both intimately connected to the tradition and crucial for a proper understanding of the theology. Therefore we can again safely blend tradition and redaction. The evangelists certainly had very characteristic ways of introducing material,⁴⁴ and many of their emphases (e. g., the "travel narrative" of Luke) can be distinguished thereby. These, of course, must be used cautiously, for they are sources only of *potential* redactional emphases. One must look for recurrent patterns or terms (e. g., travel terms in Luke 9:51-19:58) that point to definite emphases. The "seams" also provide clues to the author's characteristic linguistic phenomena. Since they are often heavily structured by the author, they become keys to a primary list of recurring stylistic patterns.

(2) Note the summary statements and fit them into the broader development of the work. In nearly every book such an approach produces rich results. Again we would note both tradition and redaction, but the very individual style of the authors in their use of them is highly illuminating. The summaries of Acts, for instance, nearly always point to the power of the Holy Spirit and the resultant spread of the gospel in spite of opposition (see Acts 2:41-47; 4:31-35; 5:11-16, 42; 6:7; 9:31; etc.).⁴⁵ Again, however, one looks for recurrent terms and ideas. The use of terms for teaching and preaching in the seams and summaries of Mark have led many to revise their views of that gospel. It is not merely the "action gospel" but contains a very real stress on Jesus the proclaimer of the kingdom message.

(3) Trace editorial asides and explanatory glosses. These help the interpreter to determine those aspects of a particular pericope that are accented by the evangelist and often lead to major theological emphases when they start to build on one another. Luke's editorial use of "Lord," for instance, helps one to define more carefully his Christology, and Matthew's "formula quotations" are the key to his fulfillment motif, his hermeneutical use of the OT, and the theological stress he attempts to illuminate in the individual passages. Of course it is not always so easy a task to determine where an editorial explanation occurs. One famous example would be John 3: Where does Jesus' speech end and John's added comment begin? Therefore again one must proceed with caution.

(4) Note alterations (omissions, expansions) between the gospels as potential sources of redactional material. These have long been recognized as the prime

⁴³J. A. Baird, *Audience Criticism and the Historical Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969). See also the discussion in C. F. D. Moule, "The Techniques of NT Research," *Jesus and Man's Hope* (eds. D. G. Miller and D. Y. Hadidian; Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1961), 2, 32, 35.

⁴⁴See, for example, E. Best's discussion of the "Markan seams" in *The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology* (SNTSMS 2; Cambridge: University Press, 1965) 63-102. While he overstates his case, he certainly shows the value of such an approach. For a more cautious approach with respect to Matthew see Walker, "Method," 81-82. For methods of detecting such seams see R. H. Stein, "The 'Redaktionsgeschichtlich' Investigation of a Markan Seam," *ZNW* 61 (1970) 70-94.

⁴⁵Compare Matt 4:23-25; 7:28-29; 9:35; 11:1; 15:30-31, and Mark 1:14-15, 28, 39; 2:13; 3:7-12; 6:53-56; 9:30-32; 10:32-34.

foundation for redactional research, but for the most part the assumption of the two-document hypothesis has restricted its use to Matthew and Luke. We believe it should be applied to all the gospels.⁴⁶ Interestingly, Johannes Schreiber said this in the early years of redaction study with respect to Mark,⁴⁷ but his thesis was doubted on the grounds that the changes in Matthew and Luke reflected their theology more than Mark's. However, when a recurrent pattern emerges (e. g., the humanity of Jesus or the obduracy of the disciples in Mark) it usually points to a definite theological emphasis (in fact, these very points are at the heart of any delineation of Markan theology).

In short, one must seek to determine recurrent patterns and terms in these areas as a guide to the evangelist's redactional stresses. Care must be taken, however, to determine as certainly as possible such emphases. William R. Farmer suggests three criteria for doing so:⁴⁸ (1) The criterion of "similarity"—the extent to which a word, phrase or grammatical idiom recurs throughout the gospel is the first key; the more frequently it occurs (and the more words in the phrase), the more likely it is to be a characteristic of the author. (2) The criterion of "distribution"—the more widely the phrase or syntactical phenomenon is distributed throughout the gospel, the more likelihood one attaches to it as being original to the author; if it is found in many different sections and types of genre, that likelihood increases all the more. (3) The criterion of "interlacing"—when several of the linguistic characteristics occur within the same context (especially in those segments noted above), the probability of redaction increases.

Walker, however, believes that Farmer's criteria cannot guarantee success, because they only identify favored phrases and cannot prove redactional activity. If the evangelist has simply "employed one or more sources, each with its own redactional characteristics, which he distributed widely throughout his gospel" (e. g., Mark or the signs source of John), then these characteristics will not produce certain results.⁴⁹ We believe that this criticism is based on Farmer's application of the criteria generally throughout the gospel. When one looks first at those editorial segments noted above, however, this problem is obviated and the results become more certain. With Walker we will call this "the criterion of function" and make it a fourth criterion, defining it as follows: "Where it can be shown that a passage which has been identified as redactional somehow provides a key to the literary structure of the gospel as a whole, then it can be assumed that this passage, at least in its present form, is potentially" due to the redactional activity of the evangelist.⁵⁰ This provides a bridge to the next section.

⁴⁶For the possibility that John used Mark and perhaps Luke see C. K. Barrett, "John and the Synoptic Gospels," *EvT* 85 (1973-74) 228-233, among others. This writer is inclined to agree, realizing that this is against the trend today.

⁴⁷J. Schreiber, "Die Christologie des Markusevangeliums," *ZTK* 58 (1961) 154-183. He said that it was due to their rejection of Mark's emphasis here.

⁴⁸W. R. Farmer, "A Proposed Methodology for Redaction Criticism of the Gospels," unpublished paper (1974). See also the discussion of his points in Walker, "Method," 89.

⁴⁹Walker, "Method," 89-90.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 91. We do not accept Walker's distinction between evangelist and redactor or between stages of redaction. Such is speculative and, as we have argued above, unnecessary to a positive historiography.

2. *The Internal Criteria.* This reverses the methods of tradition criticism: Instead of removing the additions to identify the original deposit of the tradition, they study the additions to gain the theological emphases of the evangelist. Here again, however, we would note that the purpose is to control the results, not to assert a difference between tradition and redaction either in terms of authenticity or in terms of theological work. Rather, the denotation of redaction provides the most certain results for the student and helps one to avoid that error of subjectivity that has so plagued redaction critics—i. e., that the results seem to fit their own theological distinctives more than the Biblical^a writer's perspective.⁵¹

Of course, all agree today that presuppositionless exegesis is impossible; the "preunderstanding" of the interpreter cannot be ignored; and since purely objective or neutral exegesis is impossible there can be no "final" results. Different perspectives in asking questions of the text are bound to produce different answers. From our vantage point we ask not whether we must employ presuppositions but rather how we may work with our a prioris and "ask which kinds of preunderstanding are valid and which are not."⁵² Above all, one must allow the text to dominate, challenge and determine one's presuppositions. While presuppositions are external to the text and are utilized as hermeneutical keys in interpreting the text, the scholar must continually examine them and refine them as the text demands. The safeguards mentioned above are intended to aid the interpreter to control his a prioris as they force him again and again to the text. The text must have priority over the interpreter, and the latter must make a conscious effort to allow the text to speak for itself. For instance, we freely admit that our high view of historicity is a given. As we indicated above, however, it has been the result of painstaking research and is open to constant revision as the text demands. In fact, this very article is an attempt to do just that.

When this is done—i. e., the external search for the evangelist's characteristic expressions and the consequent conclusion—they are examined in light of their contribution to the structure as a whole and applied to the tradition passages as well as the redactional passages. Only the whole of a work can produce lasting results, and theology should not be adduced until the entire structure has been examined. However, certain peculiarities should be studied in the parts before they are applied to the whole.

(1) The genre of the various sections must be taken into account. The placement of a characteristic expression into a miracle, a parable, a didactic section or an encounter narrative will give it different nuances of meaning, and one must determine the thrust of the individual elements before generalizing with regard to the whole. This factor has been too often neglected in redactional studies and is one reason why subjectivity has entered into the interpretations.

(2) One should consider what John R. Donahue calls "logical tensions and

⁵¹See M. D. Hooker, "In His Own Image?", in *What about the NT?* (eds. M. Hooker and C. Hickling; London: SCM, 1975) 28-44.

⁵²G. N. Stanton, "Presuppositions in NT Criticism," in *NT Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (ed. I. H. Marshall; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 67.

thematic incongruities"⁵³ in the narrative. As the structure of a narrative unfolds, one can often detect a deliberate tension that has been introduced into the context. For instance, the incongruity between the obtuseness of the disciples and the coming to faith of the father in the healing of the demoniac boy (Mark 9:14-29) has led some to posit two versions of the same miracle, one stressing the inability of the disciples to heal (vv 14-19, 28-29) and the other the tension of "unbelieving faith" (vv 20-27).⁵⁴ We would argue that such is unnecessary and that the purpose is to highlight the nonunderstanding of the disciples by showing its solution (especially the father's marvelous statement, "I believe, help my unbelief"). This is especially true when one sees the same method employed elsewhere (e. g., 7:18 versus 7:28-29; 10:35-36 versus 10:52).

(3) The arrangement of the material by the evangelist is probably the most important single clue to his theological core. This, of course, is an extremely complex issue and worthy of several dissertations, but some points may be made here. For instance, the use of Johannine drama in the interest of soteriology is a key to determining his major theological stress. My study elsewhere of the structures of the individual crucifixion narratives (see n. 32) showed the centrality of this aspect for their individual emphases regarding that event. The evangelists often had favored structural means of stressing their points. One of the most famous is Mark's use of insertion—i. e., placing one story within another in order to interpret the one by the other (3:2-35; 5:21-43; 6:7-44; 11:12-25; 14:1-11).⁵⁵ One example will suffice: Via his insertion of the cleansing of the temple (11:15-19) into the cursing of the fig tree (11:12-14, 20-25)⁵⁶ Mark notes an element of judgment in the cleansing of the temple. Therefore any delineation of major theological emphases in a gospel will have to take cognizance of the developing structure and arrangement of the whole before coming to any final conclusions.⁵⁷

(4) One must differentiate between themes and emphases that are carried through to the end and those that dominate only a section. Many redactional approaches are guilty of elevating a minor emphasis to a major motif. Examples

⁵³J. R. Donahue, "Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative," in *The Passion in Mark: Studies in Mark 14-16* (ed. W. H. Kelber; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). Here he follows Eta Linnemann's *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* (1970). While both Linnemann and Donahue use the criterion in a tradition-critical sense (i. e., to determine the pre-Markan elements) I would use it in a redaction-critical sense (i. e., to determine Markan emphases), for which it has greater value. The former is too subjective, for it is extremely difficult to know whether the incongruity is intentional or unintentional.

⁵⁴See V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1953) 396. But see the criticisms of C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge Greek Testament series; Cambridge: University Press, 1963) 299.

⁵⁵See Stein, "Investigation," 193-194; P. J. Achtemeier, "Mark as Interpreter of the Jesus Traditions," *Int* 32/4 (1978) 342-344.

⁵⁶This order is not followed by Matthew, and Luke omits the incident of the fig tree.

⁵⁷Good examples of this would be E. Schweizer, "Anmerkungen zur Theologie des Markus," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica* (ed. W. C. van Unnik; Leiden: Brill, 1962); J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). While not everyone will agree with their conclusions, their methodology is certainly a step in the right direction.

of this would be Mark's stress on the cosmic conflict with evil forces⁵⁸ and John's accent on the "glory" motif.⁵⁹ Both are found mainly in the first half of their respective gospels and should be considered subsidiary rather than major theological tendencies. A major *Tendenz* must be traced throughout a work, such as Mark's misunderstanding theme, Matthew's stress on the kingdom, Luke's salvation-history, or John's emphasis on faith-encounter.

(5) Finally, one must combine the two sets of criteria. The linguistic emphases must be studied for their distribution across the thematic boundaries and then applied to a proper narrowing of the interpretation of the whole. Thus may the interpreter control his subjective impulses as he continually interprets the internal development in light of the externally derived characteristics and broadens the latter on the basis of the former.⁶⁰ The interdependence and interlaced structure of the two are crucial to a proper use of redaction techniques. As they combine, the interpreter's attention is continually focused on the text rather than his own predilections.

IV. CONCLUSION

This article, it is hoped, has accomplished a manifold set of goals: (1) to demonstrate for the skeptical evangelical (and it is right to be skeptical, for one must never naively accept any "new thing" that comes along *à la* the Athenians, Acts 17:21) that the methods of higher criticism can be separated from the negative presuppositions of the radical critics; (2) to note the values and dangers of both tradition- and (especially) redaction-critical techniques for the evangelical; and (3) to develop a methodology that will maximize the values and minimize the dangers for a high view of inerrancy.

Of course, I am well aware of the main criticism that this article (as did the previous ones) will engender: that I am trying to "have my cake and eat it too" and am in the process of obfuscating the Word of God and especially the *logia Jesu* from the authority and power that they demand for themselves. I can only plead that two considerations, in my opinion, negate this observation: (1) The synoptic differences themselves demand such an interpretation as we seek the hermeneutic that they themselves employed in recording the sayings of Jesus.⁶¹ (2) The techniques put forward in this essay result from (and themselves demand) a high view with regard to the historicity of both the redaction and the

⁵⁸An overemphasis on this can be seen in the eschatological emphasis of J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1957).

⁵⁹An overemphasis on this can be seen in Nicol *et al.* (see n. 41), who have elevated the "signs" theology and therefore the "glory" motif, which is restricted to chaps. 1-12, to a place out of proportion to John's use of them.

⁶⁰This is actually quite similar to the activity of the Biblical theologian in the broader perspective of the Testaments and the Bible as a whole. For what is probably the best discussion of methodology known to this writer, one should consult my colleague Walter Kaiser's discussion of methodology in his *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) 1-70, and then compare that to the criteria here seen in the narrower perspective of a single book.

⁶¹See the discussion in my first article (n. 1) on my attempt at a "Biblical understanding"—i. e., the understanding of the Biblical writers themselves—of inerrancy.

tradition. As stated in all three articles, the evidence points to the presence of selection and coloring but not to the creation of sayings or even of details. The evangelists throughout show nothing but the highest regard for Jesus' actual meaning. They applied and highlighted but never twisted or created new meaning. This is the proper delineation of the *Sitz im Leben*: It is discovered in their application of the *logia Jesu* but never demanded the creation of new *logia*.

Perhaps I may be forgiven a personal note in concluding this study. My main purpose is not negative (to defend my views) but positive (to show the evangelical world how valuable these tools can be for an understanding of the gospels and for preaching the Biblical text). In recent years I have done a good amount of preaching from the gospels, employing the techniques enumerated above in my study. In every case I have found this approach not merely illuminating, but a powerful and authoritative tool for elucidating the "single intent" of the Biblical text. In every case I have found that the congregation was touched by the hand of God, not in spite of but because of this approach. The gospels are biographical, but more than biographies: They are encounter proclamations meant to pierce the listener to the quick with the truths of God's new kingdom in Jesus, Messiah and Son of God.