The Purpose of Mark's Gospel
Author(s): Benjamin W. Bacon
Source: *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1910), pp. 41-60
Published by: The Society of Biblical Literature
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3260133
Accessed: 12/03/2010 15:08

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=sbl.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Society of Biblical Literature is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Biblical Literature.*

http://www.jstor.org

The Purpose of Mark's Gospel

BENJAMIN W. BACON

YALE UNIVERSITY

THE following extract from a letter recently received from Prof. G. McL. Harper of Princeton, regarding what he calls my "suggestive though difficult book" *The Beginnings of Gospel Story*, will explain the subject I bring before you.

"My purpose in writing," says Professor Harper, "is to suggest that you compose an essay which shall succinctly state the theory (which I understand to be that this Gospel was constructed primarily, or at least secondarily, to authorize and illustrate the points of Pauline theology and early Christian liturgical practice) and then shall support it with those passages in your Commentary that seem most apt."

"The theory" here referred to is that which in the book — familiar, I hope, to some of you — is called the theory, or better, method, of "pragmatic values," because it starts from the principle that the beginnings of gospel story were not biographies or books, but anecdotes, and were rehearsed not in the abstract endeavor to make up history, but for the concrete and particular occasion, the narrator having in mind that special practice or belief of his own church which at the time was in immediate need of explanation or defense. The inference from such a postulate must be, of course, that we must seek first the practice and belief of the church, resorting to the oldest and best authenticated literature for it. We must take the greater Pauline Epistles and make as it were a cross-section of primitive Christian faith and practice from what we here see before us (as, *e.g.*, in the Corinthian correspondence), and apply this standard to the later formu-

lated narrative literature. Our method must correspond to that of the Old Testament critics who have learned from Graf, Kuenen, and Wellhausen to read the undated, traditional narrative in the light of the dated documents of the prophetic writers.

My reply to my correspondent's reasonable request was an expression of my intention to meet it on this occasion. I do not of course adopt Professor Harper's wording as expressing my own views with exactitude; but if I had not had some such general theory in mind as he describes I would not have chosen the title "Beginnings of Gospel Story." There is significance in requests of this sort and in other indications such as the announcement of the *Harvard Theological Review* in its columns for 1910 of an article by Professor Moulton of Bangor on "Current Theories of the Gospel of Mark," and the chapter of similar title in Prof. F. C. Burkitt's little book on *The Sources of Gospel Story*. It means that the public perceives that views have been propounded radically affecting the nature and history of the entire evangelic tradition, while at the same time it is unable to make out very clearly their precise character or object. Such a situation, it seems to me, is precisely such as calls for the discussions of this Society. The data are not dumped before us in an indigestible mass. The material is before you. My colleagues have "seen it in print" both in our JOURNAL and more consecutively and succinctly in the book, which has been out since last February. They are probably willing to concede at least the measure of reportorial appreciation to the theory of "pragmatic values" that it is "important if true"; but there has been less debate than the author could have wished, and to adopt a felicitous quotation from my distinguished predecessor in the chair of New Testament criticism and exegesis at New Haven, President Dwight, "without *controversy* great is the mystery of godliness."

Prof. Allan Menzies in his book, *The Oldest Gospel*, has applied the term "ætiological" to a somewhat similar theory of evangelic tradition. The objection is that the

term "ætiological" has long been associated with myth; whereas we are not here dealing with mythology. Nevertheless *ætiology* — the effort retrospectively to account for and justify existing practices and beliefs — not historical interest in its scientific form, has the same motive which my inquiry leads me to posit as the *fons et origo* of evangelic tradition. Perhaps I came naturally to this theory through having begun my studies in the higher criticism with investigation of the narrative books of the Old Testament, where the ancient story so frequently concludes with a "therefore": "Therefore doth a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife"; "Therefore was the name of the place called Beersheba," "Bethel" or what not; "Therefore do the children of Israel abstain from the sinew that shrank," etc., etc. Impute predisposition to whatever cause you will, the principle is well established that history does not begin as history. Primitive peoples do not sit down and say, "Go to, now, we need a record of the past. Let us compose a history of all things from the beginning." Consecutive narratives represent a relatively late stage in the process. In their earlier forms they usually exhibit very clearly their mode of composition as the stringing together of individual anecdotes, the motive of whose narration was quite other than the purely historical. In the case of nature myths, physical phenomena afford the exciting causes, movements of the heavenly bodies, change of seasons, withering and reappearance of vegetable life, periodic inundation, curiosities of geologic formation, pillars of salt, split rocks with streams gushing from the cañon, evidences of volcanic action. The mythopœic imagination responds to the innate instinct of curiosity in the face of such phenomena, and creation stories, flood stories, sun myths, shrine stories, and the like, result. In the case of legend the starting point is some historical event, a migration, a battle, a deliverance; or the relations, amicable or otherwise, of tribes, families, and nations, and their boundaries. Myth and legend is the primitive form of physical and political geography and history. In legend we have a great advance upon mere myth. Roughly we may say, the

book of Genesis is in substance *mythical*, the narrative from the exodus onward is *legendary*. Legend, I have said, commemorates great historical events. But even here the motive is not primarily historical. National or tribal *amour propre* glorifies the great achievements of the past, ancestor-worship and hero-worship contribute their part. The songs of a people come first, their Homers, Pindars, Tyrtæuses, their Deborahs and Davids, because what men want of the bard and minstrel and story-teller at the camp-fire and in the city gate is not primarily a scientific record, but the kindling of the martial spirit, or of the sense of social right, by great examples of the past. The historian comes along afterward to gather up the fragments, to turn the poetry to prose, transform the myth and song and legend of the people into the formal chronicles of the scribe.

The narrative material of the New Testament has practically nothing of myth. Even in the sphere of legend there was comparatively small opportunity for fanciful elaboration. But this at least it has in common with Old Testament story, that it is made up of individual anecdotes, more or less popular in character, very loosely strung together, and not originally meant to form part of a continuous history. Internal evidence and external tradition are at one on this point, that no one thought at first of writing the story of Jesus' career. Peter is the one figure to whom tradition and internal evidence alike point back as the source of practically all of a narrative character that is related about Jesus. And Peter, tradition declares, simply went about "adapting his teachings to individual requirements (πρὸς τὰς χρείας), and had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's sayings," or, as some Mss. read, "of the dominical oracles." The early Church accounted for its complete loss of the chronological thread on which to string these pearls of evangelic anecdote by the statement that apostolic testimony at the time of writing had ceased to be available. Peter was dead, when Mark, unable to supply the lack from his own experience, had put together such anecdotes as he remembered, "not, however, in order." The fact that even Luke, who aspires to the title and credit

of a real historian and chronographer, though with not quite the success Sir William Ramsay imputes to him, can make so slight improvement upon Mark, adding scarcely anything of historical value to the story, never once coinciding with Matthew in his departures from its order, and only increasing the confusion where he attempts to mend it, is decisive proof, if proof were any longer needed, that Mark's confessedly imperfect "order" had already become the only available one. There is no more extraordinary fact in the whole domain of gospel criticism than this complete dominance of the Marcan outline. Every subsequent Gospel, canonical or uncanonical, has this for its vertebral column, and outside of it there is practically nothing. It must have had the field to itself for a considerable length of time in order thus to eclipse all rivals.

We stand then at the transition point between anecdote and history with the Gospel of Mark. The "Beginnings of Gospel Story" lie in and before it. After it you have only modifications and combinations of the type. Both Matthew and Luke combine it with the other great element of evangelic material, the Precepts or Sayings of Jesus. Matthew has principally in view the teaching of men everywhere to "observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded," and thus in the first half of his Gospel he subordinates the Marcan order to the exigencies of his desire to present the teaching in the most effective way. In the second half he follows Mark's order without variation. In neither half has he anything to add to Marcan *story* of any historical value whatever. Luke's few attempts to improve upon the "order" of his predecessor, and his meager additions to the story we have already characterized. This Gospel, too, was in the main, like Matthew, a mere combination from about the same period of the same two great factors of evangelic tradition, the Matthæan Precepts and the Petrine Anecdotes. Only in Luke it is the historical interest which preponderates instead of the didactic as in Matthew. The third stage is that of the philosophy of history, when the fourth evangelist combines the first factor with both forms of the second, to justify and expound his own theology of the incarnation.

The nearest approach to a historical motive among all our evangelists is that of Luke. Luke actually undertakes to relate the story of Christianity "from the very first" (ἄνωθεν) and "in order" (καθεξῆς). His Greek sense of the value of an orderly recital of the facts which had led up to Christianity as it existed in his own time makes him carry back the pedigree of Jesus to "Adam, which was the son of God." But Luke's own dedication is indicative of another motive even here than the purely historical. His Mæcenas is to be confirmed in the faith. He writes "in order" that Theophilus may "have certain knowledge of the things wherein he had been catechized." The words do not indeed bear the sense of a definite announcement of apologetic purpose; yet in view of the intrinsic phenomena of his work Luke is not undeserving of the title which has been bestowed upon him of "the first of the apologists."

Our first and fourth evangelists have each their statement of purpose, like Luke; though not in the conventional form of a preface. "John" writes his selection of words and deeds of the incarnate Logos that the reader "by believing may have life through his name." Saving faith is his object. "Matthew" merely uses the Marcan story of the wonderful life as a framework to commend authoritatively the precepts that men everywhere may learn obedience to them.

Mark, the earliest evangelist, alone remains utterly silent regarding his purpose. We must draw our inferences from the structure of the work itself. As we have seen, that structure was acknowledged from the beginning to be non-historical; and yet it obtained complete and undisputed control; even over an evangelist who deliberately set himself to the task of rewriting the story from the historian's point of view, with definite chronology and method. What is the nature of Mark's "order," for which the earliest tradition feels it necessary to make so much apology, and which Luke makes his dubious attempt to improve?

Mark's "order," with all its anachronisms and prolepses, contains, from the modern critic's point of view, so much more of real historical development than any of his fellow-

evangelists, that attempts have even been made to dispute the sense of the early tradition, or else its applicability to our Mark. Some more primitive form of the story, it has been said, must have been the object of this criticism. But it is insupposable that any other Mark than ours could have been meant by Papias, writing as late as 145–160 A.D. Even if we suppose "the Elder" whom he quotes to have had one work in mind and Papias another, still, in view of the coincident employments by Matthew and Luke, it becomes impossible to assign to this Ur-marcus any materially different content, especially any different "order," from the present. As I have shown in a previous issue of the JOURNAL,[1] even the omissions of Luke, considerable as they are, yield more readily to a different explanation than to the theory of his use of a briefer edition of Mark. The objector, then, must explain why "the Elder's" words, "not however in order," are not to be taken in the most natural, *i.e.* the chronological, sense. In point of fact all attempts at any other interpretation break down before the context. The *reason* given for Mark's imperfect order is that he himself had not been an eyewitness, while Peter, from whom he might have obtained the facts, did not aim in his discourses at consecutive narrative, but spoke πρὸς τὰς χρείας (as occasion demanded), and Mark, not having undertaken his work till after Peter's death, had no means of rectifying the disorder. The adducing of Mark's non-participation in the events as the reason for his lack of order, shows that it is historical, and not any other kind of order, which is really meant.

It is true that the tradition of "the Elder" as Papias gives it bears every mark of apologetic tendency. It aims to meet the taunts of opponents who point to the discrepancies between the *two* Gospels current in the churches whence the tradition emanates. These are the Gospel of Matthew either in its present, or some earlier form, and the Gospel of Mark. No others come into consideration. The primitive apologist points to Matthew as the apostolic standard (though even this writing he admits to have passed through certain

[1] Vol. xxvi. Part 2. "The Treatment of Mk. 6 14–8 26 in Luke."

changes). He explains Mark's variation "in order" in such a way as to exonerate Peter from all responsibility for it, at the same time that he insists that Mark "made no error while he thus set down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his object not to omit anything that he had heard and not to set down any false statement." It is the *changed* Matthew which occasions the apology. The church represented by "the Elder" had been using *in former times* an Aramaic Gospel composed of the Sayings of the Lord compiled by the Apostle Matthew. The language employed by this source should be enough of itself to prove what I have repeatedly shown on other grounds, that "the Elder's" home was not Asia, as is so constantly assumed, but certainly Syria, if not Jerusalem itself. At all events "the Elder's" community had of late adopted "translations" of its "Hebrew" (Aramaic) Matthew, along with the Roman Gospel of Mark. The consequence was that they now found themselves in the predicament of being obliged to explain discrepancies of "order." Any one who has ever compared the first fourteen chapters of our first Gospel with the corresponding portion of our second does not need to be told why. So long as the Greek "Matthew" retained — as we know it did — the apostolic name and authority of its Aramaic predecessor, the blame for the discrepancy would fall, however unjustly, on the shoulders of Mark. For was it not notorious that Mark "was not himself a follower of the Lord, but afterwards, as I said, of Peter?"

It is quite true that the order of Mark in these chapters is far less artificial than that which through the authority of an apostolic name had in Papias' time already won preference over it even in Palestine, the home of evangelic tradition. Clearly "the Elders" were no better off as regards knowledge of the facts than the man whose work they supported, our first evangelist. Still the tradition has value. Negatively it only signifies that the discrepancy of order between Mt. 3–13 and Mk. 1–7 had been observed, and that apologists were thrown back upon tradition to account for it. Positively the result is instructive; for the apologist,

thus challenged, *does* give a true account of the order of Mark, one which could have no other origin than real knowledge of the methods of apostolic preaching, and which is strongly corroborated by the internal evidence. The story — and criticism has proved to us that there was substantially but one story, the same whose earliest, best embodiment is Mark's — *did* grow up just as the Elder declares. It *was* put together out of unconnected anecdotes. The grouping of these as we have them in Mark's literary work *is not* controlled by adequate knowledge of events. It *is* of a highly artificial, a rhetorical, a dramatic character. It *is* an artistic order; but the governing principle is not the historical nexus of cause and effect, antecedent and consequent. For this there was neither means nor motive. The governing principle of the construction was the practical exigency of church conditions; chronological sequence was a secondary consideration, admitted to the extent that the general narrative form made indispensable, and little, if any, beyond. This principle, supported as I maintain both by the proper sense of the ancient tradition, and by the internal evidence, is what I mean by the theory of "pragmatic values." Having shown, I trust, with sufficient clearness that it has good ground in the external evidence of ancient testimony, let us turn to the internal evidence and see to what extent it is borne out by the literary structure of the composition.

In my *Beginnings of Gospel Story* I have taken exceptional pains to bring out the structural divisions and subdivisions of Mark, largely with this special purpose in view. In almost every case there is complete agreement among all interpreters. All coincide in the view that we have two nearly equal parts, a Galilæan and a Judæan ministry, the former closing with the Collision with the Scribes in Capernaum and Exile from Galilee (Mk.7 1–8 26), the latter with the Crucifixion, and doubtless (in the primitive unmutilated form) the Resurrection and Dissemination of the Gospel. The Galilæan ministry is almost universally recognized to fall into three Divisions of 2½ to 3 chapters each, and the Judæan has a similar threefold Division covering respectively the Journey

to Jerusalem, the public Activity of Jesus in the Temple, and the Passover of the Redemption.

Some one might say that the very nature of the case made it inevitable that the two great foci of the narrative should be the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, since Jesus' career necessarily began with the former and ended with the latter, and that therefore it would be merely fanciful to consider that these two fundamental rites of the Church had anything to do with the main grouping of material. I am quite prepared to admit that this main grouping may be dictated purely and solely by the historical fact that Jesus' public career was naturally thus divided, the Exile from Galilee compelling him to confront the probability of martyrdom as the outcome of an attempt to win Judæa. It will hardly do, however, in face of the later attempts to carry back the beginnings of the story beyond the limits of Mark, to say that the story of Jesus' career had necessarily to begin with the baptism; and it is quite impossible to account for the evangelist's system of datings at the end of his Gospel, without a recognition of the observances which in the early Church marked the completion of the ecclesiastical year. It is not a question merely of the well-known framing of the story of the ministry within the limits of a single year, but of a narration of its closing events in such manner that the very days of the great annual observance, and at last even the successive watches of the Passover vigil, of the day of the Crucifixion, and of the Easter dawn, are each marked by their appropriate event. On the "Preparation" of the Passover Jesus directs the arrangements for the Supper, and institutes the rite. The night — "a night of vigil unto the Lord" in that Mosaic ritual which passed over into Christian practice in the form of a night of vigil at the Easter celebration — is devoted to the story of Gethsemane, and the fruitless struggle of the three disciples to obey the exhortation of Jesus to "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," and to emulate his example. Cock-crowing, dawn, the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and sunset, of the great day of fasting are marked each by

its separate event. Only the Sabbath remains a *dies non;* while the Resurrection is set "long before dawn on the first day of the week." The beginning and ending of the story, corresponding as they do, the former with the initiatory rite of the Church, the latter with its annual "Passover of the Lord," are significant of the practical purpose of its construction. The more closely we study the ancient ritual the more apparent becomes this practical adaptation.

The very divergence of the Fourth Gospel on this matter of the date of the Crucifixion is full of significance. The Asian gospel is Quartodeciman, as we ought to expect, and dates not by days of the week, but of the month, making the sacrifice of "Christ our Passover" take place on the 14th Nisan (not 15th as in Mark) at the hour prescribed by the Mosaic ritual. The Anointing in Bethany is dated not "two days" before the Passover, but "six days," in order that it may coincide with the choosing of the lamb on the tenth Nisan. The Resurrection and Ascension fall on the Day of First-fruits, the 16th Nisan, when Christ "became the first-fruits of them that slept."

We have not the original ending of Mark, but the later Gospels are full of reminiscences of the breaking of fast, which formed part of the ritual of Easter. How Jesus is recognized "in the breaking of the bread" is a feature dwelt upon in several forms in the Lucan narrative. In the Appendix to John it takes still another. In *Ev. Petri* the "fasting and mourning" of the disciples is described, though our fragment breaks off before we are told how the resurrection message put an end to it. Finally the *Ev. Hebr.* repeats what we may well regard as the very ritual of Syria for the Easter breaking of fast. The resurrection message comes to James, head of the Jerusalem church. "Now James had made a vow that he would eat no bread from that hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord, until he should see him risen from the dead." After this description of the situation it adds: "And the Lord said, Bring a table and bread. And he took the bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to James the Just, and said to him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead."

If the rites and observances of the Church in connection with its "true Passover of the Lord" are here distinctly marked, not merely by datings, but by the form and phraseology of the language; if we can here see distinctly reflected the ancient observance of Holy Week and Easter, and the still more ancient observance of the 14th Nisan as the anniversary of Christ's victory over the gates of Sheol, the Choosing of the Lamb, the Preparation, the Supper, the Vigil, the Periods of the Cross, the Resurrection celebration, the Breaking of fast at dawn of Easter morning, it is no more than we ought to anticipate from the fact that so early as *ca.* 50 A.D. we find Paul's regulation of Corinthian observance of the Supper beginning with a reference to the story: "I delivered unto you that which I also received (by transmission) from the Lord, how that our Lord Jesus, that same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and blessed and brake it and gave to his disciples."

But this pragmatic use of the history is not confined to institutions of church ritual, nor to the closing act of the drama. *All* that is related is related for a kindred purpose. *Something* in the faith of the Church, if not in its practice, called in every instance for justification by the recital of dominical or apostolic precedent; otherwise the anecdote would not have been preserved; for the notion of framing a history of the ministry as a whole is a later product. Only separate sayings and anecdotes were the primitive currency. Our theory of "pragmatic values" will find much to corroborate it in the individual sayings and anecdotes, and reciprocally will throw light upon the meaning of these. In my commentary I have tried to make this particularly distinct in the case of the Feeding of the Multitude, an incident whose "pragmatic value" consists primarily in its authentication and explanation of the primitive church rite of the Love Feast, or, as it is called in Acts, the Breaking of Bread, the *καθημερινή*, or daily evening common banquet of the brotherhood, but which is extended (in consequence of the early association in church ritual of the Eucharist after the banquet) to include themes appropriate to Jesus' victory

over death and the dissemination of the gospel through the restored faith of the apostles.

In Acts 6 1 ff. we have the historian's theory of the origin of the diaconate. He thinks "the seven" were appointed over the "serving of tables" to relieve the twelve apostles of the task of distributing the remainder of food to the poor. In the two anecdotes of Mark, one distinguished by *twelve* basket loads of provision which remain over, the other by *seven*, we have an attempt (or rather a pair of attempts) to relate the origin of the rite itself. The variants "twelve" and "seven" are probably suggested by the numbers of the apostles and "evangelists" respectively. They correspond to Luke's device of the "twelve" and "seventy" as recipients of the two forms of the Charge to the Disciples. In both versions of the Story of the Breaking of Bread the points emphasized are: (1) The evening hour after the close of the teaching. (2) The duty of hospitality imposed by Jesus on the disciples ("Give ye them to eat"), and the bringing of the gifts of food to him. (3) The orderly ranking of the multitude in eating companies (*συμπόσια συμπόσια*), a point of great practical importance to avoid the abuses complained of at Corinth. (4) The procedure of Jesus in presiding, "He took the loaves, looked up to heaven and gave the *εὐχαριστία*, broke them, and gave them to his disciples." (5) The procedure of the disciples. They distributed to the multitude, and afterward, at the command of Jesus, gathered up into "hampers" (or "baskets") the remainder of food. It is not the miracle which is primary here; for the story does not stand in the group of faith-wonders which culminate with the raising of Jairus' daughter. Indeed, it is only by the evangelist's statistics of number (5000 or 4000 fed) that the reader is led to the inference that there was a miracle. Every point dwelt upon has practical value for the conduct of the people, the deacons, and the presiding officer in the primitive church institution of the Agapé. If there are other values they are subordinate and indirect, pertaining to the evangelist's composition rather than the original point of the anecdote. Under the theory

of "pragmatic values" early church practice and gospel anecdote reciprocally illuminate one another.

Matthew's peculiar addition to the story of the Walking on the Sea, which concludes the Agapé narrative, is specially significant of its pragmatic value. We can hardly account for the relation between this account of Peter's attempt to follow Jesus' example and the story of Gethsemane, Peter's offer, denial, and "turning again," and the restoration of the disciples' faith by the Resurrection, without recognizing that application to the symbolism of the Eucharist has played a part in the growth of the tradition.

Finally, each of Mark's two versions of the Feeding (6 30-53 = 8 1-10) is followed by a group of sayings and anecdotes (6 54–7 30 = 8 11-26), whose application is to the dissemination of the gospel regardless of the distinctions of Mosaism which in apostolic times had interposed the historic barriers. Jesus set aside the distinctions of meats and promised "the children's bread" to the Gentiles (6 54–7 30). He himself extended his ministry to heathen territory, and unstopping deaf ears and opening blind eyes rebuked the narrow vision of his disciples (7 31[2]–8 26).

This analysis of the third and closing Division of Mark's story of the Ministry in Galilee is simply one out of many illustrations that might be given of the application of the theory of pragmatic values. The story of the vigil in Gethsemane would be more specific; we might add the story of the Healing of the Blind Man, of the Dumb Man, and of the Epileptic Boy.

But application in detail is not practicable within our present limits. That which now concerns us, and will form the conclusion of my present attempt to explain and vindicate the theory, is its application to the general structure of the Markan outline. For this outline is by no means rude or fortuitous, but framed with care and contrivance. In fact, we should find it difficult to explain the complete dominance of the Markan outline over all subsequent efforts to achieve

[2] The true place of 7 31-37 is side by side with 8 22-26, as the parallels show. It has been prefixed to 8 1-10 for the sake of symmetry.

a more logical or more historical order, if it had not fully satisfied contemporary feeling on this score.

In my commentary I have tried to make it clear that the first half of Mark, the story of the Galilæan Ministry, falls into three very unmistakable Divisions. This is no novel device of my own creation. Every modern commentary that I know of, no matter what its author's school of thought, recognizes just the same. The points of division are after 3 6 and 6 13. All that precedes the anecdote in 3 1-6 of the culmination of opposition to Jesus in the conspiracy of the Pharisees and Herodians to destroy him, is concerned with his own development of his ministry, after he had been anointed with the Spirit in the Baptism of John. Even a threefold subdivision of this Division is forced upon us. No interpreter can possibly escape it. The first thirteen verses relate Jesus' Baptism and Calling. We are not told of any source for the narrator's knowledge of Jesus' spiritual experience, but the whole description embodies in concrete form the typical experience of the convert as we know it from Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Its inward essence is the testimony of the Spirit of Adoption with our spirit that we are born of God. This is the aspect of baptism emphasized by Paul. Its outward manifestation, the aspect emphasized in Acts, is in the "gifts of the Spirit," which fall into two classes, a "word of wisdom," distinguished by the superhuman authority of the speaker, whose utterance is of "the Spirit," "prophecy," "tongues," "gnosis," "revelation"; and a "word of power," *i.e.* a service of deed, "miracles," "helps," "healings," and the like. The description of Jesus' Baptism and Adoption by the Spirit in Mk. 1 1-13 is modelled on this experience. He on whom "the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost was poured out" at his baptism becomes the type for the believer who in baptism is made a son, and endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. The description is followed by two sections describing the beginning of Jesus' ministry "in the power of the Spirit." In 1 14-39 the Call of the Four and the Sabbath in Capernaum exemplify the authority of Jesus' word, both "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," and show the

reader "the beginning of the Gospel" as the direct outcome of the Coming of the Spirit of Sonship upon him.

Between this second subdivision, and the third, commonly designated "the Growth of Opposition," the story of the Leper is very loosely interjected without chronological relation, and apparently for no other purpose than to exemplify the growth of Jesus' fame. It forms a transition link to the series of five anecdotes leading up to the conspiracy of the Pharisees and Herodians already referred to. I should prefer to call this subdivision: The Authority of the Spirit in Conflict with Judaism. Like the preceding subdivision it is still dominated by the thought of the Baptism of Adoption. From this adoption Jesus derives his authority as Son of man to forgive sins, to call sinners, to institute new rites, and to disregard the fasts and sabbaths of Judaism.

The elements of these two subdivisions are some of the most certainly historical of all evangelic tradition; but the purpose and point of view of the narrator can be best understood if we realize the necessity he was under of vindicating and illustrating the significance first of Christian baptism, then of the freedom of the religion of the Spirit from the religious practices of Judaism. If the significance of baptism be not set forth in the account of the experience of Jesus, where is the neophyte to find an authoritative exposition of the significance of this most fundamental of all the rites of the brotherhood into which it initiates him? If his sense of the forgiveness of sin, his repentance from dead works to serve a living and true God in the freedom of the Spirit are not set forth in the story of Jesus' encounter after his baptism and the beginning of his ministry with the opposition of the scribes, where should he expect to find it justified?

The second Division is occupied from beginning to end with the Evangelic Mission of the Church. It begins with the Choosing of the Twelve, and ends with Jesus' Charge to them as he sends them forth to preach and to heal. Here, too, we cannot escape the threefold subdivision. The description of the multitude and Jesus' Appointment of the Twelve ends with the great saying which makes them his

Spiritual Kin (3 7-35). Thereafter (4 1-34) comes their indoctrination with the Mystery of the Kingdom, the three Parables of the Kingdom having as their common feature the promise of the great harvest which is to crown the sowing "when God has made the pile complete." Mark, as we know, conceives the message of the Gospel as eschatological rather than legalistic. Accordingly "the mystery of the kingdom" conveyed to the disciples but "hidden from them that are without" consists in this revelation of the divine purpose, not in a series of precepts setting forth the New Commandment. Lastly we have as the third subdivision (4 35-6 7) a series of five anecdotes illustrating the wonder-working power of faith. In the storm on the lake, the encounter with the man possessed with the legion of demons, the healing of the woman with the issue and the raising of Jairus' daughter, Jesus inculcates both by word and example that "authority" of faith whereby the twelve are to perform their ministry of healing and exorcism. The series ends with the converse lesson. Against faithlessness Jesus himself "could do no mighty work." The twelve are now ready for their mission and Jesus in 6 8-13 sends them forth to preach and to heal.

Surely it cannot be questioned that the whole series of anecdotes in this second Division of the Galilean ministry is bound together by a single thread, and that a practical one. There is not one element of it that does not fall into line behind the dominant purpose of defining and authenticating the "deposit of the faith." It is a *vade mecum* for the gospel ministry in its two functions of proclaiming "the mystery of the kingdom," and of using the word of faith and power to heal and to exorcise. The particular interest of the evangelist is traceable in minor details and in certain supplements, but the key to the grouping of material is its "pragmatic value" to the Church in the service of its ministry. The Division deals with the Mission of the Twelve. The curious fact that its closing sentence describes the work of the twelve not in terms of Jesus' Charge, which has no mention of anointing the sick with oil, but in terms of the Church's practice as we know it from Jas. 5 14, is evidence of the

evangelist's interest in the justification of the actual practice to be found in apostolic precedent.

The third and last Division of the Galilæan Ministry has for its focal point the double story of the Feeding of the Multitude, whose significance as authenticating, explaining, and exemplifying the institution of the Brotherhood Banquet, *καθημερινή*, or Agapé, I have already set forth. It begins and ends, however, with material relating to the growing danger to Jesus' life, a danger which finally closes to him the Galilæan country. We certainly do have here indications of the control of purely historical considerations. But they are extremely slight. One scarcely realizes in passing from the story of Herod's Comment in 6 14 ff. to that of the Syrophœnician in 7 24 ff. that the departure from Galilee is really the sequel to Herod's aroused attention, so greatly is the historical sequence overlaid by the doctrinal interest. The later evangelists have failed, it is true, in this Division to stand by Mark. And, it must be confessed, we have every reason to regard his astonishing representation of a journey of Jesus up the entire Phœnician coast "from Tyre through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee up the midst of the borders of Decapolis" as a false inference, if not a fictitious construction. Even its meager quota of events merely duplicates the series already related in 6 30–7 30. But "pragmatic values" are on this view only the more apparent. They furnish in fact the only intelligible motive for the construction. To the evangelist the breaking of bread to the multitudes, doubtless because of association with the Eucharist, foreshadows the conveyance of the gospel to the Gentiles. The incident is introduced by the ominous forewarning of Herod's Comment and the Baptist's Fate. It is followed by the Rupture with the Scribes and Departure to Phœnicia for reasons kindred to those which make the fourth evangelist conclude his story of the public ministry with the incident of the Greeks seeking Jesus, their quest being answered by the prediction of a world harvest from the corn of wheat that is now to "fall into the ground and die." In Mark the saying to the Syrophœnician opens the prospect of

an ultimate dissemination of the gospel among the Gentiles and is followed by a repetition of the Miracle of the Loaves on heathen soil (8 1-10). The repudiation of Mosaic ablutions and distinctions of meats which precedes the Gentile Mission is built up on the saying about inward as against external purity. It occupies this place because of its bearing on the great practical questions of the Pauline missionary activity, and the scruples of the Mosaists concerning defilement. The opening of deaf ears and blind eyes by which this story of the Breaking of the Bread to the Gentiles is inclosed (7 31–8 26) has symbolic application as in Is. 29 18-23. In short the story is told not primarily to satisfy the curiosity of the historian and antiquary who would like to ascertain the facts of Jesus' career; but primarily to satisfy the need of a Church which has repudiated the distinctions of Mosaism, has carried the bread of life to the Gentiles, and is now called upon for a word of the Lord "making all meats clean" and seeks a precedent in his example.

I need not carry this analysis further. If Mark's story of the Galilæan ministry so readily shows its principle of construction to be that of "pragmatic values" what has already been pointed out as to the last Division of all, the Passover in Jerusalem, will suffice to bear out the statement that here too the same key unlocks the problems. In Division IV, covering the journey to Jerusalem (8 27–10 52) the key-thought is "Forsaking all." Its subdivisions justify and support the Church's demand for the renunciation of earthly goods and kindred in the brotherhood of believers in expectation of the life to come. Sacrifice, including martyrdom, and its reward, is the theme about which all the anecdotes after the Revelation of the Messiahship and fate of Jesus are clustered; though in some cases the connection may seem at first obscure. In Division V, chapters 10–13, the Coming to Jerusalem, the fundamental event was of course determined historically. It was the *coup d'état* in the temple and the protest from the Sanhedrin which followed it. The prefixing of the Royal Entry and Cursing of the Fig Tree bear their pragmatic and symbolic motive on their face. The addition

of the dialogues with Pharisee, Sadducee, and Scribe in the temple, and the Revelation of Judgment and of the Coming of the Son of man to the four disciples on the Mount of Olives, has of course, again, an apologetic and doctrinal purpose. In short, we have here the same practical interest as throughout the Gospel, except that here it is not ritual but belief which is authenticated and defended. The view the Church has taken and is taking on questions of its political relations, the Resurrection, the Law, the Lordship of Christ, as exalted to "sit at the right hand of God," the events of the period A.D. 30–70, and the Coming of the Son of man, now momentarily to be expected — these dictate both the selection of anecdotes and sayings and their order. Mark's eschatological chapter, as I have shown in a previous issue of the JOURNAL,[3] is only an earlier and freer example of the process of agglutination of the "sayings" into discourses which has given us Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, or Charge to the Twelve. It stands after the final rejection of Jesus in Jerusalem, partly, no doubt, because this is historically appropriate; but mainly because the needs of church edification so require, as in the eschatological chapter of the *Didaché*.

Study of the literary structure of Mark, if proper tests be applied, will be no less effective than study of the material in detail to convince the candid student of the dominating influence of "pragmatic values." The writer hopes that in the present essay he has in some measure met the request of his esteemed correspondent as well as the possible wish of other students of "The Beginnings of Gospel Story" in "succintly stating the theory" and "supporting it by the passages that seem most apt."

[3] Vol. xxviii, Part 1 (1909).