

**THE GROWTH OF THE
GOSPELS AS SHEWN BY
STRUCTURAL CRITICISM**

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The Growth of the Gospels as Shewn by Structural Criticism by W. M. Flinders Petrie

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AS SHEWN BY STRUCTURAL
CRITICISM

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW

	PAGE
1. The Gospels and the <i>Logia</i>	1
2. The Habit of Writing	4
3. Early Need of Gospels	6
4. An Impersonal Criticism Required	8

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURAL CRITICISM

5. The Examination of Structure	11
6. The Classes of Episodes	13
7. The Apparatus for Study	18

CHAPTER III

THE CLASSES OF DOCUMENTS

8. The Nucleus (i)	20
9. The Two-gospel Sequences (ii)	22
10. The Scattered Documents (iii)	24
11. The Use of Doublets	27
12. The Disintegrated Documents (iv)	29
13. The Isolated Episodes (v)	31
14. The Unrepeated Episodes (vi)	31

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

	PAGE
15. The Decades of Church History	33
16. The Historic Position of the Nucleus	38
17. The Two-gospel Additions	42
18. Connections of Scattered Documents	46
19. Changes in Expressions	47
20. The Latest Additions	49
21. Summary	52

APPENDIX

The Nucleus and other Separate Documents	57
The Choice between Matthew and Mark	86
Table I. Documents composing Matthew's Gospel	90
Table II. Documents composing Mark's Gospel	92
Table III. Documents composing Luke's Gospel	94
Table IV. Documents in Sequence in Two Gospels only	96
Table V. Documents in Sequence independently used	97
Table VI. Scattered Documents	98
Table VII. Doublet Verses	99

93

THE GROWTH OF THE GOSPELS

CHAPTER I

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW

1. *The Gospels and the Logia.*

THE fundamental question of the relation of the Gospels to each other must precede any exact understanding of their teaching. Until some means of discrimination are gained, it is impossible to decide which of the slightly varying accounts should be accepted as the more correct, or which sayings or episodes may be the more precisely recorded.

It is evident that the means of judging of these matters lie before us, in a triple account, which varies in its detail and its order. But what conclusions are to be drawn from these variations is greatly debated. The only out-

2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW

It is generally agreed upon is that the gospel according to St Matthew and that according to St Luke are both derived from the sources of the gospel according to St Mark, with the addition of much more material. And our present conclusions here, from a more impersonal research, agree in this.

The dominant point of view hitherto has been mainly literary and subjective, and hence it has been largely influenced by personal judgment. The position in the present day to such questions is rather based on the comparative view of the conditions and life of the age in question. The previous views have been implicitly influenced by the older conception of a writer sitting down to write a whole gospel as an entire work of his own. The gradual accretion of historical records side by side, like the monastic chronicles, is now felt to be more in accord with a wide-spread need of documents in the early churches. The assumption that the pre-existing material was only oral, and was first put in writing by an evangelist, has been widely removed by the appearance of the *logia* as a living actuality.

Although from the time of the earliest