

## Lecture 18: Machen and the Synoptic Gospels

February 28, 2020

The New Testament begins with **four gospels...**

**Four Portraits** – one Person

**Four Perspectives** – one Event

Illus. Basketball Game

**Four Preachments** – one Purpose

“...but these have been written so that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have *life* in His name” (John 20:31).

Sum: A gospel is not a biography, but a sermon in story from history.

### The Four Gospels

#### Synoptic Gospels

Face	Gospel	Portrait	Audience
	Matthew	The King	Jews
	Mark	The Suffering Servant <i>and</i> Son of God	Romans
	Luke – <i>a two-volume work with Acts!</i> (cf. lots of <i>fives</i> in the Bible)	The Righteous Man	Greeks
	John	God	Everyone

**Contextualization** – the mustard seed was thrown on the “field” (Mt.), the “ground” (Mk.), and the “garden” (Lk.)

*Ipsissima Verba* vs. *Ipsissima Vox*

### The Synoptic Question

Priority – *Matthew or Mark first?*

Source – *Collection of Sayings* (Q = German *Quelle*)?

### J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

Princeton – Johns Hopkins – Marburg crisis

*Prof. Wilhelm Herrmann* ←

Eight years before seeking ordination! → (He “trusted” Christ, but denied the miracles, resurrection, and deity of Jesus?!)

### Theological Liberalism

Schleiermacher – faith is a feeling of dependence on God

Strauss – *The Life of Jesus* → starts the quest for the historical Jesus

von Harnack – *What Is Christianity?* Life, not doctrine.

Bultmann – “demythologize” the documents

*The essence of Christianity is a sense of God as Father and man as brother.*

*Jesus achieved this piety and left us an example to follow—the faith of Jesus, not faith in Jesus.*

*Paul introduced doctrine through the alien Greek spirit of philosophical inquiry.*

*The myth of Scripture and the creeds of church history are mere cultural forms of a timeless spirit.*

Sum: Liberalism is a fact-value split that separates the kernel of *piety* from the husk of *doctrine*.

As a result, science can deny the historical claims of the Bible, but Christianity is still “true”.

### Machen’s Response

*Beware of running from scholarship into pre-modern times (Psalm 24:1)!*

“Christianity and Culture” (1912) – How should a Christian respond to culture?

Liberalism – submits to culture

Revivalism – ignores culture

Machen – sanctifies culture → *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (1930) – his *magnum opus*

“Faith and History” (1915)

*The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (1921)

*Christianity and Liberalism* (1923)

They are two distinct religions and should be separated by putting out or coming out.