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***Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q***

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Over the last decade and a half Christopher M. Tuckett has established a well-deserved reputation for careful, thorough scholarship in one of the most demanding areas of biblical studies: the synoptic problem. The present volume, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q*, will not disappoint those who have come to expect from Tuckett a high level of work. In these various essays, some of which were conceived and written independently, Tuckett combines a thorough treatment of the scholarly discussion with a detailed exegesis of key texts and measured conclusions to construct an argument that is well-grounded and cogent. In spite of the disparate origins of the material, Tuckett manages to weave the pieces together to produce a sustained argument around a central thesis: that Q is the document of an early Jewish-Christian group angered at the apathetic response of others to its preaching. As a result, Q draws together prophetic and sapiential traditions to speak meaningfully of their rejection, and eschatological materials to speak of the impending judgment that awaits all who do not embrace the coming kingdom.

The opening chapters (1-3) serve to set the stage for Tuckett's argument, but also serve as an excellent introduction to current Q research. Chapter 1, on "The Existence of Q," is a lucid presentation of the basic case for Q, as well as an effective refutation of two minority opinions that are part of the current discussion of synoptic origins: the revived Griesbach hypothesis of William Farmer and his students, and the more obscure hypothesis of Michael Goulder, which combines Markan priority with simultaneous Lukan dependence on Matthew. While these discussions seem to go on *ad infinitum*, every new (or revived) theory deserves discussion, and Tuckett offers these a fair, if ultimately unsympathetic, hearing.

Chapters 2 and 3 are also introductory in nature. In them Tuckett takes up some basic issues in the current discussion of Q, especially the question of multiple phases in the compositional history of Q (chapter 2), and the question of the extent of Q and whether certain materials unique to Matthew or Luke might also have come from the Q document (chapter 3). These issues Tuckett settles for himself with measured reserve, choosing to

focus on Q as we have it, rather than dealing with one or more earlier versions of Q (contra esp. Kloppenborg) and limiting himself to Q materials with clear Matthew/Luke parallels. In chapter three, he also deals with Q's date (40-70 CE) and place of origin (Galilee/Syria), and its genre (a sayings collection) without venturing too far out onto a limb. Tuckett's reserve in answering these questions will be comforting to those scholars whose watchword is caution, but in the end, the not-so-simple truth is in the details, and Tuckett will find himself pushed up against the limits he has established, as we shall see.

Tuckett argues his main thesis in chapters 4-9. His case can be seen most easily by working backward through his carefully constructed argument. In chapter 9 Tuckett establishes that the Q folk are engaged in a polemic against certain others who have heard their preaching and said, "So what?" They have experienced this apathetic response as rejection and persecution, though there is little evidence that the Q folk actually experienced physical abuse or martyrdom. This situation explains the nature of the Q document itself: in it someone has drawn together a number of Jewish traditions, including prophetic, sapiential, and apocalyptic materials, to give expression to the Q folk's experience of rejection, and the hoped for retribution that will fall upon all who do not ultimately embrace their message (see esp. chapter 6). This general framework helps to make sense of Q's various ways of speaking about Jesus--as Wisdom's rejected prophet (chapter 7) and the persecuted, suffering Son of Man (chapter 8)--as well as of the inclusion of materials concerning John the Baptist, whom Q does not see as superseded in any way by Jesus (chapter 4). His apocalyptic message coheres generally with Q's eschatology (chapter 5).

Tuckett's arguments are, for the most part, cogently built upon detailed and careful analysis of the relevant texts. His overall conception, however, is not without its difficulties, however minor. My own lingering doubts are connected with the on-going debate in Q studies over the relative roles played by prophetic and sapiential categories, respectively, in Q's presentation of Jesus and his preaching. Tuckett recognizes the presence of sapiential material in Q, especially texts in which Jesus is portrayed as one of Wisdom's rejected prophets (e.g., Q 7:31-35). But he insists that Jesus in Q is more appropriately understood as an "eschatological prophet," in the tradition of Isaiah. To substantiate this view he appeals to Q's use of Isaiah 61 in Q 7:22 and 6:20-21, and especially in Luke 4:16ff., which Tuckett thinks could come from Q (pp. 226-36). He concludes, "The use of Isa 61 appears to be an important and distinctive feature of Q's Christology" (p. 236; cf. also pp. 325, 428). But the traces of Isaiah 61 in Q 7:22 and 6:20-21 are only echoes, and it would be difficult to argue that Luke 4:16ff. comes from Q (Tuckett only problematizes it as Lukan redaction; that does not, in itself, make it Q). In any event, here we see Tuckett pressing up against his own self-imposed limits, all too ready to see Lukan special material as Q in an effort to shore up his view that Q is above all prophetic, not sapiential. The issue, however, seems not to have been resolved at all.

Related to this problem is the question of Q's content. To be sure, Q contains much that may be characterized as eschatological/prophetic. But there is also much that may only be described as sapiential. Tuckett, of course, sees this, but insists that "any sapiential elements in the tradition have been overlaid by a powerful eschatological/prophetic element which uses any sapiential traditional elements to build up a powerful critique against the present world order. . ." (p. 353). One might rightly see this view as consistent with Kloppenborg's thesis of an early sapiential version of Q (Q<sup>1</sup>) followed by a later, more judgment-oriented version of Q (Q<sup>2</sup>). But Tuckett explicitly rejects this conclusion, expressing again his own general skepticism about the possibility of distinguishing different redactional layers in Q. Rather, he prefers to suppose that these sapiential elements lay in the background of Q, but that in using them "seems to have left behind the wisdom category and focuses more on prophetic warnings and eschatology" (p. 353). But if Q had no real interest in Wisdom, why would Q have taken up these sapiential traditions in the first place? Simply to use them to "build up a powerful critique against the present world order?" Doubtful, for as Tuckett himself points out, the prophetic critique of Q is not issued against any perceived worldliness in those it attacks, but simply against their apathetic response to the Q preaching. We have, then, a good deal of sapiential material in Q, in which Q in its final form, has no real intrinsic interest. This would suggest, as Kloppenborg does (though on other grounds), that we have in Q's wisdom speeches the vestiges of an earlier period in the history of Q now overlaid with an eschatological/prophetic element better fitting to the times. Here, again, we see Tuckett bumping up against his own self-imposed limits: he cannot embrace Kloppenborg's hypothesis in principle, even though his own analysis seems to point precisely in this direction.

These questions, however, do not seriously detract from the soundness with which these studies are executed. They belong, rather, to the inevitable loose ends that will accompany any work on a problem so complicated as Q has become. In this collection of essays, Tuckett has offered the collegium of Q scholars an impressive body of work and enough challenges to fuel the discussion well into the foreseeable future. The volume as a whole is a substantial statement from one of the major voices in Synoptic-Gospels scholarship today and should be received with much interest.