CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HISTORIAN

In examining the Jewish leaders in Mark, we have presented a series of problems we feel scholars have not addressed and a single idea we feel resolves them all. Often, however, there inheres in source, form and redaction critical studies an element of conjecture, and this is true in our analysis as well. We are satisfied that our thesis is correct, but in our view there is insufficient evidence either fully to verify or fully to invalidate our proposals. Our aim, therefore, has been simply to present a plausible case. We will now summarize our position before indicating possibly significant implications of our study for the historian.

Summary

Our basic concerns have been to determine how familiar Mark was with the Jewish leadership groups of Jesus' time, where he received his knowledge about them, and how he used this information in constructing the framework of his narrative line. Essentially, we have been dealing with three chronological levels of Markan material: the latest level that of redaction, preceded by the level of written or oral sources, with the earliest level that of historical reality.

On the level of redaction, we have confronted in Mark a situation different in a major respect from what we encounter in the later Synoptists. We actually possess one of Matthew’s and Luke’s prime sources, Mark himself. Accordingly, where Matthew and Luke alter Mark, especially in ways diverse from one another, we have the potential for isolating those characteristic procedures and theological nuances which betray, respectively, the hands of these two Evangelists themselves. ¹ We remain in a far less advantageous position with Mark, however, because we possess none of his sources.

Yet it is on the level of sources that we have especially focused in this study. Rightly, scholars must beware the circularity which can so easily assume control in source criticism, wherein the very pre-

Implications for the Historian

Obstacles Confronting the Historian

We have focused primarily on the two latest levels of Markan material, "redaction" preceded by "sources"; yet what can be known

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2 See, e.g., supra, Chapter Three, notes 19, 21-22, 36-38.
3 See supra, Chapter Four, notes 7-9.