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The Development of the Idea of Canonical Pseudepigrapha in New Testament Criticism

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I. REFORMATION QUESTIONINGS

After the completely uncritical approach of the Middle Ages the questionings of the Reformers brought a breath of critical enquiry to certain problems raised by New Testament books. The criticism, however, was not historical but subjective. To that extent the opinions expressed by individual Reformers on the disputed books of the canon contribute little to a just appreciation of the problems of pseudepigraphy. Luther, although creating a deutero-canon consisting of Hebrews, James, Jude and the Apocalypse, did not disfavour any books because they were pseudepigraphic, but because they did not present Christ as other books did. For this reason all these books were regarded as non-apostolic. That his notion of apostolicity had nothing to do with authorship is clear from his statement regarding the Epistle of James—'That which does not teach Christ is still not apostolic, even if it were the teaching of Peter or Paul. Again that which preaches Christ, that were apostolic, even if James, Annas, Pilate and Herod preached it.'¹ If we are to take this latter statement seriously, Luther would have found no difficulty in regarding a pseudepigraphon as apostolic provided it preached Christ.² His comments on Jude are illuminating since he displaced it on the grounds that it is either an extract from or a copy of II Peter, a precursor of a later criticism which has reversed the procedure.

Calvin may be supposed to point the way towards the recognition of a canonical pseudepigraphon in his attitude towards II Peter, when he says, 'I therefore lay it down that if the Epistle be deemed worthy of credit it proceeded from Peter, not that he wrote it himself, but that some one of his disciples at his command included in it what the necessity of the times required.'³ Yet such a production at Peter's command is not strictly pseudepigraphic, for it has the sanction of the name it bears. Calvin's theory rather adumbrates the numerous secretary hypotheses.

The opinions of Grotius, which have been regarded as a kind of foreshadowing of the Tübingen school of criticism,⁴ are interesting for our study. His method was speculative, but he does not appear to have postulated any clearly defined pseudepigrapha. He regarded II Peter as originally an Epistle of Simeon, successor to James as bishop of Jerusalem. and suggested that its present form comprises two original letters of that bishop (chs. i, ii and ch. iii). The Petrine pseudonym was not therefore original, and the work only became pseudepigraphic in its later history. Similarly the Epistle of Jude was written by a Judas, who was bishop of Jerusalem in Hadrian's time, and although it would therefore become excluded

¹ Cited by Westcott, *On the Canon of the New Testament*⁴ (1875), p. 478 from Luther's *Werke* xiv. 150.

² In explaining the origin of James, Luther inclined to ascribe it to 'some good pious man who had taken some sayings from the apostles' disciples'. Cf. J. H. Ropes, *The Epistle of St. James* (ICC, 1916).

³ Cited by Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 485.

⁴ Cf. Souter, *Text and Canon of the New Testament* (1913), p. 203.

from the genuine apostolic writings it would not be classed as pseudepigraphic. That it later became mistaken for an epistle of Jude the Lord's brother does not affect this conclusion. A similar later confusion is presupposed by Grotius in his views on the Apocalypse, which he regarded as

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having been kept in the care of the Elder John and 'that therefore it came to pass that it was supposed by some to be his work', although Grotius himself regarded it as apostolic.

It will be seen, therefore, that during these first awakenings of a free criticism of the New Testament Scriptures, the idea of a canonical pseudepigraphon, in the narrower sense, did not arise. The grounds for determining apostolicity were too subjective for the idea to develop of a later author counterfeiting apostolicity by means of pseudepigrapha in accordance with an accepted literary convention. It was left for nineteenth-century criticism to propose the notion of pseudo-apostolicity.

II. THE RISE OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND THE GENESIS OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC HYPOTHESES

It was in the mental atmosphere of the Rationalist period that the first theories of New Testament pseudepigrapha were advanced. Before the end of the eighteenth century an Englishman, Edward Evanson,⁵ proposed that several epistles were spurious—Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews and James. He claimed that his grounds of attack were historical, although many of them arose from a misunderstanding of the text. In spite of this assumed historical approach Evanson made no attempt to suggest parallels to these supposed pseudo-apostolic writings. His criticisms were in fact quite superficial and made little impact.

It was among the early German critics of the nineteenth century that the idea of canonical pseudepigrapha became current. J. E. C. Schmidt⁶ suspected the authenticity of I Timothy and other books, but it was F. E. D. Schleiermacher⁷ who launched the first reasoned attack upon I Timothy. Strangely enough he argued from the differences between that Epistle and the other two Pastoral Epistles, and concluded that I Timothy was unauthentic. This attack, which gave the lead to later criticism, was the product of feeling rather than of true historical investigation. As Schweitzer commented with much penetration, 'Strictly speaking it was not Schleiermacher the critic, but Schleiermacher the aesthete who had come to have doubts about I Timothy.'⁸ His approach to I Timothy is instructive for our purpose, for he maintained that the measure of association between I Timothy and the other two epistles was due to borrowing. In fact, he asserted that the author of I Timothy had II Timothy before his eyes (in discussing the reference to Hymenaeus and Alexander in I Tim. i. 20).⁹ But he saw no

⁵ *The Dissonance of the four generally received Evangelists and the evidence of their respective authenticity examined*² (1805). It is interesting to note that Evanson regarded Hebrews as spurious because he objected to Pauline authorship.

⁶ Schmidt's position is described in B. Weiss' *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament* (1887), p. 8.

⁷ *Über den Sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus* (1807).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111, 'Wie höchst natürlich dagegen wird alles, wenn Sie sich einen andern Schreiber des ersten Briefes denken, der den zweiten von Augen hatte.'

necessity to support this theory with any investigation into the nature of literary borrowing. Schleiermacher's attack was very soon followed up by J. G. Eichhorn,¹⁰ who saw that Schleiermacher's critical method must lead to the conclusion that all three Pastoral Epistles must be spurious, because all three differ from the others in language and thought. In other words he rejected Schleiermacher's arguments but accepted his method. I Timothy was not an imitation of II Timothy and Titus, but all three epistles were the work of someone else who has put himself in Paul's place. This type of pseudonymity seems to have presented no problems to Eichhorn. There was no need to discuss it, and the same principles led Eichhorn to regard II Peter and Jude as pseudepigraphic.¹¹

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Belonging to the same school of thought was W. M. L. de Wette,¹² who, although showing some vacillation between his earlier and later works, still maintained the Pastorals and II Peter to be non-apostolic and therefore pseudepigraphic. He also retained some doubts about Ephesians and I Peter. His influence on F. C. Baur is noted below.

III. THE APPROACH OF F. C. BAUR

Because of his influence on later New Testament criticism, the opinions of F. C. Baur require careful examination. In spite of the fact that many of his hypotheses have been abandoned his principles of criticism still unconsciously affect many critical judgments. In his earliest book on the Pastoral Epistles¹³ he followed Eichhorn in attacking their authenticity and consequently concluded that they were spurious. That this influenced his approach to other Pauline literature is clear from a statement he made in his more thoroughgoing presentation of his position in his book on the apostle Paul.¹⁴ In discussing the epistles whose authenticity he disputed, he wrote, 'What gives these Epistles their claim to the name of the apostle is simply the circumstance that they profess to be Pauline and make the apostle speak as their author.'¹⁵ In other words it was the pseudonymous device which had created the impression of apostolicity. But Baur continued, 'Even if one of them (i.e. the Pauline Epistles) be unable to make good its apostolic name, and with regard to I Timothy this can scarcely be denied, then we see at once how little that circumstance can prove of itself; it must then be admitted that

¹⁰ *Historische-kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (1812), III, p. 315. Eichhorn acknowledged his debt to Schleiermacher, but considered the latter had not gone far enough (cf. pp. 318, 319 n.). 'Ich lasse aber meiner Untersuchung den Gang, auf welcher sie zu ihrem Resultat gekommen ist, um so mehr, da letzteres von dem des gelehrten und scharfsinnigen Verfassers des Sendschreibens noch verschieden ist, and viel weiter geht' (p. 319).

¹¹ Eichhorn's remark on II Peter is as follows, 'An das Unternehmen selbst hätte der Verfasser ohne alles Bedenken and Arg gehen können, weil es die Gewohnheit seines Zeitalters war, Ideen denkwürdiger Männer in einer ihnen beygelegten and in ihrem Namen geschriebenen Schrift zu erhalten, and sie auf die kürzeste Weise als ihr Eigenthum zu bezeichnen' (*ibid.*, p. 637).

¹² Cf. *Introduction to the New Testament* (1858), pp. 283 ff., 298-304, 324 ff., 345 ff. With regard to Ephesians, de Wette considered its close association with Colossians to be a sufficient indication of the work of an imitator, while he thought that style and doctrine supported this conclusion (cf. p. 283). When dealing with the Pastorals de Wette drew from his predecessors, maintaining as Eichhorn a common authorship for all three (p. 302), but he did not discuss or even envisage the difficulties which might beset his pseudonymous hypotheses. About I Peter he said, 'The theory of forgery, in itself odious, lacks the positive ground of a demonstrable design to be accomplished by it, for the supposed design of mediating between Paulinism and Petrinism is not clearly manifest' (p. 345). At the same time he thought that the Pauline flavour 'awakens a strong suspicion of the genuineness of this Epistle'.

¹³ *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe* (1835).

¹⁴ *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi* (1845, Eng. Tr. from 2nd German ed. 1875).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 109, 110.

what has happened in one case may have happened equally in several others.' Here is the principle that one canonical pseudepigraphon leads to the possibility if not the probability of others, and the investigator can proceed without restraint to postulate as many pseudepigraphic hypotheses as he wishes.¹⁶ He can always fall back on his precedent.

But Baur did not entirely ignore the problems involved, although he treated them rather lightly. He remarked on the different literary standards of the ancient world and then observed, 'There is therefore no reason to think here of deception or wilful forgery; yet even if it be asserted that the matter is not intelligible except on this hypothesis, that cannot be maintained as an argument against its possibility and likelihood.'¹⁷ His own attitude was clearly confused for while obviously wishing to remove the accusation of 'forgery' he nevertheless frequently speaks of the disputed epistles as 'forgeries'. His attitude to this whole problem was undoubtedly influenced by Schleiermacher. In fact, he made a definite appeal to Schleiermacher's method over I Timothy in justification of his own criticism of Colossians. Having also been influenced by de Wette's attack on Ephesians because of its close connection with Colossians, he turned the tables and argued that as doubts over I Timothy had spread to other Pastoral Epistles, so doubts over Ephesians affected Colossians.¹⁸ With such principles of literary criticism there was no check to the growth of canonical pseudepigrapha. The close connection between Colossians and Ephesians was no difficulty to Baur for both epistles were, in his opinion, pseudonymous. The pseudo-author could do what Paul could not do, i.e. produce two similar letters and get away with it.¹⁹ To explain why the particular destinations were chosen,

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Baur maintained that the author deliberately chose two, Laodicea and Colossae, where Paul was not personally known.²⁰

¹⁶ Ed. Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scripture of the New Testament*, (1884) p. 84, made an acute observation on Baur's method. Baur had argued from the close affinity between I Timothy and the other Pastorals that I Timothy would always be the 'betrayed of its spurious brothers', and Reuss commented, 'But he was sharp-sighted enough to see afterwards that the two swept away by I Tim. on the ground of similar allusions unmasked a whole series of "spurious brothers" beside them, and he found himself obliged to seek for grounds of suspicion (Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon) in order to justify a skepticism which had originated prior to, and not in consequence of, investigation, and which therefore had not grown upon its natural soil.'

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, II., pp. 110, 111. It is illuminating to note Baur's comment on Rückert's 'violent reaction' against the non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians (*Der Brief an die Epheser*. 1834, p. 303 f.)—'Only a man such as Paul was can be the author of this Epistle, and if it was not he, point out to me the spirit in that age that was his peer.... In the ranks of the imitators, the compilers, or the quacks, we dare not seek him; where then?' After citing this passage, Baur retorted, 'Critical doubts then, it appears, may be simply disposed of even now-a-days with declamations like this. The author of a canonical Epistle, such writers imagine, must either be an apostle, or one of the most despicable class of men, "the botchers, forgers, and woodenheaded compilers" (Rückert, p. 299); or if he were not a compiler he must have been known to us by reputation, since he could not have gone through the world without leaving his marls on history. But is not this product of his genius itself a sufficient trace of his existence?' (*ibid.* xx, p. 2 n.). There is point in Baur's criticisms which should have made the defendants of authenticity more cautious in stating their case, although his own hypothetical pseudepigraphists cannot so easily as he imagined be excluded from the ranks of the imitators and compilers, even if we exclude the botchers.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1 ff.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5, 'But the apostle would never have copied himself in this manner, nor does this hypothesis... escape from the objection that the agreement of the two Epistles is not the result of chance, but is certainly intentional.' And yet the imitator produced two, 'probably because he thought that what was said in the same way in two letters would produce the greater impression' (pp. 43, 44).

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 44 n.

Similar principles were applied to the other disputed epistles. Over Philippians, the imitative process is again assumed. It was 'characterized very decidedly by monotonous repetition of what has already been said, by a want of any profound and masterly connection of ideas, and by a certain poverty of thought'.²¹ Similarly the self-testimony in chapter iii is 'nothing but an imitation of the passage in II Cor. xi. 13 sq.'²² While Baur's criticism of this Epistle can find now no supporters, his approach is of interest for our present purpose in demonstrating how an acute mind like Baur's could make the most far-reaching literary assumptions without seeing the need to produce historical parallels. Once he got rid of the idea that ancient literary practice did not differ from modern, it was left for the critic himself to fill in the blanks. This Baur did without difficulty. He even suggested how the author set about creating his portrait of Paul in Philippians. It appeared to the author that 'the apostle might be expected to speak much of himself.... So he concluded that he could not make him speak too humbly, and meekly, and depreciatingly of himself.'²³ As so many of his successors have done over other critical questions Baur appealed to style. 'An author writing in the name of the apostle was of course obliged to write a Pauline style, yet the language of the Epistle betrays the imitator in many particulars.'²⁴ Yet what appeared imitative to Baur appears genuine to most modern critics, which shows the subjective character of this criterion. There is no need to multiply instances of Baur's method of appealing to pseudepigraphic hypotheses. But his attempt to justify his somewhat reluctant classification of Philemon among the pseudepigrapha is worthy of note. He described it as 'a Christian romance serving to convey a genuine Christian idea',²⁵ and cited as a parallel the idea of recognition and reconciliation in the pseudo-Clementine homilies. But he did not explain how any author, designing to write a romance, would ever have written it in so exquisite a form as this Epistle. The fact is that Baur's literary criticism was dominated by his dogmatic presuppositions and since these had to be maintained at all costs, it was no embarrassment that pseudepigraphic writings became more normal in the extant Pauline Canon than genuine works.

IV. BAUR'S SUCCESSORS

It is not surprising that Baur's principles reached their logical extreme in the rejection of all the Pauline Epistles and in the transference of the entire Pauline Canon into the category of pseudepigrapha. This occurred first in the works of Bruno Bauer and later in the writings of the Dutch sceptical school.²⁶ It is obvious that no historical grounds for the assumption of

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

²⁶ As a representative of this extreme scepticism W. C. van Manen (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii. 3634) may be cited. In rejecting the Epistles of Paul, he declared, 'They are all, without exception, pseudepigrapha.... No distinction can any longer be allowed between "principal epistles" and minor or deutero-Pauline ones. The separation is purely arbitrary, with no foundation in the nature of the things here dealt with. The group... bears obvious marks of a certain unity, of having originated in one circle, at one time, in one environment, but not of unity of authorship... This pseudepigraphic collection is, in van Manen's view, 'the later development of a school, or, if the expression is preferred, of a circle of progressive believers who named themselves after Paul and placed themselves as it were under his aegis'. The idea of a school-pseudepigraphy has been met with in some recent hypotheses on Matthew's Gospel, but it should be noted that a criticism such as van Manen's which could pronounce all the basic documents as pseudepigraphic shows itself at once to be out of touch with sound historical principles of investigation, as generally recognized by his own contemporary and more recent scholarship.

wholesale pseudepigraphic theories can be expected from writers whose approach was almost entirely subjective.

Modifications of Baur's position, however, are found in the writings of H. J. Holtzmann,²⁷ who admitted the spuriousness of only II Thessalonians, Ephesians and the Pastorals, and the working over of Colossians. But since the principle of canonical pseudepigrapha had been taken over from Baur, there was the tendency to take it for granted without discussion of its difficulties.²⁸ But

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A. Jülicher,²⁹ another scholar of the same school of thought as Holtzmann, included a fairly detailed discussion on pseudonymity in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, and several of the points he made are worthy of consideration since they are still appealed to in defence of canonical pseudepigraphy.

(a) Jülicher pleaded first for the avoidance of the word 'forgery' (Fälschung) for he maintained, 'it is only to the advantage of an exceedingly narrow view of history that we should attach ideas of fraud and deceit to writings published by men of a later generation under cover of some honoured name in the past; we thus make it easy to say that Holy Church cannot possibly have accepted such scandalous fabrications'.³⁰ This anti-forgery plea, which has been hinted at by Baur, has become almost a canon of criticism as the history of further development shows. (b) In justification of this difference in the ancient and modern approaches Jülicher appealed to what he called 'the boundless credulity of ecclesiastical circles' (Die grenzenlose Leichtgläubigkeit kirchlicher Kreise), which cannot be 'got rid of (aus der Welt zu schaffen) by moral indignation. Here Jülicher fails to place his statement in a chronological setting, for 'boundless credulity' is not a just description of the earliest period of Church history. It might as truly be said that the sense of moral indignation will not be got rid of by an appeal to credulity. Jülicher, in fact, gave no specific evidence for this credulity apart from a passing allusion to the many New Testament Apocrypha. (c) He next appealed to the habit among Christians of borrowing from other works without acknowledgement, and paralleled this to the idea of apostolic pseudepigrapha, maintaining 'that with the best intentions and the cleanest consciences they put such words into the mouth of a revered apostle as they wished to hear enunciated with apostolic authority to their contemporaries, while yet they did not regard themselves in the smallest degree as liars and deceivers'.³¹ But again Jülicher did not cite supporting evidence nor did he say how he knew the intentions and consciences of the pseudo-authors. (d) Then the difference in literary habits was cited. 'The arbitrary way in which copyists and exegetists treated the sacred writings' was paralleled with

²⁷ *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (1885).

²⁸ The approach of Holtzmann is paralleled by that of Renan, who did not hesitate to call the Pastoral Epistles 'false' (*St. Paul* (Eng. Tr. 1888-9), p. viii, ix), although he drew a distinction between these and other epistles (Colossians and Ephesians), over whose authenticity he was doubtful. It is significant, however, that he admitted the need as well as the difficulty of suggesting a purpose that a forger might have had in producing Ephesians (*ibid.*, pp. xii, xiii). Yet in no cases did he consider any comparative study of pseudepigraphy in general to be necessary. He is representative of a criticism which had no qualms about postulating 'forgeries'.

²⁹ *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*⁷ (1931) (edited by E. Fascher).

³⁰ Cited from the English translation, *Introduction to the New Testament* (1904, based on 3rd German edition), p. 52. This is followed in the subsequent citations. German phrases are inserted from the edition of Fascher⁷ (1931), pp. 54-56.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

the habit of composing discourses under apostolic names (or even attributing sermons to Jesus culled from various fragments) and with the further step of the production of pseudo-apostolic epistles. Paradoxically Jülicher³² appealed here to the *adulterae scripturae* of which the Fathers occasionally speak with such horror. But this shows that some of the Fathers at least regarded such procedure with censure. (e) From this Jülicher maintained that first and second century Christians were indifferent to the 'form' in which truth was expressed; 'they applied their conception of truth solely to the substance of their religious consciousness, and were quite indifferent as to the form in which it was clothed.'³³ This is a sweeping statement which requires the strongest support, but all that Jülicher could do was to appeal to Tertullian's evidence regarding the author of the Acts of Paul, which may be shown to indicate the reverse conclusion.³⁴ But to Jülicher, the author's 'judges, including our informant, were not shocked by his literary fraud as such, but by his venturing to advocate heresies in his book, such as the right of women to preach and baptize'. This very dubious interpretation of Tertullian's evidence is all that Jülicher considered it necessary to cite. To him the early Christian tendency towards literary disguises was 'as strong as it was naive'. (f) He did, however, cite Graeco-Roman and Jewish

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parallels., apparently merely to corroborate. He mentioned writings attributed to Pythagoras, Demosthenes, Alexander and Plato, 'the authors of which were certainly not deceivers', and the practice in Jewish apocalypses of ascribing all revelations to men of old (Daniel, Ezra, Enoch, Noah). (g) Jülicher made a distinction between Western and Eastern criticism, for he admitted that neither Irenaeus nor Augustine would have 'composed an Epistle under the name of Paul'. But he brushed aside this consideration by asserting that even Western criticism was concerned only with 'tradition and orthodoxy' and that 'any work that could produce plausible evidence and was unexceptional as to doctrine was allowed to pass unchallenged'. What Jülicher meant by 'plausible evidence' is not clear, for he again cited no examples. (h) To conclude his survey, Jülicher asserted that the arguments he had used raise a probability that some pseudepigraphy are found in the New Testament, but cautioned against the inference that all the Epistles might be, by invoking the principle that 'a forgery is usually an imitation of some greater original'. So he explained that Paul 'must first have written his Epistles and these Epistles have won repute and influence, before those who had not the courage to appear openly under their own names could attempt to influence Christendom in the customary form of the didactic letter, or could put forward their apostolic reflections under cover of the name of Peter, Paul or John'.³⁵

Jülicher's opinions have been stated at some length because he not only represents a somewhat different approach from Baur, but also represents the general attitude of many more recent scholars. There is a certain element of tension in his attempted justification of the practice of pseudonymity. He recognized the inadequacy of proposing pseudepigraphic hypotheses without some reference to the historical background, but he relied more on vague inferences than on sound historical examination. There was still evident the legacy of Schleiermacher and Baur.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³³ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

³⁴ See the author's discussion of this in his *New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles* (1961), p. 290.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

In a similar vein to Jülicher's statement of the case is the discussion by J. Moffatt,³⁶ but the latter advanced upon the former in several respects. Unlike Jülicher, Moffatt appealed first of all to the practice in Jewish apocalyptic literature and considered this as the basis for further discussion. He mentioned the group literature of David and Solomon and Deuteronomy as a precursor of pseudonymous apocalypses, which 'showed that the literary device was quite compatible with religious and moral motives of the highest order'.³⁷ Moreover he maintained that 'the rise of a literature which included the Solomonic correspondence, written by Eupolemus, or the so-called "epistle of Jeremiah" indicates how congenial and innocent the practice was in pre-Christian Judaism'.³⁸ This view of the innocency of pseudepigraphy has gained numerous adherents, but it should be noted that Moffatt gave no justification for this value judgment apart from the sheer quantity of the literature.

He did, however, bring into the discussion Graeco-Roman practice and appealed particularly to the later Pythagoreans and to the Fourth Philippic and the speech *περὶ συντάξεως* attributed to Demosthenes. The bearing of Graeco Roman practice on Christian pseudepigraphy is not obvious. Indeed careful examination shows that little connection exists between them. But Moffatt's appeal to this evidence is at least a serious attempt to view canonical pseudepigrapha against an historical background.

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Moffatt is also a representative of two other proposals regarding pseudepigraphy which have frequently been echoed. The first is the modesty motive. 'The high motives for such compositions sprang from the innocent admiration and naive sympathy which prompted a disciple to reproduce in his own language the ideas, or what he conceived to be the ideas, of his master, and yet forbade him, out of modesty, to present these under his own name. Conscious of the master's influence, disciples viewed their own writings as an extension of his spirit.'³⁹ The productions were, therefore, evidences of 'unselfish piety' on the part of the authors, and pseudonymity became elevated on this theory to a definite virtue.

The other proposal of Moffatt's,⁴⁰ in an attempt to furnish parallels, was an appeal to the practice of ancient historiography in the composition of speeches and the attribution of them to a given historic person. Indeed, he devoted more space to a discussion of this principle in relation to pseudonymity than to any other consideration. Several ancient historians were cited in support, such as Tacitus, Caesar, Thucydides, Theopompus and Sallust, while the New Testament speeches were placed in the same category. In Moffatt's opinion, 'It is further obvious that from the historian composing not only a letter but a speech in the name of some historical figure, it was only a short step to the composition of a pseudonymous epistle, in all good faith, which was designed to edify and instruct.' Scholars generally admit a difference between ancient and modern historiography, but it may be questioned whether the transition from this general historical convention to specifically Christian epistolary literature can be justly called 'a short step'. A fundamental difference between the two has not been noted by Moffatt. The historian has a ready made historical situation into which to affix his speeches,

³⁶ *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*² (1912), pp. 40 ff.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

but the pseudonymous letter writer must create his own. The latter process requires a more fictitious set-up than the former.

It should also be noted that Moffatt's approach was based on the assumption that Christian writers shared precisely the same literary outlook as their non-Christian contemporaries. This may or may not be true, but it deserved more discussion than Moffatt gave, yet in spite of this unproved assumption this approach has exerted a wide influence on later criticism. In one sense it was a by-product of the general Hellenistic approach to New Testament problems at the turn of the century, but with the reaction towards a greater emphasis on Jewish influence, some of Moffatt's literary judgments need modification.

The theory of pseudepigraphy as a literary convention has found many advocates, and once this is accepted little need is felt for further historical discussion. This appears to be the view taken by M. Dibelius⁴¹ who, after pointing out that the epistolary form was often itself artificial (as for instance in the Epistle of Barnabas), declared, 'But if the form itself is artificial it is not surprising that the name of the author also should be an invention.' He continued, 'At that time this was a literary convention and is to be judged ethically exactly in the same way as when today, in accordance with the literary customs of our time, composers clothe historical descriptions of a certain period in dialogue, or write a novel in the form of letters.' In other words these pseudepigrapha must be viewed as no more than literary pieces and must be judged accordingly. We may detect here an absence of the apologetic element seen in

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Jülicher's and Moffatt's approach. We are in fact confronted with Baur's opinion brought up to date.

Closely linked with Dibelius' viewpoint is that of E. J. Goodspeed, who devoted a whole chapter to the discussion of the problem in his *New Chapters in New Testament Study* (1937)⁴² in which he nevertheless showed a much more acute awareness of the difficulties involved in the postulation of New Testament pseudepigrapha. He gets over the difficulty, however, by resisting what he calls 'atomism' in approaching hypotheses. 'If they (i.e. the proposed pseudonymous writings) are treated separately, the problem of pseudonymity is extremely difficult and baffling, but taken together they may throw much needed light on what has long been their most difficult feature.'⁴³ The principle so enunciated appears to be that an increase in the number of pseudepigraphical hypotheses progressively makes more of them probable and helps to justify the whole. But the mere quantity of a phenomenon does not explain it, and this hypothesis must inevitably place the whole collection of hypotheses on a very insecure foundation. Given one canonical pseudepigraphon, there is an immediate motive for the finding of others, a process already well illustrated from Baur. Goodspeed's principle is implicitly assumed when II Peter is appealed to as an exemplar and therefore the justification of other pseudepigraphic epistles.

C. L. Mitton, while still regarding pseudonymity as somewhat conventional, draws a distinction between various classes of pseudepigrapha. Thus, he maintains, 'In some cases

⁴¹ *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (1937), pp. 140-141.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

pseudonymity seems to us to be something less than honest, but this charge need not be levelled against Ephesians. If the writer deliberately derived what he wrote from the epistles which Paul had written, and did so that he might the more faithfully represent Paul to a subsequent generation, it might well have been less honest in his case to pass the result off under his own name than to acknowledge it as Paul's.⁴⁴ This is Moffatt's theory of pseudonymous virtue taken one step further. But it is noteworthy that to maintain it Mitton is obliged to admit a theory of degrees of honesty.

Another recent writer who maintains a similar theory for the Pastorals is F. D. Gealy, who asserts that 'the very use of pseudonymity must itself be regarded as a most important service rendered by the author both to Paul and the Church, a service which in the times could not have been rendered otherwise'.⁴⁵ If this view is correct pseudonymity ceases to be suspect. Nevertheless, Mitton does not dismiss it as lightly and in fact devotes detailed attention to the problem of imitation.⁴⁶ In common with all other contemporary advocates of pseudepigraphical hypotheses, Mitton objects to the use of the word 'forger' and prefers 'imitator', because of its lack of emotional content. He acknowledges the important principle that the onus of proof must rest on the challengers of authenticity and not on the defenders, which illustrates his cautious approach to the whole subject of canonical pseudepigrapha. This principle means that pseudepigraphy is not to be assumed unless there is proof enough to make authenticity untenable.

A still more cautious approach is adopted by H. J. Cadbury,⁴⁷ who nevertheless still maintains canonical pseudepigrapha. He pleads that 'each writing should normally and freely be dealt with as though the question was an open one to be faced separately.' He makes certain propositions regarding pseudonymity with reference to Ephesians in an effort to arrive at a common basis for both

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defendants and opponents of Pauline authorship, and his basic suggestion is that both parties could accept 'that pseudonymous writings can come into existence very soon after the namesake's lifetime'. But unfortunately he can produce no evidence for such an assumption. He admits 'the absence from Christian antiquity of cases where we can compare the spurious with the genuine writings of the same author', and he agrees that late Jewish and early Christian writers made little attempt to write 'in character' for they had no models of the man whose style they were impersonating. The recognition of this fundamental distinction is the real key to the problem of canonical pseudonymity. In the case of Ephesians Cadbury applies the following caution: 'Until we can discover an instance where close adherence to a known master's style has been aimed at in a definitely spurious composition it must be regarded as doubtful whether any imitator of Paul would or would not either strive for or unconsciously achieve the degree of stylistic similarity which exists between Ephesians and the Pauline *homologoumena*.'⁴⁸ But the fact is that no such parallel exists. Cadbury's approach to pseudonymity therefore marks a definite advance in respect of critical principles. Pseudepigraphic hypotheses must, in a word, be viewed in comparison with literary types

⁴⁴ *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (1951), pp. 259, 260.

⁴⁵ *I and II Timothy and Titus (Interpreter's Bible)* 1955, p. 372.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 111 ff.

⁴⁷ 'The Dilemma of Ephesians', *NTS* (1959), pp. 94, 95.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 95, 96.

vouched for among the acknowledged pseudepigrapha. Where there are no parallels that fact must be a mark against those hypotheses.

V. THE DOGMATIC APPROACH

Among those who during the period since the rise of criticism have maintained the rejection of canonical pseudepigrapha two different approaches may be discerned, the dogmatic and the historical. The former approach is well represented by a recent writer, J. I. Packer, who makes the following assertion, 'We may lay it down as a general principle that, when biblical books specify their own authorship, the affirmation of their canonicity involves a denial of their pseudonymity. Pseudonymity and canonicity are mutually exclusive.'⁴⁹ He goes on to assert that since the New Testament books were received into the canon, that must *ipso facto* rule out the possibility of pseudonymous authorship for any New Testament writing. 'As we have seen, if a New Testament book is not authentically apostolic, and if it makes false assertions (as on this hypothesis these books do), then it has not the nature of Scripture, and has no place in the New Testament canon. But the fact is that these books established their place in the canon of the early Church, and have been studied and expounded in the Church for centuries without anything unworthy of their apparent authors, or inconsistent with the rest of Scripture, either in teaching or in tone, being found in them.'⁵⁰

This view differs radically from all those so far considered in that it begins with an essentially different presupposition. The books under discussion are of a different kind from all other books since they claim an authority which other books do not. There is no place, therefore, for a critical comparison of proposed New Testament pseudepigrapha with non-canonical literary types. Such comparison is in the nature of the case invalid. The force of this kind of argument has not always been fully appreciated by those who have unhesitatingly rejected it. Consistency would seem to demand that any proved unauthentic

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works would be automatically excluded from the canon. If this policy had been followed it would in one sense have lessened the problem, although it would have created many others unless complete unanimity had been attained. But it is the fact that this policy has not been followed that has led to the many attempts to justify the literary device as a commendable or at least excusable and certainly harmless convention, which need not detract from the book's authority.

Packer argues strongly for the description of pseudonymous works as 'forgeries'. He defines it as follows. 'The dictionary definition of "forgery" is fraudulent imitation, as such, irrespective of its aim, the point of the fraud being simply to get one's own product accepted as somebody else's'.⁵¹ Moreover, in answer to those who postulate the highest motives, Packer maintains, 'frauds are still fraudulent, even when perpetrated from noble motives.'⁵² The difficulty which arises here is that different minds have different notions of what is meant by 'forgery'. Thus J. C. Fenton defines it as follows, 'A forger is one who writes in the name of another for his own profit: they (i.e. pseudonymous writers) did not do so. Forgery involves

⁴⁹ *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (1958), p. 184.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

deceit for gain; pseudonymity did not'.⁵³ In all probability Fenton's definition is rather too narrow, for there are other gains beside financial. J. D. Deniston has another definition—'with a true forgery the attribution must be made by the real author himself and there must be intention to deceive'.⁵⁴ In this case the motive does not affect the issue. In view of this lack of agreement on the essential meaning of the word there is a case for avoiding it because of its possible overtones, although the mere refusal to use the word does not automatically remove the idea of culpable deceit as a possible factor in the problem.⁵⁵

Naturally a dogmatic rejection of all idea of canonical pseudepigraphy can find no place in an historical and purely literary enquiry. Yet it does not necessarily follow that the resultant position of both dogmatic and historical advocates will diverge. The dogmatic theologian cannot ignore the assured results of criticism, any more than the historical investigator can fail to take into account the facts surrounding the formation of the canon. But the former has every right to demand conclusive proof for assured results and where this is lacking he may with reason maintain authenticity. In other words the *onus probandi* rests on the advocates of non-authenticity. At the same time the historical critic has every right to insist on a thorough investigation of every avenue of historical knowledge to form a background against which to view the Biblical writings.

VI. HISTORICAL ENQUIRIES

The earlier traditional reaction towards the critical postulation of canonical pseudepigrapha almost invariably followed the dogmatic pattern, although there were some notable exceptions such as the approach of men like Dean Alford⁵⁶ who rejected the hypotheses on critical grounds. But it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a serious attempt was made to present a reasoned investigation of the claims made in respect of pseudepigraphy in the course of critical enquiries. Two such enquiries will be mentioned as representative of what might be called more enlightened reaction.

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J. S. Candlish⁵⁷ strongly challenged the assumptions of English scholars like Farrar, Simcox, S. Davidson and Plumptre that pseudonymity was an innocent literary device—in view of the fact that none of them gave supporting evidence. He then discussed whether innocent impersonations are known from Graeco-Roman antiquity, and in the course of his enquiry he called attention to various types of ancient pseudonymity—mercenary, dramatic, ironic—but concluded that there was little evidence of such works being published 'in perfect good faith'. He made much of the early Christian approach to pseudepigrapha (e.g. the Book of Wisdom, Sibylline Oracles, Gospel of Peter, Acts of Paul) and his summing up of this investigation is worth quoting as one of the earliest and clearest attempts to present the problem in its

⁵³ 'Pseudonymity in the New Testament', *Theology* (1955), p. 55.

⁵⁴ Article, 'Forgeries, Literary', *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ G. Milligan, writing on theories of non-authenticity for II Thessalonians stated, 'It is unfortunate to have to use the word "forgery"—round which such definite associations have now gathered—in connexion with our problem; but I know no other word that brings out so well the deliberate attempt of one man to use the name and authority of another in his writing. In view of iii. 17, 18, there can be no talk here of a harmless pseudonymous writing.' (*Exp* VI. ix. (1904), p. 449 n.).

⁵⁶ *The Greek Testaments* (1868).

⁵⁷ *Op cit.*, 'On the Moral Character of Pseudonymous Books', *Exp* IV. iv. (1891), pp. 91 ff., 262 ff.

historical perspective. He declared,⁵⁸ 'From these facts it would seem to follow that in the early Christian centuries, when any work was given out as of ancient or venerable authorship, it was either received as genuine, which was done with very great facility of belief, or rejected as an imposture; that such fictions, though very common, were regarded, at least by the stricter Christian teachers, as morally blameworthy; and that the notion of dramatic personation as a legitimate literary device is never mentioned, and seems never to have been thought of as a defence of such compositions. If any author write a pseudonymous book in such a way, he must have been very unsuccessful in his purpose; for it was generally taken as a genuine work, or else rejected as feigned and worthless.' Candlish partly accounted for the practice on the grounds that it was a prevalent Greek view that what is false might sometimes be used to promote men's higher good in religious matters. He also disputed the relevance of an appeal to ancient historiography as a justification for pseudonymity on the grounds that the facts do not support it. But his main concern was to demonstrate that the moral outlook of the majority of pseudonymous authors was not so high as to make deception improbable. His conclusion⁵⁹ regarding these pseudepigrapha is 'that their moral and spiritual character is not inconsistent with their having been pious frauds employed in what was supposed to be the service of religion, in an age when deceptions of that kind were common and allowed by a current system of philosophy'.

After such historical enquiries, Candlish came to the dogmatic problem of inspiration and expressed the opinion that books in which 'a false authorship is claimed, merely in order to gain the more acceptance for their contents, cannot be divinely inspired, or any part of the canon of Scripture'.⁶⁰ This approach may be summarized as follows. If criticism proves a book to be deliberately pseudonymous it must be excluded from the canon, while if, within itself, a book bears the mark of its own inspiration and claims a certain authorship that fact must take precedence over critical conclusions. Candlish admitted, however, that these two kinds of evidence may sometimes conflict, and his final position is marked by the following caution. 'In such cases the inquiry on each point should be carefully kept to its proper subject matter, and the critical question of authorship not influenced by theological considerations, nor the religious question of inspiration by mere literary conclusions; but after each has been fairly examined by its own evidence, an effort must be made to compare their relative degrees of probability, though the result may be that judgment must be suspended and fuller light waited for.'⁶¹

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The position taken up by R.D. Shaw⁶² was very similar to that of Candlish, who obviously influenced his approach. He rejected equally strongly the view that a pseudonymous work written in good faith in accordance with a literary convention would have been received without demur in the Christian Church. On the other hand he admitted in relation to inspiration, 'If there were no conscious transgression of any moral principle, it would be impossible to refuse inspiration to a pseudonymous writing on the mere ground of its pseudonymity. But if there be the conscious insincerity that we believe there must have been, then we have to consider the question: could we conceive such a writer, under the Christian

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁶² *The Pauline Epistles*⁴ (1913), pp. 477-487, an excursus on 'Pseudonymity and Interpolation'.

dispensation, a medium of revelation such as the Spirit of truth and holiness would use? It is very difficult to think of any but one answer to this question. If we are "to try the spirits whether they be of God", what better test can there be than that now applied? It seems to us that if the case of Christian morality breaks down, and we certainly regard it as in a condition of utter collapse, the claim to a place in the canon must go with it.⁶³ It will be seen from this that Shaw is representative of a merging of the historical into the dogmatic approach to the problem.

Among Continental scholars the need for a thorough enquiry into the notion of a pious fraud was certainly not overlooked. G. Wohlenberg,⁶⁴ for instance, called for an extensive examination of the evidence, but although he made certain suggestions as to the direction which such an enquiry should take he did no more than recognize the need. He himself thought that there was little probability of any book being used for Church reading which had not been authorized, and this would naturally have acted as a curb on canonical pseudepigrapha.⁶⁵

But it was not until F. Torm⁶⁶ produced his monograph on the subject that a fuller attempt was made to provide such an enquiry. Torm's main interest was the psychological problems underlying the production of pseudepigrapha. After studying the problems of author-mentality and motive, he concluded that greater problems exist in relation to religious than to secular pseudonymity. The comparisons he makes are, therefore, mainly confined to this sphere (for instance, the Orphic, Hermetic, Sibylline and Jewish writings). His conclusions coincide strikingly with those of Candlish in that he asserts that a pseudonymous writing was either believed and therefore highly esteemed, or else its unauthenticity was accepted and the writing, because of its pseudonymity, was regarded as somewhat disreputable.⁶⁷ The importance of Torm's work cannot be too greatly stressed, especially his examination of alleged New Testament pseudepigrapha. But its weakness lies in the inadequate attention given to Jewish antecedents.

Another study of a similar character is that of Arnold Meyer,⁶⁸ who made a brief but comprehensive survey of pseudepigraphic literature, but came to a different conclusion from Torm, since he used his investigations to support a number of canonical pseudepigrapha. His principle is that this procedure was so widely used in the ancient world that it was quite natural for Christians to adopt it. On the whole, an attempt to approach the subject from an ethical point of view does not appear convincing since different scholars form different estimates of the same evidence. An objection to it has been summarily expressed by Kurt Aland in the most recent study of the problem. He states categorically,

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p. 482.

⁶⁴ *Die Pastoralbriefe* (1906), p. 63, n. 1.

⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 64. Aber es ist schon an sich sehr wenig wahrscheinlich, class Schriften, welche als Vorleseschriften im Gemeindegottesdienste Aufnahme fanden, unbesehen als solche aufgenommen oder belassen worden sein sollten. So gut wie von anderswoher kommende Reiseprediger, ἀποστόλοι, in Beziehung auf, ihre Lehre geprüft werden sollten (Off. ii. 1, Did. xii, cf. 1 Jhn. iv. 1), so wird es auch bei Überreichung von Briefen gewesen sein.

⁶⁶ *Die Psychologie der Pseusonymität im Hinblick auf die Literatur des Christentums* (1932).

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 19. In a footnote Torm calls the idea of a recognized literary form, whose rightness was acknowledged, a modern invention ('eine modern Erfindung, die man aus der grossen Menge der pseudonymen Schriften and der Leichtgläubigkeit der damaligen Zeit hat wahrscheinlich machen wollen, die man aber mit wirklichen geschichtlichen Gründen nicht unterbauen kann').

⁶⁸ 'Die Pseudigraphie als ethisch-psychologisches Problem', *ZNTW* xxxv, (1936), pp. 262-79.

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'Ethics is no proper category for our problem.'⁶⁹ On the other hand, it is difficult to contend that ethics plays no part in this literary procedure, unless it is to be maintained that Christianity had absolutely no impact in the field of literature.

VII. K. ALAND'S THEORY

Aland's own proposals are perplexing, for, on the one hand, he attempts to meet the requirements of a historical approach by a definite assertion that a solution 'can be achieved only by taking into account the literature of the first two centuries as a whole'.⁷⁰ This is an advance on the earlier critics and must be commended. But, on the other hand, he takes no account of possible Jewish antecedents, nor of the apocryphal Christian pseudepigrapha, except as a development later than his chosen period. He effectively excludes by this means any possible comparative study and leaves himself free to propose his own explanation of pseudonymity without the restraint of any parallels. It is difficult to see how such a method can claim to be historical. Nevertheless, Aland's thesis must be briefly considered if only to illustrate the constant dilemma of advocates of pseudonymity.

His first proposition is that it is not until towards the latter part of the first century that authors appear as distinct personalities; and his second proposition, which is presupposed in the first, is that real letters must be distinguished from epistles, by which device he excludes the letters of Paul, Ignatius, Polycarp and Dionysius. This differentiation between epistles and letters, which was first proposed by A. Deissmann,⁷¹ is not sufficiently certain to make an exclusion of the vitally important Pauline letters at all convincing. This is particularly so since Aland classes the Pastoral Epistles among the pseudepigrapha. His theory, therefore, commences with the initial disadvantage of being far less comprehensive than he himself supposes to be desirable.

The mainstay of his approach is that anonymity and pseudonymity are intricately connected and that the latter cannot be considered apart from the former. He thinks that the earliest period was dominated by the notion of anonymity.⁷² All the Gospels were originally anonymous, as were also I Clement and the Epistle of Barnabas. Of the latter, he says, 'The author is but its instrument, the channel through which it flows to the readers of this writing.'⁷³ Of the transition from anonymity to pseudonymity Aland surprisingly finds the key in the *Didache*. Since the writer knew himself to be, and was acknowledged as, a charismatic, 'the written word received the same credence as the charismatically spoken word, and thus the *Didache* achieved recognition in the Church of those days'.⁷⁴ In other words, the work was attributed to the twelve apostles because of the evidence of its charismatic character. From this kind of evidence Aland concludes that an author who reported holy events remained anonymous, because he was writing according to the Spirit. He was 'but the pen moved by the Spirit'.⁷⁵ Consequently an authentic author of an epistle (as distinct from a letter) could not

⁶⁹ 'The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries,' *JTS* n.s. xii (1961), p. 39.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷¹ Cf. his *Bible Studies*, (1901), p. 16 and his *Light from the Ancient East* (1927), pp. 233-245.

⁷² *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

maintain his own name without exciting suspicion. From this Aland reaches the extraordinary position that there is no need to justify anonymity or pseudonymity, but that there is only a need to give an explanation where the author's real name is stated. Now this is tantamount to

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calling anonymity and particularly pseudonymity normal, which goes much farther than the hypotheses of literary convention which at most regard pseudonymity as a possible literary form for Christian writers to use.

Such a suggestion involves so much reversal of literary value that it requires the most careful sifting. Are Aland's presuppositions valid? The most obvious criticism which at once springs to mind is the arbitrary distinction between the author-mentality of letter-writers and of epistle-writers. The idea that the Spirit would lead some to write in their own names and forbid others to do so is inconceivable. If Paul's letters be taken as examples, it is not at all evident why he should be able to manifest the Spirit's activity by writing in his own name, whereas the author of the Pastorals could do no other than attribute his work to Paul. In any case Aland seems to regard II Timothy as an intended forgery,⁷⁶ which is hardly in harmony with the work of the Spirit. In fact, the Pastorals are somewhat of an embarrassment to him. This leads to the second criticism of Aland's position. His conception of the work of the Spirit is not in agreement with New Testament teaching. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and it must be assumed that He teaches men in conformity with His own nature. This would at once exclude deliberate deception, but would it also exclude the idea of pseudo-apostolic ascription on the grounds that par excellence the apostles were instruments of the Spirit? Aland sees in this latter practice the Spirit's activity. He comments on pseudonymous writings as follows: 'The unknown men, by whom they were composed, not only believed themselves to be under the sign of the Holy Spirit; they really were.'⁷⁷ By this means the inspiration of pseudonymous writings may be retained and no barrier exists to forbid their canonicity. But this is really the principle that the end justifies the means. If the authors really were under the sign of the Spirit why could they not write in their own names? Aland supplies no satisfactory explanation.

A more certain approach to the whole matter would be to make a comparison with non-canonical pseudonymous works such as contemporary Jewish examples and the earliest apocryphal New Testament writings. It is possible here to give only one or two of the main results of such a comparison,⁷⁸ but these will be sufficient to show that any explanations of suggested canonical examples must be able to stand parallel with contemporary literary processes. It may, at once, be said that there is no evidence in Christian literature for the idea of a conventional literary device, by which an author as a matter of literary custom and with the full approbation of his circle of readers publishes his own productions in another's name. There was always an ulterior motive. In the case of the Jewish books, the canon was closed and no effective audience could be secured without the sign of authority upon the writings.⁷⁹ This was achieved, so it was believed, by attributing the books to ancient worthies whose authority was sanctioned within the Canon. Contemporary with the development of the

⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁷⁸ A detailed comparison by the author is in course of preparation for publication.

⁷⁹ Many other motives may have contributed to the genesis of Jewish pseudepigrapha and these will be fully discussed in the above mentioned publication, but the closure of the Canon seems the most dominant.

Christian Church was the appearance of such writings as the Apocalypses of Baruch and Ezra, both of which address a first century situation using assumed writers of centuries before. The apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Apocalypses later do precisely the same thing, although with far less interval between the real and assumed authors and with much greater approximation to canonical forms. In both Jewish and Christian examples there was usually an attempt

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to give some verisimilitude to the pseudonym adopted, although these attempts were often not serious.

In most cases, some extra-canonical doctrine was being commended (particularly in the case of Gnostic pseudepigrapha) or else some unorthodox or unusual procedure (such as women baptising in the *Acts of Paul*). Such deviations could command no respect apart from apostolic authority and hence the resort to pseudepigraphy for propaganda purposes. This is highly intelligible, but it means that the pseudonymous device was not generally used unless there were good reasons for it. Some advocates of canonical pseudepigrapha have tried to maintain that Christians may have found it necessary to publish a work under an apostolic name or some other authoritative early Christian name in order to recall a later generation to the apostolic teaching.⁸⁰ But can it be conceived that orthodox Christians would have used a method currently being used by Gnostic writers and that this method was sanctioned by the whole Church?

For those who propose canonical pseudepigrapha the problem must be squarely faced. There are none of the suggested examples which bear any close resemblance to the known Jewish or apocryphal or pseudo-Christian pseudepigrapha.⁸¹ Aland is right in concluding that these latter show no evidence of possession of the Spirit and, therefore, cannot be used to explain the former. But the logical consequence of this should be a reluctance to propose hypotheses which involve a similar procedure unless the evidence is so overwhelming that there is no alternative but to suppose a new category of pseudepigrapha, quite different from others either before or since. This is virtually Aland's position and is undoubtedly more logical than any appeal to common literary practice. But it is really a confession of perplexity, particularly as it appears to involve a confusion over the doctrine of the Spirit.

From this brief survey it will be evident that New Testament criticism in attempting to solve one type of problem has created another which it has never satisfactorily solved. It may at least be questioned whether the principles of criticism which have led to this situation are necessarily correct.

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Prepared for the Web in December 2006 by Robert I. Bradshaw.

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⁸⁰ Cf. J. C. Fenton, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.49.