

## *Reversals of New Testament Criticism*

**Merrill C. Tenney**

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For nearly two centuries the science of Biblical criticism has played an increasingly important part in the thinking of Protestant Christianity. Influenced by the uninhibited attacks of the Encyclopedists of the French Revolution and by the rationalists of the "Enlightenment," the scholars of the Church felt compelled to study the Scriptures more carefully in order to answer the questions that had been raised concerning their truthfulness and authenticity. The resulting examination of the written text evoked numerous theories, widely promulgated and vigorously argued, concerning its authorship, composition, and reliability. Tradition was thrown to the winds as legendary and consequently unreliable; the deductions of critical study were regarded as "assured results." Some of these results have proved to be of permanent value; others have been long since discarded in favor of other theories. Many scholars who digressed from traditional belief honestly admitted that their theories were only provisional, and that new evidence would doubtless bring new conclusions. Others changed their minds when the evidence confronting them did not support their conjectures. Some, however, have clung to a negative criticism as tenaciously as their forbears did to inherited tradition.

As a matter of fact, Biblical criticism is a paradox. If all of the books of the Bible contained a categorical statement like the title-page of a book, giving the name of the author, his connection with Christianity, the date at which he wrote, the place where he lived, and the circumstances under

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which his book was composed, historical criticism would be unnecessary. It is the absence of the full historical data that compels the scholar to search out all the minute points that bear on the case, and to formulate from them some coherent conclusion about the document that he is studying. His task is legitimate, and is forced on him by the paucity of the evidence.

Ironically enough, it is this selfsame paucity that makes his conclusions uncertain, and that has brought the science of Biblical criticism into disrepute. A shaky case in court can be defended more adequately by competent witnesses than by astute lawyers, although both may be necessary. Similarly, the scarcity of data concerning the authorship of a book like Hebrews may lead to a dozen different learned suppositions or arguments about it; but the real settlement of these arguments will never be reached until positive information is available.

Unfortunately, such decisive evidence on the details of historical introduction is not always easy to obtain. The writers of the Bible were much more concerned with making history than they were with writing history. Even when they did offer some information about themselves and their works, they assumed that their readers knew who they were and what their circumstances were, and so they omitted many details that seem necessary to the modern scholar.

Of course, one should remember that Scripture was not given by God to entertain scholars but to convey a message. Nor was the scholarly approach wholly lacking; for Luke, in his well-known preface in Luke 1:1-4, stated plainly both the process and the intent of his work. Paul states in several passages (Gal. 1:11-12, I Cor. 15:1-11, I Thess. 2:13) that his writings were not simply his own opinions, but that they were to be received as the Word of God. There is no dearth of evidence that the writers of the New Testament looked upon their own works as authoritative, but often the precise details of origin are missing. Consequently, in order to reconstruct the framework of these writings many theories have been proposed. The evaluation of some of these proposals in the field of New Testament research will be the main burden of this chapter.

## I. THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

The place of honor in the long history of New Testament criticism should be assigned to the Synoptic Problem. How can the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke resemble each other so closely if they are totally independent of each other, and how can they be so distinctive if they are simply copies of each other, or of some common source? The literary phenomena of the Gospels have been minutely studied for a century and a half, and in that time certain conclusions have been reached which have been almost universally adopted.

Modern Synoptic Criticism began with Lessing (1729-1781), a German

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philosopher and essayist, who held that there was an original Aramaic Gospel which Matthew condensed and which Mark and Luke enlarged. Herder (1744-1803), a pupil of Kant, suggested that Mark was the first of the trio, and that later on an Aramaic Gospel was written which appeared in Matthew and which was used by Luke. The theory of an oral tradition as the basis for the Synoptics was proposed by Gieseler (1792-1854), and in substance it was carried on in the nineteenth century by Westcott (1825-1901). Numerous other solutions have been proposed, but the one most universally held today is that Luke and Matthew derived their content largely from Mark, which they contain almost in its entirety, and from a collection of the sayings or teachings of Jesus which for want of a better name is called "Q," from the German *Quelle*, meaning "source."

So firmly entrenched has this latter theory become that Sanday, as long ago as 1911, began an essay on "The Conditions under Which the Gospels Were Written" by saying:

We assume that the marked resemblances between the first three Gospels are due to the use of common documents, and that the fundamental documents are two in number: (1) a complete Gospel practically identical with our St. Mark, which was used by the evangelists whom we know as St. Matthew and St. Luke; and (2) a collection consisting mainly but not entirely of discourses, which may perhaps have been known to, but was probably not systematically used by St. Mark, but which supplied the groundwork of certain common matter in St. Matthew and St. Luke (*Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 4).

Sanday's statement of the case represents quite fairly the chief assumption of the majority of critical scholars for the last 50 years. Even such conservative writers as A. T. Robertson in

America and W. Graham Scroggie in Britain have espoused the Two-Document theory in one aspect or another. In recent times, however, some new developments of thought have shaken confidence in it considerably.

For one thing, the rise of the Formgeschichte school has brought back the old concept of oral tradition into the forum of discussion. In an attempt to get behind the two documents of the current hypothesis, the analysts of the text began to consider the units that composed it. These units consisted of sayings or stories or blocks of teaching that could have been circulated individually and later collected into the "sources" or documents mentioned above. A little reflection, however, brought further questions. Who would have circulated these stories? How would they have been used? For what purpose would they have been employed? If they were really widely current among Christian believers, and were used as illustrations or texts for Christian preaching, why was it necessary to predicate that the persons who collected and assembled them were other than the traditional Gospel writers? Undoubtedly there are scholars who hold to the Formgeschichte theory as con-

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comitant with the Two-Document theory, but there is a perceptible trend away from it back to some form of the theory of oral tradition.

Not only does the Formgeschichte theory offer a positive alternative to a documentary theory, but there is also a trend toward the abandonment of the hypothetical Q. Its existence has always been shadowy. Although the verbal similarities existing between sections of Matthew and of Luke have been interpreted as reflections of a non-Markan original which both Evangelists used, such a document has never been found. Of course, a very early collection of the sayings of Jesus and of some stories concerning him remains possible. One such fragment appeared among the papyri of Egypt, and has already been published by Grenfell and Hunt (1897) under the title, "The Logia of Jesus." Another, "A Fragment of an Unknown Gospel," was edited by Bell and Skeat (1935). Neither Q nor any approximation of it has yet been discovered, however, nor is there any record of such a source in patristic literature.

While it is true that the foregoing reasoning may have the disadvantage of being based on an argument from silence, it is also true on the positive side that some modern scholars are challenging the existence of Q. A. M. Farrer, in an essay entitled "On Dispensing with Q," published in 1955 (*Studies in the Gospels*, D. E. Nineham, Ed.), has propounded that the critical study of the Synoptic Gospels can simplify its process by dispensing with Q. It is, he avers, quite unnecessary to hypothecate it unless we assume that St. Luke never read St. Matthew. Both of these Gospels, he says, were composed in the same literary region and about the same time, between A.D. 75 and A.D. 90. Mark's Gospel was extant and known in the same place and at the same time. It would be quite possible for the Evangelists to have known each other directly, and to have interchanged information or manuscripts, had they chosen to do so.

Not only is Q non-existent as a separate document, but no attempt to recover it from the Gospels has been successful. No two reconstructions are alike. There is no unanimity among those who propose the theory as to what the contents of the original document might be, except that it consisted chiefly of discourses and teachings. Furthermore, if Q had been written containing only a collection of Jesus' sayings and a few scattered narratives, it would

not have reflected at all the general trend in gospel teaching characteristic of its age. Farrer observes that when Luke referred to his sources of information he spoke of Gospels; and Q was not a Gospel.

In another work published in 1957, a posthumous volume by Wilfred C. Knox on *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew and Luke*, the author suggests that the material may not have come from a single source, but that there may have been a number of short tracts used for teaching which the writers of these Gospels combined in their works. Without making any commitment on the validity of Knox' theory, one may say that he has

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at least presented a plausible alternative to the Two-Document theory that supplants the hypothetical Q.

## II. THE DATE OF ACTS

A second important subject of historical criticism has been the book of Acts. Its historicity was assailed by F. C. Baur of Tübingen, who, under the influence of Hegel and Schleiermacher, became a thoroughgoing rationalist. He contended that Acts was produced about the middle of the second century for the express purpose of glossing over a long standing dispute between the Pauline or universalizing party in the Church, which advocated Gentile liberty, and the Petrine or Judaizing party, which held to a strict observance of the Law. The book of Acts was thus not an actual history of what had taken place in the first century, but was historical romance written for propaganda purposes. Baur remarked that "[its] statements... can only be looked upon as an intentional deviation from historical truth in the interest of the special tendency which they possess."

The same general opinion was reiterated by Weizsäcker in 1902 in his *Apostolic Age*, and in more recent years has been held by Kirsopp Lake and John Knox, although neither of these men would necessarily follow the Tübingen school in all details. They agree, however, on the historical unreliability of Acts, and to a date of writing that places it somewhere between A.D. 90 and 150.

Counter to this dismissal of Acts and its writer as unreliable is the teaching of Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939). Trained in the German historical school of the mid-nineteenth century which followed the Tübingen theory, he entered upon his career as a classical scholar and archaeologist. He became interested in the antiquities of Asia Minor, and spent a number of years in traveling through the country, studying its people, its terrain, and the remains of classical civilization. To his surprise he discovered that the most valuable guide to Asia Minor of the first century was the book of Acts. After examining carefully the actual territory over which Paul and the writer of Acts presumably traveled, and after comparing the book with the results of his historical and geographical investigations, Ramsay said:

The boundaries of the districts mentioned in Acts... are true to the period in which the action lies... they are based on information given by an eye-witness, a person who had been engaged in the action described.... The present writer takes the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 79 f.).

An even more astounding reversal of opinion was that of Adolf Harnack (*Luke, the Physician*, 1907), who could not by any stretch of the imagina-

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tion be described as a conservative in Biblical criticism. Writing in 1907, Harnack said:

Ten years ago, in the preface to the first volume of the second part of my "History of Christian Literature" I stated that the criticism of the sources of primitive Christianity was gradually returning to the traditional standpoints. My friends [of the rationalistic school] have taken offence at this statement of mine, although I had in part established its truth.... Let me, therefore, now express my absolute conviction that many traditional positions are untenable and must give place to new and startling discoveries.... We can now assert that *during the years 30-70 A.D., and on the soil of Palestine*—more particularly in Jerusalem—*this tradition as a whole took the essential form* which it presents in its later development.... This result of research is becoming clearer day by day, and is steadily replacing the earlier "critical" hypothesis [the Tübingen theory] which assumes that the fundamental development of Christian tradition extended over a period of some one hundred years, and that in its formation the whole Diaspora played a part as important as that of the Holy Land and its primitive churches (*Luke, the Physician*, 1907, pp. vi, vii).

After an intensive and highly detailed study of the Greek text of Luke and Acts he came to the conclusion that both were written by the same author; that the author was a companion of Paul; and that he must have been Luke the physician, whom Paul mentions in his epistles. He affirmed that Acts was written in A.D. 62 or earlier, and that it is an accurate historical statement of the events which it describes.

Recent archaeological and historical discoveries have tended to confirm these judgments. At no point has archaeological evidence contradicted Luke, though not all of his statements have yet been corroborated. His use of the proper titles for contemporary officials, his accuracy in describing cities, and in locating provincial boundaries which changed frequently during the first century, and his vivid description of ancient navigation in Acts 27 bespeak an essential historical truthfulness that is quite the opposite of the careless partisan writing of which he had been accused.

### III. THE FOURTH GOSPEL

A similar change has begun to take place in the critical attitude toward the Fourth Gospel. The traditional view, founded largely on the testimony of the Fathers of the second century, Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Irenaeus, assumed that the Gospel was the product of John the son of Zebedee, who wrote it in his extreme old age at Ephesus. This view was generally held by the church with very few exceptions down to the last of the eighteenth century, when it was first challenged by Evanson, a clergyman of the Church of England, who questioned both the authorship and validity of the Gospel. In 1826 Bretschneider, a German writer, published the first systematic

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criticism of the book. He reached the conclusion that it was written by an unknown Greek using the name of John, who lived in Egypt in the middle of the second century, and that the Gospel was first introduced to Rome and to the world by Gnostics. Baur, of Tübingen fame, followed much the same method of approach and came to the same conclusion that the Gospel was a document belonging to the second century.

Along with the acceptance of a late date there followed inevitably the corollary that the Fourth Gospel was not of apostolic authorship and that it was not historical in content. It came to be regarded as a theological interpretation of the life of Jesus written from a mystical or philosophical standpoint, representing the effect upon Christianity of a fusion of Greek philosophical speculations and of Jewish Messianism. The problem of its relation to the Synoptic Gospels was particularly acute. Many of the differences in statement and in attitude seemed irreconcilable. F. C. Burkitt (*The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, 1906, p. 225), after a survey of the divergence between the accounts of the life of Jesus given by Mark and that given by John, said:

This is something more than mere historical inaccuracy. It is a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth; and, as the Evangelist is a serious person in deadly earnest, we must conclude that he cared less for historical truth than for something else. To render justice to his work we must do more than demonstrate his untrustworthiness as a chronicler.

Burkitt adds also:

It is quite inconceivable that the historical Jesus could have argued and quibbled with opponents, as He is represented to have done in the Fourth Gospel. The only possible explanation is that the work is not history, but something else cast in historical form (*ibid.*, p. 228).

Burkitt's position was supported in this country by Benjamin W. Bacon and others of his school. He said in *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate* (1910), "On this question we are driven unavoidably to the alternative: Either Synoptics or John" (p. 3). This verdict epitomizes the critical thinking on the Fourth Gospel for most of the first half of the current century.

Both the critical views of the late date and of the unhistorical content have been modified considerably in recent years. The most vigorous rebuttal of the second century date was provided by J. B. Lightfoot in his *Biblical Essays*. He gave a convincing demonstration that the extant external evidence made a late date impossible, and made the following prediction: "We may look forward to the time when it will be held discreditable to the reputation of any critic for sobriety and judgment to assign to this Gospel any later date than the end of the first or the beginning of the second century" (p. 11).

Lightfoot's prediction has been amply justified by more recent develop-

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ments in discovery and criticism. In 1935 a small fragment of a papyrus codex of the Fourth Gospel, containing John 18:31-33, 37, 38, was published by the John Rylands Library. It had come into their possession with a mass of other papyri from Professor B. P. Grenfell in 1920,

and was identified in the process of cataloguing. This tiny fragment, about 2½ by 3½ inches in size, was unquestionably a genuine part of a very early copy of the Gospel written in codex form. Obviously it was intended to be read frequently, rather than to repose in the orderly oblivion of some library. When examined by palaeographers for the style and age of its handwriting, it was found to have close affinity with documents of the second century. Its editor says:

On the whole we may accept with some confidence the first half of the second century, A.D. 100-150, as the period in which P. Ryl. Gk. 457 was most probably written—a judgment which I should be much more loath to pronounce were it not supported by Sir Frederic Kenyon, Dr. W. Schubart, and Dr. H. I. Bell who have seen photographs of the text and whose experience and authority in these matters are unrivalled.

This fragment proves that the Fourth Gospel circulated in Egypt by the first half of the second century. To be circulated at this time it must have been composed previously, and must have been known in the Church for at least a few years. The date of the writing of the Gospel must therefore have been in the last decade of the first century—quite certainly not later than the time of Trajan.

Even apart from such objective evidence as the Rylands Fragment recent critical theories have been changing. A. T. Olmstead, late professor of Oriental History in the University of Chicago, asserted in his work on Jesus in the *Light of History* (1942) that the narratives of John were written in Aramaic before A.D. 40, and were the oldest and most authentic accounts of Jesus' life. He did not submit extensive proofs for his view, but at least he allowed that an early date was possible. Erwin R. Goodenough, in an article on "John, A Primitive Gospel" (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXIV [1945] II, 145-182), concluded that there is no reason why the Fourth Gospel could not have been composed as early as A.D. 40. He discarded an evolutionary view of Christianity as "a hypothetical creation," pointing out that if Paul's Christology can be assigned to the sixth decade of the Christian era, there is no inherent reason why John's should be later. As positive arguments for such an early date, he presented (1) the author's apparent ignorance of the Synoptic tradition, (2) the absence of reference to the Virgin Birth, (3) and unfamiliarity with the Eucharist as taught by the Synoptics.

William F. Albright has taken much the same viewpoint in his published works. In *The Archaeology of Palestine* (p. 141) he shows that the court where Jesus appeared before Pilate, called Gabbatha or the Pavement (John 19:53) was the court of the Tower of Antonia, the Roman military headquarters in Jerusalem. It was destroyed in the siege of A.D. 66-70, and the

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rebuilding of the city in the time of Hadrian left it buried under the rubble of the ruins. The clear allusion of that Gospel to this place means that the writer knew the condition of the city before A.D. 70, and that he was probably writing from first-hand experience.

Again, in an essay on "Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of John," published in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* as recently as 1956, Albright contends

that there was a complete decline of Aramaic literature in Palestine under the Seleucids. The Jewish civilization of Palestine was wiped out in the First Revolt. He says:

...if there are correct data in the Gospels or Acts of the Apostles which can be validated archaeologically or typographically, they must have been carried from Palestine in oral form by Christians who left that land before or during the First Jewish Revolt (p. 156).

Albright's observation suggests two conclusions: first, that the Gospel of John was written by a person who lived in Palestine before A.D. 70 and who was acquainted with the data about Jesus as they were circulated in Aramaic; and second, that it was originally written in Greek for a constituency that existed during his later lifetime. It must, therefore, have been written not later than the beginning of the second century, and more probably in the first century.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have cast some light on the Johannine problem. They have shown that Aramaic manuscripts existed in the time of Christ, but if the proportion of Aramaic literature to Hebrew were the same outside of the Qumran community as within it, it must have been sparse. There are relatively few Aramaic writings that appear among the Scrolls. The actual publication of an Aramaic John is not impossible, but is rather improbable. On the other hand, the Scrolls have shown that the vocabulary of John is not alien to the thinking of the earliest Christian community of Palestine. F. F. Bruce has brought out the fact that such expressions as "sons of light," "the light of life," "walking in darkness," "doing the truth," "the works of God" appear in the literature of the Qumran settlement (*Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1956). These phrases show that the Gospel may reflect the pietistic religious terminology of first century Palestine which was used in the Qumran settlement, rather than the mystical language of the Greek world of Alexandria or Ephesus. If so, another objection to the early date of John has been dissolved.

The trend of Johannine criticism today is toward an earlier dating and a Palestinian provenance. The authorship is still debated warmly, for first century dating does not necessitate that John the son of Zebedee wrote the Gospel. There is, however, less objection to ascribing the Fourth Gospel to the disciple of Jesus who leaned on his breast at the last supper than to the "great unknown" hypothesized by Biblical criticism a century ago.

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#### **IV. THE CRITICISM OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES**

The Pastoral Epistles of Paul form a united group which possess marked characteristics of their own. Their content bespeaks a settled Church, rapidly becoming institutionalized, with recognized leaders and with increasing internal problems, both ethical and doctrinal. They differ considerably in content from the Travel Epistles, which reflect small groups of Christians who had not yet adjusted to the life of the world around them, and are trying to gain their balance in a novel and confusing situation.

Historical criticism has not been slow to seize upon these differences and to challenge the Pauline authorship. Marcion, in the second century, rejected them from his canon, and did not list them with the epistles of Paul which he accepted as authoritative. His judgment was doubtless prompted more by feeling than by an historical reason, since the teaching of the Pastorals against asceticism would have run counter to the Gnostic philosophy which he held.



In 1807 Friedrich Schleiermacher rejected the Pauline authorship of I Timothy. F. C. Baur in his work on the Pastorals in 1835 contended that it was inconsistent to reject I Timothy and to accept the Pauline authorship of II Timothy and Titus. He excluded all three from the Pauline Canon. The general verdict of New Testament scholars, with a few exceptions, has been the same down to the present day, and in many works on introduction the non-Pauline character of these books is taken for granted.

The arguments for this position are fivefold. First, the Pastorals differ in language and style more radically from the books of the acknowledged Pauline Canon than any one of the latter does from the rest. P. N. Harrison (*The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, 1921) argues at length from an exhaustive study of the vocabulary of the Pastorals that it bears a much stronger resemblance to the literature of the second century than it does to the Pauline writings. Of the 848 words used in them which are not proper names, 306 are not found in any of the ten Pauline epistles. Harrison concedes that some passages in the Pastorals are strongly Pauline, and that they probably represent genuine brief notes included in the larger works assertedly written by a later author.

The second objection to the Pauline authorship is that the church polity of the Pastorals is more advanced than that of the pioneer conditions in which Paul labored. The Pauline Church was in its infancy; the Church of the Pastorals is reaching adulthood. Church government had acquired a fixed form, and the officers had well-defined functions rather than being simply itinerant preachers.

Again, the errors combated by these epistles seem to have been more closely related to the heresies of the second century than to those which Paul discussed in his earlier epistles. These doctrinal digressions were the result of a reaction against an accepted standard rather than individual misapprehensions of the initial preaching of the gospel.

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In conjunction with the foregoing argument is the corollary that the doctrinal content of the Pastorals reflects a body of truth which has become codified in a creed. The atmosphere does not reflect the creative formation of a new theology in Christ, as does Galatians, but rather the repetition of what has become settled belief.

Finally, the argument has been advanced that the Pastorals cannot be fitted into any known pattern of Paul's life. Their geographical and personal references do not accord with itineraries and contacts mentioned in Acts, and cannot, therefore, belong legitimately to his biography.

On the basis of the preceding arguments general critical opinion has rejected the genuineness of the Pastorals. There have been some notable exceptions, however. Theodor Zahn (*Introduction to the New Testament*) pointed out that the personal references to Paul's companions could hardly be free creations, especially since some of the allusions are uncomplimentary. Legend almost invariably lauds its subjects, and seeks to make them appear saintly. Zahn also questioned why the Pastorals, if they were written in the second quarter of the second century, did not reflect the autocratic rule of the bishops as Ignatius describes it. He asserts that there is no trace of such an attitude in these epistles.

From the historical standpoint Sir William Ramsay remarked:

Incidentally we may here note that the tone of the Pastoral Epistles in this respect is consistent only with an early date. It is difficult for the historian of the Empire to admit that they were composed after that development of the Imperial policy towards the Christians which occurred... under the Flavian Emperors (*The Church in the Roman Empire*, 1903, p. 248).

While it is true that the Pastorals describe an ecclesiastical organization different from that of Thessalonians, it is by no means impossible that the change could have taken place within the span of fifteen years, which would be half a generation of growth. The offices mentioned were not to be understood wholly by modern definition. A "bishop" was merely an overseer; not the church official that he is now. Sometimes there was more than one bishop in a given church.

Pherigo, in an article published in 1951, "Paul's Life after the Close of Acts," in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, argued that Paul must have been released after the two-year imprisonment chronicled in Acts, and that he died later in Rome under Nero, as tradition states. He avers that a forger would not have assumed release and imprisonment had there not been good reason for believing in them. Genuine or spurious, the Pastorals thus speak of a chapter in Paul's life that the New Testament does not record elsewhere. There is, therefore, room for the writing of the Pastorals by Paul between A.D. 62 and 65 in the general pattern of his career.

F. J. Badcock in *The Pauline Epistles* (1937) attacked the problem of the vocabulary which had been posed by P. N. Harrison. "I shall try to prove,"

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he said, "(1) that there are no words employed which might not well have been in use in St. Paul's time...; and (2) more generally, that Dr. Harrison has set himself an impossible task" (pp. 115 ff.).

Accepting the list of words and phrases given in the appendix to Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* as peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles, he started with a count of 197. From these he deducted ten that were alternate or erroneous readings in the text, or as occurring elsewhere in the New Testament. The words used in common with the Septuagint, which would be available to any Christian writer in the apostolic period, may also be subtracted, amounting to 73. Thirty more are used in the classical authors; Aristotle and Strabo supply nine more; and ten are used by non-Christian authors contemporary with the apostolic age. Of the remaining vocabulary, a large part can be accounted for on the basis of analogy with known terms or by formulation from the needs of church life. He comes to the conclusion that there are no terms in the Pastorals that are demonstrably later than the first century. Harrison's thesis that the Pastorals must be late because of their language is not supported by the facts. Badcock concludes that the Pastorals "belong to the time anterior to the First Epistle of Clement, and are at least substantially Pauline."

Although Badcock takes the view that "The hand is the hand of an editor or redactor, but the voice is the voice of Paul, and no other" (p. 529), it is obvious that he has been compelled by

the force of the content of the epistles to concede that they are essentially Pauline. He suggests that they are notes left by Paul which one of his assistants put into epistolary form after his death in Rome.

While Badcock does not completely reverse the critical position on the Pastorals, the concession that he makes shows that he is not fully convinced of its truth. A more positive attitude is assumed by E. K. Simpson in his commentary on *The Pastoral Epistles* (1954). He shows that many words and features appear that are distinctly Pauline, and that the dissimilarities between these documents and the uncontested Pauline writings are really no greater than the disparities between Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and his *Northern Farmer*. Simpson champions boldly the Pauline authorship.

Even more recently William Hendriksen in his *New Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* contends that in this controversy the burden of proof is wholly on the negative side. His discussion is extensive, and he holds that many phenomena which have been interpreted as fatal to the Pauline origin of the Pastorals may really be in its favor.

For instance, he points out that out of the 306 new words found in the Pastorals that do not occur in the ten undisputed epistles of Paul, only nine are found in all three letters. "If dissimilarity in new vocabulary proves different authorship, something can be said for the proposition that a different author would have to be posited for each of the Pastorals" (p. 8).

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Thus the argument that a large proportion of new words must necessarily call for a different author proves too much, for the Pastorals are generally acknowledged to have been written by the same man.

Hendriksen notes that the Pastorals have many positive Pauline features. The author's attitude of concern for his addressees is Pauline. His use of figures of speech, of lists of virtues or vices, his occasional play upon words, his employment of long compounds, and the frequent allusion to individuals by name are all Pauline characteristics (pp. 13-17).

While he concedes that the Pastorals differ in many ways from the other Pauline epistles, he shows that there are no insuperable objections to the Pauline authorship, and he makes a good case for their acceptance in the Pauline Canon.

## V. THE NEW TREND IN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Ever since the printing of Erasmus' Greek Testament in the beginnings of the Reformation there has been a steady attempt to improve and to clarify the text of the New Testament. From the *Textus Receptus* of Stephanus, hastily patched together from the first convenient manuscripts that scholars could find to provide a basic text, to the carefully formulated text of Westcott and Hort, there has grown a Greek Testament which presumably is a close approximation of the original. Westcott and Hort edited the manuscript evidence by a set of principles which gave an objective basis for choice of variant reading, and which sifted them as accurately for error as any procedure could.

Through their genealogical method which classified the texts of the manuscripts, versions, and fathers into groups which could be evaluated as units, Westcott and Hort succeeded in eliminating some of the grosser mistakes and in making a closer approach to the original. They demonstrated that the bulk of the manuscripts followed the "Syrian" text of the fourth century, a revision made in Antioch which was antedated by the "Western," "Neutral," and "Alexandrian" families of text. Since the "Alexandrian" consisted chiefly of numerous small refinements of the "Neutral," it could not be given much separate weight. Consequently, the choice lay between the "Western" text, a somewhat cruder but more detailed text existing chiefly in the Old Latin, Old Syriac, and in the Latin fathers. The "Neutral" text was supposed to have been the oldest and purest of all. The editors so named it because they thought it to be free of perversions and corruptions. They based it chiefly on Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, which were at that time the oldest complete vellum manuscripts known.

The text which they produced is still probably the best critical text available, but it cannot be considered as a final criterion of what the original manuscripts were. In the first place, the whole genealogical method has been called in question. One might almost as well attempt to reconstruct the

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features of his great-grandfather by adding together the features of his descendants as to reproduce exactly the original text from the faulty copies which have descended from it. It is true that when a series of manuscripts are copied from one original their united worth is no more than that of the archetype from which they were drawn. The subjective factors of judgment are still great, however; and the possibility of individual variants apart from family relations is so great that Ernest C. Colwell has argued for individual critical judgment upon each variant rather than judging by use of the family to which the variant belongs ("Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVII, 1948, pp. 1-5).

A second problem was posed by the discovery of the "Caesarean" family. The term is probably a misnomer, for the examples of this type of text have been found in Egypt as well as in Caesarea. It is supposed to have been the text used in Caesarea by Origen, perhaps according with the type of Testament that he found there. It has been reconstituted for a part of Mark by Lake and Blake, and on the Westcott and Hort theory makes a new family in the manuscript tradition. Its variants show that there was another class of text available in the third century which had not previously been taken into consideration when the supremacy of the "Neutral" text was accepted.

The discovery of the Chester Beatty papyri (p 45, 46, 47) of the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation, and of the Bodmer papyrus of John (p 66) has raised new questions about the finality of the Westcott and Hort text. Since the manuscripts of the "Neutral" text belong to the fourth century at the earliest, the newly discovered papyri, which belong to the third century, antedate it by a hundred years. It is possible that where the WH text differs from the papyri, it might be wrong. The papyri do not accord exactly with any of the "families," and since they are older, they may approximate more nearly the originals than Westcott and Hort.

A third factor in revising the standing of the WH text is the new estimate of the "Western" readings. Westcott and Hort admitted that this text was equally as ancient as the "Neutral," but thought it to be more loosely copied, and hence more corrupt. As a matter of fact, it was

used more widely than the "Neutral," and despite its oddities, in some passages was conceded even by Westcott and Hort to be more trustworthy. The most recent venture in the field of textual criticism, the creation of a larger critical text of the New Testament based on the *Textus Receptus* and including collations of all the major manuscripts, will doubtless show that the WH text was not infallible, although it was undeniably the best up to its time.

The foregoing changes in the conclusions of New Testament criticism are sufficient to show that while much has been learned from the application of its principles, it is still in a fluid state. As new facts become available, the "assured results" of yesterday must often be altered or abandoned. In the attempt to fill the gaps of knowledge by hypotheses some errors are inevitable-

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ble, and there is little room for insisting dogmatically that the theories are correct when their foundations are so often unsure.

To assert with finality that Q existed in a certain form, or that Acts is unhistorical, or that John is a product of the late second century simply because the conclusion logically follows from a theory is unsafe indeed. It is just as naive to accept the latest theory because it is new as to cling to tradition because it is old. Insufficient information may make the premises of the theory faulty, and consequently unreliable.

From the earliest period of the Church's history the Scriptures have been exposed to critical scrutiny. Their friends have sought to protect them from attack, and their enemies have sought to discredit them by the use of the same tool. Biblical criticism has stimulated a fuller investigation of the background of the Scriptures, and to an evangelical thinker it provides a powerful tool for apologetic preaching. The instrument is a useful servant, but it may become a bad master; for the "critical mind" may become so critical that it loses the truth it is trying to illumine.

Two things become increasingly apparent as the critical process of developing hypotheses and the consequent verification or contradiction of them continues: speculative theories and attacks upon the veracity and authenticity of the Scriptures tend to lose their support as the field of knowledge broadens, and fuller research increases the tenability of a conservative attitude in Biblical studies. Time is on the side of the believer who has confidence in the eternal truth of God revealed in the Scriptures.

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