

# EARLY CHRISTIANITY'S LETTERS

G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, *Oudchristelijke Brieven*  
Godsdienstwetenschappelijke Studien, 1951, 3-31

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Not every text described as a letter is really a letter. We may start with the following definition: a real letter is the written communication of his thought by one person to another, sometimes to more than just one other person. For example a young person, when staying abroad could regularly send letters to his/her parents which are supposed to be sent on, in turn, to his/her brothers and sisters, if they live elsewhere, and perhaps still further to some good friends as well. The simplest form of a letter, however, remains the expression in writing of a person's own thought for transmission from A to B.

It has been said that four conditions have to be met to allow a written text to be designated as a letter: the name of the sender and that of the addressee must be known; the opening and signature have to secure its completeness. There mustn't be any doubt about its being genuine<sup>[1]</sup>.

The sender need not have written it in his/her own hand; he or she may have dictated it to a secretary or a stenographer. Someone else may have copied it from a draft. A third person may even have composed it following the sender's instructions. But the letter remains a letter, only if the sender by signing it or by some other mark of authenticity assumes responsibility on his own account<sup>[2]</sup>. I can agree to these conditions for a genuine letter. Nevertheless, what I see as the essential condition is that it be the communication of a person's thought by this person to another person.

Not every so-called letter is such a real letter. There is no need for a thorough-going acquaintance with literature to be aware of this. Aren't there in our own Dutch literature novels in the shape of letters? [4] I am thinking of Wolff and Deken, of Bosboom-Toussaint's psychological novel of emancipation, *Majoor*

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[1] So **Otto Roller**, "Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe". Stuttgart, 1933, p.30

[2] **Roller**, p.3

*Frans*, which consists of “letters”. Moreover, there are Busken Huet’s *Brieven over den Bijbel*. Widely read among the “letters” of foreign literature are Erdmann’s *Psychologische Briefe* (1852), addressed to a highly esteemed friend (to ask who this friend possibly could have been would be a foolish thing to do) and Justus von Liebig’s *Chemische Briefe* (3rd ed. 1851). Not one of all these letters was ever sent to particular persons, either by public or private means of transport. Their dressing-up for literary ends is obvious and so nobody thereby suspects forgery.

So we have to distinguish between real and pseudo-letters. This is true not only in our times but just as well in antiquity. Discoveries of papyri in Egypt have brought to light many letters which were written for specific occasions <sup>[3]</sup>. Classical examples of such occasional letters were written by Cicero: private letters showing profound intimacy, letters communicating information, diplomatic letters, business letters, letters of consolation, of recommendation. In such real letters the author logically reveals his own character and at the same time, he tries to show empathy with the feelings of the addressee. Correspondence of that kind always gives us a more or less clear picture of both the author and his readers. In his letters to Atticus, Cicero reveals himself as he actually is. On the other hand, his letters *ad familiares* were drafted for a greater number of readers, and because of that they show traces of rhetoric.

The *letter of Art*, as a special type of literature, is derived occasionally from real letters. The great Attic rhetorician Isocrates (436-338 BCE) used the letter form for fiction to give his readers more vivid impressions. In Rome the poet Horace (65-8 BCE) pictures in his *Letters* scenes of human life in a satirical way or teaches his readers how to understand poetry [5]. In the fictitious letters of literature, the authors aim at beauty of form. Typical examples are the collected letters of Pliny (62-114), which no scholar accepts as real letters. In them there is but seldom any connexion between the subject of the letter and its addressee, whose name is only mentioned to flatter him. “The addressee, in fact, is the contemporary community of the educated.”<sup>[4]</sup>

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century C. E., letter writing had already become a special type of literature in the Roman world. Thus in schools of rhetoric, letters using names of historical persons were being written about given events to improve one’s style. From there they found their way into literature. Letters were edited in the fields of law, medicine and didactics. The letter genre was used by the Stoics above all to popularize moral values (Panaetius and Poseidonius). Especially

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[3] cfr. **St. Witkowski**, “Epistulae privatae graecae”. Leipzig, 1906

[4] “Geschichte der römischen Literatur” by **Martin Schanz**, 2. Teil, 4. ed., revised by **Carl Hosius**, p.847, p.847ff.

Seneca's letters are to be seen as edifying reading material for the public at large<sup>[5]</sup>. Though they are addressed to the procurator of Sicily Lucilius (62 CE) on the surface, they nevertheless clearly show traces of not belonging to a real exchange of letters, but rather of being destined from the very beginning to the broader public.

This is already made apparent by the inherent contradiction when Seneca, 66-years old at the time, introduces his friend as "a young man" (Ep. 26,7) from whom he expects great things (2,1), but who, in point of fact, still badly needs his advice and teachings. Elsewhere, he declares the difference in age to be insignificant. (35,2). Because of this, some scholars have assumed that the collection consists of both real and fictional letters. But there is no reason whatever [6] for doing so: the entire collection is meant to be read by the broader public.

By writing to Lucilius, Seneca gives his teachings the character of a private exchange of ideas though it is really just a pseudonym<sup>[6]</sup>. In confidential letters, one would expect to find allusions to contemporaneous persons, but there aren't any. What the letters aimed at was to recommend philosophical studies as the most important and most suitable occupation for a human being. In these letters Seneca gradually lets go the letter-form. Often he confines himself to just a remark as e.g. "you want to know." His text switches more and more into dialogue form to the end of refuting other people's ideas<sup>[7]</sup>.

PETERS' diagnosis has since been confirmed by A. BOURGERY<sup>[8]</sup>: these letters were never sent. He points out that already JUSTUS LIPSIUS (1547-1606) considered them to be the fruit of Seneca's everyday meditations. There aren't any individual traits in the portrait of Lucilius. Though totally unable of taking any initiative himself, he is unabasingly willing to let his friend provide him with a moral education. He represents the ideal pupil, but in fact, he is of no real importance; he is a dummy that "asks" and "would like to", "wants to know" and "says" — everything just as an author might make up as a fictional interrogator.

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[5] Cfr. **Hermann Peter**, "Der Brief in der römischen Literatur. Literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchungen und Zusammenfassungen" (Tome XX of the "Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der kgl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften". No. III, Leipzig, 1901, p.216ff., 204ff.

[6] *l.c.*, p.229

[7] *l.c.*, p.233ff.

[8] In "Revue de Philologie de Littérature et d'Histoire anciennes". XXXV. Paris 1911, p.40–55. Cfr. p.31, footnote 1

It may well be that Seneca got the idea of expressing his thoughts in the form of letters from Epicurus' famous letters from which he likes so much to quote.

Seneca had a great impact on later authors, e.g. on Fathers of the Church like Cyprian, Lactantius, Ambrose and Hieronymus. Generally speaking, their letters were conceived and written for public use, even though they are directed at particular communities, circles or private persons. Their intentions are education and edification, admonition and consolation for the greatest possible number of readers.<sup>[9]</sup> The same can be said about early Christian [7] letters. In those times, pseudonymous writing was quite common. Works attributed to Adam, Henoch, the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Ezra are just a few examples among many. This usage cannot be ignored by any NT scholar. Yet, as soon as the canonical apostolic Epistles are at stake, they seem to forget this fact.

Theology today is not much interested in the problems of criticism that were particularly prevalent in the last century [i.e. nineteenth century]. Those seeking to cast a positive sheen on matters speak with disdain regarding such critics as if their predecessors liked nothing better than declaring as many ancient texts as possible spurious. But too much confidence regarding the traditions of the Church without the necessary amount of criticism leads to absurd conclusions regarding earliest Christianity.

The Danish theologian, FREDERIK TORM<sup>[10]</sup> identified pseudonymous works in Greek, profane Roman and Jewish religious literature, but denied that such Christian literature also existed and had been recognized as such by contemporaries within the Christian Church of the first centuries. In the end, it was possible for him to ascribe the fourth Gospel to John, the Epistle of James to James and the Pastoral Letters to Paul. According to the historian of Greek literature ULRICH VON WILAMOWITZ – MOELLENDORF, by contrast, these latter documents have nothing whatsoever to do with Paul. He labels them “Falsate” (forgeries), as opposed to the other Pauline Epistles which he evaluated in the traditional way. But he neither considered the genuine letters to be private letters nor just literature, but rather something in between, an inimitable but again and again imitated form that reminds us of Epicurus' usage of the letter mode to disseminate his doctrines.

“Forgery” sounds nasty. We have to differentiate [9] between the work of a forger and that of an author who makes use of “the literary form of fiction”. When in the period of Hellenism in Alexandria and Pergamom great libraries

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<sup>[9]</sup> **Peter**, p.239ff.

<sup>[10]</sup> “Die Psychologie der Pseudonymität im Hinblick auf die Literatur des Urchristentums. Gütersloh, 1932”

were being founded, the administrators paid out good money in their attempt to complete their stock of books as far as possible. Then it surely happened that, seeking profit, booksellers added the name of a famous author, as e.g. Isocrate or Galen, to obscure texts to enhance their price. Thus works that were anonymous or were written by unknown authors and had not done well in bookshops found their way to buyers. There were even special tricks to give recently composed manuscripts the appearance of old ones, e.g. by putting them in a granary on top of heaps of fresh wheat! Lucian (adv. indoctum 1) mockingly talks about the credulity of a public that doesn't see through such practices. This kind of fraud figures prominently in the time of the Roman Emperors. In agreement with THEODOR BIRT,<sup>[12]</sup> we should speak here of literary stealing.

We can't accuse the early Christian pseudepigraphers of such a criminal act. We must stress this point, for there is a lot of equivocation here. The opponents of radical criticism very often seem to say that it classifies the NT authors among the ignoble tamperers mentioned above. Showing a certain amount of annoyance, mainstream critique of both 'believers' and 'liberals' rejects the ignoble idea that Paul's Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians could have been composed by *forgers*. As if the Dutch School of Radical Criticism had ever said so! But with the killing epitheton *forger*, a negative atmosphere is being aroused against every form of "dangerous" radical critique. It frightens orderly people that don't want to have anything to do with the forgery of texts or with hairsplitting and quibbling. In point of fact, such [9] denigrating terms are employed less to prove Paul's Epistles genuine than in order to articulate antipathetic feelings toward independent criticism. Seeking peace of mind, these terms are employed to overcome the danger of criticism.

Spuriousness in literature, let it be added at this juncture, in no way necessarily implies a lack of quality in the piece under examination.

"A letter, made accessible to the public — that is to say, 'edited' -, could be read, found genuine and recommended to others if its contents could be authenticated as addressed to all believers". VAN MANEN<sup>[13]</sup> found this thesis confirmed in Peter's 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle the author of which pretends to be the same person as the one of 1 Peter and to be writing to the same readers. Cf. 2 Pe. 3:1; "This is now my second letter to you".

The author of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter had addressed himself to "God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1 Pe. 1:1). Our present author, by contrast, addresses himself to "those who have received a faith as precious as ours", which is much wider geographically, not

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[12] "Kritik und Hermeneutik", p.12

[13] "Paulus III". Leiden, 1986, p.315

confined to a restricted group of people. He mentions “our dear brother Paul, who also wrote to you” (3:15), as if Paul had addressed *all of his letters* (3:16) to the readers of 2 Peter.

Ignatius (Eph. 12:2) indeed considers *all* of Paul’s letters to have been addressed to the Ephesians and his fellow bishop, Polycarp, (Phil. 3:2) thinks the Philippians received them as well! And indeed, they are right! For they were intended from the beginning to be read by as many groups of people as possible. In his *Thesaurus*, SUICERUS (1624-1684) uses the word *epistolè* in the sense of *mandate* in ecclesiastical literature.

ADOLF DEISSMANN has written a clarifying piece about the *epistle*,<sup>[14]</sup> contrasting the term from that of a genuine letter. The latter is not a work of literature, no more than a rent contract, a testament or a diary. You could call it a conversation written down on paper that involves nobody but the sender and the receiver. It’s an object of intimacy, an open-minded meeting of two persons that are separated by greater or lesser distances. The epistle, on the contrary, is intended for the public; everybody could and should read it and the greater the number of people who read it, the more its aims will be achieved.

Logically DEISSMANN does not see the bulk of the pseudonymous epistles of ancient times as products of fraud. It is a widespread and in itself innocent custom. By the way, DEISSMANN was not very consistent in using his own letter-or-epistle distinction. For example he designates James’s letter an epistle because it’s addressed to the twelve tribes in the Diaspora; such a letter, he says, could never have been delivered. But he does not accept the identical counter-evidence for 1 and 2 Corinthians and for Galatians.

At the end of the nineteenth century, VAN MANEN argued in his university course on Early Christian Literature, that Paul’s letter to the Romans neither was a letter, nor by Paul, nor to the Romans. The astonishment of the juvenile students of theology was understandable. They had never heard of such heretical opinions in their religious education, no matter of what kind it had been: evangelical, ethical-orthodox, reformed or even modern. VAN MANEN’s strict argumentative method could not help but make a deep impression on them and in the end, the students either came to hate their teacher as an apostle of disbelief, or they came to honouring him as a champion of free scholarly-based thinking.

The latter group of students learned to see how sincere VAN MANEN’s motives were though they forced him to work on a purely rational basis which, at first sight, seemed totally negative. But only *Seemingly* negative, not in fact! The

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<sup>[14]</sup> In his “Bijbelstudien”. 1895, p.157–252; compare his article “Epistolary Literature” in “Encyclopaedia Britannica” II, 1323–1329

reproach addressed to Dutch Radical Criticism of only teaching how matters had *not* happened, leaving people at a loss as to how things *had actually* happened, has always been unfair.

Can critique, [11] after having wiped the slate clean of untenable convictions, be reasonably expected to immediately produce unquestionable, new perspectives? Even if internal dates show that not a single one of Paul's Epistles is genuine in the usual meaning of that term, we are, nevertheless freed from a deep-rooted scholarly error. This is a positive result in itself, not to be underestimated. Where in science does constructing begin and dismantling end? Outsiders seem to be rasher in deciding on such a point than the insider who knows that he is already constructing while still engaged in dismantling. If Paul's Epistles are not documents of the middle of 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E., but are to be dated approximately one hundred years later, and if they are to be regarded as an attempt by the Church to cut the ground from under the dangerous Gnostics' feet, even then we have a positive result which is much more useful in explaining the century of silence regarding these letters than the one usually employed:

those not quite "anspruchslose" (orig. German = unpretentious) letters of the famous Apostle to the Gentiles received no attention within the Christian public for something like a hundred years.

VAN MANEN's predecessors were ALLARD PIERSON and A.D. LOMAN. Exposed to a flood of criticism for half a century, quite a number of the collected letters that tradition has passed on under Paul's name were nevertheless declared spurious, and this by scholars of no "frantic" natural disposition<sup>[15]</sup>.

In 1835 the Tübingen scholar F. C. BAUR had proclaimed Romans, 1 and 2, Corinthians and Galatians genuine without a trace of doubt. Then, having labelled them the principal letters, he set them up as a standard of authenticity for the other ones. As late as 1855 he reassured all that in those four there had never arisen any grounds for suspicion and added that they showed the character of Pauline originality in such an uncontroversial way that critical doubt would never[12] affect them<sup>[16]</sup>. The celebrated Baur could only write that way because he neglected the work of the greater critic, BRUNO BAUER and his "*Kritik der paulinischen Briefe*" (1850—1852). VAN MANEN,<sup>[17]</sup> in the meantime, had never accepted the arbitrary fashion of sifting employed by the man from

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[15] For **Edward Evanson's** critique cfr. my article in "Nieuw Theologisch Tijdschrift?" 1913, p.149ff.

[16] **F. C. Baur**, "Paulus". 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Leipzig, 1866, p.275

[17] "Paulus II". Leiden 1891, p.9f.; compare "Tijdspiegel", 1891, p.428f.

Tübingen. In his opinion those principal letters themselves first had to be investigated in respect of their genuineness.

The well-known statement of ALBERT SCHWEITZER to the effect that nothing of all that had ever been published about Loman, Steek or Van Manen was in the slightest degree equal to the importance of their works makes one think twice. He continues by saying that these men had carried on the work of the Tübingen School of Criticism and had kept on asking questions where the other theologians had given up such a task<sup>[18]</sup>. One of these other theologians was the widely influential scholar, HARNACK, who, writing about the genuineness of the Ignatius letters, remarked with a sneer, “There are still some that deny the authenticity of these letters, but then there are still even those that reject the authenticity of every single one of Paul’s Epistles”<sup>[19]</sup>. *Du haut de sa grandeur*. Harnack did not ever attempt to refute radical criticism’s theses with arguments.

Since Schweitzer made that remark forty years ago, mainstream scholarship has neither repelled the attacks of radical criticism nor given positively proof that Paul’s Epistles are genuine. These persons simply declare that the authenticity of these documents “have been investigated scrupulously time and again” during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today the dispute has almost completely come to a standstill. The greater part of the collection is generally considered genuine, namely Philippians, 1 Thess., Philemon. KNOPF confirms this stand in his well-known ‘Introduction’<sup>[20]</sup>, but he has nevertheless to concede that there are considerable passages within the Epistles which, in terms of content [13] and style are far removed from the characteristics of a letter, viz. the admonitions, lay-sermons, lectures, prophecies, essays, poems and controversial dialogues. All these passages are immediately recognized as not arising from the exigencies of the day, but constitute incorporated traditions from long before.

According to KNOPF, one is dealing here with a special problem in literature which has seldom been analyzed: how do genuine letters, though written on special occasions, with a particular aim, and addressed to particular narrowly confined groups of people, nevertheless go beyond accidental and letter-like characteristics with regard to both style and contents to such a degree as to be ultimately transformed into elevated literature? I for one would prefer to speak here of essays in the guise of letters.

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[18] “Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung”. Tübingen, 1911, p.105; 108

[19] “Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und der anderen vorkonstantinischen christlichen Briefsammlungen. Sechs Vorlesungen aus der altkirchlichen Literaturgeschichte”. Leipzig, 1926, p.77 footnote

[20] “Einführung in das Neue Testament”. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Giessen, 1934, p.37

According to WENDLAND, Paul's relation to his readers is not easy to understand. Paul produces something in between a letter and an epistle, which, alone by its typically liturgical presentation, is already on a higher level than that of a private letter. Paul does not speak as a private person but as a spiritual adviser and head of the community. That's why in the introduction of his letters, he emphasizes his being an apostle<sup>[21]</sup>. This smack of authoritarianism in the Pauline letter is certainly a matter to be taken into account.

Well yes, some say, but 1 Thess. 5:27 shows that those letters were supposed to be read out to the congregation. The quote is as follows, "I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers". But the letter is addressed to the *Church* (1:1). Who then are those "you" in 5:27? The *heads* of the Church, is the answer! But at no place in the letters are the heads of the Church specifically addressed. Ceremonious and ponderous are the words, "I charge you before the Lord" in a private piece of writing, but not so if we are dealing with a kind of Sacred Scripture which, divinely authorized, demands its reading out in front of the congregation. What about this 'reading out' when the letter has been addressed to the Churches [14] of the Galatians? Such a letter is undeliverable. The pretext that it had to circulate does not help. Even the modern system of having periodicals circulated presupposes a list with the subscribers' names and the sequence of delivery. Nothing of the kind is to be found in this letter.

A peculiar light on this letter-writing is shed by Col. 4:15f., where the Church of the Colossians is asked to see to the reading out of the text in the Church of Laodicea as well, as if it were a letter to the Laodicean Church. These letters, then, are to be read out in local churches to keep their members obedient. To this end they are written in the name of a person of accepted authority. We are dealing with works intended for publication. WENDLAND<sup>[22]</sup> even compares them with "Erlasse hellenistischer Könige und Beamten" (decrees of Hellenistic Kings and government officials) seeing as how these, too, were often shaped in letter-form. This is indeed quite a different procedure from the personal communication of thought by an important person! Furthermore JOHANNES WEISS<sup>[23]</sup> tells us that what we have here in front of us is not the expression of transitory feelings, but works deeply pondered and certainly not just jotted down in the course of a few hours' time. Rather, they kept their author fully occupied

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[21] **P. Wendland**, "Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur; Anhang: Die urchristlichen Literaturformen". 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Tübingen, 1912, p.344

[22] *l.c.*, p.346, footnote 3

[23] "Gegenwartsbibel II". 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p.223ff.

for several days or even weeks. Well now, doesn't this hint at a book more than a letter?

The size of Paul's letter to the Romans, some 27 to 30 sheets of papyrus, says the expert ROLLER<sup>[24]</sup>, exceeds by far the normal size of a letter. Indeed it is almost the size of a book. 1 Corinthians should even be called a tome. Private correspondence of such length is not to be found among the Greeks. Even in antiquity the extraordinary size of Plato's and Thucydides' letters of questionable authenticity caused remarks to be made to the effect that they were not letters, but books with greeting formula tacked on as introductions. Since the canonical Epistles to the Romans and 1 Corinthians are even more voluminous, we can safely conjecture that they belong to the literary form of the „open letter“.

[15] The Pauline letters vary from the usual type of Greek letters in antiquity in that they adorn the name of the sender with attributes. In so doing, they expand the length of the introduction on the average six fold. In this respect the Pauline letters seem very odd to ROLLER<sup>[25]</sup> In the classical letter, as is well-known, the addressee's name is put in the Dative, followed by ‚be saluted.‘ The formula, then, is „A to B, greetings!“ This formula is found as well in Acts 23:25 and 15:23 and in James 1:1. Interestingly, texts supposed to have been written in Jerusalem. In the Pauline letters, however, the actual appellation stands grammatically separated from the greetings, and this, not only because of the attributes that are added to the sender's name, but additionally because of the hints about the contents of the letter and the protest against those who disregard the author.

Another deviation from the normal letter-type consists in the formula “Paul and all the brothers that are *with me*” (Gal. 1:1). A Greek author would write, “Paul and all the brothers that are *with him*”<sup>[26]</sup>. It's not the custom in private correspondence to mention more than one author. This rather agrees with the kinds of letters produced by public bodies such as townships, corporations or other established groups. In this case, they sometimes mention in the letter's head one or more representative official or manager. We then speak of decrees or edicts similar to the pastoral or Lent– letters that bishops address to all the believers in their diocese or that the Pope addresses to believers all over the world<sup>[27]</sup>.

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[24] l.c., p.39

[25] l.c., p.57, 349

[26] l.c., p.58

<sup>1</sup>[27] l.c., p.59; 436ff.; 349

Instead of the short and concise, “Paul to the Corinthians, greetings!” 1 Cor. begins with the words, “ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [15] their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” There is a taste here of the Christian sermon imbibed in the devotional rhetoric of the East<sup>[28]</sup>. The secular greeting has been replaced by a religious one, in which grace and peace are prayed for and the source is mentioned out of which they flow.

By emphatically mentioning his holy function, the author seems to engage in polemics against those who accuse him of having usurped apostolic dignity (cf. Rom. 1:1, “set apart for the gospel of God”). This seems to imply confrontation with non-authorized apostles. SICKENBERGER<sup>[29]</sup>, a Roman Catholic commentator, rightly says that, by using these words, Paul intends to give his epistle the appearance of an official document. This scholar furthermore rightly recognizes that Sosthenes’ cooperation cannot be seen as something merely external - for example copying the letter - but indeed as co-authorship<sup>[30]</sup>. Remarkable though is the fact that after that opening, Sosthenes immediately vanishes and Paul writes thereafter exclusively in the singular. The purpose of mentioning a co-author seems to be to give the letter a Catholic character.

This is likewise the case with 2 Cor. 1:1 (Timothy), and especially in Gal, 1:2 “all the brothers with me.” The author seemingly wants to show that Paul as well has his supporters. We can willingly believe that, but that all those brethren cooperated in writing the letter — no, that we can’t believe. Furthermore the character of a real letter does not allow that it be addressed to “all those *everywhere* who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:2); or – somewhat more limited, but still rather ambitious - “together with all the saints throughout Achaia” (2 Cor. 1:1), or “To the Churches in Galatia” (Gal. 1:1). LIETZMANN calls our attention to inscriptions in synagogues that read, “peace to this place and to all places in Israel”. But LIETZMANN’s remark is actually beside the point and is [17] not comparable: that which is convenient on the top of a temple or a church is not automatically appropriate in the heading of a letter. There where presumably “Paul” writes, “This is the rule I lay down for all the

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[28] **A.D. Loman**, “Nalatenschap”. Groningen, 1899, p.26

[29] In “Tillmann’s Heilige Schrift des N.T. VI”. Bonn, 1932

[30] Cfr. 1 Cor. 16:21. Not correct **Lietzmann** in his “commentaar”. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p.4

Churches.” (1 Cor. 7:17), it is the Church leadership itself which is speaking in its full authority.

What prerequisites were required from Romans before they could understand the Pauline Epistle addressed to them? Concretely put, they would have to have become Paulinists well before Paul had ever seen the city of Rome. At the time this letter was written, the dogmatic concept of “grace” was already fully developed and along with it the criticism raised against the concept by legalistically-minded people. ‘Faith,’ ‘justice,’ ‘love,’ ‘justification through faith,’ ‘the working of the law,’ ‘being baptized into Christ’ and ‘being crucified together with Christ,’ ‘revelation,’ ‘spirit’ etc. Prior to the time in question, no Greek would have been able to comprehend these concepts Paul intended them to grasp when they heard these words. Until then the meaning of these words would have been unintelligible to them and that applies equally to the Jews.

Let’s have a look at the Pastorals that are said to have been written to Timothy and Titus by Paul. One might think that the very personal relationship between them and Paul implied in the letters ( a forgotten coat, a book-scrolls Paul had left behind (2 Tim. 4:13) are mentioned as examples )would oblige analytical theologians to label the Pastorals authentic. Even more, the congruence of the thought they contain and the theological formulas employed cause us to immediately recall the “genuine” Pauline letters. The vividly pictured events of Paul’s life likewise give an impression of authenticity. But none of this stifles doubt; it rather causes us to reject the Pastorals’ genuineness. Even SCHLEIERMACHER labelled the situations of 1 Tim. as fiction; the historical authenticity “floats in air.” WEISS says that the artificiality of this piece of fiction is apparent just by taking it up into your hands, an assertion, according to him, which cannot be raised about the characters in the *genuine* letters<sup>[31]</sup>. Furthermore the remark has been made that there was no need for the pastoral enlightening of Timothy and Titus, for Paul had presumably taken leave of them but shortly before (1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:5) and was looking forward to seeing them again very soon. (Tit 3:12; 1 Tim. 4:9,25; 3:14). But does this not apply just as well – I must ask – to the book-length Epistle to the Romans? After all, Paul is looking forward to seeing them soon.

If elements of an intimate, private character are needed to provide proof that a written document is really a *letter*, then Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians has to be designated as a pseudo-apostolic text. But then, this is a conclusion which scholars nowadays gladly try to avoid. WEISS<sup>[32]</sup> especially declared 2 Cor. to be a genuine private letter about tangible facts. But at the same time he saw it as a

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[31] “Gegenwartsbibel II”. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.. p.534ff.

[32] l.c., p.264ff.

compilation and as containing elements from two different letters, written under different circumstances and in different states of mind. How can such a product be called a normal letter? This problem especially emerges, when a bit further on in WEISS' book, one reads that the two Epistles to the Corinthians are redactional compositions fitted together out of at least four Pauline letters. I shudder at the thought that I myself once considered them to have been *written*, not *compiled*! A letter, I think, is that genre of literature which is least of all suitable for compilation<sup>[33]</sup>. Those exegetes, among them WEISS, are not far away from the standpoint of the radical critics when they admit that we don't have Paul's letters in their *original* form, but only as they were altered by redactors.

The Epistle to the Galatians clearly reveals how the private details one expects in a letter clash with the contents of this text. This supposedly extempore letter was sent off by the apostle when circumstances forced him to address a group of Galatians who, shortly after he had won them over to his faith, apostatized. The letter opens with Paul stating that he had received his apostleship directly from God and Christ without any human mediation. How was it possible that this community — according to the letter itself, well acquainted with Pauline theorems— could forget in so short a time Paul's unique authority which ipso facto demanded unconditional obedience?<sup>[34]</sup> That should have been impossible, but nevertheless it had happened, for they had allowed "some people" [19] of law-abiding thought and practice to persuade them. "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal 1:8). He includes the possibility that he himself or even an angel from heaven – the two here seem to be considered of equal authority – would have to be condemned. How strange all of this, especially when it is followed up by, "As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted from me, let him be eternally condemned!" (1:9 f.).

An astonishing repetition, using different words, of what appeared in the preceding verse and even more astonishing, his reference back to a menace of condemnation while condemning<sup>[35]</sup>. VALENTIN WEBER's attempt to saving his apostle made the situation even worse than it already was. Paul, this scholar says, in verse 8 included himself in a possible condemnation. After jotting down the words, passion forced him to stop writing or dictating for a while and he

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[33] **Heinrici**, "Der literarische Character der neutestamentlichen Schriften"

[34] Cfr. **Dr. A. Pierson**, "De Bergrede en andere synoptische Fragmenten". Amsterdam, 1878, p.100f.

[35] **Bruno Bauer**, "Kritik der paulinischen Briefe". Berlin, 1852, p.11

thought the matter over and discussed it with his fellow brothers. In their opinion his statement was excessively harsh. But Paul then confirms that he, for one, will stick to what he has written. That's why he now uses 1<sup>st</sup> person singular.

Doesn't this harmonizing blow up the second condemnation to monstrous size? The first one could perhaps be explained by the fits of temper from which he, the apostle, suffered from time to time – as he himself confesses to us. But the second condemnation - after pausing and deliberating with his fellow brothers who disagreed with his harsh determination reveals him to be pig-headed and spiteful to a degree seldom found anywhere else.

If one, like myself, considers the epistle spurious, then the rhetoric affectation becomes understandable and we were in a position to answer the question: where and when had Paul previously said such a thing? Obviously in 2 Cor. 11:4. There, after giving voice to his fear that his readers might be [20] led astray from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ by some bad influence, he continues, "For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received from me, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough."

Thus here, too, a warning against someone preaching another gospel, while in another place (16:22) he seems to have the power of condemning deserters. In point of fact, it is the Church hierarchy, hiding its face behind the Mask of Paul, which is delivering a sentence of eternal condemnation. PIERSON's remark retains its validity, namely that a claim of being sent by heaven loses quite a bit of its strength, when at the same time one denies this heaven the right to reveal new truths, even ones that contradict its former utterances<sup>[36]</sup>.

One of the best arguments of the radical thesis is the fact, confirmed again and again, that each of the later letters of the Pauline collection presuppose the reading of an earlier one beforehand. So for example the Galatians are supposed to have read Paul's extempore letters to the Romans and to the Corinthians. I have already given a few examples and will now add some striking, additional ones. Gal. 4:19 reads, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Even though LIETZMANN call this a cry from out of the deepest part of the soul and OEPKE consider it "almost drastic", I, for one, agree with LOMAN, who called it a monstrous metaphor: to be in the pains of childbirth for a person who had already been born, and, on top of it, speaking as a male!

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<sup>[36]</sup> l.c., p.110

Everything becomes more understandable, if we think of 1 Cor. 4:14f.: “in Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel”. So here he was the father of the community, giving them spiritual life. His presentation of himself in Gal. as the mother is obviously a re-hash that didn’t come off well. But this citation is of even greater importance. In it, namely, it is said that up to that moment, the Galatians did not belong among those in whom “Christ is formed,” [21] in other words, that they now had to be won over to Pauline Christianity for the first time. How else, if once Christ had been formed in them, could they have deserted? They then would, like Paul himself, have been crucified with Christ, and would no longer have lived for themselves, but with Christ in them (Gal. 2:20)

In Gal. 1 and 2 Paul proclaims quite a lot of surprising things to the Galatians that make us ask the question: but didn’t they already know all this? Had they then never heard anything about that Pauline Gospel? Here indeed we find much ado about nothing. And again it’s a preceding letter that puts matters in perspective: in 1 Cor. 15:1 the identical, “I want to remind you” fits in nicely. One is dealing here with the disclosure of the Lord’s last Revelations<sup>[37]</sup>.

When reading in Gal. 4:13-15 about Paul’s meeting the “uncivilized” people of the mountains for the first time — he doesn’t know their language, nor are they able to understand him — we ask: how conceivably could these people accept his pneumatic Gospel? And how could they have submitted to him or to his Christ Jesus, an angel of the Lord? Did Paul himself attempt to spread such ideas among them? And while we are at it, what possibly could they have known about Christ Jesus? Hasn’t he protested against such a glorification of his person? He then goes on to assert that, if it were demanded from them [*if they were forced into it* fits in better here], they would have torn out their eyes and given them to him. Such a statement could perhaps be said about a small group of intimate friends, but not about all the Churches in Galatia.

Here the rhetorical and the fictional characters of this pseudo-letter show up clearly and LOMAN<sup>[38]</sup> rightly points to the absence of a real life situation and further to the absence of factual information on the customs and the way of the Galatians thought in the midst of the first century. The sentimental way in which the love relation between Paul and the Galatians is described, is unbearable, if indeed we are dealing with a larger community rather than an isolated person. That’s rhetorical exaggeration [22], acceptable, perhaps, in an open letter or an essay, but not in a genuine letter.

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<sup>[37]</sup> l.c., p.14

<sup>[38]</sup> l.c., p.71

According to 2 Thess. 3:17, a greeting, written in his own hand, is the mark, the sign of authenticity in each of the Epistles (cf. Col. 4:18 as well). So it becomes clear why the author, pretending to be Paul, writes to the Galatians, “See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand” (Gal. 6:11). But Paul also wrote letters, not in his own hand, as 1Cor. 16:21 tells us: I add “this greeting in my own hand”. Such a flourish appeared in Gal. 6:11 as well. There is no understandable motive for saying that here. The writer imitates Paul’s supposed custom of giving his letter a mark of authenticity. In both spots the greeting ‘in his own hand’ is followed by harsh words<sup>[39]</sup>. Here fiction becomes obvious: if the readers knew Paul’s handwriting, the recourse to it was not needed, if they didn’t, then its use was utterly nonsensical. If the letter was delivered by well known people, why the affirmation that it really had been written by Paul? And how possibly would such a letter, estimated to be of the greatest importance and undeliverable by a third party, be entrusted to somebody unknown? So LOMAN,<sup>[40]</sup> and he rightly asked it.

The letter in the period of Early Christianity used a special vocabulary and it belonged to the literary genre, rhetoric. One of the peculiarities of the Pauline collection is that praise and blame alternately are bestowed on the readers. The Romans’ faith is said to be known all over the world (Rom. 1:8). The same kind of praise is poured out in the letters addressed to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:14) and the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:8). Words of reproach to the readers are always preceded by words of praise. The hardly flattering passage, Rom. 1:18 – 2:1, strikes one as strange, coming as it does immediately after the praise of the Romans’ faith throughout the world. But the reproach is followed up by words of [23] praise once again as if a bandage were being applied to an open sore. In Rom. 6:12-16 again we have first an extensive and forceful warning against sin, followed up in v.17 with renewed attestations of honour. In a genuine letter, this would have made the admonition obsolete. Thus, “Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching (*typos tès didachès*) which were entrusted to you.”

But the skipping back and forth continues. Rom. 8:8 declares, “Those controlled by sinful nature cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:8); This is followed immediately by the reassuring words, “You, however, are controlled not by sinful nature but by the Spirit.” Still the references to the “nature of the flesh” continue. It does not seem to disappear all together, not even after a radical conversion, “once the Spirit of God lives in you. And anyone who does not have this Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ.” (Rom. 8:9). And so the chapter continues, alternating between praise and blame. The author sticks to the conviction of the Romans

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[39] **R.Steek**, “Der Galaterbrief nach seiner Echtheit untersucht”. Berlin, 1888, p.142

[40] l.c., p.27ff.

being full of goodness and higher knowledge (15:14), but they nevertheless must still be taught hard lessons by their pastor who has to treat them with firmness.

The same applies to the Corinthians. They evoke feelings of gratitude in Paul, for they have been enriched in Christ Jesus in every way, in all their speaking and in all their knowledge (1 Cor. 1:5). Nevertheless they are reprimanded as “not spiritual but worldly” and they need teaching because of their lack of knowledge (3:1–3; 10:1; 12:1; 15:51). Indeed, just a few verses after they were praised Paul has to appeal to them: there may be no divisions among them and they must be perfectly united in mind and thought (1:10). Still we learn that there are quarrels among them (1:11 ff.). In the community of these beloved children of the Apostle jealousy and quarreling occur (3:3), even sexual immorality (5:1), idolatry and drunkenness (5:11) These people impose themselves upon one another (4:6). They cheat and do wrong, and they do this to their brothers (6:8). They need to be warned against all sorts of evil sins, listed by names (6:9-10). Nevertheless they have been washed (by baptism), they have been sanctified, they have been justified [24] (6:11). But all this does not make warnings against sexual immorality (6:13, 18; 10:8) and idolatry (10:7, 14) superfluous. They are praised for remembering Paul in everything and for holding to the teachings which he has just passed on to them (11:2). But there are divisions among them and the Lord’s Supper is not held in a Christian way (11:18f., 20). So the final conclusion reads, “Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!” (11:22). They have taken their stand on the Gospel (15:1), but nevertheless some of them say that there is no resurrection of the dead (15:12). The faith of these is useless (15:14). The spiritual Corinthians are warned not to be misled but to return to their senses and stop sinning; Paul says all this to their shame and adds, “There are some who are ignorant of God” (15:33f.).

In the second Epistle to the Corinthians we see precisely the same pattern. The Church’s members stand firm by their faith (2 Cor. 1:24). In their mortal flesh the life of Jesus is at work (4:12). Nevertheless they still have to be reconciled to God (5:20) and must take care not to receive God’s grace in vain (6:1). They must not yoke themselves together with unbelievers (6:14ff.). They still have the task of purifying themselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit (7:1). Yet Paul does not condemn them; on the contrary, he has reason to boast about them (7:3f.; 9:1ff.). They are innocent (7:11); and as all of them are obedient, he has nothing to worry about (7:15). Don’t they, after all, excel in faith, in speech, in knowledge and in the complete earnestness and in their love (8:7)? But the sincerity of their love apparently has still to be tested (8:8) and they will have to show the proof (8:24). Alas, their obedience is not yet complete and they are still looking at the surface of things (10:6f.).

Paul is consequently afraid their minds may somehow be led astray from their “sincere and pure devotion to Christ” and desert him in favor of the preacher of a

Jesus other than the Jesus he preached (11:3f.). He fears that when he comes there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, [25] arrogance and disorder (12:20). There are those who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they once indulged (12:21) so he will not spare them (13:2).

We find the same contradictory ideas about the communities in the Epistle to the Galatians. Before their very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed by Paul as crucified (Gal. 3:1) and Paul called them by the grace of Christ (1:6). They received the Spirit by believing his pneumatic Gospel (Gal. 3:2). Therefore they are all honoured with the title “sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26; 4:6f.). And this although after their recent conversion they have so quickly deserted Paul’s Gospel and have turned to a different one, being foolish to such a degree that they allowed themselves to be bewitched. So, after beginning with the Spirit, they are now trying to attain their goal by human effort (3:3) as they are turning back to weak and miserable principles to be enslaved by them all over again (4:9). No wonder that the Apostle fears that somehow he has wasted his efforts on them (4:11). How, under such circumstances, can Paul, cast into a bitter mood due to their desertion, write the words: “You have done me no wrong” (4:12)? And this although he has now become their ‘enemy’ by telling them the truth (4:16). Only when he is with them are they zealous (4:18). Consequently he is perplexed with them (4:20). If they let themselves be circumcised, - just think of it: the members of all those Churches in Galatia *en bloc* ! - then Christ will be of no value to them at all (5:2) They ceased obeying the truth (5:7).

After all this complaining, one does not understand how Paul can be confident in the Lord and believe that they will take no other view but his (5:10). This can’t be rhymed with the presupposition that they keep on biting and devouring each other (5:15) while gratifying the desires of their sinful nature (5:16). The list of sinful acts is long and of so serious a type that those who live in this fashion can’t possibly inherit the kingdom of God (5:19-21; 25). They need counselling not to take pride in themselves (6:4) nor to sow to please their sinful nature (6:8), yet they are called “spiritual” people, able to restore gently those of their brothers caught in sin [26] (6:1f.). All this explains the harsh words just before the prayer for grace at the end of this “letter,” ending with “Finally, let no one cause me trouble” (6:17)!

All this shows that we have to see these “letters” as treatises, as books to be read out in Christian congregations. Texts already in existence were utilized to produce them. What has been explained in extenso to the Romans –and is understandable in that context – is repeated in the treatise to the Galatians in a kind of shorthand-style. Even LIETZMANN, a non-radical commentator, has to admit this fact, though he does not see what follows from it. Regarding Gal.

3:15-1 he makes the quite laconic remark, “One has to know Paul to be capable of understanding him” and to explain what he means by this statement he quotes Rom. 4:13. Even more grossly, writing about Gal. 3:13, the same scholar declares, “There the audience is supposed to be acquainted with the complete structure of the ideas developed in 2 Cor. 5:21 otherwise this text is not understandable”. The poor Galatians (!) Back in their own time, they had to do without both LIETZMANN’s *Handbuch* and without an Epistle, which was in the hands of the Corinthians?...

Regularly the authors of these Epistles take ideas and whole phrases out of other Epistles in the same way as they quote from the O.T. texts without mentioning their sources - just as nowadays some preachers repeatedly do while quoting from the O.T. or the N.T.

As for the supposed addressees mentioned here and in other Epistles as well, it would carry us off too far to specify the inconsistencies which occur. But there is one characteristic example in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians that I can’t omit. This community provides Paul with good reasons to be grateful to God for their work produced by faith, their labor prompted by love, and their endurance inspired by hope (1 Thess. 1:3). The members of the congregation have been chosen by God (1:4) and obey the Apostle. In spite of their severe suffering, they welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. They became a model to be followed by many believers (1:6-7). They are Paul’s hope and joy, the crown in which he will glory. They are indeed his glory and joy (2: 19f.)

Nevertheless they needs must be admonished to an ethical way of life (4:1ff.); Paul has to instruct them on how to live in order to please God, adding on, as if correcting himself, “as in fact you are living” (4:1). The only point being that they should do this more and more (4:2). They namely should avoid sexual immorality (4:3) and should not wrong their brothers or take advantage of them (4:6). About brotherly love, however, Paul need not write a single word, for they themselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, they do love all their brothers. Yet they should do so more and more (4:9-11). They still need to be urged to live in such a fashion that their daily lives win the respect of outsiders (4:12). These sons of the light (5:5) must encourage one another and build each other up, just as “in fact you are doing” (5:11), for there are still idle ones and timid ones among them who need to be warned (5:14) and there are those that pay back wrong with wrong (5:15)

The examples given may suffice. Considering that the addressees don’t in the least give reason for this exaggerated amount of admonition, we are obliged to take cognisance of the fact that we are confronted here with formal, Great-Church, official, episcopal verbiage that stresses dual messages, i.e. a totally perfect body which nevertheless has never been free of stains and wrinkles. The

diplomatic letter-writer, enmeshed in the Church's hierarchy, suffers under the burden of having to care for all of the communities (2 Cor. 11:28) and consequently directs his writing to the *entire* church. In a remarkable way we find this confirmed by the so called fragmentum Muratori, the most ancient list of canonical texts we possess<sup>[41]</sup>. All of the pauline letters are seen there as written for the entire Catholic Church and the number, seven, which occurs in the book of Revelation (cf. 2–3) provides the framework for ordering Paul's correspondence. There needs must be seven local Churches. 'Seven' means fullness, perfection, completeness [28]. The number stands for the entire Church.

We should further focus on the fact that in his letters Paul regularly switches from humiliating to elevating himself, which is something that fits well in the mouth of a Prince of the Church. The second Epistle to the Corinthians provides an example. The Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God (1:1), who suffers together with the suffering Christ (1:5) and whose conscience testifies to the fact that he himself dwells in the world in the holiness and sincerity that are from God (1:12), so that the community may be proud of him (1:14), still might conceivably be outwitted by Satan (2:11). But God nevertheless always leads him on in Christ's triumphal procession, through whom, He spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Himself (2:14-17). This is not to be understood as boasting, for his competence comes from God (3:5). If he renounces secret and shameful ways and does not use deception, nor distorts the word of God, but rather, by setting forth the truth plainly commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God (4:2), then it must likewise be understood that he is not promoting himself, but rather Jesus Christ as Lord. He himself is the Corinthians' servant for Jesus' sake (4:5). And everything he does and says is from God (4:7; 5:18).

Although he says that he does not recommend himself to the readers (3:1; 5:12), in point of fact, he is doing just that time and again (6:4ff.) by summing up what he achieved during his mission (6:5–10; 11:22,33; 12:10) and by widely advertising his own virtues (6:2; 10:3–6). He is taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men (8:21). Even had he boasted excessively about his authority, he would not be ashamed of it (10:8). He does not think he is in the least inferior to the other Apostles, and he does have knowledge (11:5f.). On behalf of the Corinthians, he lowered himself (11:7), confessing: "I am nothing" (12:11). Are we not confronted with a diplomat – a Prince of the Church – who alternately engages in self-glorification and pious humility and in so doing reminds us of a "servant of the servants of God"? Indeed, these are not the words of a real person, but of the Great Church displaying its official ecclesiastical authority.

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[41] "Kleine Texte". edited by Lietzmann, nr.1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bonn, 1908, p.7

[29] **TORM**<sup>[42]</sup> opined that in Tertullian's time [155 or 160 to after 220 C.E.], writing in the name of an Apostle was by no means considered unobjectionable. In his work on Baptism (c. 17), he shows that the "Acts of Paul" were indeed recognized by the latter's contemporaries as a forgery, but the scholarly consensus is that not critical analytical examination served as a base for rejection. It was rather dogmatic objections which lead to this verdict. **TORM**'s own proposition was that these Acts were not heretic. He shows himself, then, to be a less severe censor than the *Decretum Gelasianum* of the 5<sup>th</sup> century which classified these 'Acts' as belonging among the writings of heretics and schismatics which were to be repudiated by the Church. What were Tertullian's objections to these Acts? In them a female, Thecla, is told to baptize and teach! A text containing such impiety, he argued, could not possibly be of Paul's hand.

The presbyter who confessed to having produced the text, and who, for that reason was dismissed from the church, declared that he had acted out of love for Paul. So did others as well argue. Around the year 440 someone released a text in four volumes against the meanness of the times with an appeal to the Church to give up her riches and wealth. The opening was in the apostolic style: "Timothy, the least of God's servants, to the Catholic Church all over the earth. Grace and peace to you in the name of God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and of the Holy Spirit".

Hints as to the identity of the real author in the affair about the Acts of Paul were missing. When bishop Salonus got hold of the work, he soon had an idea about the author's identity and whereabouts. Out of fear that the text mistakenly could be accepted as written by the apostle Timothy, he sent a protesting letter to the presbyter of Marseille, asking why such a pseudonymous letter had been released. The presbyter's answer to the bishop<sup>[43]</sup> read: the text is not to be regarded as apostolic apocrypha, for it does not really present itself as having been written by the apostle Timothy. Put another way, he was saying that that designation had not been used to fool the public.

The author –so the presbyter continues– has left out his own name for [30] a number of reasons, the most important being God's command never to strive for vain worldly glory. Just like we give alms in secrecy, so do we behave with the fruit of our labouring. May your left hand ignore what your right hand is doing. It's to God's honour that the author acted as he did; to God, human work is the more agreeable the less public appreciation is sought for. The author is humble, effaces himself and hasn't any dishonest intentions. He doesn't want to diminish the impact of his precious text by the obscurity of his own personality. Nowadays

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[42] *l.c.*, p.26f.

[43] **Salvanus**'s 9<sup>th</sup> letter in the "Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Lat.". Vol. III

the public is trivial to the point of giving more weight to the name of the author than to the contents of his text. Out of respect and humility the author has consequently used Timothy's name. In this sense, he has followed the example of St. Luke, the Evangelist, who, for the sake of God's love, pretended to write for Theophilus. The book has been written "to honour God," or, to put the matter in other words, it's veritably God's honour itself that has brought these words to light, for He, who caused it to be written, may justly be said to be its author. With HAEFNER<sup>[44]</sup> one could see here a *transition* from pseudepigraphy to pseudonymity in the modern sense of the word, if the two in this context were not one and *the same* thing, for in both cases the name of a person of great reputation is attributed falsely.

The single fact that the Canon of Sacred Scriptures had already been fixed necessarily provoked a bishop's protest when, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, an author, hiding himself under a biblical name, wrote the opening lines of his book in apostolic style. Bishop Salonus may have felt additionally that a minor cleric in the hierarchy should not be allowed to imitate the fashion of an apostolic author by addressing the entire Church with a pauline opening. All this is proof enough that the biblical letters were seen as written for all of Christianity and that it was not pride [31] but, quite the contrary. Christian humility that stood behind the attribution to them of apostolic pseudonyms to the end of securing their contents,.

Tertullian's assertion (adv. Marcionem V 17) may likewise be admitted as king's evidence in this context. Marcion had known the Epistle to the Ephesians as the Epistle to the Laodiceans. To this his opponent, Tertullian, says, "Marcion did his best to give this title to the text, as if he were a zealous investigator in this field as well. But we aren't interested in the least in titles (here synonym for *addresses*), for the Apostle, when writing to *some* people, has written to *all*". Here we have confirmation of the fact that every single letter was addressed to all of Christianity and not to one or the other distinctive circle. Tertullian then, was not acquainted with all the particularistic, the local, the personal factors that fence in modern criticism, nor with the close relationship between the author and his readers.

In my opinion, anyone who would investigate Paulinism exegetically must give earnest attention to this pallet of reflections<sup>[45]</sup>.

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[44] **Alfred Haefner** in "Anglican Theological Review". 1934, p.8ff.

[45] Only while correcting the proofs I come to see an essay by **Dr. A.D. Leeman** in "Mnemosyne", quarta series, vol. quartum, fasc. II, Leiden, 1951, p.175–181, titled "The epistolary form of Sen. Ep. 102". Leeman's conclusion confirms **Bourgery's** impression mentioned above (p.6 and footnote [8]).