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James D. Miller

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The authorship of the Pastoral Letters has been a matter of intense scholarly debate for almost two hundred years. The letters clearly purport to be written by the apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus, but perceived differences between the literary style, vocabulary, and theology of the Pastorals and those of the genuine Pauline letters suggest that this was not so. For many scholars, if Paul did not write the Pastorals, the author must be a disciple of Paul – a gifted pseudonymist– who composed these letters in Paul’s name seeking to propagate Paul’s thinking and to continue his effectiveness after his death.

Dr. Miller argues that the evidence demands a third solution, and suggests that no single author can be held responsible for much of this material. He presents a wide-ranging review of Jewish and early Christian literature, focusing on the compositional histories of these documents. This is the environment out of which the Pastorals emerged. Many biblical and extra-biblical documents are clearly compilations of materials, brought together by “editors” who sought to preserve material considered sacred by the communities of faith to which they belonged.

Miller’s conclusion is that the Pastorals are composite documents based upon brief, but genuine, Pauline notes written to Timothy and Titus. The notes were preserved within the community’s archives and later became that literary vehicle upon which other traditional material sacred to the community was loaded.

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To Diane

my co-worker and teammate  
whose spirit of adventure and industry  
made this Edinburgh dream come true

To my parents, Edwin and Mary

“I am reminded of your sincere faith” (II Tim. 1:5).

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