I must make it plain at the outset that this lecture is primarily concerned with the Pastoral Epistles. I aim to show how the author of the Pastoral Epistles used material which he took from the letters of Paul, and then I intend to draw some conclusions from this examination of the Pastorals about the way in which the main tradition of Christian theology developed. But before I can do this I must say something about how and when I believe the Pastoral Epistles were written.

I hold that the Pastorals are not Pauline at all, in the sense that there are no elements in them which come directly from Paul’s pen. In this respect I have changed my opinion from that which I held when I wrote a small commentary on the Pastorals in 1966. In that commentary I maintained that some fragments of genuine Pauline material could be detected in the Pastorals. I now believe that such a view cannot be effectively defended. I also reject the suggestion that the Pastorals are the product of one of Paul’s secretaries or amanuenses. I do not think that the author of the Pastorals was as close to the historical Paul, either in sentiment or in time, as a secretary must certainly have been. I would not therefore describe the Pastorals as ‘Deutero-Pauline’, in the sense in which I would apply that epithet to Colossians chapters 1–3 and to Ephesians. The author of the Pastorals, I believe, was a disciple of Paul only in the sense that Gregory the Great was a disciple of Augustine: he admired and read Paul, but he did not always understand him.

1The Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Manchester on 13 November 1980.
The Pastorals were written, I maintain, shortly after the turn of the first century AD, before the threat of imperial pressure on the Church had materialized but during a time when the Church in Asia Minor was beginning to experience the challenge of incipient Gnosticism. The author of the Pastorals was well acquainted with almost the whole Pauline corpus, including Colossians and Ephesians. His intention was to use Paul's authority in order to oppose the advance of Gnosticism, and to strengthen the position of the institutionalized ordained ministry which had now emerged in the Church. He was therefore in no sense a privileged intimate of Paul. One could not even call him a member of the Pauline school. I am not sure whether Trummer's epithet of 'Trito-Paulines' is a suitable one for the Pastorals; but one could legitimately call their author a student of the Pauline literature, and an ardent admirer of the historical Paul.

I propose now to examine five passages in the Pastorals where, I believe, the author has used Pauline material. I hope to be able to show that he has adapted the material to his own ends and to fit in with his own situation. After that I intend to draw some conclusions about this phenomenon. But I should make it clear at this point that the five passages I select do not by any means constitute an exhaustive list of the author's borrowings from Paul. Many other such examples could be cited. At the end of the much larger commentary on the Pastorals, which I shall shortly be publishing in the New Century Bible Series, I have listed twenty-one places where I believe Pauline quotations can be detected. H. E. Barnett in his book Paul Becomes a Literary Influence (Chicago, 1941) claimed many more Pauline echoes than I do. But the five examples which I have chosen seem to me to illustrate admirably how the author of the Pastorals uses Paul, and what happens to Paul when he falls into the hands of a genuine, but not very profound, admirer of at least a generation later. It so happens that four out of my five examples are taken from II Timothy. Other Pauline passages could be found in I Timothy besides the one which I have chosen to expound. It is true, however, that I cannot detect any echoes of Paul in Titus. It is almost as if the author had run out of Pauline inspiration by the time he came to compose this letter.
Our first set of passages is

_I Timothy 6: 11-12 and Philippians 3: 12–14_

_I Tim. 6: 11–12_: ‘But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.’

_Phil. 3: 12–14_: ‘Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect: but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.’

The parallel here is more in sentiment than in actual phraseology, though there are three very significant word links. Paul uses καταλαμβάνω three times very emphatically, claiming to have been apprehended by God in Christ, and rather repudiating the notion that he could do the apprehending himself. This is too profound for the author of the Pastorals, who prefers to use ἐπιλαμβάνω: Timothy is to lay hold on eternal life for himself, with no suggestion that there is any problem as far as concerns Timothy’s ability to do so. Secondly Paul speaks of his calling, κλήσις; the author of the Pastorals can adopt this quite easily: Timothy has been called (ἐκλήθης) to eternal life. Thirdly, both writers use διώκω, ‘pursue’, but in how different contexts! Paul pursues a calling, he answers the challenge of God in Christ, the lofty vocation of the Christian. The author of the Pastorals merely asks Timothy to pursue a number of virtues, in which ‘piety’ appears side by side with ‘love’, and righteousness is a moral characteristic, not a gift of God in Christ, as it is in Paul’s own writings. When we look at the sentiment which the two passages express, we see a strong resemblance between them: both are concerned with vocation, both see that vocation as leading on to an eternal dimension (though we may suspect that eternity is more a future condition in I Timothy than it is in Philippians),
and both use the image of an athletic contest. This last point has been rather obscured in the RSV translation of I Timothy 6:12, with its language made familiar by the Victorian hymn 'Fight the good fight of faith'. This could be understood of a battle, a conflict in war. But, in fact, the author of the Pastorals uses ἀγωνίζεσθαι and ἀγωνίκατος, terms which must refer to an athletic contest and not to war. Paul makes it absolutely clear that he is thinking in terms of an athletic contest and not of war, though he uses neither of these words here. A reference to I Corinthians 9:24–6 shows that Paul was accustomed to using this sort of illustration. The author of the Pastorals can use the language of battle and war for the Christian life if he wishes to, as we see in II Tim. 2:3–4. Nor was Paul averse to using it either; e.g. Rom. 13:12. But both writers here are thinking in terms of the games.

The author of the Pastorals, therefore, has taken a passage in which Paul speaks about his own vocation and ministry and has applied it to the vocation and ministry of the Christian presbyter or bishop in his own day. I assume that Timothy here represents the ordained minister or church leader. The author reminds Timothy of the confession made before many witnesses. This is probably the baptismal confession, but the author may have also in mind some sort of a confession made at ordination. He has dropped Paul's fine paradox of being apprehended by Christ, and has inserted a rather miscellaneous list of virtues to be cultivated. He has also imported what is probably a reference to the context of faith. Fighting the good fight of faith probably means defending the true belief. His nervousness about heresy is thus apparent in this passage as in many others. All in all, this is an excellent example of theological transposition by the author of the Pastorals. It is also a very simple and straightforward one, which cannot be said of all our other examples.

The second set of passages is

II Timothy 1:6–9 and Romans 8:12–17

II Tim. 1:6–9: ‘Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands: for God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power and love and self-control. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our
Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our own works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus.'

Rom. 8: 12–17: ‘So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.’

The obvious link between these two passages lies in the phrases πνεῦμα δουλείας in Rom. 8: 15 and πνεῦμα δειλίας in II Tim. 1: 7. The author of the Pastorals is using a deliberate play on words in order to call the attention of his readers to the passage in Romans. Once our attention is alerted this way, we can perceive other links also: συμπάσχομεν in Rom. 8: 17 corresponds to συγκακοπάθησον in II Tim. 1: 8. It is remarkable, too, that where Paul speaks about the Spirit with a capital S the author of the Pastorals prefers to speak of the ‘power’ of God (see δύναμις in II Tim. 1: 7, 8), or of the χάρισμα (v. 6). This is no doubt because the author did not have a very clear theology of the Holy Spirit, and certainly did not rise to the level of the Pauline doctrine of the Spirit as the mode in which we experience the risen Christ. The sentiment of these two passages is almost identical: both passages are concerned with Christian life and vocation; both urge Christians to show confidence on the basis of God’s gift; both warn that their life will involve suffering or hardship. Indeed there can be little doubt but that the author of the Pastorals, wishing to write a passage in which church leaders would be encouraged to live up to their vocation, has deliberately modelled himself on Rom. 8: 12–17.

But at the same time we cannot fail to notice the remarkable
differences between the genuinely Pauline passage and this one in II Tim. 1. In the first place, Paul's words apply to all his readers, and indeed to all Christians. The author of the Pastorals means his words to apply to Church leaders only, that is, ordained clergy. This is a most frequent characteristic of the Pastorals: words addressed by Paul to all members of the Church the author applies to the clergy only. Again, whereas Paul seems to assume that the Spirit has been received in baptism, the author of the Pastorals states explicitly that the χάρισμα (which I take here to mean the gift of the Spirit) has been received at ordination. Again, we cannot help being struck by the way in which the author of the Pastorals has avoided the concept of sonship. Sonship is central to the Pauline passage, but in II Timothy it is replaced by a heterogeneous collection of three nouns, 'power and love and self-control'. This is no doubt because the author did not make his own the concept of the sonship of Christ. The word ἱλός is never used for Christ in the Pastorals. Naturally therefore he had no use either for the concept of Christian sonship. Nor can the author cope with the profound Pauline doctrine of the identification of the Christian with Christ, suffering with him and being glorified with him. He substitutes quite a fine exhortation not to be ashamed of witnessing for the Lord, and a reminder of the need to suffer hardship for the sake of the gospel.

Thus we have in this second passage another clear example of the theological transposition which the author of the Pastorals has applied to his Pauline material. He takes what he needs from Paul, but he adapts it to his own circumstances, which were not exactly those of Paul; and he omits or modifies those elements in Pauline thought with which he was not at home.

Our third comparison is

II Timothy 2: 20–1 and Romans 9: 21–3

II Tim. 2: 20–1: 'In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble. If anyone purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.'
Rom. 9: 21–3: 'Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory. . . .'

The only verbal link between these two passages is the double phrase ἁκένη ἐλς τιμήν and ἁκένη ἐλς ἀτμίναν. But it is quite sufficient to show that the author of the Pastorals had Romans 9 in mind when he composed this passage. We have here, however, a new feature in the author's use of Pauline materials; previously we have been able to show that the sentiment and intention in the two examples already quoted are pretty well common to Paul and the author of the Pastorals. Here, however, we meet a different situation: though he certainly recalls a passage in Romans 9, and probably believes that he is interpreting the master correctly, he is in fact using his Pauline material here for a purpose quite different from that which Paul has in mind.

In Romans 9 Paul has been pondering God's design whereby he has, for the moment at least, rejected the Jews and chosen instead the mixed Jewish-Gentile church of Paul's day. Paul points out that it has always been God's way to choose certain individuals and to reject others. The objection arises: 'in that case no one can be blamed for refusing God's call, since that is part of God's design.' Paul is embarrassed by this, but replies in effect (a) we have no right to criticize God's actions, since we are wholly his creation; and (b) perhaps behind God's rejection and choice lies the intention to make his purpose known, and that purpose is one of absolute love (v. 16). Thus God is like a potter who makes some vessels for an honourable purpose, others only to be scrapped after use. The honourable vessels show his mercy; the dishonourable ones show that he is able to maintain a moral universe, where wrong-doing must have disastrous consequences.

The author of the Pastorals is also faced with a situation where some have made what he believes to be a wrong choice: these
are the Christians in his congregations who have fallen for the attraction of incipient Gnosticism. This is nothing less than a catastrophe (the exact word which he uses in 2: 14). The author even seems at first to be following Paul’s line of thought in maintaining that God’s elect cannot fall. Such seems to be the meaning of the quotation which he cites in verse 19: ‘The Lord knows those who are his.’ This sounds like Paul’s ‘vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory’. But at this point the author abandons the Pauline argument. He cannot follow Paul into the perilous heights of predestinarian doctrine. He uses Paul’s figure all right: in a large house there are various sorts of vessels, some for an honourable and some for a dishonourable use. But we now discover that according to the author of the Pastorals it is possible to change from one category to the other. The litter-bin may become a soufflé-dish! All that is required for this change is a little moral effort. Paul’s dark but profound picture of God the irresistible moulder of human destiny has been transformed into a charming domestic interior. The figure that helped Paul to wrestle with the agonizing problem of God’s action in salvation history has been borrowed by the author of the Pastorals in order to show that even the most deplorable heretic may by moral effort be transformed into a respectable member of the orthodox community. It seems as if the author of the Pastorals went swimming with his master, but found himself out of his depth, and has just managed to scramble back into shallow water. The resemblance and contrast between the two passages is hopelessly obscured by the RSV translation. Who could be expected to guess that ‘one vessel for beauty and another for menial use’ is rendering exactly the same Greek as is translated in II Timothy 2 with ‘some for noble use, some for ignoble’?

Here, then, is a passage where the author has transposed Pauline material, but has both misunderstood it and used it in a sense which his master would probably have repudiated.

The fourth example is:

II Timothy 3: 16–17 and Romans 15: 4–6
II Tim. 3: 16–17: ‘All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for
teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.'

Rom. 15: 4–6: 'For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Of all our five examples this is perhaps the one in which the parallels between the two passages are most obvious and most numerous.

We can list them like this:

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<th>Paul</th>
<th>Pastorals</th>
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<tr>
<td>'Whatever was written in former days'</td>
<td>'All scripture is inspired by God'</td>
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<td>'for our instruction'</td>
<td>'for teaching'</td>
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<td>'steadfastness'</td>
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<td>'encouragement'</td>
<td>'correction'</td>
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<td>'together you'</td>
<td>'the man of God'</td>
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As in the case of the last example, we must make some remarks about the translation. I have reproduced the RSV text rendering of πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, but I do not think it is correct. In the NT γραφὴ in the singular can only have two meanings: either 'a passage of scripture' or 'scripture as a whole'. When NT writers wish to refer to the scriptures as a whole they usually write αἱ γραφαί, but there are places (e.g. John 10: 35) where η̣ γραφή means 'the bible', and Paul can use it more or less in this sense; see Gal. 3: 22. However in this passage in II Timothy πᾶσα γραφὴ cannot mean 'the whole scripture'; for that we would need πᾶσα η̣ γραφή. It must therefore mean 'every passage in scripture'. Likewise we must translate the whole sentence: 'Every passage in scripture is inspired and is profitable', not, as many editors do 'Every inspired passage of scripture is also profitable...'. This would imply that according to the author of the Pastorals there could be an uninspired passage of scripture; but that is
precisely the view which the author of the Pastorals is repudiating. We must assume that some of the Gnostic teachers were casting aspersions on some passages in the Old Testament. This means that they were not Marcionites for Marcion rejected the entire Old Testament. We should also note that in our second parallel ‘instruction’ and ‘teaching’ render the same word in Greek.

In this comparison Paul and his admirer are saying essentially the same thing, to wit that scripture has great value for use among Christians; it is a source of instruction and support for the faithful. And, of course, both of them are referring to what we call the Old Testament. The author of the Pastorals does not rank Paul’s writings with scripture, however useful he found them as a source for his own compositions. But the modifications which the author has introduced into his Pauline model are very significant indeed. In the first place we have the familiar feature that what Paul applies to the whole Christian community the author of the Pastorals applies to the ordained minister: Paul’s ‘you’ becomes ‘the man of God’. Next, the author of the Pastorals seems much more interested in the polemical use of the scriptures against his Gnostic opponents. He uses the words ‘training’, ‘reproof’, ‘correction’ where Paul seems to be thinking mainly of the growth in spiritual stature of the individual Christian. There is a paradox latent here, for, in fact, it is Paul who uses the scriptures for polemical purposes in his authentic letters much more than the author of the Pastorals does. Another remarkable difference between Paul and the author of the Pastorals here is that the latter introduces technical Stoic vocabulary into his account of how scripture should be used. Epictetus, probably a near contemporary of the author of the Pastorals, uses παιδεία (‘training’) and ἐπανόρθωσις (‘correction’) as technical terms in moral philosophy. Finally we may note that ‘training in righteousness’ is not a phrase that would make any sense in an authentically Pauline context.

So once again the author of the Pastorals has used Pauline material for much the same purpose as Paul used it, but in the process has markedly modified it to suit his own circumstances and outlook.
Our last example is as follows:

**II Timothy 4: 6–8 and Philippians 2: 16–17**

II Tim. 4: 6–8: ‘For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.’

Phil. 2: 16–17: ‘holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.’

To complete the picture we should probably add I Corinthians 9: 25: ‘Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.’

Verbal links or parallels between these passages are not difficult to find. Both use σπεύδομαι (‘to be poured as a libation’) of Paul’s apparently impending death. Both use the same root-word, ἔδραμον and δρόμος to describe the course which Paul has run. Both refer to the parousia: it is called ‘the day of Christ’ in Paul and ‘that Day’ in the Pastorals. Both refer to faith, though with a somewhat different significance. When we include the verse from I Corinthians we can add that both speak of a crown of victory (the word τίμιος is used in both passages), and both use the figure of the games—not of war or battle, despite RSV’s rendering ‘I have fought the good fight’. A more accurate translation would be ‘I have made a good match of it’.

What the author has done in II Timothy 4: 6–8, then, has been in effect to take a passage in which Paul writes as one who is facing the possibility of death because of his service of the gospel and use it of Paul’s historical situation as a prisoner in Rome shortly before his actual execution. Since he is writing from the standpoint of one living at least a generation later, who now regards Paul as a shining example of martyrdom for Christ, he can afford to make Paul express himself rather more confidently than perhaps the historical Paul would have done. We may well wonder whether Paul would have spoken so confidently of his
reward, and in particular whether he would have spoken about 'the crown of righteousness'. But on the whole this transposition is well done. The author uses apposite language from 1 Corinthians 9: 25, and has himself introduced the very felicitous note in verse 6: 'the time of my departure has come.' The word for 'departure' is \( \alpha\nu\lambda\varsigma \nu\sigma\iota \varsigma \), which can mean a ship slipping her cable as she leaves the quay. Commentators have also pointed out that a libation would often be made on such an occasion.

Because the passage on which the author of the Pastorals has modelled himself here does not contain much profound Pauline theology, the transposition is perhaps more successful than is any of the others which we have considered. The author has entered more sympathetically into Paul's outlook, and his genuine admiration for his master has enabled him to write a farewell message from Paul to his favourite disciple which has evoked the admiration of generations of readers and is not unworthy of the authentic Paul.

As we review these five passages, it does not seem unjust to describe the process of transposition which they reflect as the domestication of Paul. Certainly in the first four passages we can legitimately claim that the high, dark, far-ranging Pauline theology is being modified and reduced. In all four what Paul meant to apply to every member of the Christian community has been restricted so as to apply only to the ordained ministry. In many of them the more difficult (and therefore very often the more profound) flights of Pauline speculation have been simply bypassed: justification by faith, the sonship of Christ and the adopted sonship of Christians, the thought of Christians suffering with Christ, Paul's doctrine of the Spirit, predestination, all these topics are beyond the range of the author of the Pastorals, and he simply omits them. On the other hand he shows a tendency to insert some features which are not Pauline, notably the need to oppose a specific form of false teaching and also the concept of the Christian faith as consisting in a deposit of belief that must be defended and passed on intact. The whole exercise could approximately be described as an attempt to make Paul's teaching relevant to the circumstances in which the author of the Pastorals was writing.
When we look at this process in the perspective of the history of Christian theology we must confess that the author of the Pastorals has succeeded in considerably modifying the image of the historical Paul which later Christian tradition received. Thanks to the Pastoral Epistles, later ages believed in a Paul who was much concerned about the proper training of the ordained ministry, who was anxious to encourage among Christians a quality described as ἡσυχία 'piety, godliness', who regarded the task of the ordained ministry as consisting largely in ensuring that a fixed deposit of faith should be handed on to subsequent generations. We may add for good measure (though this does not appear in the passages we have been examining) that it was a Paul who strongly disapproved of women taking a leading part in Christian worship, and who had received an education which included at least some acquaintance with popular Stoic moral philosophy. This domestication of Paul is not exactly identical with that 'early Catholicism' which so much exercises the minds of our Lutheran colleagues on the continent, but it seems to me that there can be no doubt whatever as to the extent to which the image of the historical Paul has been obscured and even misrepresented by the author of the Pastoral Epistles. We have only to turn to the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer to see how deeply it has been impregnated by the influence of the Pastorals. Those who composed that Ordinal certainly believed that in the Pastoral Epistles we have much valuable material on the topic of church order from the pen of the blessed apostle himself. The man who composed the Pastorals has been only too successful in projecting his image of Paul onto the screen of Christian tradition.

III

The claim which the author of the Pastorals makes to be writing in Paul's name at least a generation after Paul's death is one which must give rise to a number of significant reflections for anyone who is interested in the history and development of Christian theology. One could, for example, compare the author's claim to write in Paul's name with the claim made through the ages by
successive bishops of Rome to speak in the name of Peter. Indeed, one might even suggest that the author of the Pastorals has vindicated his claim more effectively than have many bishops of Rome, since one can at least compare the Pastorals with the authentic Paulines, whereas we have no evidence whatever as to what Peter would have said about such topics as transubstantiation or the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But I would prefer in the last section of this paper to draw a comparison from a different area, the area of rabbinic midrash.

Midrash, we are told, was simply the attempt to make the scriptures in general, and the Torah in particular, relevant to each successive generation. We may be allowed to include the Targums in the definition of midrash for this purpose, since those who composed the Targums certainly wished to make scripture intelligible and relevant to the generation that heard them or read them. To take a very simple example; Isaiah writes:

\[
\text{The ox knows its owner,} \\
\text{and the ass its master’s crib;} \\
\text{but Israel does not know,} \\
\text{my people does not understand.}
\]

The targumist renders the second half of this verse thus: ‘Israel has not learned to know the fear of me, my people has not considered how to return to my law’ (Isaiah 1: 3). The targumist has imported into his interpretation a reference to the Torah because that is what Jews were concerned with in his day.

May we not say that the author of the Pastorals is, at least in the passages which we have been considering, writing Midrash on Paul? In one respect the parallel is very close. Midrash as enshrined in the Mishna and the Talmud could be described as commentary on the scriptures, particularly on the Torah, with a view to making them applicable to a period long after they were written. But the process of Midrash did not undergo a decisive break at any one time. What we have in the Mishna and Talmud is material which has accumulated over a long period of time. Some of it goes back to more than two hundred years before the publication of the Mishna, and it is very probable that the process of midrash composition began as soon as the scriptures were
written. J. W. Weingreen in his book *From Bible to Mishna* (Manchester, 1976) recently suggested that Deuteronomy itself was originally a sort of Mishna on earlier versions of the Torah, designed to adapt Torah to contemporary circumstances. Moreover the claim was made by the rabbis that the oral tradition, the *Halaka*, went back to Moses himself.

Of course, if the author of the Pastorals may be said to be writing midrash on Paul, the process is much briefer and more circumscribed than that which we find in the Mishna and the Talmud. Also we cannot say that the author treats Paul's writings as canonical scripture. Nevertheless, we have in the Pastorals a clear example of an attempt to adapt Paul to contemporary conditions, which is exactly what Midrash and Targum are meant to do, and the material in the Pastorals is presented in the same form, a letter, in which the original was written. One might almost say that our five passages are a sort of Targum on the Pauline original. When in the course of the history of the Church some later theologian wrote a commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, as did apparently Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and certainly Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Jerome, they were in fact writing a commentary on a commentary on what was by that time regarded as scripture. This looks very like the process of Midrash, reflected in Mishna and Talmud, whereby scholars and theologians go on writing commentaries on commentaries through the ages, all claiming to be faithful to the meaning of the original scripture, and all sharing to a greater or lesser extent in the authority of the original.

The question that interests me is this: why did this process of Midrash upon Midrash cease in Christianity, whereas it continued in unbroken continuity in Judaism? There is of course a sense in which the process did continue uninterruptedly in Christianity: the Fathers who wrote commentaries on the books of the New Testament believed that those whom they were interpreting held exactly the same doctrinal beliefs as they did themselves. You have only to read Maurice Wiles' *The Spiritual Gospel* to be struck by the way in which all patristic commentators on that book assume that St. John had a full knowledge of the doctrine of hypostatic union and of the two natures of Christ. And the
medieval commentators in their turn did not want to interpret the scriptures in any way different from what they tended to believe was the consensus of the Fathers. Right up to the end of the nineteenth century some theologians (mostly, but not exclusively, Roman Catholics) continued to write as if there was a complete consensus of the Fathers on all essential points of doctrine and even that the Fathers were only articulating what the apostles believed. But, when all allowance has been made for the continuity of the tradition of exegesis within the Church, it is nothing like what we find in Judaism. There is nothing in Christianity really comparable with the unbroken series of commentary on commentary, Midrash on Midrash, from Moses to Maimonides, with which Judaism presents us.

The main reason why the tradition of rabbinic Midrash did not develop in Christianity was the recognition by the Church of the canon of the New Testament. This meant that there was a break between the New Testament and commentaries on the NT. Admittedly, the canon included within itself the Pastorals' commentary on Paul, but it did mean that no commentary on Pastorals' commentary would attain quasi-canonical status. The canon made it much easier to appeal to scripture against later commentary, and hence to make something of a break between scripture and tradition. I do not mean to suggest that there was first scripture and then tradition. That would be a very simplistic account of the matter. Scripture, whether in the OT or the NT, has never existed without tradition. But the recognition of the canon meant that tradition was never permanently able to master scripture. I think that this has happened in orthodox Judaism, in the sense that orthodox Judaism is not willing to question the assumption that the Law, the Prophets, and the writings must be interpreted in a Torah-centric way. It is true that Judaism also has a canon, but it has tended to emphasize it perhaps less than Christianity has emphasized its canon. In Judaism one can legitimately say that there are degrees of inspiration within the canon. The existence of the canon in Christianity has meant that it was possible at the Reformation to appeal to scripture against tradition. Even more significantly perhaps, the existence of a canon has enabled the Roman Catholic Church ever since
Vatican II to appeal to scripture against some elements in its own tradition. One might regard the canon of scripture as acting like the sun, exerting a gravitational pull upon Christian tradition through the ages. It might seem at times that tradition is moving out into outer space, having freed itself from any obligations to scripture. But always the gravitational pull of scripture exerts itself eventually. In the last twenty years we have seen that gravitational pull bring about something like a change of course in the case of the largest denomination in Christendom.

One could go on to ask, why did Christianity produce a canon of the NT so relatively soon after the NT was completed? Apart from historical reasons such as the challenge of Gnosticism, I think the reason must lie in the historicity of Jesus Christ. Because God's saving action in Jesus Christ was both relatively recent in time and historically testified, it was capable of being more clearly defined and described. It did not go back hundreds of years into the legendary past, as did the story of salvation history in the Old Testament. The consequence was that the testimony to God's act in Christ which we call the New Testament was more clear, succinct, and definable. It therefore provided a more adequate criterion whereby to evaluate Christian tradition than did scripture in Judaism. We have nothing exactly corresponding to the rabbinic tradition of Midrash in Christianity because we are better able to distinguish biblical authors from biblical commentators.

I conclude, therefore, that, though we should not reproach the author of the Pastorals for his all-too-successful attempt to interpret Paul to his own generation, we should be very glad that his technique was not widely followed by early Christians. Other examples of the same technique within the NT, such as Second Peter, are not on the whole encouraging. Perhaps we can say of the Pastorals what a Lambeth Conference said of an ordination of a woman to the priesthood: it was eminently pleasing to God, but it must never be done again.