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A STUDY IN LETTER-WRITING.

THE masses of papyri which have been exhumed in recent years are regarded by most of those who take an interest in their recovery as being of the nature of mines, from which may be extracted lost literature, either in the nuggets of whole documents or the gold-dust of identified fragments. Hence when any great mass of such papyri has been accumulated, the question as to the contents of the pile is a literary enquiry, a demand, on the part of theological students, to know whether it is the Logia of Papias, or some other collection of our Lord's sayings that has come to light ; and, on the part of classical scholars, whether it is true that fragments of Sappho have been seen amongst the *débris*. And such an attitude is proper and reasonable for the enquirer, because our greatest losses intimate to us the direction of our greatest conceivable gains, and every student has decided ideas as to what constitutes the literary deficit in his own line of study. Every patristic student, for instance, hungers and thirsts after Papias, whether he be apologist or rationalist ; nor will either school be happy, except in a restricted sense, until it is recovered.

But these discoveries of papyri are not merely valuable for the accretion which they make to our classified literature ; they contain an immense amount of information which does not properly belong to literature at all, but which is of the highest value for the historical and literary student. It is difficult, for instance, to find a place for tax receipts, or wills, or agreements for letting of houses, in

literature ; they are sub-literary rather than literary ; valuable enough for the light they throw on geography, on history, and on law, even though no one should exult over the finding of a thousand of them. And in the same way the fragments of letters which come to light are of the first importance in that they take us, which literature so seldom does, into the very heart of the popular life in its most natural forms of expression. Yet such letters do not properly constitute literature ; they were never intended to do so. We might as well describe conversation as literature, for letters of the everyday sort are only an awkward substitute for conversation ; they are præ-literary rather than literary. And it might be thought that such documents would scarcely pay for printing from the point of view of the critic ; for who would venture in the present day, if he were given the run of the post-office, to print five hundred letters taken at random from the multitudinous pseudo-conversation that goes on from day to day and from hour to hour in every country where civilization has established itself ? The reason for this low esteem lies in the fact that they add nothing, or almost nothing, to what we know or want to know about our own time. But put the case that it were some other age or time than our own, concerning which our information is scanty and our judgment ill-informed, and how readily may such trifling matters acquire a critical or a historical value !

I propose to show that much light in an unexpected direction is obtained from the examination of some of these trifling documents by using them to illustrate the structure of the Pauline Epistles. It occurred to me in reading some of the papyri preserved in the British Museum and elsewhere that they furnished singular parallels to sentences in the Pauline Epistles, especially with the opening and closing parts of them. There was clearly a conventional element in the compositions referred to, and one could not read,

for example, a Greek letter in which the writer spoke of making a constant remembrance, usually in some religious sense, of the person addressed, without feeling that there was something of a common sentiment in the writer of such an epistle and in the Apostle who was so in the habit of telling his disciples that he made mention of them unceasingly in his prayers.

It was, therefore, with a great deal of interest that I found that Deissmann had, in his recent *Bibel-Studien*, discussed the whole question that had opened before my own mind, and that he had done it with a subtlety and a thoroughness that I despair of ever attaining. To Deissmann we owe our grateful thanks for his very successful attempt to co-ordinate the letters which have come down out of the Greek remains in Egypt with the literature that has come down out of the same periods as the letters themselves, and to use the recovered documents for the criticism of similar compositions which make up so large a part of our New Testament. It is no small service to bring back Pauline correspondence into the atmosphere of daily life after it has been so persistently relegated to the region of theology.

We do not mean to say that Deissmann *discovered* the existence of a human element in the apostolic writings; it must always have been sensible, in some degree at least, to those who spoke and wrote Greek. For instance, Theodore of Mopsuestia, in his Commentary upon Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, remarks at the outset that Paul's opening sentence is cast in the mould which we use ourselves, as when we say in writing a letter, "So-and-so to So-and-so greeting."¹ Theodore was right in his comparison of the Pauline salutation with those which are current in ordinary

¹ ἐν τούτῳ κατὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτῷ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τὴν προγραφὴν συνεπέρανεν, παραπλήσιον τι τῇ παρ' ἡμῶν συνηθείᾳ ποιῶν ὡς ἔταν ἐπιστέλλοντες λέγομεν Ὁ δέῖνα τῷ δέῖνι χαιρεῖν.

correspondence; for either they are directly coincident with them, or derived from the Greek salutations, such as *χαίρειν* and *τὰ πλείστα χαίρειν*, by a reference to *χάρις* as underlying the expressions in common use.

Let us then see how far the conventional epistolary parallels go to which Deissmann has drawn attention. One of his letters is dated 172 B.C., and is written by an Egyptian lady named Isias to her brother (which probably means husband), who has gone into retreat in the Serapeum at Memphis, leaving his family to take care of themselves, while he enjoys a religious holiday. The letter begins:¹ "Isias to her brother Hephaestion greeting. If

¹ The whole of the letter is as follows:—

"Isias to her brother greeting:

"If you are well and other things happen as you wish, it would be in accordance with my constant prayer to the gods. I too am in good health, and so is the boy; and all at home make constant remembrance of you. When I got your letter through Horus, in which you explain that you are in sanctuary at the Serapeum in Memphis, I straightway gave thanks to the gods for your being in good health, but as for your not coming to us when the evils that threatened you there have passed away, I am disconsolate because such a long time I have been keeping myself and the child, and am come to the lowest point on account of the price of bread, and I did think that now you were coming I should find a little relief, but you seem to have no idea of coming to us nor to have an eye to our circumstances, as you would if you were still here. We are in need of everything, not only because such a long time and so many seasons have passed since you were here, but because you have not sent us anything. And besides that, Horus, who brought me your letter, tells me further that you are released from sanctuary, and I am perfectly miserable.

"No, indeed! and your mother, too, takes it very hard, and you will do well to come for her sake as well as ours to the city, unless some more pressing need draws you elsewhere. Farewell, then, and have a care of your body, so as to be in health.

"Good-bye.

"Dated on the 30th of the month Epiph
in the ninth year."

It will conduce to the understanding of the argument in the following pages if the reader will observe the traces of Hephaestion's letter which are discernible behind the letter of Isias. She clearly distinguishes the direct information which Horus has brought her over and above the letter. But she has had a letter, and the letter began with a formula saying that the writer was in good health, probably wished her the same, but wished her to know that he was in retreat, and not coming home at present. So much of Hephaestion's letter can be restored from the reply of Isias.

you are well, and other things happen as you would wish, it would be in accordance with my constant prayer to the gods. I myself am well, and the boy and all at home make constant remembrance of you (*οἱ ἐν οἴκῳ πάντες σου διαπαντὸς μνείαν ποιούμενοι*)." We naturally compare, as Deissmann directs us to do, such expressions as Philemon 1: "Always making mention of you in my prayers"; 1 Thessalonians i. 2, "Making mention of you in my prayers unceasingly" (*ἀδιαλείπτως*);¹ Romans i. 9, "How unceasingly (*ἀδιαλείπτως*) I make mention of you always in my prayers"; Ephesians i. 16, "Making mention of you in my prayers," etc.

Here the conventional element in the apostolic introduction is perfectly clear. The modification of the traditional usage does not consist in the addition of the words "in my prayers," for it is clear that these are involved in the letter of Isias, both as regards herself and the rest of the family. The only change is in the address of the prayers. We are, therefore, entitled to consider the apostolic introduction, to which we have referred, as in the main a conventional one. It is his Greek environment and his Greek education that are responsible for the expressions which he uses.

We shall see the same formula underlying another expression which turns up in the papyri. For example, we have in a letter of invitation to a child's birthday party, written in the second or third century A.D.,² the sentence:

"Before everything I pray that you may be in health, and daily I

¹ We alter the punctuation of Westcott and Hort.

² The whole letter runs as follows:

" . . . Before everything I pray that you may be in health, and daily I make the act of worship for you before our lord Serapis. Certainly do your best to come to us, if possible, for the birthday of my son Serapion. But I wrote you previously on this point. . . . Your daughter greets you and Leonides . . . and Serapion . . . and your sister and Hermione and her children; I pray that you may be well and strong."

make the act of worship (προσκύνημα) for you before our lord Serapis" (*Berlin papyri*, No. 6836).

The same language appears in the letter of a certain Ammonios to his sister Tachnumi¹ :—

"Ammonios to his sister Tachnumi abundant greeting :

Before all things I pray that you may be in health, and each day I make the act of worship for you" (*Paris papyri*, No. 18).

Here, then, we get a secondary form of the affirmation of constant prayer on behalf of the beloved person. And not only so, but we disentangle a third formula, the prayer for health, in the form which coincides almost exactly with that which we find in the third Epistle of John. The spirituality of the Apostolic address lies in the expansion of the sentiment by the words "even as thy soul prospereth." Compare, for a contrast, the conclusion of the letter of Isias to her husband, in which she says, "Farewell, and have a care of your body, that you may be in health." The same turn of speech appears in a number of other papyri, *e.g.* :

¹ The whole letter is to the following effect :

"Ammonios to his sister Tachnumi much greeting :

"Before all things I pray that you may be in health, and each day I make the act of worship for you. I salute heartily my goodest (ἀγαθώτατον) little boy Leo. I am jolly, and so is the horse and Melas. Don't neglect my son. I salute Senchris, and I salute your mother. I likewise salute Pachnumi and Pachnumi junior. I salute . . . and Amenothis. 'Hurry up'¹ about the boy until we go to my place. If I come to the place and see the place I will send for you, and you shall come to Pelusium, and I will come to you at Pelusium. I salute Steches, the son of Pancrates. I salute Psemmonthis and Plato. If your brothers dispute with you, come to my house and stay there until we see what to do. Don't neglect it. Write me of your own welfare and of my boy's. Hurry up over the matter of the farm. I wrote this letter in Thmuis on the fifth of the month Phamenoth. We have two days more, and then we will arrive at Pelusium. Melas greets you all by name. I salute Psenchnumi the son of Psendermout. I pray that you may be well and strong."

¹ Γόργευσον: the Americanism has recently been introduced into English by our first literary authority!

“Lykarion to his father Emphoues, greeting :

Before all things I pray that you may be strong, you and all yours, and may prosper continually” (*Berlin papyri*, No. 6875).

“Serapias to her children Ptolemy and Apollinaria, abundant greeting :

Before all things I pray that you may be in health,” etc. (*Berlin papyri*, No. 6811).

The recurrence of the formula renders it almost certain that in 3 John 2 we should correct the expression, Ἀγαπητέ, περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί σε εὐδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, so as to read πρὸ πάντων.

The final salutations and closing prayers of many of the Epistles of Paul can also be paralleled from the papyri. Compare, for example, in the epistle of Ammonios, mentioned above, such expressions as—

“I salute Senchris, and I salute thy mother. I salute Pachnoumi, likewise Pachnoumi junior. . . . Melas [perhaps the coloured servant] salutes you all by name”

with the obvious parallels in the New Testament, and we shall see how life-like the Pauline and Johannine letters become. In the same way we compare the expression in the letter of Serapias, “Greet Ammonios and his children and wife, and those who love me (?) with Titus iii. 15, “Greet those who love us in faith”; or the expression in 2 Corinthians xii., “All the saints salute you,” with Berlin Papyri, 6811, “Cyrilla salutes you . . . and all who are here,” etc., etc.

We shall apply the information which we have thus gained with regard to the structure of an ordinary Greek letter to the criticism of the oldest of the Pauline Epistles, the first Epistle to the Thessalonians. But before doing so, let us recall what was said in the opening sentences (a point which Deissmann so well elucidates), that the simplest and most primitive letters are a form of conversation. It follows from this that any letter which forms part of a

series, which either constitutes a reply or involves one, can only be understood thoroughly by studying its relation to what has preceded it and what follows it. Otherwise we should be engaged upon questions without answers, or answers without questions, the reconstruction of whose conjugate elements must necessarily be involved in a good deal of uncertainty. In the case, however, of a good letter-writer (and St. Paul was certainly that) the single letters have always a tendency to so incorporate elements from what they are trying to answer, that the conversational basis of letter-writing reasserts itself, and a large part of the document may easily be restored into dialogue. A very interesting case of this kind will be found in a recent study of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, by Mr. Walter Lock, in the *EXPOSITOR* for July, 1897. Turning then to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, we can immediately recognise a formal element in the addresses and in the salutations, and determine some further facts which might easily escape the casual reader. For we not only find that he makes mention of them incessantly in his prayers (*μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν ἀδιαλείπτως*), and has a remembrance (*μνημονεύοντες*) of their love;¹ but when we read further in the Epistle, we find in iii. 6 the statement that Timothy came to us, and brought the good news that you have always a good remembrance of us, and that you long to see us as we do to see you (*ὅτι ἔχετε μνείαν ἡμῶν ἀγάθην πάντοτε ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς*), we are sure from the expressions used that the communication was in the form of a letter which Timothy brought, and that Paul had this letter before him when he penned the first Epistle to the Thessalonians. We thus arrive at the information that *there is a lost Epistle of the Thessalonians to St. Paul*. The form

¹ The recognition of the conventional element in the Epistle relieves the Commentaries upon it from a good deal of well-intentioned subtlety.

of the good news which they send is epistolary, both as regards their remembrance of him and their longing to see him.

Nor is it difficult to unravel from the web of the existing epistle some threads of the prior communication.

In the first place it contained an expression of thanksgiving to God; for we find in ii. 13 the Apostle says:

“And on this account *we also* give thanks to God unceasingly,” etc.¹

The Thessalonians had done so in their letter, and apparently this was the motive, not only for the expression which the Apostle uses in ii. 13, but also for the opening words in i. 2 (*εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε*). But however this may be, the expression *διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς* betrays the fact that he had something before him which was similar to what he was saying himself.

In the second place, observe how the Apostle plays upon certain leading thoughts with regard to his work in Thessalonica. In ii. 1 we are told that “ye yourselves know, brethren, what sort of *an entrance* we had to you that it was *not in vain*.” The same expression is involved in the previous verses (i. 9, 10), where we are advised that “they know what kind of *an entrance* we had to you”; and in iii. 5 the Apostle reminds them that he had sent Timothy to them to know concerning their faith, lest perchance by the work of the tempter his toil amongst them *had been in vain*. Now it is clear that the letter of the Thessalonians to Paul must have contained the expression that “his labour amongst them had not been fruitless, nor his

¹ The A.V. has wrongly, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing,” and the R.V. corrects to “And for this cause we also thank,” etc. Findlay (*Camb. Bible for Schools*) remarks the emphatic “we,” but misses the meaning. He says, “The Apostle has already given thanks for the Christian worth of the Thessalonians (c. i. 2 ff.): his thanksgiving is renewed when he considers that this is the fruit of his own and his companions’ labours amongst them.” Hence “we” is emphasized here (in the Greek), but not in c. i. 2.”

entrance to them in vain," or something very like this. It must have had εἴσοδος in it, and οὐ κενή.

And this brings to light a number of other curious facts. It appears that when in ii. 1 the Apostle uses the expression, αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν, the expression "ye know" must be understood in the sense "ye have admitted in your letter," or "ye have testified." Now it is characteristic of this Epistle that the expressions καθὼς οἶδατε, ὑμεῖς οἶδατε and the like recur again and again with suspicious regularity.

Thus in i. 5, καθὼς οἶδατε οἰοί ἐγενήθημεν ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς; in ii. 5, οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακίας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἶδατε¹; in ii. 10, καθάπερ οἶδατε ὡς ἓνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατήρ, κ.τ.λ.²

In the same way when in iii. 3, 4 we have the expression αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα followed by καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε, the repeated appeal to the knowledge of the Thessalonians implies more than a historical reminiscence; it means that they had made the historical reminder themselves in their letter to him.

Return now to i. 9, and see whether the effect of the scrutiny which we have made of these appeals to the Thessalonian conscience, as witnessed by the letter which they had sent to the Apostle, does not lead us to believe that a slight reformation of the text is necessary at that point. As it stands we have the statement:

"Αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κ.τ.λ., 'For they declare what sort of entrance we had to you.'"

¹ The verse continues—οὔτε προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς, which confirms the interpretation of καθὼς οἶδατε by "ye attest." Bengel says of the two clauses, "haec duo inter se respondent." They are, indeed, very like a Hebrew parallelism.

² Here again the testimony of the Thessalonians is appealed to in parallelism with the Divine witness, for the previous verse introduces the matter by saying, ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεὸς, so that ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες is an anticipation of καθάπερ οἶδατε which follows.

This is usually taken to mean that the people throughout the regions of Macedonia and Achaia report what kind of an entrance we had amongst you. It seems to me that we ought to read *αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀπαγγέλλετε*, "ye yourselves report," and take it as an exact parallel to what follows in ii. 1, "ye yourselves admit that our entrance was not in vain." The alteration is a conjectural one, having only the support, as far as I know, of a single Latin copy, but it seems to me to add greatly to the force of the reply.

The fact is that this passage, as ordinarily read, has always been a *crux interpretum*. The Apostle seems to say that the regions of Macedonia and Achaia are reporters on the matter of his mission to Thessalonica, and that the whole world is also in evidence on the same point. But, as Baur acutely remarked, "How can it be said of Christians, belonging to a Church only lately founded, that they were patterns to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, that the fame of their reception of the word of the Lord has not only gone abroad in Macedonia and Achaia, but that . . . people of every place were speaking of them, how they were converted, and turned from their idols to God?"

Evidently the right explanation is that given by Dr. Gloag in his commentary, that the passage "does not intimate that the Thessalonians, by their missionary activity, disseminated the Gospel, but that from them locally the Gospel had spread." And he adds, "The sentence is complete without the addition 'your faith to Godward is spread abroad,' and therefore we must consider these words as equivalent to 'from you sounded out the word of the Lord.'" The whole passage would seem to be much clearer with this explanation, and there is no longer any need to regard the Macedonians and Achaians as giving evidence, in other than a general sense, to the Christianity of the Thessalonians. The special evidence which Paul was in quest of came from Thessalonica direct.

In the next place we find in ii. 9 the expression, *μνημονεύετε γὰρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον*. This is not to be regarded as an imperative, or a suggestion equivalent to an imperative; the Thessalonians had alluded to his toils amongst them in their letter, and the fact that they had done so is confirmed by the opening sentences of the Pauline Epistle, in which he tells them that he unceasingly remembers *their* faith-work and *their* love-labour. The motive for these expressions is to be sought in the letter before him, just as we suggested that *καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν* in ii. 13 was provoked by a sentence in the Thessalonian epistle, which also furnished the suggestion for the opening sentences in i. 2.

But, perhaps, by this time we are in a position to make a rough reconstruction of the lost Epistle of the Thessalonians to St. Paul: it may have run something as follows:

“The church of the Thessalonians to the beloved Paul, greeting.

We give thanks to God on thy behalf continually,¹ and have an unceasing remembrance of thee in our prayers,² desiring earnestly to see thy face. For thy entrance to us has not been in vain,³ but thou hast spoken to us the words of God in truth, without flattery and without covetousness,⁴ and we remember thy labour and thy toil on our behalf.⁵

And we have turned from the worship of dead idols to serve a true and living God, and to wait for the return of His Son from heaven. And we have become imitators of thee,⁶ and of the churches of God in Judea, and of thy patience and of theirs in those afflictions whereunto we are appointed. And thou hast been to us as a nursing father,⁷ even as Moses carried the people in the wilderness, exhorting us to walk worthily of the kingdom and glory of God. And even as thou didst declare to us that we should suffer for the kingdom of God, so it came to pass.

¹ Cf. ii. 13.

² Cf. iii. 6: Τιμοθέου εὐαγγελισσαμένου ἡμῶν ὅτι μείλαν, κ.τ.λ.

³ Cf. ii. 1.

⁴ Cf. ii. 5.

⁵ Cf. ii. 9.

⁶ Involved in the repetition—

i. 6. καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου.

ii. 14. ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ.

⁷ The idea is involved in τρόφος ὡς πατήρ (ii. 11) τέκνα ἐαυτοῦ (ii. 7).

“But we desire to know¹ concerning them that are fallen asleep before the coming of the day of God, and what will be their portion when that day cometh suddenly as a thief² upon the inhabitants of the earth, etc., etc.

“All our friends salute thee.”

Something like this, then, may have been the Epistle which Timothy brought from the Thessalonians. But may we not go one step further? The letter was in the form of a reply to enquiries which Timothy brought. May it not be that Timothy carried a letter to Thessalonica as well as brought one?

In that case we shall perhaps find some reference to it in the letter of the Thessalonians, or in Paul's reply to it. For instance, in ii. 17 he says that he was “deprived of them in appearance, but not in heart, and that in consequence he had been eager with a great longing to see their faces. It was for that reason that he had sent Timothy, etc.” Timothy comes back and brings the information that “they long to see his face as he did to see theirs”; and Paul goes on, after quoting this information, to tell them that “night and day over-exceedingly he prays to see their face.” Does it not look as if something of the same sentiment had coloured the whole of the correspondence?

Again, when he sent Timothy, it was that he might know concerning their faith, and whether his preaching had been lost labour (*κενή*). This provokes the reply that “his entrance has not been in vain,” and the rejoinder that “yourselves admit that our entrance has not been in vain.”

¹ Hence, perhaps, St. Paul's “I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, c. iv. 13: but the expression occurs elsewhere.

² In c. v. 2 *ἀκριβῶς ὀδᾶτε* involves the thought “you are rightly informed”: so there must have been a statement about the last things in the Thessalonian letter. It is curious how near Findlay came to the detection of this letter and of its peculiar feature. He says, p. 108: “1 Thess. v. 8. *Perfectly* is a somewhat vague rendering of an adverb that with verbs of *knowing* signifies *precisely* or *accurately*. . . . Possibly the Thessalonians in sending the query had used this very word: “We should like to know more precisely,” they may have said, “about the times and seasons,” etc.

Then there is a strong probability that the first enquiry was in writing, and contained an expression concerning the success and permanence of his work amongst them, which the Thessalonians had taken up in their reply. And so we can discern behind the present first Epistle to the Thessalonians another and earlier one (the real first Epistle to the Thessalonians), like a double palimpsest, very faint indeed, beneath the top-writing of what we call the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, and the fairly legible first palimpsest of the reply which the Thessalonians made to his enquiries.

So much follows, then, from a knowledge of early epistolography with regard to the critical and homiletic interpretation of what is, probably, the oldest document of the New Testament. Nor is there anything strange in the recovery of these lost documents by means of the recurring formulæ and expressions in the extant letter.

Jowett came near to the discovery in his *Essay on the Probability that many of St. Paul's Epistles have been Lost*. He takes as his text in this essay the expression "in every epistle" in 2 Thessalonians iii. 17, which involves the Apostle in a correspondence far more extensive than is covered by the two extant Epistles to the Thessalonians. He points out that in the same Epistle Paul twice speaks of "a letter from us." Further, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians his opponents are credited with the opinion that "his letters are weighty and powerful," which certainly implies that in Corinth also there was more Pauline correspondence than has been preserved to us. Jowett also points out that for the first ten or fifteen years of Paul's ministry no epistle is extant; and that within a single year he wrote more than half of his extant correspondence. It is certainly difficult to believe that the original letters of the Apostle are fairly represented by what has come down to us.

It is surprising that when Jowett makes these pertinent

remarks he should have failed to suspect earlier written communications between Paul and the Thessalonians; he says that it is "improbable (observe, however, 2 Thess. ii. 15) that a previous epistle could have interposed itself between the visit of the Apostle and chapters ii. and iii. of the first Epistle." We venture to think that the word "improbable" must be replaced by its direct contrary, or by an even stronger word.

Now if the arguments which we have advanced be valid, we are in a position to clear both the text of the Epistle and its commentaries from a good deal of residual misunderstanding. For example, in chapter i. 2 we should correct the punctuation, so as to connect *ἀδιαλείπτως* with the previous clause, as in the epistles which make allusion to constant prayers or daily adorations before Serapis, which we quoted above. We must also, I think, follow Lachmann in correcting the punctuation in chapter i. 8, so as to place a colon after *ἐξελήλυθεν*, and carry the clause *ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν, κ.τ.λ.*, into close connexion with *v. 9*.

We shall be able to free ourselves from such exegetical subtleties as have attached to those parts of the text which we have shown to be either wholly or in great part conventional. There will be no longer any need to say with Findlay (*Camb. Bible for Schools*, p. 24) that "on the whole the confidence [of the Thessalonians in St. Paul] had not been shaken. 'You have good remembrance of us at all times,' so Timothy (chap. iii. 6) had assured St. Paul. But the Apostles show themselves in chapter ii. 1-12 most anxious to increase this good remembrance." Imagine any one making similar comments on the letter of Isias to the effect that "on the whole the confidence of Hephæstion's family in him had not been shaken"!

A similar reflection would show how groundless is Jowett's argument for the authenticity of the Epistle which is based upon the salutatory formulæ; he says: "Without

laying greater stress on this argument than it deserves, we pass on to enumerate other internal evidence that the Epistle is St. Paul's. Such are (i.) the desire to see the face of his converts, iii. 6, 10," etc. An examination of the text will show that this desire occurs on both sides of the correspondence, and is, again, largely formal in character in spite of the apparent heat of the language. We do not mean that it is not sincere on both sides, but a large formal element has to be allowed for before we can recognise the personality of St. Paul in the language.

But if this particular argument for authenticity is weakened, the general argument is immeasurably strengthened by our enquiry. If we can disentangle from the extant first Epistle to the Thessalonians the shreds of two previous letters, then it is idle to imagine any longer that this peculiar letter is the work of a forger. There may be, and probably is, room for the existence of an interpolator; but the letter itself must be in the main a piece of an actual correspondence, and not the simulation of a literary hand.

The acute criticism to which this Epistle was subjected by Baur in his *Paulus*, and again in his discussion of the Thessalonian Epistles in the *Theol. Jahrbuch* for 1855, is thus seen to be largely a series of misunderstandings, and his attempts to prove that 1 Thessalonians borrows expressions from 1 and 2 Corinthians a failure. Amongst the linguistic proofs of loan-script we find the following examples: "The passages analogous to these [from 1 and 2 Corinthians] in 1 Thessalonians are i. 9, αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν, ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς; ii. 1, αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε, ἀδελφοὶ τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν; v. 5, καθὼς οἶδατε; v. 9, μνημονεύετε γὰρ; v. 10, ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες; v. 11, καθάπερ οἶδατε, etc. As in the Corinthian Epistles, so here, the meaning and aim of all the passages of this kind is to be found in the Apostle's defence of himself against the imputations of his

opponents." The whole of this series of passages has been shown by us to be a part of an actual correspondence, in which the inquiries and the replies can be separated from one another. There is, therefore, no room left for Baur's acute and, in many ways, attractive criticism, except in so far as this, that he rightly held the expressions in question to be of the nature of replies. It is not possible that this series of passages can be excerpts from, or imitations of, the Corinthian Epistles.

The foregoing method of study of the Pauline Epistles is likely to be fruitful beyond the immediate application that we have made of it to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians.

It is something to the credit of criticism if it points out to us a natural and conventional and conversational element in the Apostolic writings. We are better off when, in consequence of a more careful study of the literary environment of the early Christian teachers, we are able to take them off from artificial pedestals, and make them verify what they were so fond of impressing upon their hearers in their lifetime, that they are men of like passions with ourselves, and in no respect dehumanized by the processes of Divine grace. That which is most human about them, the common speeches of life, appears transfigured as we watch the colouring which the writers give to the every-day thoughts, turning assurances of every-day remembrance into the formulæ of Christian intercession, and urging the claims of the soul in terms borrowed from the welfare of the body.

It is a gain, also, to make a Pauline Epistle translucent enough to let us see through it the previous interchange of ideas which has been going on between himself and his correspondents; for we acquire from such observations new tests of genuineness and apostolicity which are not to be undervalued at a time when the criticism of the Pauline

Epistles is beginning afresh, and with microscopic keenness.

The method which we apply is not limited to the single case that we study: there are other Epistles which will yield similar results, though, perhaps, not in as striking a manner. Let us briefly test, for instance, the second Epistle to the Corinthians, an Epistle of which the criticism is becoming more and more difficult, complicated as it is by the confusion in the order of the text, and the apparent want of unity of its composition.

In 2 Corinthians i. 12 we find that Paul is playing on a Greek word (*καύχησις*) which means "a state of glorying, boasting, or exultation," and in i. 14 upon another word (*καύχημα*) which means "an object of such glorying." He says "our glorying [*i.e.*, considered subjectively] is the testimony of our conscience," and "we are your glorying [*i.e.*, considered objectively] as ye are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ." Here the repetition of the idea is suggestive; we notice that in v. 12 the pronoun can be taken emphatically (almost like the words "we also" in 1 Thess. ii. 13); and if taken that way, they imply that the Corinthians had been expressing *καύχησις* to St. Paul. But this is distinctly stated to be the case in the 14th verse, where the writer says, "Ye did acknowledge us in part, so far as to say that we are your exultation." And the inference is clear that Paul had the acknowledgment before him in a letter, whose opening sentences had addressed him as their *καύχημα*.

It would seem to be a conventional thing to say, and was probably common enough in the affectionate correspondence of friends and lovers in that day, but it ceases to be conventional when it passes into St. Paul's hands, and is played upon, over and over, like a sweetly sounding string. He had himself said something like it in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians (ii. 19) when he called them "his

hope, his joy, and his crown of exultation." Apostolic utterances readily fall under Paul Sabatier's rule—that the language of religion is the language of love.

Assuming, then, that we have recovered a trait from the Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul, we have to follow up the hint in the structure of Paul's reply, and also to get any further idea that we can of the correspondence. The first part is not very difficult. When, for example, we find Paul saying in iv. 11 that he hopes he is also manifested in their consciences, and that, though he is not commending himself to them (a thing which he has disclaimed), he is furnishing them with materials for glorying (*καύχημα*) on his account, we must connect this with the previously detected statement of theirs, and understand him to say, that if they talk of boasting over him, he will himself feed the flame of that passion. But then we go a step further, and noting the connected words in which he expresses the hope that he is manifested in their conscience, we must connect these also with the parallel in i. 14, "the testimony of our conscience that in holiness and divine transparency we walked in the world, and especially towards you." From which it appears probable that the Greek text of this verse is in error; it should read "the testimony of *your* conscience" is our matter of exultation. So that the Corinthian letter contained a statement as to their conviction of the apostolic sincerity, very similar to that of the Thessalonians, which we unearthed from 1 Thessalonians ii. 10. And the explanation is confirmed by what follows: "We do not write anything which you do not read or admit." Most of these three verses, 1 Corinthians 12-14, is, therefore, based upon an actual communication from Corinth to Paul.

Precisely as in the case of the Thessalonian letter, the cause of the correspondence was a previous letter from Paul to Corinth; this is recognised in vii. 8, where he says, "I

grieved you in the letter," and again, "if that letter grieved you."

In the case of the Thessalonians the correspondence was carried by Timothy, as far as relates to the two lost letters; in the case of the Corinthians the postman is Titus. In 2 Corinthians vii. 7 we are told of the joy which was caused by the arrival of Titus. He announced to us your ardent longing (*ἐπιπόθησιν*), your lament, your zeal, etc. How did he announce it?

In the case of the Thessalonians we had the expression (1 Thess. iii. 6), "ardently longing to see us (*ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν* . . .), as we to see you"; and we were able to isolate the expression as a submerged epistolary formula. But if *ἐπιπόθησις*, or "ardent longing," is epistolary in one case, the chances are that it is so in the other; that is to say, the probability is that it was a letter which told of this earnest desire; and this enables us to restore another sentence or two in the lost Epistle of the Corinthians.

We are now well on our way toward the recovery of the part of the correspondence between Paul and the Church at Corinth, which underlies the second Epistle to the Corinthians. And we may claim to have verified one statement—that the method which we adopted in dealing with the first Epistle to the Thessalonians is susceptible of a wider application. Perhaps enough has now been said in illustration of the method of our enquiry, and we may leave the matter for the present with the hope that our entrance (*εἴσοδος ἡμῶν*) into the field of the commentator (which is properly not a portion of our fatherland) has not been altogether in vain.

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