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THE PROBLEM OF II CORINTHIANS AND THE HISTORY OF THE CRISIS AT CORINTH—II.

In 2 Corinthians, as we have it presented to us in the Greek text, there is one most remarkable phenomenon, the existence of which every reader can easily verify for himself. I refer to the extraordinary use which it makes of the words *καυχᾶσθαι*, *καύχῃς*, and *καύχημα*. In this Epistle these words appear twenty-nine times, excluding two passages in which the manuscript evidence is conflicting; the inclusion of which passages would bring up the number to thirty-one. Now in the remaining twelve epistles which announce to us St. Paul as their author (including of course 1 Corinthians) these words occur twenty-two times; in the Epistle to the Hebrews *καύχημα* is once found; and the only other New Testament writer who employs any of these words is St. James, in whose Epistle there are three instances. The expressions then appear at least twenty-nine times in 2 Corinthians, while we can only find twenty-six instances of their use in all the other Books of the New Testament put together.

But when we investigate this matter a little more closely, we make a discovery of a surprising nature. We find that while these expressions occur ten times in the first nine chapters of 2 Corinthians, there is not one of the paragraphs in which any of them is found which does not contain a marked compliment to the Corinthians—a compliment which is paid in every single instance by the use of one or more of these very words. The evidence of some manuscripts would make an eleventh instance (ix. 5); but in that case also the word *καύχῃς* would be the vehicle of a compliment. We find further that in these nine chapters the writer (after the preliminary explanation of his *καύχῃς* which he makes in i. 12) never speaks of himself as boasting of anything, except of the

Corinthians, or of them as boasting of anything, except of him. When, however, we pass beyond the apparent break in the sense at the end of chap. ix., a new and opposite (an apparently contrasted) use of these words begins. We meet them nineteen times in these four chapters; but never once do we find the least approach to the complimentary use of them which characterized the former section. On the contrary they are here employed again and again to describe the writer's indignant vindication of his claims against the disloyalty of the Corinthians.

We discover also that the references which the writer in these four chapters makes to himself as boasting are found in close and intimate connexion with such words as *περισσότερον* and *εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα*, apparently describing his boasting, and *ἄφρων*, *παράφρονων*, and *ἐν ἀπροσύνῃ* applied to himself.

All this appears plainly to indicate that he is repeating taunts which have been levelled against him in Corinth.

If it is possible to ascertain anything about the origin of these taunts, and the time when they originated, we may in this way make an important advance in our knowledge of the order of events.

There is a paragraph in chap. xi. which may well have been felt by the Corinthians to be one of the heaviest blows in the whole letter. In it the founder of their church tells them that in all the years he has been with them he never accepted anything from them, and that in order to keep himself from being in any way a debtor to their hospitality, he accepted contributions which were brought to him from Macedonia, while he was actually residing in Corinth, and labouring among the Corinthians. "In everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself." And he vehemently protests that as the truth of Christ is in him, in the regions of Achaia this boast shall not be barred against him.

If we place this paragraph beside a paragraph in 1 Cor. ix., we shall be struck at once by the resemblance of the

two and by the difference between them. In the earlier Epistle the writer had shown that if others had a right to obtain a maintenance from the Corinthian Church, he had yet more; nevertheless, he added, "I have used none of these things, and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case: for it were good for me rather to die than that any man should make my ground of boasting void." There is plainly a connexion between this statement, τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδείς κενώσει, and the statement made afterwards with reference to the very same matter in 2 Cor. xi. 10, ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασι τῆς Ἀχαίας.

But, while the connexion between the statements is very apparent, there is also an important difference which shows that developments had taken place in the interval between the date of the two Epistles. The declaration in 1 Corinthians is general in its scope. The οὐδείς might not exclude any one community more than another; no comparison is made between one church and another; there is no mention of the Macedonians, and no reference to Corinth or Achaia by name.

In 2 Corinthians all this is changed; the declaration of the writer about his καύχησις immediately follows the statement that "The brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want," and the statement τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδείς κενώσει has become ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασι τῆς Ἀχαίας.

The previous statement had evidently been challenged. Very possibly some of those who claimed to be of Cephas may have resented as presumption his boast; as if he were taking pride in a course of action which differed from the custom of the primitive Apostles. Such a claim would be viewed by them with jealous eyes; and when it came to be known that messengers had arrived from Philippi with contributions for St. Paul they would not be slow to make capital out of this circumstance. They evidently maintained that, while he asked nothing from

his converts at first, after a time, when he had thoroughly secured their devotion and had caught them with guile, they would be made to contribute to his revenue. This time had come for the Philippians, and the turn of the Corinthians would come next. In answer to this he appealed to the fact that in the years which had already elapsed since his first visit a succession of agents had continued the work among them, and no contribution for their maintenance had ever been asked from the Church of Corinth. "Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you?"

In the regions of Achaia, at any rate, no one shall get from his conduct an argument to prove that his boast is an empty one.

But this is not the only instance of the vehement re-assertion in 2 Cor. x.-xiii. of a statement in 1 Corinthians which had been attacked by Paul's opponents.

We have already seen that the phrase *περισσότερον* is used in x.-xiii. in such a manner as to suggest that this, or some kindred word, must have been made a vehicle of reproach against Paul. Now if we refer to 1 Cor. xv. 10, we shall find this word in a passage in which the writer asserts that his labours have been greater than those of the other Apostles: *ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα.*

This is to us the simple statement of a fact which is abundantly confirmed by all the accounts of the Apostolic age which have come down to us; but to some of those at Corinth who said, "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ," it might appear an extravagant attempt to exalt himself above the other Apostles, and it might furnish a handle to some of his opponents to taunt him with boasting *περισσοτέρως*. But this conjecture is turned into certainty by our finding that in 2 Cor. xi. 23 the statement, which in 1 Cor. xv. had been briefly made, is vehemently repeated, and justified by a copious enumeration of the labours and sufferings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. He prefaces his repetition of the statement with the words

παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, thus announcing that he is going to repeat something for which he has already been reproached. He then twice reiterates the offending word περισσοτέρως, first in combination with the noun which corresponds to the verb ἐκοπίασα which he had used in 1 Cor. xv. 10, ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, and even then follows it up with the tremendous adverb ὑπερβαλλόντως.

We have already seen that passages in 2 Cor. i.-ix. appear to refer back to corresponding passages in 2 Cor. x.-xiii., and that this phenomenon is never reversed. We are now shown by the cross references just adduced that when the writer of x.-xiii. refers back it is to the painful visit, and to passages in 1 Corinthians, and occasionally to events earlier still. We have seen, too, that every passage in which the painful letter is expressly referred to, is paralleled by a corresponding passage in x.-xiii., in which there is a striking similarity of phrase and even employment of identical words; and that in every case the reference appears to be made in order that the writer may show that he feels that the severe warnings contained in the corresponding passages are no longer needed and are now withdrawn.

If we should decide to dismiss these apparent back references as merely illusory and ascribe them to accident we are now further confronted with the startling phenomenon of the opposite and apparently contrasted use of the words καυχᾶσθαι, καύχησις and καύχημα.

It is, I think, admitted on all hands that the hardest blow in the whole letter is contained in xi. 10, where the man who was their Apostle, who had converted them from heathenism, and who they felt in their hearts was most worthy of their confidence and love, told them that it was his boast that he had never received anything from them and never would, though he had received from others. He had, as we have seen, been driven to say it by attacks which seemed to assail his character for uprightness; but still I think that if we had been in their circumstances

we would have confessed that he had indeed made us sorry with a letter. In speaking of this boast he had called it ἡ καύχησις αὐτοῦ, and in i. 12 we have a sentence beginning with these identical words with ἡμῶν answering to εἰς ἐμέ, and he gives it the only explanation which could be given, viz., that it was a defence of the holiness and sincerity of the Apostle's conduct towards the Corinthians. But, before the paragraph closes, he uses the word καύχημα to pay to his first readers two compliments, which must have been very grateful to their feelings. It would be a pleasant thing to be told by one whom we greatly revered that he was proud of us; but if he had lately accused us of disloyalty, and we had given him cause for doing so, we might then be still more pleased to hear him say that he knew that we were proud of him; for that would be an emphatic reversal of the charge of disloyalty. In this paragraph Paul gives the Corinthians both the one and the other assurance. He says that they acknowledge that he is their καύχημα, even as they also are his, in the day of the Lord.

The next occasion on which he employs one of the expressions which we are now considering is at v. 12, and in this passage we also find a word which he used when (xii. 11) he charged the Corinthians with disloyalty, saying, "You have compelled me to boast, for I ought to have been commended of you," ὥφειλον ὑφ' ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι.

This is, of course, a weaker word than καυχᾶσθαι. But the employment of the weaker word only made the censure stronger; for if he had said, "You ought to have boasted of me," that would seem to be expecting a great deal; and, therefore, the reproach of having withheld it might not appear so great. In v. 12 we again have the weaker word with the negative proposition, where, as before, it adds to its strength (for the exclusion of the weaker excludes also the stronger *a fortiori*); and here also we have the strong expression with the affirmative proposition, where again it adds to its strength; for the

assertion of the greater, *a fortiori* asserts also the less. But the use of the same terms only makes the absolute reversal of the charges so often found in x.-xiii. still more express. There the writer was compelled to boast, because he was not commended of them. Here he says, "I do not again commend myself, because I know that I have only to furnish you with the material for καύχῃσις and you will employ it on my behalf." Οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. The word πάλιν implies that he has done on a late occasion that very thing which he now assures them that he will do no more.

The third paragraph in which one of these expressions appears is vii. 4, where he says, "Great is my καύχῃσις on your behalf."

The fourth paragraph is only a little later in the same chapter (v. 14), where he tells them that even when he was sending Titus, he had expressed to him his confidence in their favourable reception of him. The use of these expressions here is a most remarkable fact; for when an envoy was being sent to bring rebels to submission, we should hardly think of describing our anticipation of a favourable result as being a boast on their behalf, unless we wished to make opportunities for a complimentary use of the word. In this passage the writer employs both the noun and the verb in this complimentary way. He says: εἴ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθην, ἀλλ' ὥς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλάλησαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ καύχῃσις ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη.

The next (fifth) paragraph is viii. 24, where St. Paul speaks of his καύχῃσις on behalf of the Corinthians to members of other churches, which the context shows to be the churches of Macedonia. But he is not content with this reference; for, two verses later on, he returns to the subject, this time expressly mentioning the Macedonians. Here, too, he brings in the word καυχῶμαι, and says to the Corinthians, "I boast of you to the Macedonians that a year ago Achaia was prepared, and your

zeal" (or emulation of you) "has stirred up very many of them." Again in the very next verse, we have the phrase τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, and two verses further on, some manuscripts have the word καυχῆσεως. But, leaving this disputed reading out of consideration, we have in a paragraph of only four verses three of these words or phrases, all used in the same way to describe St. Paul's praise of the Corinthians to the Macedonians.

When we read these verses in the order which we are now provisionally adopting, the accumulation here of these expressions, all employed in the same peculiar connexion, acquires a significance which it seems impossible to mistake. If these chapters were originally part of a letter which was written later than that to which x.-xiii. belonged, the Apostle was here speaking to the Corinthians of that very Church which in his previous letter he had contrasted with the Corinthians in a manner which must have sorely wounded their self-esteem. Nor was this all; for they might very naturally apprehend that the fact of St. Paul's having received help from Macedonia, while he was labouring at Corinth, must have lowered them greatly in the eyes of the Macedonians. Now they are told that they have been held up as an example to these very Macedonians, and that the zeal of the Corinthian Church has stirred up the Macedonian Churches; and in telling them this, the writer has employed (but in a sharply contrasted manner) the same expressions which he had used in the paragraph which must have given them so much pain.

The contrasted use of these particular words is very significant because it is on so large a scale that it excludes the notion that it can possibly have been the result of accident. But these are not the only instances in which St. Paul gives a similar turn in chaps. i.-ix. to expressions to which he had given a stern or reproachful meaning in x.-xiii. Thus the θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς of x. 1-2 (I have confidence against you) is replaced by θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν (I have confidence in you) in vii. 16, and πεποίθησις,

which was similarly used in an unfavourable way in x. 2 is given a favourable meaning in i. 15. And when a word was not capable of being thus transformed, we have seen how the writer has substituted another word, as "sorrow" for "severity."

The fairest way of ascertaining what light is thrown by these extraordinary phenomena of 2 Corinthians on the question of the proper order of the sections i.-ix. and x.-xiii. is provisionally to adopt each of them in turn and see what the result will be. We have, therefore, now to examine the meaning of these phenomena on the assumption that the present arrangement of the text is correct, and that the order in which we have these sections now is the order in which they were written by St. Paul.

A favourite mode of explaining the marked contrast of the two sections is to assume that an interval elapsed between the composition of chaps. i.-ix. and of chaps. x.-xiii., and that during the interval unfavourable news arrived from Corinth, completely reversing the favourable account of the situation there which had been given to Paul by Titus. When we begin, however, to examine this assumption of later news, the question at once arises, was the insulting use of these expressions which St. Paul so often indignantly quotes in x.-xiii., and which have coloured the most vehement portion of these chapters, part of this unfavourable news, or was St. Paul already cognizant of these taunts before he wrote i.-ix.? If they were part of the supposed later news, how are we to explain the reiterated use of these very terms in the earlier chapters? Was it a pure coincidence that St. Paul had thus, beforehand, used them, again and again, in warm utterances of esteem and love, in such a manner as he has never even approached in any other Epistle which has ever been attributed to him. It seems utterly inconceivable, and we are thrown back upon the supposition that when the Apostle employed these words to give point to his praise and to the expression of his esteem and love, his recollection of the taunts of which

these words had been the vehicle was fresher and more recent than when he afterwards used them in indignant reproaches. The latter supposition would seem to be Dr. Menzies' view, if I interpret rightly the following words:—

"It is the same material that burns in both parts of the Epistle; only in the earlier the fire is kept down and not allowed to burst into flame. In the latter part it does so. And it is natural to suppose that the part in which the Apostle suppresses his feeling, and only betrays it in a series of hints and quotations of what is said of him at Corinth is anterior to the part in which he allows it free vent."⁶

It seems to me that there is no lack of fire in either section; but that it is of a very different kind. In the one section it is the fire of indignation manifesting itself in scorching reproaches; in the other it is the fire of exulting joy and love, fusing the old reproaches in its glowing heat, and moulding anew the same material into utterances of affection and of cordial praise.

No inquiry into the order of the sections of 2 Corinthians can claim to be scientific if it omits an examination of the text of the document at the close of the former section—in other words, of the point of junction. It is generally assumed that it is very improbable that if the sections had been wrongly joined here they could have fitted so well. I could understand how persons who hastily glanced at the two sections (as the delegates from Clement to the Corinthians might naturally be supposed to have done) might be struck by a superficial appearance of connexion; for in the larger section the last word but one is αὐτοῦ, while the first words of the smaller section are αὐτὸς δέ. But I believe that St. Paul would have been inexpressibly shocked if he could have foreseen the text that would be produced many years after his death as a result of the mistaken junction of the two sections. For the pronoun αὐτοῦ represents God, and the αὐτός represents Paul. The division into chapters and verses helps

⁶ *Introd.*, p. xlii.

us to overlook this; but of course in the original manuscript there were none of these divisions. We are rather understating the effect of this, if we render it into English thus:—"Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift proceeding from himself, but I Paul myself"—for in the original Greek the pronouns are in closer apposition still, being only separated by a single word.

It may be said that the writer might have thus placed the words in close juxtaposition without noticing how profane would be the result if they were read in conjunction. It is, however, one thing to maintain that the sections fit so well that it is a strong argument for believing that they were placed in this juxtaposition by St. Paul, and quite another thing to say that he may have written them in this order without noticing how badly they fitted. In the latter case, instead of the point of junction contributing evidence to counterbalance the many gross improbabilities resulting from the present order of the two sections, it adds to the same scale of the balance the weight of a new improbability, quite independent of the others.

Such a result seems to invite further scrutiny. If, accordingly, we examine carefully the last verse of chap. ix., we find that the majority of the manuscripts which have come down to us, give that verse as an ejaculation--*χάρις τῷ Θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγῆτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ*, a reading which makes the sentence appear to have reached its conclusion, though it leaves us without any explanation as to what is the gift of God for which the writer is giving thanks, and leads us to a conclusion which presents a strange contrast to the sentence which, without the slightest explanation, immediately follows it. But there is another reading, *χάρις δὲ τῷ Θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγῆτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ*, which, if correct, would show that the sentence must have been torn off in the middle; and which is thus absolutely inconsistent with the present order of the text of the Epistle; yet which has the support of two of the oldest versions, the Syriac and the Ethiopic,

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and which has also on its side strong evidence from the quotation of this reading by early writers. St. Chrysostom had probably access to more ancient Greek manuscripts than any that have down to us, and he three times quotes the passage as χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, and takes no notice of the present reading, though his intimate knowledge of Greek must have made him fully conscious of the awkwardness of the reading which he has invariably adopted. But a still more important witness is Euthalius, who was the principal expert in manuscript literature in the following century, and who showed his carefulness in such matters by making a long journey on one occasion to consult a manuscript. Euthalius adopts the reading χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ; and never endorses that which omits the δὲ. He would scarcely have done this unless he felt that he was coerced by the preponderance of manuscript authority in his day, to adopt this strange reading—a reading indeed which with the present arrangement of the text is almost impossible. How strong would be the tendency to omit the δὲ is shown by our Authorized English Version, for the translators who gave us that version had adopted as their original the Textus Receptus, which retains the δὲ; yet, though they had it in the Greek text from which they were translating, they deliberately ignored it in the translation which they made. Indeed it would be hard to blame any scribe or translator for omitting it as a manifest blunder, for it would be impossible to make sense of the text, χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιγήγητῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς. The result of the constant temptation to copyists to make this apparently slight correction would be that as time went on, the number of manuscripts which omitted the δὲ would gradually increase, and the number of those which retained it would diminish.

But, when we take into account the conclusion which I believe is forced upon us by the internal evidence which we have been examining, and recognize the possibility

that a manuscript may have been torn at this place, the reading with $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ becomes as intelligible as it was unintelligible when the text here was assumed to have been continuous from the first. For the transformation of the sentence into an ejaculation was only a poor make-shift. The ejaculation does not arise out of the context, and everyone is left to conjecture what the unspeakable gift may be, which is the subject of it, for our present text gives no information or guidance on this important point. But the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ indicates that a new paragraph was beginning in which this explanation was to be found. If we refer back to the beginning of the corresponding paragraph at viii. 16 we shall find that it opens with the same four words followed by $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ διδόντι; $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ δὲ $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ Θεῷ $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ διδόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ κκρδίᾳ Τίτου. It cannot, however, be contended that a copyist might be led by this reference to insert the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$: the interval between the passages would be too long for the scribe to be influenced by it, or to retain it in his mind at all.

Dr. Menzies writes as if such an accident as the loss of the concluding part of a manuscript letter were an extremely improbable occurrence. "How the two letters, fragments of which make up 2 Cor., could be so little thought of and so carelessly preserved at Corinth, that when they came to be put together, the end of one and the beginning of the other was lost is," he says, "a hard question." He seems to forget that it is an admitted fact that these same Corinthians allowed a letter which preceded our present 1 Corinthians to disappear totally; unless, as some critics suppose, 2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 2 be part of it. He can scarcely maintain that the account of the proceedings of the Corinthians given us in 1 Corinthians shows them to have been so orderly and careful as to make such an accident very improbable.

He seems also to forget that it is admitted by most scholars that two of Cicero's letters must have met with the very same accident, one having lost its ending and the other its beginning, which resulted in their being

afterwards joined together in an inverted order, so that a letter which was really written earlier, was mistaken for the concluding part of a letter of later date.⁷

Psalms ix., x. also are treated as one Psalm in the LXX., while in our present Hebrew text and English translation they are separate Psalms. We need not debate which of these readings is to be preferred. In either case a mistake must have been made. Either two Psalms have been joined by some scribe, or one Psalm has been divided. On the other hand Psalm cxlvii. of the Hebrew text is divided into two by the LXX.

The original letters seem to have been written by the Apostles, not on parchment but on paper; and Bishop Lightfoot has shown that there is a strong probability that in our Canon we have only a part—perhaps not a very large part—of the whole correspondence of St. Paul either with churches or with individuals. “How,” Dr. Lightfoot observes, “could St. Paul have spoken in 2 Thessalonians of ‘his token in every letter’ if with the single exception of 1 Thessalonians he had written nothing for the eight years preceding, and was destined to write nothing for five years to come.”

But it would be a most improbable supposition to assume that, when the churches began to make copies of St. Paul’s letters and to publish them to the Christian world, every letter was either in perfect preservation or had totally perished. All experience about manuscripts and books must show us that there must have been many in an imperfect state owing to the frail material on which they were originally written; and the most likely parts to get lost either of manuscripts or letters are the beginnings and the endings. If therefore we have no apparently imperfect epistles in the New Testament it must be because the churches which had received the letters never thought of copying them for wider circulation unless they were believed to be whole and entire. This absten-

⁷ Ad Brut., I, 2.

tion from publishing mutilated documents will account for the fact that 2 Corinthians (as the letter of Clemens Romanus shows) was not published till several years after the publication of 1 Corinthians. It seems also to show us that we should never have had it at all, had not some persons, whether they were Clement's delegates, or members of the church at Corinth, made the supposed discovery that two paper manuscripts, of which one had lost its earlier part and the other its conclusion, really belonged to one and the same letter, which would by joining them together be completely restored.

JAMES HOUGHTON KENNEDY.