

THE PROBLEM OF EPHESIANS

IN the August number (pp. 136-141) Dr. Souter has made an interesting attempt to show that the insertion of *ἀγάπην* in Ephesians i. 15 is a later harmonistic touch, and further that the original text of this verse, set over against Colossians i. 4 and properly interpreted, rules out the possibility of Ephesians being sub-Pauline. This raises a nice point of literary criticism. The "secondary" character of Ephesians rests upon a wide induction from the style and tone of the Epistle, but those who oppose this theory have the right to claim that every detail, especially with regard to the parallels from Colossians, shall be duly weighed, while those who uphold it are conscious that the strength of their case does not require any dubious aid. Dr. Souter courteously suggests that I should have noticed in my volume of Introduction (p. 376) this well-known variant in the text of Ephesians i. 15. I can only reply that the omission was deliberate, and attempt to justify it in view of his skilful effort to use textual criticism here as a proof of authenticity. Put briefly, my position is that even were the "love-less" text of Ephesians i. 15 original and translated as he proposes, it would tell rather against than in favour of the hypothesis that Paul wrote Ephesians.

The apparent case against *ἀγάπην* as an integral part of the text is slightly more serious than Dr. Souter brings out. N^oDG and some other of its supporters are found on the side of the liturgical additions in iii. 14 (τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and v. 30 (ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ), while DG, with the Latin and Syriac (Vulgate) ver-

sions, also support the inferior ἀπηλλικότες in iv. 19. *Prima facie* one might infer, therefore, that the addition of ἀγάπην in i. 15 is part and parcel of the secondary type of text thus represented. On the other hand, ἀγάπην has the support not only of D and G, buttressed by the powerful fourth century Latin authority of "Ambrosiaster" and Victorinus, but of the Latin and Syriac Vulgate versions, together with the Gothic, which are superior to the Bohairic. Above all, it makes good sense, and it is relevant to the general tone of the epistle¹ (cp. ἐν ἀγάπῃ i. 4, iii. 17, iv. 2, 15-16, v. 2, and the collocation of ἀγάπην and πίστις in vi. 23), which is rather more than can be said for the rival reading. These are considerations which have to be taken into account. It is perhaps characteristic of Dr. Souter that he makes no mention of an instructive and (on his theory) contemporary parallel from Paul's language in Philemon 5: ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς² τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. Here, as in Colossians i. 4 (τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς π.τ.ἁ.), εἰς can have only one meaning, and that meaning is not "among" but "for," or "towards," whether the somewhat loose language of the letter is interpreted as a chiasmus (so Col. i. 4) or whether the ἣν is referred to πίστιν alone.³ No doubt it is true that the sense of εἰς is determined here by the foregoing ἣν ἔχεις. But when Colossians i. 4, Philemon 5, and Ephesians i. 15 are taken to-

¹ The repeated parallels in sequence of thought and in expression between i. 15-19 and iii. 14-21 have more than once been noted. One of them is i. 15 (καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην κ.τ.λ.) = iii. 18 (ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθελιωμένοι), immediately after the mention of πίστις.

² The variant *eis* (A C D *) is not noticed in Dr. Souter's recent edition of the Greek New Testament.

³ In the latter case (which is less probable) the interpretation tallies with the rendering of Ephesians i. 15 by the English Revisers: "The faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye show toward all the saints." This is perhaps possible, though decidedly artificial; the alternative rendering, "The faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you and (the faith which is) among all the Christians," is as artificial and even more un-Pauline to boot.

gether as products of Paul's pen within "the same period, probably in the same week," there is surely a likelihood that in the third passage he wrote the *ἀγάπην*-text, or that, if he did not, the phrase *εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους* means in Ephesians what it does in Philemon.

To this it may be replied: "But Paul wanted to say something else in Ephesians i. 15, and therefore he gave a special turn to the phrase." Well, as the Bohairic version proves, it is grammatically possible to construe the "love-less" text of Ephesians i. 15 as if *εἰς* meant "among," but exegetically it must be pronounced even more clumsy than the Revisers' version. Consider how the thought of the writer moves. Towards the close of the opening doxology Paul (*ex hypothesi*), after dwelling on the Jewish Christian privileges and position, recalls with gladness that Gentiles, like his readers, had also come to share in the boon of faith (i. 13 f. *ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς . . . πιστεύσαντες*). This prompts him to dwell on the Gentile Christian side of the church (i. 15 f): *For this reason, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus . . . , I cease not to give thanks for you.* What object would there be in inserting at this point a phrase to warn them that their faith was shared by all the saints elsewhere? It was the Jewish, not the Gentile, Christian who was likely then to require a reminder that the faith was not his special possession, and if Paul meant to assure the Gentile Christians that their faith in the Lord Jesus was of the same quality as the faith of other Christians (cp. 2 Pet. i. 1), he would be repeating in a singularly awkward and otiose fashion the very truth which he had aptly expressed in i. 11-14. It is irrelevant to appeal to a passage like 1 Peter v. 9, in proof that the situation of other Christians could be referred to in an encyclical epistle; the Petrine reference to sufferings is entirely apposite to the context, and it does not occur suddenly in a passage of exalted feeling. No one doubts that such an

outlook on Christendom is compatible with a general letter. The doubt is, whether it sounds natural in Ephesians i. 15. I cannot feel that it does.

Once again, the phrasing is peculiar. Paul, we are told (I quote from Dr. Souter's previous note in the *Expository Times*, xix. p. 44), "wished to vary the expression *κατὰ* with the accusative, and yet express the same meaning." Why should he not have simply written *καὶ* (or *ὡς*) *κατὰ πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους* or some such phrase? The annoying thing for the interpretation of *εἰς* as "among" is that the encroachment of *εἰς* on the province of *ἐν* never occurs in Paul's epistles elsewhere. Add to this unparalleled feature the unexampled (for Paul) use of *τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν*, and Ephesians i. 15, in either form of the text and on either interpretation of *εἰς* in the "love-less" form, swings steadily over into its place as one item of the stylistic evidence that the epistle was not written by Paul.

Such considerations lead one to fear that Dr. Souter is a trifle premature in claiming that "the restoration of the correct text and interpretation of Ephesians i. 15 is a demonstration that 'Ephesians' cannot be a sub-Pauline compilation based on Colossians." I cannot see why, even if the "love-less" text were the original, it precludes a sub-Pauline authorship. If Paul, with Colossians i. 4 before him (or, at any rate, before his mind), could write the shorter form of Ephesians i. 15, why should it be thought incredible that a later writer could have produced the latter text also? The variation is genetically as plausible in the one case as in the other, when the comparative phenomena of the two epistles are taken into account. Grammatically, I think it is more plausible as sub-Pauline than as Pauline. Textually even, the addition of *ἀγάπην* might have been a harmonising touch subsequent to the composition of Ephe-

sians (like e.g., *υἱῶ αὐτοῦ* in i. 6, *ἐγενόμην* in iii. 7, and the opposite instance of *ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας* in Col. iii. 6). In any case, the textual evidence and the proposed interpretation do not form anything like a secure pivot for the conclusion that Ephesians is Pauline.

Incidentally, Dr. Souter hails as "a great consolation" Harnack's recent defence of Ephesians in *Die Adresse des Epheserbriefts des Paulus* (1910, a reprint from pp. 696-709 of the *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*). Harnack as yet, however, is an inconvenient ally to be summoned, especially by those who are defending the view that Ephesians was a circular letter; ¹ he maintains, or rather assumes, that it was written by Paul, but his remarkable theory of the epistle had better be scrutinised before it is hugged as a consolation. In reality, Harnack throws up the notion of a circular letter. Ephesians, he contends, was originally written to the church of Laodicea. This is not a new view; what is novel is his theory of how the Ephesian title rose. The degenerate condition of the Laodicean church towards the close of the first century (cp. Rev. iii. 14 f.), he conjectures, made pious people feel it no longer deserved to have such an epistle connected with its name. Go to, they said, let us delete *ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ* from the address, by way of censure! Which they did, about the year 100 A.D. in Asia Minor, as the Pauline canon was being drawn up. And ere long the church of Ephesus had this derelict epistle assigned to it. One curious result of this theory, by the way, is the vindication of Marcion; instead of mutilating Ephesians, as Tertullian alleged, Marcion really restored or preserved the epistle in its original shape when he included it in his canon under the title of Laodiceans. Another result

¹ In Mr. Rutherford's book on *St. Paul's Epistles to Colossae and Laodicea* (1908), Ephesians is regarded as a circular letter which was sent in the first instance to Laodicea.

is that the lack of a place-name in Ephesians i. 1 was not an accident ; it was a mark of punishment.

This view, of course, is not at all similar to Hort's, and in one important respect, it is really inferior to the circular-hypothesis. On the latter view it is not impossible to account for the vagueness and paucity of the personal references by arguing that the letter was designed for a number of different churches, some of whom were hardly known to Paul. But when it is taken as specifically directed to a single church, like that of Laodicea, this explanation drops to the ground. What rules out Ephesus rules out, though less conclusively, any Christian community like that of Laodicea, for even though it may have been unvisited by Paul, he must have had as clear opportunities of grasping its situation as in the case of the sister-community at Colossae. Harnack acknowledges this obstacle. "Warum er an sie daneben einen so ganz eigentümlich weiten, ideal-abstrakten Brief geschrieben hat, vermögen wir nicht zu enträtseln." This is a characteristically candid admission, but it leaves a real difficulty which should suggest prudent hesitation about using so ingenious and romantic a theory in order to buttress the hypothesis of Paul's authorship.

Furthermore, the new theory involves difficulties of a special kind. Naturally it would be too much to say that so drastic a treatment of an early Christian epistle was impossible (although it is unparalleled), particularly if one is inclined to agree with Harnack's hypothesis about the editorial process to which the "catholic" epistles were subjected at the rise of the ecclesiastical canon in the second century. The acceptance of the latter hypothesis renders it more easy to admit the likelihood of a freedom in dealing with Ephesians. If titles could be added, they could also be changed. On the other hand, those who would decline to explain the origin of the "catholic" epistles in their canoni-

cal shape according to Harnack's arguments have less ground for agreeing with his hypothesis about the address of Ephesians. It is an hypothesis, besides, which involves a deliberate motive for changing the original address, and that motive is liable to serious question. The prophet John is, no doubt, very severe upon the Laodicean church, which appears to have been passing through a phase of moderation during the last decade of the first century. But, without attempting to whitewash that community, we may notice that Laodicea, with the exception of Philadelphia, (cp. the indirect reference in ii. 9), is the only church which the Lord is represented as loving. Ἐγὼ ὁσους ἐὰν φιλῶ, ἐλέγχω κ.τ.λ. I have elsewhere (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, v. pp. 373-374) discussed the difficulties created by the appearance of the glowing promises in iii. 19 f. at the close of the severe message to Laodicea; but, for our present purpose, it is enough to say that Laodicea is included in their scope, and that this alone should put us on our guard against drawing any sweeping inferences from John's language about the actual condition of the local church, particularly when we recollect that little more than half-a-century later the local bishop, Sagaris, was martyred (so Melito, quoted in *Eus. H. E.* iv. 26. 37, and Polykrates in v. 24. 5). Evidently, the unheroic state of the Laodicean church was only temporary. It would require larger evidence than is at our command to justify us in supposing that the church lapsed so seriously for the time being as to prompt such an extraordinary punishment at the hands of other Asiatic churches.

As to the method of procedure in executing the censure, Harnack does not seem to be very clear in his own mind. He implies at one point (p. 703 note 2) that copies of the epistle might still be in circulation entitled *Πρὸς Λαοδικεῖς*, though lacking any place-name in verse 1. Now is it likely that the deletion of any reference to Laodicea (assuming it

was possible) would be carried out, without removing *πρὸς Λαοδικεῖς* from the epistle as well as *ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ*, and also without substituting some other name in both places, especially in the superscription of the epistle? This substitution, as we are told (p. 705), probably followed the deletion of *ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ* after a very brief interval, i.e. before A.D. 110. But a canonical epistle must have had some title. It might circulate without a place-name in i. 1—from Origen and Basil we know that it did—but it must have had *Πρὸς . . .* in its title, and it appears almost inconceivable that those who were responsible for the drastic treatment of it should have left *Πρὸς Λαοδικεῖς* still in the title or left it with no title at all? Why Ephesus was eventually chosen to supplant Laodicea, Harnack can only explain on the ground that Ephesus was the capital of the province where the Pauline canon was drawn up.¹ Which does not carry us very far.

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SAMARITAN SEPTUAGINT MASSORETIC TEXT.

IN the year 1815 Gesenius published a monograph on the Samaritan Pentateuch² which has dominated all subsequent discussion of its relation to the other texts.³

¹ Dr. Souter conjectures that perhaps it was Marcion who was responsible for introducing the harmonising *ἀγάπην* in Ephesians i. 15. If guesses are going, one might as plausibly ask whether the deletion of *ἀγάπην* may not have been due to some reader or editor who found this praise inconsistent with Revelation ii. 6 (*τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῷ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον . . . ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ, ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφήκας*).

² *De Pentateuchi Samaritani Origine Indole et Auctoritate Commentatio philologico-critica.*

³ Dr. Swete, for instance, writes of its occasional agreements with the LXX.: "A careful analysis of the Samaritan text led Gesenius to the conclusion, which is now generally accepted, that the fact of the two Pentateuchs often making common cause against the printed Hebrew Bibles indicates a common origin earlier than the fixing of the Massoretic text, whilst their dissensions show that the text of the Law existed in more than one recension before it had been reduced to a rigid unifor-