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THE UNITY OF SECOND CORINTHIANS.

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It is admitted by nearly all critics that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is wholly the work of Paul. A few Dutch scholars have recently been bold enough to maintain that none of the letters attributed to the apostle were really written by him, at least in their present form (Cf. Pierson and Naber, "Verisimilia," 1886; R. Steck, Galater brief, 1888; Von Manen; Expository Times, February and March, 1898); but in view of the small adhesion given to this school by even rationalistic writers, it may be set aside as one of the eccentricities of criticism. The epistle bears every evidence of Pauline authorship. It is, in fact, the most autobiographic of the apostle's writings. It is written in his most intense and characteristic style. It deals with a particular situation occasioned by his relation to the Corinthian church. It contains those doctrinal ideas which were his favorite thoughts. Yet it is no set thesis. It is the outpouring of his heart to his fickle but beloved Corinthians. There can be, therefore, no question that from beginning to end of the epistle we have the genuine product of the apostle's pen.

But, while this is generally admitted, not a few contend that our extant epistle consists of several fragments; all of them by Paul, but not all written at the same time. One epistle is said to be a compilation of Pauline documents which it is possible for criticism to distinguish and possibly to assign to their real occasions. This view is not a new one. In the eighteenth cen-

ture Semler divided the letter into three, as follows: (1), i.-viii., to which he added Rom. xvi. 1-20 and 2 Cor. xiii. 11-13, and which he supposed was the letter sent by Titus from Macedonia to Corinth; (2), x. 1-xiii. 10, a letter written afterwards on receiving further and less favorable news from Corinth; (3), ix., an independent document concerning the subject of the collection for the Judean Christians. A few other German scholars followed a modified Semler's view; but the matter was not very seriously discussed until in 1870 Hausrath advocated the theory that Chapters x.-xiii. of Second Corinthians formed really the letter which Titus, in the opinion of many, carried with him to Corinth when he was sent from Ephesus to allay the troubles in the Achaean church. Hausrath endeavored to show that the situation implied in the last four chapters was earlier than that implied in the first nine. He was replied to exhaustively by Klopper, and the latter's answer was for a while deemed sufficient. But of late the controversy has been reopened; Hausrath's general position has been repeated and elaborated. In Germany Clemen (*Chronol. d. Paul, Briefe*, 1893), Schmiedel (*Hand Com.*), H. Lisco (*Einleitung in d. 2 ten Korintherbrief*, 1896), have argued in various ways for the partition of the epistle. Clemen's scheme is the most thorough-going. He holds that Paul wrote five letters to Corinth: (1), the one referred to in 1 Cor. v. 9, a portion of which we have in 2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1; (2), our First Corinthians, which, however, contains some verses from the earlier letter; (3), a letter about the collection, to be found in 2 Cor. ix.; (4), a letter of a most painful character, rebuking the Corinthians for their disloyalty to the apostle's commands and authority, and identical with an 2 Cor. x.-xiii. 10; (5), the letter written from Macedonia and sent with Titus on his last visit to Corinth, and consisting of 2 Cor. i.-viii.; xiii. 11-13. Schmiedel and Lisco agree so far as to place the last four chapters earlier than the first nine. A similar view has been advocated in Great Britain by J. H. Kennedy, D. D. (*Expositor*, September and October, 1897). Dr. Kennedy believes that in 2 Cor. i.-ix. several distinct allusions to what had already been written in x.-xiii. may be discovered. Thus, ii. 3 is said to be an allusion to xiii. 10; i. 23 to xiii. 2; ii. 9, and vii. 15, 16 to x. 6. It is also maintained that the whole tone of the last four chapters, in which Paul violently defends

his authority and sternly rebukes his readers, shows that these chapters could not have belonged to the same letter as i.-ix., in which he praises the Corinthians for their repentance and loyalty. The discussion has finally been brought over to America by Prof. McGiffert (*Apost. Age*, p. 311, etc.) He, too, holds that chapters x.-xiii. are part of the stern letter carried from Ephesus to Corinth by Titus. His position is based solely on the change of tone toward the readers in these chapters from that of the preceding. On the basis of this assumption, however, Prof. McGiffert constructs his view of the progress of affairs in Corinth between the writing of 1 Corinthians and the final letter from Macedonia. Finally, it may be added that Drescher (*Stud. und Krit.*, January, 1897), like Semler, separates the last four chapters from the preceding, but supposes, like Semler, that they were written *later*, and on the receipt of discouraging news from Titus after the latter had returned to Corinth.

The one critical question therefore connected with Second Corinthians is that of its unity. This question concerns in particular three portions of the epistle. We must inquire whether vi. 14-vii. 1 is an interpolation, or whether its place in our epistle can be exegetically justified; then, whether viii. ix. (or ix. by itself) belongs to the epistle; finally, whether the last four chapters are in their proper place, or whether they are a Pauline fragment written on a different occasion. A recent study of the epistle has convinced us afresh of its unity as it now stands; and we desire to state briefly the reasons for this conclusion.

We might indeed fairly protest against any partition of the epistle on the ground that no traces of it exist in any form of the transmitted text. In such cases as those of the last twelve verses of Matthew and the account in John vii. 53 to viii. 11 of the woman taken in adultery, the textual evidence reveals the additions made to the original document; but in the case before us there is no such evidence. The supposed union of these Pauline productions must have taken place in the first century itself. Why it should have been done we cannot imagine. Other letters, even when very brief, like that to Philemon, were preserved intact. We cannot affirm indeed that such a combination of documents was impossible. But we do affirm most

earnestly that it was very improbable, and that the unity of the epistle as transmitted throws the burden of proof wholly on those who argue for its partition. If a natural hypothesis can be suggested, capable of explaining the difficulties, nothing more should be required. Ingenious suggestions, on which the division may be made to appear plausible, are not a sufficient proof of it. It must be shown that the present arrangement of the epistle is incredible.

I. First then, with reference to the passage vi. 14–vii. 1. Must this be regarded as an interpolation? Even Heinrici (*Das 2ten Sendschr.*) thinks it out of place. So do many others. The chief reason for this is the fact that it seems to break the connection. In the previous verses Paul has spoken of his own devotion to his ministry, reciting the labors and sufferings by which he had attested it, and had risen to an impassioned appeal to the Corinthians (verses 11–13) to accept his confidential description of his service for them, and to reciprocate with a like large-hearted treatment of him. Then in vii. 2 he seems naturally to continue, “Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.” It is observed that vii. 2 thus connects closely with vi. 13. But it is said vi. 14–vii. 1 interrupts the thought. It deals with the making of unhallowed alliances with unbelievers, especially with mixed marriages; and is an appeal to the readers to come out of the world and be wholly dedicated to God. This better accords with the situation treated in 1 Cor. v. and vi. (Compare especially verse 16 with 1 Cor. vi. 19.)

But let us look more carefully at the connection as it stands. The primary thought of Chapter vi. is expressed in the first verse, which may be thus paraphrased: “Because we are workers with God, entrusted with his message, we do also entreat you not in vain to receive the grace of God”; that is, not to bring to nothingness by your conduct the wondrous favor which God has given. We are advised, therefore, that the thought is about to take a practical term. This exhortation is then enforced by two lines of remark; first, the fact that the present is the day of grace in which they must improve their opportunities (verse 2); second, that he has set them an example by his supreme desire to discharge his own ministry blamelessly, and by his actual performance, in spite of many sufferings, of the trust com-

mitted to him (3-10). Single-eyed devotion had been the feature of his life, and ought to be of theirs. This leads to the impassioned appeal (11-13), half apologizing for his remarks about himself, that they in a large-hearted way should reciprocate his affection, respond to his exhortations, and be thoroughly his disciples—yea, even in truth his own children. When, then, he continues, “Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, etc.” (i. e., be not yoked with respect to unbelievers in a manner alien to that which becomes you as Christians), the connection with the preceding is two-fold. In the first place, this is a specific application of the primary thought (verse 1), not to receive the grace of God in vain. In the second place, the application takes the form of an exhortation not to form improper fellowship with unbelievers, because he has just called them (verse 13) his *children*, and because he called them such out of the deep emotion with which he had set himself before them, their spiritual father, as an example. The words *μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες* are therefore directly antithetical to the immediately preceding *τέκνοις* and the thought of the passage is suggested as a warning in view of what has been said. On the other hand, vii. 2, “receive us” carries on the thought. Instead of forming alien alliances they should ally themselves with him, as already intimated in vi. 3-13.

This connection becomes still clearer if the contents of vi. 14-vii.1 is further noted. The phrase “be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” need not refer especially to mixed marriages, but is an exhortation applicable to all alliances with the world, such as would impair the singleness of their devotion to the Christ whom Paul had preached. The temptations of the Corinthians, as shown elsewhere (e. g., 1 Cor. v. 9-11; vi. 12-20; viii. x. 14-33), suggests why this application is so strongly emphasized when once the practical duty of not receiving the grace of God in vain was being discussed; but they need not be thought to limit the application itself. (Cf. vii. 1, “defilement of flesh and spirit.”) So, too, the figure of a temple (verse 16) is applied much more widely than it is in 1 Cor. vi. 19. It is to be noted also that one passage contains a large number of words not elsewhere used by Paul (*ἑτεροζυγεῖν, μετοχή, συμφώνησις, Βελίαρ, μερίς, συγκατάθεσις, παντοκράτωρ, μολυσμός*). This is due to the great excitement under which he was writing, and which

led him to seek various expressions of the same thought; and this perfectly accords with his evidently highly wrought emotion throughout the entire chapter. There is in verses 14-16 the same desire to express in every possible way the warning he was giving, that shows itself in verses 4-10 in the effort to describe his own ministry. Thus understood, then, this passage justifies by its connection and contents its place in the epistle.

II. We turn next to chapters viii. and ix, which deal with the subject of the collection for the Judean brethren.

It is first to be remarked that these two chapters certainly belong together, in spite of the fact that some critics have separated them. This follows not only from the fact that they deal with the same general subject but also from the opening verse of chapter ix. The *ῥὰρ* implies close connection with the preceding verses. This connection also is clear. In chapter viii. he had exhorted the Corinthians to liberality by the example of the Macedonians, and had commended Titus and the brethren who accompanied him as the authorized agents for the completion of the collection. He had concluded (viii. 24) by urging the Corinthians to justify by their liberality his boasting about them. Hence ix. 1. follows naturally. It was not necessary for him to prove the propriety of the collection. He would only explain that Titus and the brethren were sent to bring the matter to a conclusion.

Taking then these two chapters together, can we justify their place in one epistle? They have seemed to some to come in with quite too cool and practical an air after the strenuous composition of i.-vii. and before the defence of x.-xiii. would Paul thus turn to this prosaic business amid the evident excitement under which the rest of the epistle was written?

We might reply that it was just like Paul to do this very thing. It corresponds precisely with his versatile character. He habitually combined doctrine and ethics, emotion and practical direction, even as he did rebuke and tenderness. One has poorly read the epistles of Paul who is not prepared for sudden transitions. We might also reply that in these chapters there is still evident the emotion of the writer and the same sense of the need of dealing carefully with the Corinthians, which appears elsewhere. But the unity of viii., ix. with the preceding chapters is capable, we think, of still more definite and conclusive

proof. In the first place, the external situation is the same as that of the previous part of the epistle. Paul is still in Macedonia (viii. 1; ix. 2-4), Titus has come from Corinth (viii. 6-16) and was about to return (viii. 18-23; ix. 3).

In the second place, the close of chapter vii. leads up to the subject of the collection in a natural way. He has expressed a joyful confidence in the fidelity of his readers and has mentioned the impression they had made on Titus, concluding with the words, "I rejoice that in every thing I am of good courage concerning you" (vii. 16 R. V.). It was just the appropriate point therefore at which to take up the subject of the collection and urge its completion.

Further, the opening phrase of viii. 1 (*γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν*) is one elsewhere used by Paul when beginning a new section of an epistle (see 1 Cor. xii. 3; xv. 1; Gal. i. 11).

Finally chapters viii. and ix. contain a large number of words and phrases which are repetitions of or allusions to words and phrases used in the previous part of the epistle. The force of this fact is very impressive to the careful student. In these phrases he hears the echo of those preceding. The same mind at the same time was clearly the author of all nine chapters. Examples of what we mean are the following: The use of *διδόναι ἐν* occurs only in Paul in this epistle (i. 22; vi. 3; viii. 16). The word *δοκιμή* was a term specially suggested by the mission of Titus and by the whole situation, and it occurs four times (ii. 9; viii. 2; ix. 13; xiii. 13; elsewhere only Rom. v. 4). The phrase *ἐν παντί* occurs occasionally in other Pauline epistles, but in this epistle ten times, and in chapters viii., ix. as much as elsewhere (iv. 8; vi. 4; vii. 5, 11, 16; viii. 7; ix. 8, 11; xi. 6, 9). It seems to have been due to the apostle's intense sense of the perilous situation of himself and his readers. In viii. 7 *ἐν παντί περισσεύετε* is antithetical to iv. 8 and vii. 5, *ἐν παντί θλιβόμενοι*; and in viii. 13 *ἀνεσις* is an echo of ii. 5; vii. 5. Still more clearly is *μή τις ἡμῶς μωμῶσθται* (viii. 20) an echo of *ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία* (vi. 3), the only places where this verb is found. *Παρακαλέω* and *παράκλησις* may be said to be characteristic of the epistle. The former occurs seventeen times (i. 4, three times, 6; ii. 7, 8; v. 20; vi. 1; vii. 6, 7, 13; viii. 6; ix. 5; x. 1; xii. 8, 18; xiii. 11) to thirty-five times in all the other Pauline writings. The latter occurs eleven

times (i. 3, 4, 5, 6 (bis), 7; vii. 4, 7, 13; viii. 4, 17) to nine elsewhere in Paul. Both are found in chapters viii. ix., as in the preceding, and signify the state of the apostle's mind when he wrote the epistle. In like manner ix. 2, 4 may be compared with vii. 14; and ix. 11, 12 with i. 11.

These indications, when combined, amount quite to a demonstration that chapters viii., ix. belong to this epistle and are in their original position. They can be sundered neither from one another nor from the preceding chapters. It would seem wholly arbitrary to imagine them an independent document.

III. We approach then the third and last portion of the epistle, which has been thought to have had a separate origin. The main difficulty found here is that these chapters consist of a vehement defence of Paul's authority and stern rebukes of the Corinthians for giving heed to teachers opposed to their apostle. This is said to be inconsistent with the warm affection for them and the confidence in their repentance and loyalty expressed in the earlier chapters. Hence it is concluded that the last four chapters of Second Corinthians were written on a different occasion, either earlier or later. It is commonly assumed that if written earlier, they formed part of the painful letter carried by Titus from Ephesus.

Attention has also been called by some to the abrupt sentence, "Now I Paul myself entreat you" (x. 1 R. V.), with which this section of the epistle begins. Those, however, who advocate the divisive view have themselves supplied the answer to whatever difficulty this phrase may suggest. Prof. McGiffert writes (p. 313, note 1): "The emphatic *αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος* with which chapter x. begins suggests, as Pfeiderer and others have seen, that chapters x.-xiii. may be simply Paul's part of a larger epistle written jointly by himself and some companion, very likely Timothy. It may be that Timothy expressed his mind touching the difficulties which he had not succeeded in allaying, and that then Paul added what he had to say, beginning with the words, "But as for me, Paul, I entreat you." If this supposition were correct, it would be very easy to account for the disappearance of the part of the letter written by Timothy, and for the attachment to another epistle of the part of the letter written by Paul." But the fact is that our Second Corinthians is written in the name of Paul and Timothy. The beginning of

chapter x. may therefore be due, as these critics suggest, to the fact that the apostle was about to deal with purely personal matters. Their suggestion, however, fits equally well with our epistle, as it stands and makes the assumption of a lost beginning for chapters x.-xiii. quite needless. We might inquire also what has become of the ending of i.-ix. It is singular, to say the least, that the close of one letter and the beginning of another should have been lost, and that the two portions should so be joined that the latter part, by its opening words, should imply a previous portion, written in the name of Paul and one of his companions, corresponding so far precisely to the other letter to which it was added. This is to create a difficulty for the mere sake of solving it.

But, to pass on to a consideration of the last four chapters themselves, it may be remarked first that they do not necessarily imply a condition of affairs earlier than that implied in the previous chapters. As we have seen, Drescher considers them to have been written later. Neither view, however, is demanded, unless it be assumed that all the Corinthians acted as one man; that there was no majority and minority among them; that none of the elements antagonistic to Paul remained at all after Titus had visited them. This is an unjustified assumption, as will be seen presently. It is also a very mechanical view. If we once make the reasonable supposition that, while the majority of the Corinthians had rallied around their apostle, there was still a hesitating or disloyal minority, we can well understand that Paul should close his letter with such a vigorous personal defence as that which is found in chapters x.-xiii. Furthermore, the passages in chapters i.-ix., in which Dr. Kennedy (see above) finds a distinct allusion to passages in x.-xiii., are not demonstrative. They are indeed striking coincidences of expression. If on these grounds we had reason to place x.-xiii. before i.-ix., the allusions might be admitted. But they may equally well be used to prove that, in the latter part of the epistle as it now stands, the apostle re-echoed expressions which he had previously employed, and thus confirms the unity of the epistle. In either case, however, these cross-references are not sufficiently cogent to decide the question.

There are, however, strong reasons for rejecting the view that chapters x.-xiii. were written earlier than i.-ix., and are part of the letter carried by Titus from Ephesus.

(1), According to ii. 1-3, he had written on that occasion that he would not go to them himself, because he was not willing to visit them again in grief and, as verse 13 implies, had sent Titus instead. In chapters x.-xiii., however, he speaks quite differently. He declares that he is going to them (xii. 14; xiii. 1) and warns them that he will not spare.

(2), Again, these chapters do not contain any directions concerning the discipline of the rebellious offender in Corinth, although, according to ii. 4-8, this was evidently the subject on which he had written in the painful letter which Titus bore.

(3), Still again, chapters iii.-vi. are such a rigorous and even excited defence of his ministry that they imply the existence in Corinth, in spite of his confidence in the fidelity of the church, of some who opposed him, and therefore prepare the way for the direct personal defence which follows in x.-xiii. It is therefore quite needless to reverse the order of the sections, since the earlier part of the epistle reveals already the smouldering fire of indignation controlled by the wish first to praise the obedient portion of the church, but ready to flash out in final vindication of himself and in utter annihilation of his adversaries.

(4), Finally, and it would seem conclusively, in xii. 18 Paul refers to the visit of Titus as already past. This passage would seem wholly to forbid the supposition that x.-xiii. formed part of the letter carried by Titus from Ephesus, unless we assume a still earlier visit by Titus from Ephesus to Corinth, of which there are no indications elsewhere. Prof. McGiffert appears at this point to fall into singular confusion. He accepts the view that our last four chapters were part of the "sharp and passionate epistle which was carried to Corinth by Titus" (*Apost. Age*, p. 320). Yet elsewhere (p. 313, note 1) he says, "The apparent identity of the mission of Titus in 2 Cor. viii. 17, 59, and xii. 18 is apparent only." The difference, however, between these two missions of Titus is not doubted. It is the fact that they were different which makes the difficulty with the view which Prof. McGiffert adopts. Since the mission of xii. 18 was the early one on which Titus bore the "sharp and passionate epistle," chapters x.-xiii. of our Second Corinthians cannot have been that epistle, for the conduct in Timothy on that visit is there referred to as well known. We must make these chapters subsequent not only

to the visit of Titus to Corinth, but to his return to the apostle, since Paul's language implies his knowledge of how Titus had fared at Corinth, a knowledge which he did not possess till after Titus rejoined him (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13; vii. 6, 7). That, however, was the time when chapters i.-ix. were written.

If it be thus impossible to place x.-xiii. earlier than i.-ix., it is equally unnecessary to place them later. Drescher, following Semler, supposes that after the second visit of Titus to Corinth, bearing chapters i.-ix., bad news was received by the apostle, which led to the letter of which x.-xiii. is a part. But, as already observed, the earlier part of our epistle, especially chapters iii. to vi. (cf. ii. 17; iii. 1; v. 20; vi. 11; vii. 2), indicate that the apostle was already on his defence, even while commending the repentance of the majority of the Corinthian Church. With sustained self-control he first explained his conduct and the spirit of his ministry to his spiritual children, leading them on to the full performance of their duty. In this he associated Timothy with them. But the burning indignation against his traducers and the anxiety that his work as an apostle should not be doubted are evident beneath his self-control. The situation therefore was such that it is not surprising that he should add in his own name his final, vehement defence. This answers the objection that in i.-ix. he speaks as if all the Corinthians were loyal, and in x.-xiii. as if all were disloyal. The objection is based on a misstatement. The earlier portion betrays too great anxiety about his own defence not to imply the presence of others who were still rebellious; while, on the other hand, in x.-xiii. he as clearly has in mind not all the church, but some (compare x. 2, 10, 11; xi. 12) who were teaching falsely and had misled a portion of the Corinthians. The closing words of these chapters (xiii. 11-14) moreover breathe again the confidence in their condition expressed in the earlier chapters. Semler and Clemen have realized this, and supposed that these verses belonged with chapters i.-viii. That, however, is to make another needless incision in the document. The conclusion really shows that chapters x.-xiii. are a continuation of i.-ix.

The unity of Second Corinthians may thus, we think, be defended successfully on internal grounds. We believe that Paul did send a sharp letter by Titus to the Corinthians from Ephesus, alluded to in 2 Cor. ii. 3, 9; vii. 8, which letter, like the

still earlier one referred to in 1 Cor. v. 9, has not been preserved. But our Second Corinthians is a unit. The whole of it was sent from Macedonia on the return of Titus to Corinth. There is thus no reason to believe that in the apostolic age Pauline fragments were welded together by unknown hands; and Second Corinthians remains, just because of the intense and highly wrought condition of the apostle's mind which it reveals, the most interesting piece of autobiography which St. Paul has left us.