

THE UNITY OF 2 CORINTHIANS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Unity of 2 Corinthians

One of the most debated critical problems concerning Paul's Corinthian correspondences is the unity of 2 Corinthians. It was first disputed two hundred years ago when J. S. Semler proposed the controversial hypothesis in his Paraphrasis II: Epistolae ad Corinthios in 1776.¹ Semler proposed to partition 2 Corinthians into two letters by Paul so that 2 Corinthians 10:1--13:10 should be a separate letter written later by Paul to the Corinthians.² Even though his proposal did not gain wide acceptance or generate much debate for the next hundred years, his proposal has been set as a landmark in the controversy and

¹Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, ed. George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 3-4. Betz provides an excellent historical survey on the origin and development of the hypothesis of Semler on the two letters (or three letters). The first letter consists of 2 Corinthians 1--8, Romans 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9, and 13:11-13 whereas the second letter consists of 2 Corinthians 10:1--13:10. Further 2 Corinthians 9 was sent separately to the other towns of Achaia but later put together to form the first letter by the Corinthians, placing it rightly after chapter 8. A more recent analysis and summary is done by Margaret E. Thrall, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, vol. 1. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 3-4.

²Ibid., 3

the division among the scholars of 2 Corinthians. As Betz noticed correctly, Semler's proposal was an outcome of his deep conviction and investigation against the orthodox doctrine of the canon, to demonstrate that the canon did not exist until a much later period and that early Christianity did not know of the canon and thus was not bound by it.³ These underlying presuppositions and objectives are still the major thrust and primary goal for the arguments and methodologies of the critics against the unity of 2 Corinthians.

History of the Debate Since Semler

Since Semler, there have been numerous debates, books, articles, and commentaries from both sides of the scholarship against or for the unity of 2 Corinthians in last two hundred years.⁴ As Betz notes, the partition theory has been evolved through at least four historical

³Ibid., 3-4. Betz appraises Semler's hypothesis so significant that such a proposal was ever made at all whereas its accuracy was of secondary importance. Further the hypothesis is so tightly interwoven with the critical and historical problem-set of 2 Corinthians including (1) how many times Paul visited Corinth, (2) how many letters Paul has written to the Corinthians and what are they, (3) who the opponent of Paul is in 2 Corinthians 10--13, and (4) when and how long the time intervals are between various events from 1 Corinthians to 2 Corinthians and then to the final visit of Paul to Corinth in Acts, in attempt to answer the missing pieces in the historical reconstruction of the mission and ministry of Paul.

⁴Ibid., 146-153. An extensive and excellent historial bibliography for the subject is found here.

phases: (1) since Semler (1776) to Adolf Hausrath (1870),⁵ (2) from Hausrath and James Houghton Kennedy (1900)⁶ to Hans Windisch (1924),⁷ (3) from Windisch and Rudolf Bultmann⁸ to Walter Schmithals (1956),⁹ and (4) of Dieter Georgi (1958)¹⁰ and Günter Bornkamm (1961).¹¹ Further I would like to add the fifth phase: (5) since Geogri and Bornkamm, to the present scholarship including Hans Dieter Betz (1985)¹² and

⁵Adolf Hausrath, A History of the New Testament Times: the Time of the Apostles. Vol. IV, translated by L. Huxley (London: Williams and Norgate, 1985). Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 10-13.

⁶James Houghton Kennedy, The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: Methuen & Co., 1900). Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 13-14.

⁷Hans Windisch, Der zweite Korintherbrief 9th ed, (KEK 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), cited by Betz here. Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 14-18.

⁸Rudolf Bultmann, The Second Letter to the Corinthians, original German edition edited by Erich Dinkler, translated by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985) 18.

⁹Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 16-18. Walter Schmithals, Die Gnosis in Korinth: Eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen (FRANT 66; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), as cited by Betz here.

¹⁰Dieter Georgi, The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986). Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 20-21.

¹¹Günter Bornkamm, "The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians", The Authority and Integrity of the New Testament (London: SPCK, 1965). Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 21-22.

¹²Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

Margaret E. Thrall (1994).¹³ An excellent summary of various partition theories by Thrall further shows the degree of the problem's complexity and its controversial nature.¹⁴ It is also an overwhelming experience to notice the ever-increasing magnitude of the disagreements and variations among the critics of the partition theory. As noted by Thrall, there are three main divisions of the partition theories along with some variations: (1) to partition 2 Corinthians into two original letters of 2 Corinthians 1--9 and of 2 Corinthians 10--13, where the first letter is either prior to or later than the second letter,¹⁵ (2) to partition 2 Corinthians into three (2 Corinthians 1--8, 2 Corinthians 9, and 2 Corinthians 10--13) or more letters (to partition further 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4 out of 2 Corinthians 1--7, and further 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1 out of 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4),¹⁶ or (3) to

¹³Margaret E. Thrall, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, vol 1.

¹⁴Ibid., 47-49.

¹⁵Ibid., 49. Thrall notes: (1) Chapters 10--13 (Painful Letter) as the first and Chapters 1--9 as the second letter by Hausrath, Schmiedel, J. H. Kennedy, Plummer, Lake, Strachan), and (2) Chapters 1-9 as the first letter and Chapters 10--13 as the second letter by Pherigo, Batey, Barrett, Bruce, and Furnish.

¹⁶Ibid., 48-49. Thrall notes: (1) to partition into three letters (a) of 2 Cor 1--8, 2 Cor 9, 2 Cor 10--13 and in this order, by Semler, Windisch, and Thrall, (b) 2 Cor 10--13:8, 2 Cor 9, 2 Cor 1--8, in this order, by Hérring, (c) 2 Cor 10--13, 2 Cor 1--8, 2 Cor 9 by Lan, and (2) to partition further for the fragment of 2 Cor 2:14--7:4 or others, into (a) four letters of 2 Cor 2:14--7:4, 2 Cor 10--

partition both 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians as the intermixed composite of various fragments to make up four or nine original letters.¹⁷ However, the majority of the partition theories are focused on the four passages of 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4, 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and 2 Corinthians 10--13.

The debate is still finding a new ground and course without exhaustion. And it generates still more fresh interest and challenge from the both sides of the debate. As one may review these arguments, it is an overwhelming experience to realize the vast amount of the data and the depth of their arguments, and yet to be frustrated by the

13, 2 Cor 1:1-2:13 with 2 Cor 7:5-16 and perhaps with 2 Cor 8, and 2 Cor 9, by Bornkamm, (b) 2 Cor 2:14--7:4, 2 Cor 10--13, 2 Cor 1:1--2:13 with 2 Cor 7:5-16, 2 Cor 8, and 2 Cor 9 by Georgi, and a few other variations.

¹⁷Ibid., 47-48. Thrall notes: (1) Six letters by J. Weiss where (a) Letter A consisting of 1 Cor 10:1-23, 6:12-20, 11:2-34, 16:7(?), 16:8-9, perhaps 16:20-1; 2 Cor 6:14--7:1, (b) Letter B-i consisting of 1 Cor 7--9, 10:24--11:1, 12--15, 16:1-6, perhaps 16:7, 16:15-19, (c) Collection Letter consisting of 2 Cor 8, (d) Letter B-ii consisting of I 1:1-9, 1:10--6:11, 16:10-14, perhaps 16:22-4, (e) Letter C (Painful Letter) consisting of 2 Cor 2:14--6:13, 7:2-4, 10--13, and (f) Letter D (Letter of Reconciliation) consisting of II 1:1--2:13, 7:5-16, and Chapter 9, and (2) nine letters by Schmithals where (a) Letter A consisting of 1 Cor 11:2-24, (b) Letter B consisting of 1 Cor 6:1-11, 2 Cor 6:14--7:1, 1 Cor 6:12-20, 9:24--10:22, 15:1-58, 12:31b--13:13, 16:1-12, (c) Letter C consisting of 1 Cor 5, 7:1--8:13, 9:19-22, 10:23--11:1, 12:1-31a, 14:1c-40, 12:31b--13:3, 16:1-12, (d) Letter D consisting of 1 Cor 1:1--4:21, (e) Letter E (Interim Letter) consisting of 2 Cor 2:14--6:2, (f) Letter F consisting of 1 Cor 9:1-18, 2 Cor 6:3-13, 7:2-4, (e) Letter G (Painful Letter) consisting of 2 Cor 10--13, (h) Letter H (Collection Letter) consisting of 2 Cor 9, and (i) Letter I (Letter of Reconciliation) consisting of 2 Cor 1:1--2:13, 7:5--8:24.

fact that the matter has not yet been settled. Moreover, it is surprising for one to find out that some of these arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians could be also used for the unity at the same time.¹⁸ Or it is not a surprise to see that one's own critical opinion widely ranging from a doubt to a certainty as one refers the proposal as a possibility¹⁹ and then later as an assertion.²⁰ As one may notice, almost all the arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians are based on a set of the hypothetical assumptions and historical reconstructions which should not be taken as decisive or proven.²¹

Purpose and Plan of the Study

Therefore, it is reasonable to examine these typical methodologies used by the critics against the unity, the logical consistency of arguments, and the validity of the

¹⁸Paul Brooks Duff, "The Mind of the Redactor: 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 in its Secondary Context," Novum Testamentum 35, 2 (1993): 160-180.

¹⁹Paul Brooks Duff, "Metaphor, Motif, and Meaning: The Rhetorical Strategy behind the Image 'Led in Triumph' in 2 Corinthians 2:14," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 53 (1991) 79-92. Duff refers the works of W. Schmithals, D. Georgi, and G. Bornkamm, for the fragments of 2 Corinthians 2:14--6:13 and 7:2-4 to be an independent letter as a possibility.

²⁰Paul Brooks Duff, "Apostolic Suffering and the Language of Processions in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10," Biblical Theology Bulletin 21 (1991) 158-165. The same author is assertive as he is referring the works of Bornkamm, Georgi, Koester.

²¹Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 25.

major assumptions or presuppositions applied or implied in these arguments.

In the following chapters, the typical arguments and questionable methodologies of the critics against the unity will be reviewed and analyzed with the recent assessments made by Betz.²² Further these arguments and methodologies will be examined and analyzed to identify some of their problematic hypotheses and presuppositions. Some of these typical fallacies will be reviewed and discussed. Then the problem areas of 2 Corinthians under debate since Semler will be surveyed and discussed toward the defense of the literary unity based on this analysis and results. Further a few alternative and critical arguments will be presented based on the historical evidence and the critical methods of exegetical and literary analysis, followed by the conclusion to summarize the discussions.

²²Ibid., 35.

CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Historical Assessment

In the two hundred years since Semler, there have been diverse and varying theories against the unity of 2 Corinthians. Some of these proposals have gone through evolving stages and have generated tremendous controversy or popularity among the critics. Yet as Betz noticed,

As has been shown in the previous sections, the debate on the literary composition of 2 Corinthians passed through a number of phases, concluding with the refinement of Hausrath's thesis by Georgi and Bornkamm. But throughout the debate, the literary unity of the letter continued to be maintained by conservative scholars. This serves as a reminder of the fact that even during its latest phase, the debate has not advanced beyond the hypothetical.¹

It is frustrating and irritating as Betz notes by the fact that the complete lack of methodological reflection turns the debate largely naive. As a result, the presentations are in the agreement or disagreement with their own predecessors, or even modifying what they themselves have proposed. Betz summarizes his observation in a critical and yet lamenting voice,

None of these arguments operates at the level of the text itself, but on hypothetical constructions lying

¹Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 25.

beneath the text: the train of thought, the plan of the letter, the course of events, and psychology. One of the few scholars to have complained about the lack of methodological reflection in the debate was Anton Halmel. He rightly observed that the debate was, from the beginning, too much determined by Semler, but no one took notice.²

This may be an oversimplified assessment to undermine many of the contributions which have come as result of the arguments from both sides of the critics. However, I agree with Betz that most of these arguments against the unity are trying to go beyond what they are allowed to assert within the frame of their methodologies. Further it is frustrating to see that even Betz himself, after he rightly recognizes some of the major problems in the debate. However, he also falls into his own pitfall as he asserts,

The investigation of the problem at hand attempted in the following chapters will be include the following steps: first, a detailed literary analysis of the hypothetical letter fragments (chaps. 2 and 3). This will determine whether 2 Cor 8 and 9 constitute independent, self-contained textual units which can be interpreted in accordance with Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistography. . . .

Semler's hypothesis can be regarded as proven if our analysis in chapters 2 and 3 yields positive results, if the literary genre and function can be identified (chap. 4), and if the letters thus reconstructed can be made understandable within the context of Paul's dealings with the Corinthian church.³

This concludes his first chapter. With this premise, Betz ventures a detailed literary analysis of "the hypothetical letter fragments" of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 in the following

²Ibid., 26.

³Ibid., 35-36.

two chapters, to show his own version of a possibility.

Problematic Methodology

This type of the approach in the previous section may provide a plausible explanation to support (or even to deny at the same time) the intended hypothetical reconstruction. But such a well-educated guess is still a possibility. The proposed frame of rhetoric and epistolography is not exhaustive nor assertive, and could be very misleading.⁴ Further the problem is complicated and compounded by the subjective nature of the proposed literary analysis and evaluation. Depending on who evaluates with what kind of presupposition, there are varying degrees of opinion. And even one's own opinions could be contradicting to each other. Because of this reason, Betz's argument should not be taken as a decisive proof even though it is claimed to be so. Ironically, Betz himself acknowledges such a continuing and inherent problematic trend in the debate and makes a note of the observation made by Anton Halmel, "He rightly observed that the debate was, from the beginning, too much determined by Semler, but no one took notice."⁵ But Betz himself falls into similar determination

⁴E. E. Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents (Boston: Brill, 1999), 49-52.

⁵Anton Halmel, Der zweite Korintherbrief des Apostels Paulus: Geschichtliche und literakritische Untersuchungen (Halle: Niemeyer, 1904) 3-4, cited by Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 26.

and does not take a notice of his own fallacy as he also misses the nature of literary analysis and its limitations.

These are the problematic methodologies based on the problematic presuppositions that many have overlooked, ignored, and therefore have fallen into its own misjudgment, especially in the critics against the unity of 2 Corinthians. It is commonly observed that these critics are crossing beyond the boundary of their admissible framework inherent in their methodology. One of the common problem is that they ignore or neglect necessary step(s) in their arguments in order to be valid or consistent. Rather they jump into a conclusion which destroys the integrity of the arguments. And these hidden and problematic presuppositions of such problematic arguments and methodologies should be recognized, addressed, avoided or resolved to be scholarly and sound arguments. I hope that this is what Betz intended to achieve in his work originally.

Common Basis and Limitations

The unity of 2 Corinthians has been held throughout Christian history and scholarship until the modern time.⁶ Since multiple texts are supported in no manuscript nor

⁶C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 21-22; Victor Paul Furnish, II Corinthians (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1984), 29-30. According to Barrett, the external evidence is good, even though it is not as early as that of 1 Corinthians, and the internal evidence is decisive for the unity of the text.

version attesting any possibility of the disunity, the authenticity, the integrity, and the unity of 2 Corinthians have never been challenged seriously on the basis of the external or textual tradition. And the conservative scholars have defended the integrity of the text against the challenge and hypothesis of the critics.⁷ For example, Gordon D. Fee provides an excellent discussion and defense against the possibility of the interpolation, whether it is accidental or intentional, of the text of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. This conclusion is further enhanced by the literary and contextual continuity and its epistolary unity in context of Paul's journey and of 1 Corinthians.⁸

Another critical and common ground for both sides of the critics is the surviving textual and external evidences. Plummer asserts, "No MS., no version, and no patristic quotation supplies any evidence that the Epistle was ever in circulation anywhere with any one of these four portions omitted."⁹ This claim still stands true today. However, one may argue and set the date of the letter based on its

⁷Ibid., 21. According to Barrett, the external evidence is good, even though it is not as early as that of 1 Corinthians, and the internal evidence is decisive for the unity of the text.

⁸Gordon D. Fee, "II Corinthians VI.14-VII.1 and Food Offered to Idols," New Testament Studies 23 (1977), 142-143.

⁹Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), xxiii.

absence (for a later date, even though it may not be the case), or its presence (certainly for a prior date) relative to the date of the other literary sources which reference or cite it. It is absent from I Clement (around AD 95-96), and from the letters of Ignatius (around AD 105-108), even though one may argue for its allusion in his letters. However, it is evidenced clearly in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians (around AD 155), by Irenius (around AD 185), by Clement of Alexandria (around AD 210), by Tertullian (around AD 210), recognized by Marcion between AD 139 and 144, and was listed in Muratorian fragment).¹⁰ This places the formation and circulation of 2 Corinthians, as late as possible, by the middle of the second century.¹¹ Further Plummer recognizes that this external evidence as

¹⁰Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, xii. Margaret E. Thrall, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, vol. 1, 2-3.

¹¹James Houghton Kennedy, The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: Methuen & Co., 1900), 147, 139-162. For the dating of I Clement, it is traditionally dated to AD 95-96 or the last decade of the first century for its composition (Lightfoot, Jaubert, Lindemann); however, Ellis argues for the earlier date, AD 69-70, to be more likely (Robinson, Henderson, Edmundson), by Clement who (1) was Paul's contemporary, (2) knew Paul in Rome, (3) wrote a summary of Paul's achievement, (4) probably just after the Neronian persecution but before the destruction of the temple, referring various sacrifices still being offered in the Jerusalem temple (I Clement 41:2), in E. Earle Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents (Boston: Brill, 1999), 280-281, footnote 286. This may imply the majority of the New Testament canon has been written prior to AD 70, including the writings of Paul, widely recognized and circulated.

solid ground in favor of the unity of 2 Corinthians, and that his proposal (of two letters of chapters 1--9 and 10--13 parts) rests entirely upon internal evidence.¹²

Most arguments against the unity are primarily based on the literary analysis of 2 Corinthians, using the flow of the discourse, the tone of the voice, the usage and frequency of words, the contrast of the various passages, and the contextual smoothness. For this reason, the main thrust of all the arguments against the unity has been heavily driven by a set of radical and hypothetical presuppositions against the unity, to bridge the gap between the weak literary evidences and the radical hypothetical model. Once convinced of the possibility of the disunity, the next radical step is to project (1) which portion of the epistle might be, (2) whether it is authentic or not, (3) who wrote or edited the letter, (4) from what source the epistle was composed of, and (5) what could be the plausible historical reconstruction suitable for these projections. After elaborate speculations of such possibilities, the tone of the arguments against the unity usually changes from a possibility to an assertion.¹³

Interestingly, almost all the critics universally agree concerning Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2

¹²Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, xxxvi.

¹³See above footnote 18, 19, 20 in Chapter I.

Corinthians.¹⁴ Even though there are various partition theories and even within the same partition one may differ from another by a different chronological arrangement of a partition, there are also several major guarding anchor points to keep the textual locality and integrity based on the context and the historical data available to us (e.g., Acts). This tends to converge the problem areas into a reasonable set of partition, ranging from one to six blocks of texts.

For example, the critics of the disunity traditionally proposed the seemingly-inserted passage(s) as part of the severe letter (2 Cor 7:5-16) based on the literary and discourse analysis in the changes of tone, voice, and wording. Even though the critics want to refine their partitions, there are not many alternatives to partition a block of text or to reconstruct the plausible reconstruction for that text. In this case, the critics generally assign the seemingly inserted portion(s) of 2 Corinthians to the severe letter or less likely to the previous letter (1 Corinthians 5:9). It is because Acts and Paul's letters witnessed a fairly good outline of the historical model of Paul's journey and work concerning the

¹⁴Possible exception is 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1. This view is taken by J. A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6:14--7:1," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 23 (1961): 271-280; Hans Dieter Betz, "2 Cor 6:14--7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?" in Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973): 88-108.

Corinthian correspondence. So far this is an acceptable intellectual exercise and hypothesis.

Fragmentation and Interpolation

However after such an elaboration on a partition theory, the critics of the disunity advance their arguments toward the theory of the fragmentation and interpolation, and then toward the model and explanation for their historical reconstruction and its final form. Their methodology and arguments are in general of abductive reasoning¹⁵. In essence, the critics against the unity have claimed with a plausible historical model that 2 Corinthians was not in its original form as Paul wrote but was redacted later from two or more letters of Paul by a reactor. In addition, the critics against the unity attempted to provide a plausible event (or a series of plausible historical events) to justify why this was the case. For example, Strachan has attempted to provide a plausible defense for this cause. He begins in the spirit of constructive self-criticism, by saying,

¹⁵An abductive reasoning is commonly used or observed in an explanation or a common-sense reasoning. It is not a classical and monotonic logic. A typical form of the abductive syllogism is: B, If A then B, therefore A, whereas a deductive syllogism of modus ponens is: A, If A then B, therefore B. In a layperson's medical diagnosis, one may conclude for a cold or flu because one has fever and cough. Even though fever and cough is a common symptom of a cold or flu, but there could be many other potential diseases or allergies or even a physical condition which may cause severe fever and cough.

How, it may be asked, was it possible thus to dovetail stray portions of one manuscript into the body of another? If these portions represent torn manuscripts, or surviving pages of manuscripts, of which the rest has been lost, how, it may be asked, could the tear or the loss always respect the whole of a sentence? Are we not assuming four remarkable coincidences, in each of which the accident occurred just at the end of one sentence or the beginning of another?¹⁶

Acknowledging these four remarkable coincidences, he further created more remarkable coincidences, first by saying, "The objection has considerable weight, but only if we assume that the compiler of this particular letter did not feel himself free to restore, where necessary, grammatical connexions."¹⁷ Then he advanced his argument on the loss of many other Paul's letters, and to this assumption I have no objection. However, he assumed further (1) Paul's words would not yet have the value of Holy Scripture, (2) so the letters would be laid up in their archives, often probably in disorder, and (3) so the previous remarkable coincidences would occur, (4) resulting that someone like a copyist started to do some editorial work out of these remaining fragments by trimming and fitting. He states,

Many of Paul's letter must have been lost, and those that survived were ultimately collected from a few leading Churches to which they were addressed. They would be laid up in their archives, and often probably in disorder. Paul's words would not yet have the value of Holy Scripture, and it is quite conceivable that in giving 2 Corinthians its present form, as part of a general scheme to make a more or less complete

¹⁶R. H. Strachan, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), xx-xxi.

¹⁷Ibid., xxi.

collection of his correspondence, the beginnings and the endings of fragments would be trimmed to fit what was regarded as their appropriate context. Such work would be done by a copyist.¹⁸

When Paul wrote his letter of the importance, that is, a holy scripture containing the commandment of the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37-28), Paul commanded the recipient church(es) to read and circulate the letter. According to Ellis, there has been a long and traditional religious practice to read a holy scripture as a part of the worship service and a part of formal religious teaching of a synagogue, which has also been an important part of the early churches.¹⁹ This practice of early church was also evidenced by the ministry of Jesus and the apostles in Acts. Ellis further advanced his thesis on the church practice, structure, and organization based on the biblical and extrabiblical evidences, affirming the existence of the well-organized Corinthian churches in Corinth. The recipients of 2 Corinthians are not only the churches in Corinth but also all the churches in Achaia (2 Cor 1:1), as Ellis argues,

Since the Apostle's letters were in all likelihood copied and circulated among neighboring congregations from the outset, to say nothing of the copy retained by Paul, it is difficult if not impossible . . .²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., xx.

¹⁹E. E. Ellis, Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 137-138.

²⁰Ibid., 67 and also footnote 50 in the same page.

Further he adds,

Paul commands only that his letters be read to the congregation or Christian missionaries not present in the congregation (1 Thess 5:27, ...) or to a nearby congregation (Col 4:16; cf. 2 Thess 2:2). But in the latter instances a recopying of the letter would likely have ensued. The Corinthian letters were not sent just to one house-church congregation since 1 Corinthians presupposes more than one house-congregation (1 Cor 1:11; 16:15f.; see below, 141-45) and since 2 Corinthians (1:1) is addressed to Corinth and "the whole of Achaia." 2 Thess 2:2 (c. A.D. 51) appears to assume that copies of Paul's letters (genuine and counterfeit) might be carried to different congregations at a very early time.²¹

So it is very hard to imagine that Paul's official public letter was, not just a personal correspondence but a church-business letter containing many revelations of God, to be neglected and laid aside in a shelf, unnoticed or uncopied for such a long time, until the deterioration and decay have been so severe that the letters were no longer in a unit but fragments.

Further Ellis argues for two very important factors which should be considered in the reconstruction of the historical model of the epistology: (1) the role of the secretary in antiquity, and (2) the implication of the preformed traditions for the nature of the authorship.²² Its critical importance is worthy noting as Ellis provides his critique on the nineteenth century literary assumptions (e.g., of Bauer and his school) in the light of the

²¹Ibid., 67. Footnote 50.

²²E. E. Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents, 326-328.

twentieth century literary-critical developments.²³ One should not ignore or undermine the common practice and employment of a secretary or a group of professional scribes in the writings of an epistle or a book in antiquity, as evidenced frequently in various New Testament writings.²⁴ And the preformed materials in the New Testament epistles include various types of literary pieces such as biblical expositions, confessions, congregational and household rules, and hymns.²⁵ Another important consideration and factor in the literary analysis of this letter toward its partition theory is its repeated and vivid internal evidences of the author's group in a dynamic situation during the time of the composition. The composition is the product of the constant interactions and timely updates as the journey went on.

Problems in the Arguments

Understanding the problematic assumptions and presuppositions of the critiques against the unity, let's turn the scope of this discussion into the various problems of the arguments which have been solely based on the

²³Ibid. 320-325 and also in Appendix VI on Bauer and his school, 433-445.

²⁴Acts 15:23, Romans 16:22, 1 Peter 5:12, John 21:24.

²⁵E. E. Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents (Boston: Brill, 1999), 99-101, 139, 327-330. His estimate of the preformed materials for 2 Corinthians is about 11%.

internal evidences in the debate. The classical summary is found in four categories as Bates notes,

(a) definite contradiction in i-ix of what is said in x-xiii, (b) words used either in a consciously or in an unconsciously different way in the two sections, (c) passages in i-ix which clearly presuppose previous knowledge of x-xii. (This needs very careful handling. Mere point of contact between the two sections is not enough, and would indeed be completely natural in any letter what was a unity, and would therefore constitute strong support for the opposing argument), (d) Where a different situation can be seen to be presupposed in either section.²⁶

Further, Murray J. Harris observes four main problem areas of (1) 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4, (2) 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1, (3) 2 Corinthians 8--9, and especially (4) 2 Corinthians 10--13, concerning the debates on the unity.²⁷ In the next chapter, I plan to follow in general the plan and survey of Harris and his reponse to the problematic arguments.²⁸

²⁶Bates, "The Integrity of II Corinthians," New Testament Studies 12 (October 1965): 60.

²⁷Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians." In The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 10, ed. Frank G. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 303-306.

²⁸Ibid., 303-306.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEM AREAS AND ARGUMENTS

Various problem areas and supporting arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians have been proposed and identified, evolved and developed, and converged and clustered into a few major problem areas as the key and critical passages throughout the course of the debate. These main problem areas and their key arguments are centered in (1) 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4, (2) 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1, (3) 2 Corinthians 8--9, and especially (4) 2 Corinthians 10--13. Following the survey of Harris and his reponse, these four main problem areas and the arguments from both sides will be reviewed and analyzed.¹

2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4

The first problem area is the passage of 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4 as R. Bultmann,² W. Schmithals,³ G.

¹Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," 303-306.

²Rudolf Bultmann, Der zweite Brief an die Korinther (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976) 176-182, cited by Betz 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 19. Rudolf Bultmann, The Second Letter to the Corinthians, original German edition ed. Erich Dinkler, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985) 18. Following Hausrath, Bultmann is partitioning 2 Corinthians into two separate letters of C and D. The interim letter C is of 2:14--7:4 and chapters 10--13, along with chapter 9 which is presumably attached to

Bornkamm,⁴ W. Marxsen⁵, and D. Georgi⁶ argue that the passage (without 6:14--7:1) is the intermediate letter including 2 Corinthians 10--13 and 9 (Bultmann), or the fragment of the letter that Paul wrote before his "severe letter" of 2 Corinthians 10--13. The main argument for the disunity is based on the observation, (1) for the repeating words and phrases from 2:13 ("So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia") and 7:5 ("when we came into Macedonia"), (2) thus for the better flow of the discourse without any disruption to continue the trip report as Paul left Troas and went into Macedonia, and (3) for the seemingly too long digression (2:14--7:4) away from the main topic of the trip report of Paul and his team toward Corinth. Therefore there seems to be a noticeable interruption in his discourse and

the letter C. The letter D is of 1:1--2:13, and 7:5--9:15.

³Walter Schmithals, Die Gnosis in Korinth: Eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956) cited by Betz 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 19; Walter Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, trans. John E. Steely from the 3rd German edition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 96-101, cited by Duff, "Metaphor, Motif, and Meaning ..." 79; Walter Schmithals, Paul & the Gnostics, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 245-247.

⁴G. Bornkamm, "The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians," The Authority and Integrity of the New Testament (London: SPCK, 1965), 73-81.

⁵Willi Marxsen, Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to Its Problems, trans. G. Buswell (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), cited by Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," 303.

⁶D. Georgi, The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 9-14.

then to resume the flow. However, this is also a strong evidence that Paul went into some other thought as he wrote or dictated his letter, and came back with his own recognition, restating the previous thought, that he had digressed. To enhance the continuity of the discourse, the terms used in 7:4 also reappear in 7:5-7 (e.g., the appeal or encouragement, to comfort, encourage or appeal, joy, affliction). These thematic words and phrases are applied consistently and give evidence overwhelmingly throughout 2 Corinthians, unless one is determined to ignore.

2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1

Within the first problem area, some scholars argued the authenticity of the passage of 6:14--7:1 as an interpolation from (1) non-Pauline source (J. A. Fitzmyer,⁷ D. Georgi,⁸ J. Gnilya⁹) or (2) anti-Pauline source (H. D. Betz¹⁰) or (3) Pauline source, possibly misplaced (J. C.

⁷Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6,14-7,1," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 23 (July 1961): 271-280.

⁸D. Georgi, The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 9-14, cited by Paul Brooks Duff, "Metaphor, Motif, and Meaning ..." 80.

⁹J. Gnilya, "2 Kor 6,14-7,1 im Lichte der Qumranschriften und der Zwölf-Patriarchen-Testamente," Neutestamentliche Aufsätze (Regensburg: Pustet, 1963), 86-99.

¹⁰Hans Dieter Betz, "2 Cor 6:14--7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?" Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973): 88-108.

Hurd¹¹) or inserted fragment (R. P. C. Hanson¹²) from the "previous letter" (1 Corinthians 5:9), or (4) Paul's rephrasing of an Essene text (K. G. Kuhn,¹³ J. F. Collange,¹⁴ R. P. Martin¹⁵). The arguments are based on (1) the passage seems somewhat a self-contained unit lacking the Corinthian matters, (2) the interruption of the flow of the discourse and thought, (3) six New Testament hapax legomena (these words occur only here throughout New Testament), (4) the seemingly Pharisaic or Legalistic doctrine, and (5) a striking affinity with the doctrine within the Qumran sect.

All these proposals may notice a digression, yet all fail to provide a strong evidence to prove their cases. Further, Paul's letters show frequently similar patterns of such digressions, suggesting Paul may be quoting a prepared exposition or a preformed message (very likely of his own)

¹¹John Coolidge Hurd, Jr. The Origin of I Corinthians (London: SPCK, 1965), 43-58.

¹²R. P. C. Hanson, II Corinthians (London: SCM Press, 1954), 16-25.

¹³K. G. Kuhn, "Die Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer." Evangelische Theologie 11 (1951): 72-75, cited by Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians in Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 40 (Waco: Word Books, 1986), xlii.

¹⁴J. F. Collange, Enigmes de la deuxieme epitre de Paul aux Corinthiens: Etude exegetique de 2 Cor. 2:14-7:11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 319. Collange reads this section as Jewish Christian polemical fragment. Cited by Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 439.

¹⁵Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians (Waco: Word Books, 1986), xl-lii.

and thus making a brief yet intentional digression.¹⁶

Another strong evidence is that Paul is repeating himself to resume his discourse on the trip plan and progress after digression. It is to remind his audience for his current location and status now in Macedonia, as he left Troas and came into Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:13 and 7:5) to move on to the joyful arrival and news of Tius (2 Corinthians 7:6-16). Moreover, Paul's encouragement of the Corinthians to open wide their heart (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) is repeated again (2 Corinthians 7:2) as a result of this imbedded exposition. It follows a Midrash pattern with a Temple typology for the holy lifestyle of the saints of God with relation to the unbelievers. It begins with a thematic pronouncement or an implied text, "do not be yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14a).¹⁷ This opening thematic pronouncement is then followed by the exposition with a series of the dramatic and clarifying questions to

¹⁶Ellis, Pauline Theology, 104.

¹⁷E. Earle Ellis, The Old Testament in Early Christianity (Grand Rapid, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 92-98. The "proem" midrash has generally the following structure of (1) the text for the day, (2) a second text, the proem or opening for the discourse, (3) exposition including supplemental texts, parables, and other commentary with a link to the initial and final text, and (4) the final text, sometimes with the concluding applications. For 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1, my proposal to the structure is (1) the initial implicate or interpreted rendering of a text (6:14a) as found in Deuteronomy 7:3, (2) the exposition with a series of the questions and the answer with a scriptural proof text of Leviticus 26:12 (6:14b-16), (3) the concluding scriptural texts (6:17-18), and (4) the concluding applications (7:1).

contrast a set of the mutually exclusive concepts in pair, to induce a self-evident answer and theological consensus. These are (1) "what do righteousness and wickedness have in common", (2) "what fellowship can light have with darkness", (3) "what harmony is there between Christ and Belial", (4) "what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever", and (5) "what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols". Each one of them could be expanded into a fully elaborated commentary with supplemental scriptural text, illustration and discussion. The next step is to conclude the exposition with the authoritative proof text (Leviticus 26:12), followed by the concluding applications. This exegetical development and conclusion is then to be a basis and rationale for Paul's appeal and commandment to Corinthians, (1) to keep oneself holy and pure away from everything contaminating body and spirit such as idol worship and immoral lifestyle (or negatively stated, "do not be yoked together with unbelievers"), and (2) to open wide their heart to and to welcome the fellows and ministers of God (that is, Paul and his coworkers who are doing their best to do only good for Corinthians) and to take their disciplinary words very seriously.¹⁸ Further the lifestyle mandate and instruction for the holiness code of the saints

¹⁸2 Corinthians 7:9-13. In 7:12b-13a, at the arrival of Titus and his news, Paul is now relieved, and so encouraged to see how serious Corinthians are in their devotion to Paul and his coworkers and their instructions, to keep them clean and pure in holiness.

is not against Pauline nor legalistic, but is found very frequently throughout the Old and the New Testament, including the teaching and ministry of Jesus and Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9, 6:9-11, Galatians 5:1). And the temple typology is found throughout the New Testament, frequently in Paul's writings, with its own unique exegetical and eschatological doctrine.¹⁹ Finally it is quite impossible to imagine that someone would insert this short passage arbitrarily or intentionally here, or to assume this fragment fallen into here by an accident (and further just right here between these lines).

2 Corinthians 8--9

First proposed by Semler, 2 Corinthians 9 was argued as a separate epistle for the churches of Achaia. As he observed some repetitions in both chapters, he argued that the section was seemingly independent and self-contained. Even though the majority of the critics reject this view, a few recent scholars such as E. Dinkler,²⁰ J. Héring,²¹ H. D.

¹⁹Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents, 74-77. The temple typology in New Testament is in two forms of (1) the corporate body of Christ and Christians, found in Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 6:14--7:1, Ephesians 2:19-22, and (2) Jesus Christ as the rejected stone, in Romans 9:33, 1 Peter 2:6-7, Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Mark 14:58, John 2:21-22.

²⁰Erich Dinkler, "Korintherbriefe," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart 4 (1960), 17-23, cited by Werner George Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, 285.

²¹Jean Hering, The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock,

Wendland,²² K. F. Nickle,²³ and recently H. D. Betz²⁴ still followed this line of the argument.²⁵ It is based on the changes in the tone, in the wording, and the repetitions.

Further Betz argues to partition 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 as independent and separate letter(s) based on the literary structure, the psychological impression, the theological presupposition, and the genre in Graeco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography.²⁶ Assuming the omission of the epistolary prescript (the identification of the sender and its recipient and the greeting) and postscript (the farewell) from the both chapters, 2 Corinthians 8 is framed into the body of a letter: (1) the introduction, "Exordium", 8:1-5, (2) the statement of facts, "narratio", 8:6, (3) the proposition, "propositio", 8:7-8, (4) the proof, "probatio", 8:9-15, (5) the commendation of the delegates, 8:16-22, (6) the authorization, 8:23, and (7) the peroration, "peroratio"

from the First French Edition (London: The Epworth Press, 1967), xi-xv.

²²H. D. Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968-1972), cited in Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, xlii.

²³Keith F. Nickle The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy, in Studies in Biblical Theology 48 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966), 16-22.

²⁴Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, ed. George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 35-36.

²⁵Harris, "2 Corinthians," 304.

²⁶Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 38-41, 88-92.

in Paul's appeal for the delegates. And 2 Corinthians 9 is framed into a body of a letter: (1) the introduction, "Exordium", 9:1-2, (2) the statement of facts, "narratio", 9:3-5a, (3) the proposition, "propositio", 9:5b-c, (4) the proof, "probatio", 9:6-14, and (5) the peroration, "peroratio" in prayer, 9:15.

Yet the marked change of the tone or repetition could be easily explained by the delicate reflection of Paul after the arrival of Titus and his encouraging news. This dramatic transition and change of the epistolary tone is clearly explained and vivid in 2 Corinthians 7:6-7. And the following passage is filled with the comfort, joy, happiness, delight, and confidence, as discussed in the previous section. From this turning point, Paul is now back on track or his main business item for his trip, throughout all the regions of Macedonia and Achaia, to collect the relief fund for the saints in Jerusalem. Writing this letter, Paul is to send Titus back to Corinth, ahead of Paul for the preparation for the collection. Moreover Paul sent this letter not only to Corinthian churches but also all the churches in Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1). This should accomodate for the critics arguing for the following two points: (1) 2 Corinthians 8 is sent to the Corinthians as 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 and thus Paul's appeal to the Macedonian example for the Corinthians, and (2) 2 Corinthians 9 is to the rest of the churches in Achaia as 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

and thus Paul's appeal to the Corinthian example for the rest in Achaia.

Further it is clear that these two passages are not so exclusive as one may argue for two different and exclusive audiences. Paul is writing to all of them about (1) what the Macedonians have done for the collection as Paul is there writing this letter (2 Corinthians 8:1-7), and then (2) what Paul is telling the Macedonians and their delegates to Corinth, about what the churches of Achaia have been doing for the collection over a year (2 Corinthians 9:1-5). Paul's concern is not only his own embarrassment but also the shame of the churches of Achaia (2 Corinthians 9:4) as these delegates are soon to arrive there with Paul to discover the fact. If the Macedonians had not done extremely well in the midst of their trial and extreme poverty as Paul has said (2 Corinthians 8:1-5), it may not be such a great deal (or shame) for the churches of Achaia even though their collection would be very poor. Therefore Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 9:4 presumes this prior information in 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. Therefore the argument for the partition is weak and problematic. Another consideration is that the content of these two chapters are not literary parallels in their content but complementing each other. If Paul wrote two separate letters (one for the church of Corinth and the other for Achaia), one should expect an overlapping core message by Paul for the cause and

pledge of the collection offering. And there is no reason why these two chapters differ so much from each other.

Further it is hardly regarded as a valid proof or even a leading evidence for a separate letter, as one is able to superimpose very general and flexible literary structure for 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, respectively. For example, a general literary structure of a letter excluding an opening (a epistolary prescript) and a closing (a epistolary postscript) can be superimposed in almost every major section as Paul may discuss one major agenda. One may further conveniently assume the necessary omission of the epistolary prescript and postscript of these sections to fit nicely into the conceived and very generic epistolary frame. Thus one may conclude that each of them was originally sent as a separate letter by Paul, but someone decided to put them all together to make it as one letter. Whether the omission might be intentional or accidental (whether fragmented by a natural damage or eliminated by an editor), one should not ignore or undermine the possibility that Paul has written these passages as a unit, based on his own authorial intention, his epistolary discourse and convention which are very common in his letters. Otherwise, one may safely partition each major section of 1 Corinthians (for example, 1 Corinthians chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10:23-33, for the repeating themes on idolatry and adultery) and argue for four or more separate letters originally but later

fragmented and then interpolated with the omission of the epistolary prescript and postscripts.

2 Corinthians 10--13

The passages in 2 Corinthians 10--13 have been the major problem area concerning the unity of 2 Corinthians. Historically, this is called "the four-chapter hypothesis" with the following proposals of: (1) 2 Corinthians 10--13 was written earlier than 2 Corinthians 1--9, and was a part of the "severe letter" or (2) 2 Corinthians 10--13 was written later than 2 Corinthians and was a separate fifth letter (that is, Paul wrote the "previous letter" [1 Cor 5:9], 1 Corinthians, a "severe letter", 2 Corinthians 1--9, 2 Corinthians 10--13), or (3) 2 Corinthians is one unit as Paul wrote all of 2 Corinthians.

The first and second views share the same conviction and foundation of the argument, based on the change of tone at 2 Corinthians 10:1. The critiques for the disunity further argue that there is a sharp contrast in the general tone, between chapters 1--9 and chapters 10--13. The first part seems to be of great relief, joy, comfort, and gentle appeal, whereas the second part seems to be of doubt, complaint, remonstrance, irony, and endless self-defense. The main argument to support this contrast as a proof for its epistolary inconsistency and thus the incoherency is based on the appeal to Paul's main goal and purpose of this pledge letter and his trip to Corinth for collection of the

offerings to help the saints of Jerusalem. In other word, Paul is not in a position to say these things in 2 Corinthians 10--13 in such a tone and manner, or Paul should be foolish enough to mess up everything which he has built so far in 2 Corinthians 1--9. However, it should be remembered first (1) that Paul is the founding father of the church of Corinth and an apostle of Jesus Christ in authority. Second (2), Paul has been very careful to keep his authorial status and integrity, to keep himself neutral out of any personal favoritism, influence or potential complicit of interest for the church as evidenced in 1 Corinthians 1:14-16, 14:37, and especially in 9:3-12 for money matters.

There are in general three critical positions for 2 Corinthians 10--13 in relation to 2 Corinthians 1--9.

(1) 2 Corinthians 10--13 is earlier than 2 Corinthians 1-9. This view was first proposed systematically by A. Hausrath (1870),²⁷ and has been still dominant view supported and enhanced by A. P. W. Schmiedel

²⁷A. Hausrath, Der Vier-Capitel-Brief des Paulus an die Korinther (Heidelberg: Bassermann, 1870), cited in Betz 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 12; A. Hausrath, A History of the New Testament Times: the Time of the Apostles. Vol.IV, trans. L. Huxley (London: Williams and Norgate, 1895), 55-69.

(1892),²⁸ J. H. Kennedy (1897, the classical defense),²⁹ A. Plummer (1903),³⁰ K. Lake (1911),³¹ M. Goguel (1926),³² R.H. Strachan (1935),³³ and R.P.C. Hanson (1954).³⁴

(2) 2 Corinthians 10--13 is later than 2 Corinthians 1--9. This view is a rival form of "the four chapter hypothesis" which was first proposed by J. S. Semler (1776).³⁵ It is now gaining increasing recognition among the scholars seeking a viable alternative to Hausrath's

²⁸Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel, Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament Vol. 2 (Freiburg: Mohr, Siebeck, 1982), 74-75, cited in Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 15.

²⁹James Houghton Kennedy, The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: Methuen, 1900), 79-162; James Houghton Kennedy, The Problem of 2nd Corinthians and the History of the Crisis at Corinth (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co.), 8-29, Reprint from the Irish Church Quaterly.

³⁰Alfred Plummer, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), xxx-xxxix, reprinted 1911; Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), xxii-xxxvi.

³¹Kirsopp Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul: Their Motive and Origin (London: Rivingtons, 1911), 154-164.

³²M. Goguel, Introduction au Nouveau Testament Tome IV (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1926), 73-146.

³³R. H. Strachan, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1935), xiv-xxii.

³⁴R. P. C. Hanson, II Corinthians (London: SCM Press), 16-25.

³⁵Johann Salomo Semler, Paraphrasis II: Epistolae ad Corinthios (Halle, 1776) Praefatio b 1, cited by Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 3-4.

theory. The advocating scholars are H. Windisch (1924, the classic defense),³⁶ L. P. Pherigo (1949),³⁷ C. H. Buck (1950),³⁸ J. Munck (1954),³⁹ C.K. Barrett (1964),⁴⁰ R. Batey (1965),⁴¹ and F.F. Bruce (1968).⁴² This is based on the two major arguments. First, the Pauline opposition seems in a less critical stage in 2 Corinthians 1--9 than in 2 Corinthians 10--13. And thus it is more natural to read 2 Corinthians 1--9 as a foreshadow of 2 Corinthians 10--13. Second, the mention of the visit of Titus could mean as a future event (2 Corinthians 8:17, 8:18 and 8:22) whereas the later passage seems to describe it as a past event (2 Corinthians 12:18).

³⁶Hans Windisch, Der zweite Korintherbrief (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 5, cited by Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, 16-18.

³⁷Lindsey P. Pherigo, "Paul and the Corinthian Church," Journal of Biblical Literature Volume 68 (December 1949), 341-357.

³⁸Charles H. Buck, Jr. "The Collection for the Saints," The Harvard Theological Review Volume 43 (January 1950), 1-29.

³⁹Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind (London: SCM Press, 1959), 168-195.

⁴⁰C. K. Barrett, "Christianity at Corinth," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library XLVI 2 (1964): 269-297, cited by Murry J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," 305.

⁴¹Richard Batey, "Paul's Interaction with the Corinthians." in Journal of Biblical Literature Vol. 84 (June 1965), 139-146.

⁴²F. F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971 reprinted July 1990), 166-172.

(3) 2 Corinthians is originally written as a single letter. This is the traditional and conservative view, and the scholars of this view have been busy defending this view as well as providing the convincing arguments against the "four-chapter hypothesis." Concerning Hausrath's theory, they proposed several questions as Harris summarized.⁴³ First, if 2 Corinthians 10-13 is the "severe letter", then why is 2 Corinthians 10--13 silent about the punishment of the offender (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:5-6 and 7:12)? Second, how would Paul call the passages, in 2 Corinthians 10--13 filled with many ironies and invective statements, as a letter written "with many tears" (2 Corinthians 2:4) and from "great distress and anguish of heart"? Why does Paul promise an imminent visit (2 Corinthians 12:14-15, 13:1-2) filled with fatherly love, and stating that this will be his second facing of those who sinned? Why does 2 Corinthians 1--9 show the knowledge of a previous encounter with the group of intruders, and mention also a single one who sinned (2 Corinthians 2:6-8, 12:21, 13:2)? How could Paul boast to Titus about the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:4), if Paul just composed the "severe letter" condemning Corinthians to be sent by Titus (2 Corinthians 10--13)? The scholars who advocate the unity of 2 Corinthians include J. H. Bernard

⁴³Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," 305.

(1903),⁴⁴ H. Lietzmann (1909),⁴⁵ A. Menzies (1912),⁴⁶ H.L. Goudge (1927),⁴⁷ E.B. Allo (1936, the classic defense),⁴⁸ R. V. G. Tasker (1945),⁴⁹ D. Guthrie (1961),⁵⁰ P. E. Hughes (1961),⁵¹ W. G. Kummel (1963),⁵² A. M. G. Stephenson (1964),⁵³

⁴⁴J. H. Bernard, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970 reprint of 1903 work, 3:1-119), 19-28.

⁴⁵Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I/II HNT 9 (Tubingen: Mohr, Siebeck, 1909) cited by Harris, "2 Corinthians," 305.

⁴⁶Allen Menzies, The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (London: Macmillan, 1912) xxxvi-xlii. Cited by Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 448-449.

⁴⁷H. L. Goudge, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Methuen, 1927), xliv-1.

⁴⁸E. B. Allo, Saint Paul: Seconde Epitre aux Corinthiens (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), XLIX-LVI.

⁴⁹R. V. G. Tasker, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), 23-35.

⁵⁰Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Fourth Edition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961/1990), 437-457.

⁵¹Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), xxi-xxxv,

⁵²Werner Georg Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 287-293.

⁵³A. M. G. Stephenson, "A Defence of the Integrity of 2 Corinthians," The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament, Theological Collections 4 (London: SPCK, 1965), 82-97.

W. H. Bates (1965),⁵⁴ and E. E. Ellis (1999).⁵⁵ From this point, the analysis and defense by Philip E. Hughes⁵⁶ is summarized to conclude the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians 10--13 with 2 Corinthians 1--9, as he answers the four main arguments of Plummer in addition to the counter-evidences for the unity.

(1) In order to explain the abrupt change of tone at 2 Corinthians 10:1, Paul is now entering into a third section of his letter, as he is finishing the main business item of this letter and his pledge for the collection in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. From this point, Paul is beginning to open up, with great humility, love, care and meekness, the most serious threat and problem of the false teachers and their intrusion. It is first time that Paul is addressing here, and is not found anywhere in his letters to the Corinthians. As one may discover from Pauline mission and ministry, it is almost expected to encounter the arrival and intrusion of the false teachers after Paul's mission and ministry has launched to become fruitful (Acts 15:1, 21:29-30, Galatians 1:7-9, and 1 Timothy 1:3). As discussed previously, it is Paul's integrity and leadership which

⁵⁴W. H. Bates, "The Integrity of II Corinthians," New Testament Studies, Vol. 12 (1965-1966) 56-69.

⁵⁵E. E. Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents.

⁵⁶Hughes, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, xxiii-xxxv.

keeps himself free from any conflict of interest including the money matter and fund raising.

(2) For the logical inconsistency, (2.a) the first problem passage is "examine yourselves whether you are in the faith" (13:5) in contrast to "by faith you stand firm" (1:24). The first passage (13:5) may sound like that their salvation is in doubt; however, Paul immediately affirm his confidence by saying "Do you not know that Christ Jesus is in you?". Thus it is not an inconsistency but a rhetorical emphasis. (2.b) The second contrast is 2 Corinthians 12:20-21 versus 7:16-17. It seems that Paul's assessment for the Corinthians is contradictory. However, it is noted that one may find the same literary pattern in 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 versus 1:11-12. It should be noted at the beginning (2 Corinthians 1:14 versus 2:5-6) that there is also a troublesome group still causing problems. (2.c) The thirst contrast is 2 Corinthians 10:2, 11:3, and 13:10 versus 2:3, 7:4, 7:11, and 3:2. However, the same observation may apply for the whole group as his joy is in tension with a reluctant minority group in need of his discipline.

(3) For the prior knowledge of 2 Corinthians 10--13 by 2 Corinthians 1--9 to support that 2 Corinthians 1--9 is later than 2 Corinthians 10--13 (for example, 10:1-2 versus 7:16, 8:22). Here a careful note of the context should resolve this seemingly inconsistent understanding. (3.a) First, 2 Corinthians 7:16 deals with Paul's own confidence

in the Corinthians in faith in God and loyalty to him, whereas 2 Corinthians 8:22 deals with the unnamed brother who is going to go to Corinth with Titus, whereas 2 Corinthians 10:1-2 talks about the different kind of confidence or boldness of Paul in his disciplinary teaching. (3.b) Second example is 2 Corinthians 10:6 versus 2:9, for its reversed order. However, it should be noted that the urge in 2 Corinthians 2:9 refers to the Paul's previous letter, whereas 2 Corinthians 10:6 refers to Paul's imminent visit (or the second coming of the Lord at the day of the parousia). (3.c) The third example is 2 Corinthians 12:16 versus 2 Corinthians 4:2. The first one is the slandering opinion of the slanders against Paul, whereas the second is Paul's pledge not to be so. In fact, these two are saying the same thing. (3.d) The fourth example is 2 Corinthians 13:2 and 13:10 versus 2 Corinthians 1:23 and 2:3. Again the first is speaking to those who sinned and did not yet repent, but were warned by Paul in his second visit, whereas the second is referring to the majority of the Corinthians in good spirit.

(4) For the phrase, "so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you" (2 Corinthians 10:16), is inconsistent with the traditional view for Rome and Spain, if Paul is writing this phrase in Macedonia toward Corinth. However, it should be noted based on Paul's mission strategy and leadership of Holy Spirit that it is westward toward

Rome and beyond (Acts 16:6-10, Romans 1:9-10).

Further as shown previously, there are abundant examples of the continuing themes and keywords such as boasting, suffering, affliction, joy, comfort, encouragement, relief, glory, strength and weakness. Further one may find many more univocal phrases for the literary integrity.⁵⁷

⁵⁷For example, 2 Corinthians 1:13 with 10:11, 1:17 with 10:2, 2:1 with 12:14 and 12:21, 2:17 with 12:19, 3:2 with 12:11, 6:13 with 11:12 and 12:14, and 8:6, 8:18, 8:22 with 12:17-18.

CHAPTER IV
UNITY OF 2 CORINTHIANS

Literary Integrity

In the previous chapter, the major literary arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians have been surveyed, analyzed, and refuted. It is a consensus from both sides of the critics that these arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians are mainly based on the internal evidences, and have never developed beyond the hypothetical stage. Further it has been shown that many of these literary and internal arguments are not valid nor consistent with respect to their problematic presupposition and methodologies. It is therefore fair to say that the literary integrity and thus the literary unity of the letter has been defended since the receipt of the letter by the church of Corinth continued to be maintained by the church tradition and the critical scholarship.

Further it is worthy to note that the literary integrity and epistolary unity of 2 Corinthians, solely based on the internal evidence, is a fact defended and thus the defense provides proof. (1) The first argument and thesis is that there is the epistolary prescript and postscript, according to Roman-Graeco and Pauline epistle,

found as expected and they are in the right place. Its content and style is no doubt Pauline and is consistent and coherent in its affinity to the body of the letter which they are embracing. The letter begins with the epistolary prescript and Pauline greeting, as its pattern was also found in the other Pauline letters.¹ Similarly the letter ends with the epistolary postscript, and that there is no other literary sign or textual evidence to advocate even any presence or potential for other prescript or a postscript throughout the letter.² (2) The second argument and thesis is that there are numerous themes and thematic discourses to bind and connect the literary segments and structure of 2 Corinthians in a historical-temporal and cognitive-personal unity as a whole, coherently and tightly throughout 2 Corinthians. These include the recurring thematic keywords such as comfort, encouragement, suffering, affliction, and boasting, the grand setting and dynamic progress of Paul's historical journey back to Jerusalem, the massive details of the collection campaign and the people directly involved, the vivid and dynamic report of Paul and his mental state in

¹2 Corinthians 1:1-2. The epistolary prescript clearly exhibits the characteristics of Pauline letter, "Paul and Timothy" as the senders of this apostolic letter and "the church of Corinth (and) with all the saints in all Achaia" as the official recipients, followed by the typical Pauline greeting pattern of grace and peace.

²2 Corinthians 13:11-14. The epistolary closing words of the final farewell and a closing prayer of the blessing are clear here.

this historical-temporal and epistolary framework of 2 Corinthians. (3) The third argument and thesis is that 2 Corinthians can be partitioned or outlined in a coherent and cognitive frame of one and only one letter. Summing up the analysis and conclusion on the literary integrity, it is asserted that the partition hypothesis and theory against the unity of 2 Corinthians has been demonstrated to be invalid, and that the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians ought never to have been denied.

Historical Evidence

In the light of the biblical and extrabiblical materials, it is shown that the various partition hypothesis and theory against the unity are not fair in the light of the historical tradition and evidences of the early apostolic Christianity. As noted before, all the arguments are based solely on the internal evidence and there is no other surviving textual and external evidence to support the partition hypothesis and theory. This is still true as the scholarly consensus today. Further the earliest date of 2 Corinthians in reference or citation can be traced back to the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians (around AD 155) or even to Marcion (around AD 139 to 144). Based on the silence in I Clement (around AD 95), the critics against the unity speculate the date of the formation, appearance and circulation of 2 Corinthians as a unit between the end of the first century and the early middle of the second

century.

However, as noted and discussed before, (1) the silence does not necessarily mean that 2 Corinthians has been formed as a single letter out of a pile of the fragments. (2) One should examine the degree of the extensive copying and wide circulation of both 1 and 2 Corinthians, concerning the occasion and historical setting. It is reasonable to assume that 2 Corinthians should be in a wider distribution and circulation throughout the whole region of Achaia and Corinth, as its occasion demands the attention of all the saints and churches of Achaia. (3) The letter has been in hands of many in action including Paul and Timothy, Titus and the other brothers to deliver and minister, and many more church ministers, elders, and ministers of the churches of Corinth and the region of Achaia. There is no doubt that this letter was read, hand-copied and distributed to many church leaders throughout the region of Achaia. (4) The theme and event of 2 Corinthians is very positive and encouraging. They have been engaging in this monumental and historical collection offering for over a year, for the apostles and Jerusalem church which is the mother church of all the churches throughout the world. In contrast, 1 Corinthians is full of many problems and troubles which are very shameful and sensitive to many of them. There is no doubt that it is 1 Corinthians that the Corinthian saints want to hide and leave in the archive. By

the way, all the basic problems are all resolved and they have paid their due respect as Paul appraised (2 Corinthians 8:8-16). (5) Further 2 Corinthians continues some of the very critical and unfinished items which Paul has addressed in 1 Corinthians. (6) The scriptural importance of 2 Corinthians is not less than 1 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians is not only addressing one-time business item of a collection but also is filled with the abundance of the scriptural treasure and theological masterpiece of Paul. And it is very improbable for the church of Corinth or any church of Achaia to forget, neglect or ignore 2 Corinthians after the collection is over, while 1 Corinthians is read and studied in a wide area and in circulation even after the problems and troubling people of 1 Corinthians are long gone. (7) Further this letter provides the historically invaluable document to fill the missing gap and to complement the very short account of Luke in Acts concerning the Paul's ministry and journey from Ephesus to Greece (Acts 20:1-3).

As a summary, the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians is then correlated with the historical value and importance of the letter in the light of the biblical and historical evidences and witnesses. As noted, some of the historical and literary practices of Paul and his contemporary writers should be considered in the process of the analysis for or even against the unity of 2 Corinthians.

Some of these considerations should include: (1) Paul's use of one or more amanuensis including himself during this dynamic and contingent timeframe of the composition while engaged in ministry and traveling, (2) to consider the time lapse between various historical milestones and the possibility of the personal digressions in the course of the composition, along with the diverse compositions and profiles of the recipients and the agenda over the time, and (3) to validate the legitimacy of the epistolary framework of 2 Corinthians as a unit. As noted before in the time of Paul, it is the scribal practice to make a copy of the important letter of the apostle for its preservation and transmission. It is a matter of a literary lifestyle and discipline of the time of Paul, very common and expected among the disciplined prolific Roman-Graeco writers and Jewish scribes such as Paul and his team of the prophets and scribes.

Unity of 2 Corinthians

The literary integrity, the biblical and extrabiblical witnesses, and the historical considerations have been correlated to support and enhance the arguments for the unity of 2 Corinthians. As a summary, all the analysis and critiques in the previous chapters have accomplished the intended objectives to refute various

partition theories and their hypotheses. The problematic presupposition and methodologies of the partition theory are further analyzed to demonstrate its inherent fallacy and problems to be untenable and rejected. However, one may argue that the unity of 2 Corinthians is totally another matter and option even though all of the partition theories have been refuted.

The unity theory is just another option among many ways to partition 2 Corinthians. Further the successful arguments against the partition hypothesis and theory does not guarantee or constitute a definite proof for the unity of 2 Corinthians. However, it should be clarified that the unity of 2 Corinthians is mutually exclusive to all possible forms of the partition theory. All the partition theories assume the common hypothesis, namely of the fragmentation and interpolation. And there is no other middle ground. However, as noted, this hypothesis is shown to be impossible or practically zero in chance. Therefore this concludes the proof of the unity of 2 Corinthians by negation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The major arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians have been surveyed and analyzed. These arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians are mainly based on the internal evidence. It is not decisive nor proven, and it is generally acknowledged from both sides of the debate that the arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians are still not beyond a hypothetical stage. It is therefore fair to say that the literary unity of the letter has been and continues to be maintained by conservative scholars.

Further it has been shown that many of these arguments are not valid nor consistent with respect to the historicity and inference of the arguments against the unity. In the light of the biblical and extrabiblical materials, it is shown that these arguments are generally not fair historical representations of the early apostolic Christianity.

Four main problem areas of (1) 2 Corinthians 2:14--7:4, (2) 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1, (3) 2 Corinthians 8--9, and (4) 2 Corinthians 10--13 have been surveyed and discussed. A partition of the text is then to combine some

of these problem areas as a building block, arranged in a chronological order based on the proposed reconstruction. Since there is no absolute consensus among the critics on how to partition 2 Corinthians, one's argument for one partition theory could be used effectively against the other partition theories, or even against one's own view.

Even though there has been a surge of the "four-chapter hypothesis", there has also been ever-increasing defense for the unity of the letter. As addressed in the introduction, almost all the arguments against the unity of 2 Corinthians are based on a set of the hypothetical assumptions and historical reconstructions, rooted deeply in the conviction against the orthodox doctrine of the canon. Its goal is to demonstrate that the canon was not in existence in an early Christian period, and it was not until a much later period and that early Christianity did not know of the canon nor were they bounded by it until a much later period. The debate on the unity of 2 Corinthians is a leading edge of the battle ground and controversy surrounding the whole issue of the New Testament canon.

One of the major benefits of this historical debate has been providing a fresh look and initiative for ever-increasing careful and critical analysis on the biblical text. This debate provides a new ground to investigate new historical models and their implications along with the biblical materials. Further, it gives me an opportunity to

pay a closer look at the authority and canonicity of Pauline letters, the practice and organization of the apostolic churches, and to provide yet another ground to defend the unity of 2 Corinthians.

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