

II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS

IV. Crucial Truths Concerning Paul's Closing

(2 Corinthians 13:11-14)

I. Introduction

- A. False teachers, claiming to be apostles, had entered the Church at Corinth, and they had tried to promote their own views while discrediting the person and message of the Apostle Paul. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552)
- B. After using the last part of his letter to address the false apostles who had opposed him, Paul shifted his attention to the responsibility of the Corinthian believers to make necessary adjustments for the truth.
- C. 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 and other Scriptures give us insight on the final outcome of Paul's efforts in this letter, and it provide closing greetings, a benediction and a significant apologetic of the doctrine of the Trinity.
- D. We thus view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Crucial Truths Concerning Paul's Closing, 2 Corinthians 13:11-14.

- A. With Paul's having taken a major portion of this epistle to get his readers to obey his directives about the false apostles, one may wonder if the Church ever obeyed him. The answer is yes (as follows):
 - 1. "Paul had conditioned the expansion of his ministry in other areas on the problems in Corinth being resolved (10:15-16)." (Ibid., p. 585)
 - 2. "He followed the writing of this letter with a visit of three months during which time he wrote the letter to the Romans," and in "that letter he wrote 'Now . . . there is no more place for me to work in these regions' (Rom. 15:23). His appeal had been heeded. The Corinthians were now obedient." (Ibid.)
- B. Thus, Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:10 had borne fruit, so his concluding remarks are worth noting for their effectiveness, and they are recorded for us in 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 (as follows):
 - 1. Paul bid his readers farewell with the admonition that they "strive for full restoration" with Paul and his ministry team, with the Lord, and with one another, 2 Corinthians 13:11a NIV.
 - 2. He also directed that they encourage one another, be unified in mind, and live in peace, that the God of love and peace would then be with them, 2 Corinthians 13:11b.
 - 3. Paul wrote that they should greet one another with a "holy kiss," a practice that is foreign to our culture, but which translates for us into our giving one another a warm handshake, 2 Corinthians 13:12.
 - 4. To assure his readers that they were still highly loved by other believers, Paul added that God's people who were with him in Macedonia also sent their greetings to them, 2 Corinthians 13:13; Ibid., p. 552.
 - 5. In closing, Paul added the benediction that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God (the Father), and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit might be with them all, 2 Corinthians 13:14.
- C. This closing is "(a)n early witness to belief in the Trinity," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Corinthians 13:14. We consider this passage in light of other Scripture references for the important doctrine of the Trinity:
 - 1. The Old Testament testifies to the doctrine of the Trinity:
 - a. On the one hand, Deuteronomy 6:4 testifies that there is One God as to God's divine Essence.
 - b. On the other hand, the Old Testament testifies that there are three divine Persons in the Godhead:
 - i. Malachi 2:10 rhetorically asks, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?"
 - ii. Psalm 110:1 has king David referring to the Messiah as His "Lord" to whom the "Lord" spoke, indicating that the Messiah, though a physical descendant of David, is nevertheless God Incarnate! This doctrine of the Incarnation of God the Son is verified by the testimony of Isaiah 9:6.
 - iii. Genesis 1:2 mentions the Holy Spirit by Whose power God created the universe!
 - 2. The New Testament testifies to the doctrine of the Trinity:
 - a. On the one hand, Ephesians 4:5 refers to God as "one Lord," one in regard to God's divine Essence.
 - b. On the other hand, the New Testament testifies that there are Three divine Persons in the Godhead:
 - i. At Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:16-17), the Father spoke from heaven to say that Jesus was His Beloved Son in Whom He was well pleased, the Holy Spirit descended from the Father to the Son in the air and God the Son was in the water – Three Persons in different locations from each other.
 - ii. Matthew 28:19 directs that we baptize new converts in the "Name" of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit – one "Name" in essence, but Three in Persons – the Trinity.

Lesson: Paul's closing exemplifies how to encourage people to repent, and it validates belief in the Trinity.

Application: May we follow Paul's example in encouraging people to repent, and firmly believe in the Trinity.