



JEROME MURPHY-O'CONNOR

KEYS TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

Revisiting the Major Issues

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JEROME MURPHY-O'CONNOR

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Preface

My interest in Paul dates from my doctoral studies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, where I wrote a thesis 'Paul on Preaching' in 1962. At that point I was already convinced that Paul was the New Testament theologian who had the most to say to the church of the twentieth century. It was only in the academic year 1975–6, however, that the École Biblique gave me the opportunity to move into full-time Pauline studies. The flexibility of the programme at the École Biblique gave me the freedom to teach whatever I wanted within my assigned field. I opted for 1 Corinthians, because I saw that it dealt with the greatest variety of subjects. I felt that it would introduce me in the most concrete way to the facets of Paul's thought in their glorious variety.

The articles in this volume grew out of class preparation. Whenever I came across a problem in 1 Cor, on which there was no consensus as to the solution, the light teaching load of the École Biblique gave me more time than others could possibly afford to delve more deeply. On occasion this permitted a new interpretation to float to the surface of my mind, and an article was born. If one pays attention to the dates of the original publications, it will become clear that in general they follow the order of the chapters of Paul's letter. I dealt with the obscurities as I came to them. An immediate response on the part of my colleagues would have been too much to expect, but as time went by I began to worry: was anyone reading my proposals?

The first hint that the answer might be in the affirmative came from Gordon Fee. In the bibliography of his commentary (1987) he noted, 'Section III is a list of "short titles" for two authors (R. A. Horsley; J. Murphy-O'Connor) whose works might be otherwise difficult to find because of their extensive number.' This alerted me to the trouble to which he must have gone to cite me 82 times in the course of his commentary. Even then my bibliography was not complete, because he missed two articles.

Such interest in my work was confirmed by the publication of the papers given at 43rd Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense (8–10 August 1994). The index to the congress volume, *The Corinthian Correspondence* (1996), shows that I am cited 44 times, a figure surpassed only by those who have written major commentaries on one or both Corinthian letters. Of course, not everyone agreed with me, but they were paying attention!

This refreshing acknowledgement was confirmed by subsequent major commentaries. Raymond Collins (1999) singled me out for my 'innovative and probing remarks'. Unfortunately neither he nor Wolfgang Schrage (1991–2001) nor Christian Wolff (1996), who cite me regularly, provide an index of 'Modern Authors' to identify the colleagues they quoted. Others were more

accommodating, and provided the following statistics. Anthony Thiselton (2000) referred to my articles 87 times and David Garland (2003) 78 times. In the latter my 1 Cor bibliography runs to 19 items, because he includes several books dealing with Corinth and Corinthians in addition to the articles. Nonetheless it was also incomplete.

Since their successors may not have access to the library facilities or research assistants that they enjoyed. I thought that it might be useful to bring my contributions to the exegesis of 1 Cor together in one volume. This would obviate the need to search through the files of five different periodicals.

In the collected articles of others I have always appreciated that they were reprinted as originally published. This is a humbling reminder of the human dimension of a scientific product. To write an article is to give hostages to fortune. One does the best possible at a given moment with the material available, but in the full knowledge that an oversight, a new piece of data or a flaw in logic may make the conclusion look ridiculous. And the mistake is there to be deplored for ever. Rewriting with the benefit of hindsight smacks of wanting to have one's cake and eat it. What I have regretted, however, is the fact that authors do not provide a 'reception history' of their contributions. I wanted to know how the story ended. Had the fragile barque of an idea sailed serenely to the far shore bearing the colonists of a new consensus? Had it been becalmed in the doldrums of neglect? If hit by a storm of criticism, had it sunk without a trace, or had the battered hulk survived to be salvaged?

Such curiosity about the fate of the ideas of others, of course, was intensified in my own case. I had been reassured that colleagues had paid attention, but had they responded with acceptance, rejection, or suggestions for improvement? To deal with these questions I have appended a Postscript to each article. My focus here is on those who have interacted with my ideas, and while the review is necessarily incomplete, it does provide a reasonable *Forschungsbericht* for the period between the original publication and the present.

The generosity of colleagues in making an effort to understand me has been a source of great pleasure. In certain cases their thoughtful arguments have forced me to modify my opinions. Responding to them has often resulted in greater clarity. In other instances I spell out in detail why I do not find the objections to my position convincing. On occasion I have been able to inject some new thoughts into the ongoing debates about the meaning of the most fascinating letter in the Pauline corpus.

I deeply regret that I was not able to engage with *I Corinthians* (AB 32: New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, which appeared too late for me to use. Its claim on my attention was demanded, not only by our long friendship and the intrinsic qualities of any commentary written by him, but also by the fact that we were both awarded honorary doctorates in a joint ceremony on 10 September 2008 by Villanova University, Philadelphia, USA, as part of its celebration of the Year of Saint Paul (2008–9).

My gratitude is due to all who authorized the republication of these articles: the École Biblique for those which appeared in the *Revue Biblique* (Chs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 15, 16); the Catholic Biblical Association of America for those which appeared in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (Chs. 3, 7, 10, 11, 14); the Society of Biblical Literature for those which appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Chs. 4, 9); and Liturgical Press for those which appeared in *Worship* (Ch. 13) and *The Bible Today* (Ch. 12).

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, OP

École Biblique de Jérusalem
31 May 2008

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>ATRSS</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review Supplementary Series</i>
AV	Authorized Version
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BdeJ	Bible de Jérusalem
BECNT	Bakers Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
EBib	Études Bibliques
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvTh</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

GNS	Good News Studies
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JB	Jerusalem Bible
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LD	Lectio Divina
LSJ	Liddell–Scott–Jones, <i>Greek–English Lexicon</i>
MeyerK	H. A. W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
NAB	American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NRT</i>	<i>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PW	Pauly-Wissowa (<i>Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>)
PWSup	Supplement to Pauly-Wissowa
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>

<i>RSR</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revised Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBM	Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Str-B	[H. Strack and] P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash</i>
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testament
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TDNT	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TOB	Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TTZ</i>	<i>Trierer Theologischer Zeitschrift</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WV	Westminster Version
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZST</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie</i>

1

Co-authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence

With the exception of Rom, Paul mentions one or more associates in the address of all the generally accepted letters: Silvanus and Timothy (1 & 2 Thess), Sosthenes the brother (1 Cor), Timothy the brother (2 Cor; Col; Philem), Timothy (Phil), all the brethren with me (Gal).¹ The Fathers saw in this only evidence of Paul's courtesy and modesty. He mentioned those in his company as he began to write; a gracious but meaningless gesture. The practice of modern commentators has been to discuss such associates in terms of a special relation to the communities addressed. Silvanus and Timothy, we are reminded, had been part of the team which founded the church at Thessalonica. Sosthenes had once been a member of the Corinthian community. As Paul's closest collaborator Timothy was well known and deeply appreciated in all the communities.²

[563] There is some contemporary evidence for the inclusion in the address of individuals who have a special relationship to the recipient. Cicero includes his son Marcus in the address of letters to his wife and daughter (*Fam.* 14.14.18), but when he writes to his wife alone, greetings from Marcus are included but he is not named in the address (*Fam.* 14.5.7). A series of letters to Tiro, written between 2 November 50 and 12 January 49 BC, come from Cicero and his son together with his brother Quintus and the latter's son (*Fam.* 14.1.3.4.5.6); in one letter all these are joined by Cicero's wife and daughter (*Fam.* 16:11). It is noteworthy that in this series, when one or other are absent for even a day they are not included in the address. Thus *Fam.* 16.2 is sent by Cicero alone, and *Fam.* 16.7 and 9 by Cicero and Marcus, because Quintus and his son were elsewhere (cf. *Fam.* 16.3.7). Despite the occasional use of 'we' in a number of these letters, there is no doubt that Cicero alone is the author.³

¹ Originally published in *RB* 100 (1993) 562–70, whose original pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² So, for example, to be followed by many others, A. von Harnack, *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und die anderen vorkonstantinischen christlichen Briefsammlungen* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1926), 12.

³ So rightly M. Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy* (JSNTSup 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 178 n. 6.

The relevance of these parallels to Paul's epistles is severely diminished by the fact that both recipients are especially significant members of Cicero's household. The Pauline letters are addressed to communities. They belong to a different category from Cicero's highly personal letters to his wife and valued associate. What is important, however, is that Cicero mentions *all* those with him who have a relationship to the recipient, even when this makes for an extremely cumbersome address. This is not the case with Paul. Prisca and Aquila were with the Apostle when he wrote 1 Cor (16:19), as was Titus when he wrote 2 Cor 1–9 (8:6). The former had a claim to be founders of the church of Corinth,⁴ and Titus had been instrumental in the resolution of a dangerous crisis in its relations with Paul (2 Cor 7:6–7). If companions such as these are passed over in silence, it means that a relationship to the community addressed was not Paul's criterion of selection for mention in the address.

Implicit in both the ancient and modern approaches to the question of multiple senders is the assumption that the inclusion of others in the address of letters in fact written by an individual was nothing exceptional in antiquity. Recent studies, however, do not [564] bear this out. Pliny, Seneca, Cicero, E. R. Richards asserts,⁵ never name anyone else in the address, nor, it may be added, does Ignatius. Cicero nonetheless was aware of the possibility of a co-operative letter because he once wrote to Atticus, 'For my part I have gathered from your letters—both those which you wrote in conjunction with others (*quas communiter cum aliis*) and those you wrote in your own name (*quas tuo nomine*)—that ...' (*Att.* 11.5.1), but the fact that he raised the point hints that epistolary co-authorship was unusual. This inference is confirmed by research into letters with multiple named senders.⁶ Prior found only 15 papyrus letters which fall into this category,⁷ whereas Richards discovered that only 6 out of 645 papyrus letters from Oxyrynchus, Tebtunis, and Zenon had a plurality of senders.⁸ Such a tiny proportion indicates that the naming of another person in the address was anything but a meaningless convention.⁹ In fact it was

⁴ In so far as they were in Corinth prior to Paul and were not converted by him, see P. Lampe, 'Aquila' in *ABD* 1.319.

⁵ *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2/42; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 47 n. 138. This needs to be corrected in the light of what has been said above regarding Cicero's letters to his wife and to Tiro.

⁶ In order to maintain the parallel with the bulk of the Pauline letters I exclude letters addressed by a group (e.g. *1 Clement*, 'The church of God transiently sojourning in Rome'; cf. 1 Macc 14:20; 2 Macc 1:1, 10) or by a named figure and unnamed others (e.g. Polycarp, *Phil.*, 'Polycarp and the elders with him', cf. 1 Macc 12:5 = Josephus, *AJ* 13:163), even though this latter is parallel to Gal.

⁷ *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 38.

⁸ *Secretary*, 47 n. 138.

⁹ 'Wie schon oben gezeigt, sind solche Superscriptionen, die mehrere Namen aufweisen, in der übrigen brieflichen Überlieferung des Altertumes, wenn auch im ganzen selten, doch nicht ganz unerhört, und man wird in allen diesen Fällen zunächst eine gewisse Beteiligung aller genannten Superscriptoren am Inhalte des Briefes, namentlich an einem etwa verpflichtenden Teile desselben annehmen.' (O. Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 153).

especially significant and, as one might have expected, multiple sender letters are formulated exclusively in the first person plural.¹⁰

Such contemporary data suggests that those associated with Paul in the address should be explained in terms of the letter, i.e. he selected them to play a role in the creation of the epistle as co-authors. While a number of scholars have exhibited a certain muted sympathy for this hypothesis, it has not been adequately tested with respect to the two letters in which the use of 'we' and 'I' pose the [565] greatest problems, namely, 1 and 2 Cor.¹¹ Such verification is the purpose of this article.

Before dealing with the Corinthian correspondence it is important to note that a number of commentators have had no difficulty in granting Silvanus and Timothy a substantive role in the composition of 1 & 2 Thess.¹² Their justification is the consistent use of 'we' in both letters. Even though the first person singular intrudes on a number of occasions—thrice in 1 Thess (2:18; 3:5; 5:27) and twice in 2 Thess (2:5; 3:17)—each case is adequately explained as a necessarily personal interjection into a joint letter on the part of Paul exercising his prerogative as leader.¹³ He emphasizes his affection for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:18; 3:5), reminds them of what he had told them on a crucial point (2 Thess 2:5), and finally authenticates the letters written by a secretary (1 Thess 5:27; 2 Thess 3:17).¹⁴ The nature of the 'I' passages in fact strengthens the communal character of the letter as a whole. Failure to note this point explains C. E. B Canfield's view that in the Thessalonian correspondence the first person plural should be interpreted in the light of the first person singular.¹⁵ He also draws attention to 1 Thess 3:2, which Harnack considered the decisive

¹⁰ e.g. the letter of the three Roman officials in 2 Macc 11:34–8, and the petition of the twins Thauas and Taous reproduced in J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Foundations and Facets: New Testament; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 68–70. Roller's commonsense observation that the recipients of such letters would have taken the 'we' at face value as referring to the senders remains valid for Paul's letters (*Formular*, 170).

¹¹ The topic in general has been investigated by E. von Dobschütz, 'Wir und Ich bei Paulus' *ZSTh* 10 (1933) 251–77, and W. F. Lofthouse, 'Singular and Plural in St. Paul's Letters' *ExpTim* 58 (1946–7) 179–82; 'I' and "We" in the Pauline Letters' *ExpTim* 64 (1952–3) 241–5; 'I' and "We" in the Pauline Epistles' *BT* 6 (1955) 72–80. Prior's trenchant criticism of Lofthouse is very much to the point (*Paul the Letter Writer*, 44 n. 22). Detailed statistics on the use of 'I' and 'we' are provided by Roller (*Formular*, 168–87) but his discussion of co-authorship remains on the level of the letters as wholes.

¹² J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 2; J. E. Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 68; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Waco: Word Books, 1982), xi, 6; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 30; Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 40.

¹³ So rightly E. H. Askwith, 'I' and "We" in the Thessalonian Epistles' *Expositor*, 8th series, 1 (1911) 149–59, followed by Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 40.

¹⁴ There is no doubt about the function of 2 Thess 3:17. The hint that Paul had acted similarly in at least one previous letter and the parallel in content strongly suggest the same role for 1 Thess 5:27–8. See Richards, *Secretary*, 189 n. 281.

¹⁵ 'Changes of Person and Number in Paul's Epistles', in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett* (ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), 280–9, here 286.

refutation of joint authorship, because according to this hypothesis Timothy would send himself.¹⁶ Common sense disposes of this forced objection; it is perfectly feasible for a group to dispatch one of its members on a mission, as university [566] faculties and parliaments demonstrate with great regularity. No doubt in practice the initiative came from Paul (1 Thess 3:5) and Silvanus and Timothy concurred.¹⁷

The joint authorship of 1 & 2 Thess creates a *prima facie* case that the same is true of 1 Cor since Paul there names Sosthenes in the address (1:1). This assumption, however, is immediately contradicted by the use of 'I' in the thanksgiving (1:4), which signals the predominance of the first person singular in the rest of the letter. Commentators vary widely in their treatment of this problem. H. Conzelmann insists that 'the fellow-writer is not a fellow-author',¹⁸ whereas H. Merklein rather more intelligibly, but no more convincingly, maintains that the co-sender is not a co-author.¹⁹ H. Lietzmann gratuitously transforms the co-sender into a collaborator whose contribution to the letter was at most to help Paul remember things.²⁰ For H.-J. Klauck Sosthenes is mentioned simply to indicate his agreement with the contents of the letter.²¹ G. D. Fee agrees that 'Sosthenes seems to have had nothing to do with the letter as such' but cautiously notes that multiple authorship is such a rare phenomenon in antiquity that 'one cannot be certain what to make of it' in the case of the Pauline letters.²²

This brief survey makes it clear that, instead of responding creatively to the polarity, commentators have simply denied the tension by arbitrarily suppressing one of the contradictory elements. To the best of my knowledge no one has attempted to determine what contribution Sosthenes might have made to the letter by evaluating the use of 'we' in 1 Cor.

Even a superficial reading of the letter reveals that a reference to Sosthenes is not implied in every instance of the first person plural. It is equally obvious, however, that the meaning of 'we' is not so univocal as positively to exclude Sosthenes in every case. [567] The problem is to determine the various senses in which it is used, and then to decide if any particular category is appropriate to co-authorship.

The most limited uses of the first person plural appear in 8:8 where it is spoken by the Strong in their debate with the Weak regarding the legitimacy

¹⁶ *Briefsammlung*, 12. Similarly V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 103.

¹⁷ Frame, *Thessalonians*, 121; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 61.

¹⁸ *I Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 20 n. 12.

¹⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4* (Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament 7/1; Gütersloh: Mohn/Würzburg: Echter, 1992), 68.

²⁰ *An die Korinther I–II* (HNT 9; Tübingen: Mohr, 1949), 4.

²¹ *I. Korintherbrief* (Neue Echter Bibel 7; Würzburg: Echter, 1987), 17.

²² *I Corinthians*, 30–1.

of food offered to idols,²³ and in 12:23–4 where it articulates normal human pudency.

The most extensive use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ is found in those passages where Paul affirms something that he has in common, not only with the Corinthians, but with all believers. Baptism (8:6;²⁴ 12:13) implies commitment to Christ (5:7; 15:3) which means the rejection of idols (8:1, 4) and the choice of a particular lifestyle (5:8; 10:6–11, 22; 11:31–2) whose difficulty is rooted in the weakness of the human condition (13:9, 12; 15:49). Believers are strengthened by the eucharist (10:16–17) and, though now only on the way to salvation (1:18), can look forward to ultimate victory (6:3, 14; 9:25; 15:51b, 52, 57).

There are three types of more specific usage of the first person plural. Paul and the Corinthians have a relationship to Apollos (16:12), but in a number of passages ‘we’ designates only those two who planted and watered the community at Corinth (3:9; 4:1, 6–13). Paul also associates himself with Barnabas (9:4–6, 10–14) because they shared the same attitude to financial support. Finally the privilege of having seen the Risen Lord places Paul among those who bear witness to the resurrection (15:11–19).

The most difficult instances of the first person plural to classify are those in 1:18–31 and 2:6–16. The commentators who take up the challenge are few and far between. C. K. Barrett ignores the problem in 2:6–16 and without explanation interprets 1:23 as ‘we Christians preach’.²⁵ Fee, on the other hand, remarks apropos of this latter text, ‘how natural it is for Paul to slip into this usage; note also that it tends to happen in such places as this, where Paul would be concerned to imply that such preaching is not unique to himself’.²⁶ The contradiction betrays the speculative character of both hypotheses. [568] Moreover, the nature of Paul’s evocation of all believers through the use of ‘we’ (see above) is markedly different to what appears here, and there is reason to think that Paul was in fact unique in his consistent stress on the brutal modality of Christ’s death.²⁷ Following Lietzmann,²⁸ Fee treats the first person singular in 2:6–16 as representing Paul’s ‘common editorial “we”’, and thus equivalent to ‘I’, as his exegesis makes clear.²⁹ However common it might be elsewhere,³⁰

²³ See my ‘Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8’ *CBQ* 41 (1979) 292–8 = Chapter 7, and now NRSV and Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 383.

²⁴ See my ‘1 Cor 8:6: Cosmology or Soteriology?’ *RB* 85 (1978) 253–67 = Chapter 6.

²⁵ *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 54. Merklein, *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4*, 188.

²⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 75 n. 34.

²⁷ Whereas the creed merely mentions the death of Christ (1 Cor 15:3), Paul preaches ‘Christ crucified’ (1 Cor 1:17, 23; 2:2, etc.). All the traditional material in the Pauline letters focuses only on the fact of Jesus’ death, without specifying the way in which it came about, but Paul adds ‘death on a cross’ (Phil 2:8) and ‘by the blood of his cross’ (Col 1:20) to pre-existent hymns. See my ‘Another Jesus (2 Cor 11:4)’ *RB* 97 (1992) 238–51.

²⁸ *An die Korinther I–II*, 11.

²⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 101 n. 13.

³⁰ The cautionary remarks of Roller (*Formular*, 169) unfortunately have not received the attention they deserve.

this literary device is unattested for this period in Paul's career; it cannot be simply postulated as if it were a documented habitual technique of the Apostle.

Typical of a certain type of solution is E. E. Ellis's suggestion that 'we' appears in 2:6–16 because it was originally a text 'created within a (Pauline) group of pneumatics prior to its use in 1 Cor 2'.³¹ By 'we', it is claimed, the spirit-people referred to themselves; hence the hiatus when one tries to understand it of Paul. The most radical version of this approach is the claim that 2:6–16 represents the views of the *pneumatikoi* at Corinth which they inserted when 1 Cor was being compiled.³² I have elsewhere indicated why this latter hypothesis is unacceptable.³³ There is some truth in Ellis's position, but not in the sense that he intends. Paul does here reproduce the theology of his opponents, the *pneumatikoi*, but only in order to transform and ridicule it.³⁴ When viewed in this perspective the 'we' remains unexplained. Nonetheless both authors put us on the right track by their perception of a certain distance between the Apostle and the text.

I once suggested that by 'we' in 2:6–16 Paul intended to associate himself with Apollos, who had been set over against him by those who considered themselves the spiritual elite of the Corinthian church.³⁵ [569] Now I am not at all sure that this is correct. It is not recommended by the context. Apollos had been mentioned previously (1:12), but only as one in a list. Moreover, the concern of 2:6–16 is to knock the *pneumatikoi* off balance by mocking their intellectual pretensions. Attention is focused on the game of giving new values to their cherished concepts. Their understanding of his relationship to Apollos is dealt with only in 3:5. Since none of the solutions proposed to explain the presence of 'we' in 1:18–31 and 2:6–16 carry conviction, it is perhaps time to envisage seriously the possibility that the first person plural in these passages indicates a contribution of Sosthenes to the formulation of 1 Cor.

The continuous cross-references in the commentaries make it unnecessary to demonstrate how closely interrelated are these two passages. Not only do they focus on the same problem, the misuse of wisdom speculation by the *pneumatikoi* at Corinth, but, as Ellis has shown, they exhibit the same basic three-part structure of (a) theme and initial OT texts (b) exposition linked to the initial and final texts by catchwords, and (c) final OT text.³⁶ This precise

³¹ *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (WUNT 18; Tübingen: Mohr, 1978), 26.

³² M. Widman, '1 Kor 2:6–16. Ein Einspruch gegen Paulus' *ZNW* 70 (1979) 44–53.

³³ 'Interpolations in 1 Corinthians' *CBQ* 48 (1986) 81–4 = Chapter 16.

³⁴ So rightly, for example, Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 100. ³⁵ 'Interpolations', 82.

³⁶ *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 155–6, 213–14. The validity of the observation is not compromised by the highly debatable hypotheses which Ellis has built upon it, namely, that 1:18–31 and 2:6–16 were originally independent midrashim. See Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 101 n. 13; Merklein, *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4*, 175.

pattern is reproduced nowhere else in the Pauline letters.³⁷ It is as specific to 1 Cor as the presence of Sosthenes in the address.

The possibility that Sosthenes had a hand in the formulation of 1:18–31 and 2:6–16 is moved towards the level of probability by their relationship to the subsequent paragraph in each case, namely 2:1–5 and 3:1–4. 1:18–31 and 2:6–16 are theoretical arguments on the level of principle, whereas 2:1–5 and 3:1–4 are eminently practical in their stress on the necessity of judging by results, not by intentions. These latter betray the quintessential Paul, whose pragmatism was one of the factors which alienated the *pneumatikoi*; his lack of sympathy with their legitimate desire for a speculative theology was why they turned to Apollos.³⁸ The irritation perceptible in the emphatic *kagô* which introduces both 2:1–5 and 3:1–4³⁹—a further unique feature [570] in so far as in only these two instances in the Pauline epistles does it begin a new paragraph—suggests that Paul had become impatient with the somewhat diffuse sophistication of 1:18–31 and 2:6–16 and intervened to state his basic position with brutal simplicity. It is improbable that this situation would have arisen were Paul the sole author of 1:18–31 and 2:6–16. It seems much more likely that, when it came to dealing with the divisive influence of the *pneumatikoi*, Paul took the advice of a collaborator as regards form and content, which gave the latter the status of a co-author, but also insisted on making his point in his own way.

Obviously this argument would be greatly strengthened if it were certain that the Sosthenes named in the address was the erstwhile *archisynagogos* of Corinth (Acts 18:17). Not only would he then have had first-hand information on the affairs of the community, but his role in the synagogue would have given him some familiarity with the exposition and use of scripture. Unfortunately we can be sure only that the Sosthenes of the letter was known to its recipients.⁴⁰ It is curious, nonetheless, that Paul invokes his aid only with regard to the divisions within the community. It would seem that, while Chloe's people reported various parties (1:11–12), Sosthenes was the one to single out the *pneumatikoi* as the real danger, and to suggest a way in which they might be neutralized. His contribution was not required on the practical issues which occupy the rest of 1 Cor.

(The second part of this article concerned co-authorship in 2 Cor. It will appear in a future collection of articles devoted to that letter).

³⁷ Ellis's attempts to extend the structure into 1 Cor 3 (following W. Wuellner, 'Haggadic Homily Genre in 1 Corinthians 1–3' *JBL* 89 (1970) 199–204) and to find an example in Rom 1:17–4:25 cannot be considered successful.

³⁸ See Merklein, *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4*, 134–9.

³⁹ This is well brought out by the BdeJ, which renders 'Pour moi' in both cases. English versions are neither as perceptive nor consistent but the NAB translates 2:1 by 'As for myself', and the RSV has 'But I' in 3:1.

⁴⁰ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 31; Merklein, *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4*, 68.

POSTSCRIPT

In the above article I argue that Sosthenes (1:1) should be understood as the co-author of the letter, and that his contribution was perceptible in 1:18–31 and 2:6–16. The purpose of the second hypothesis is to explain the sudden shift from the first person singular ('I') to the first person plural ('we') in these passages. These are two separate hypotheses, and it is perfectly possible to accept the first as probable, while rejecting the second as too speculative.

For Witherington Sosthenes is mentioned because he was Paul's 'personal secretary' at this point in his career.⁴¹ This is also the approach of Keener, who thinks that 'Sosthenes may have been Paul's rhetorically proficient scribe (cf. Rom 16:22) helping with multiple rhetorical devices that counter criticism of his speech.'⁴² Neither of these suggestions carries any plausibility. Tertius was the secretary who wrote Rom (16:22), but he is not named in the address. Timothy is named in the address of 2 Cor, but his role in Paul's entourage was far superior to that of secretary. Keener is correct in noting that Paul's speech was criticized at Corinth (2 Cor 10:10). This, however, was not due to lack of rhetorical skill on Paul's part, but to a deliberate choice, which the Apostle justifies in 1 Cor 2:1–5. Paul's mastery of rhetoric becomes evident when his guard is down, e.g. in Rom where he is writing to a church that he wants to impress and for which he has no responsibility, and in the 'Fool's Speech' (2 Cor 11:1–12:13) where anger lowers the barriers of his self-control.

H.-F. Richter took seriously my suggestion that Sosthenes should be given a more substantial role in 1 Cor than is commonly accepted. However, he believes that Paul wrote ten letters to Corinth, and suggests rather diffidently that Sosthenes may have been the editor, or one of the editors, who created the collection that we now know as 1 Cor.⁴³ This hypothesis hangs or falls with the position one takes regarding partition theories of 1 Cor.⁴⁴ I personally find none of them demanded by what is presented as evidence, and this is the view of most modern commentators.⁴⁵

Both Merklein and Schrage exclude Sosthenes as a 'Mitverfasser' because of the appearance of the first person singular in 1 Cor 1:4, 10, 11, 14, etc. The former speculates that Sosthenes was mentioned in order to indicate that he had safely arrived in Ephesus.⁴⁶ The latter insists that Paul's purpose in mentioning Sosthenes was twofold. (1) It was to indicate that 1 Cor was not a private letter,

⁴¹ *Conflict and Community*, 79. ⁴² *1–2 Corinthians*, 20.

⁴³ 'Anstössige Freiheit in Korinth. Zur Literarkritik der Korintherbriefe (1 Kor 8:1–13 und 11:2–16)' in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996), 561–75, here 567 n. 14.

⁴⁴ Richter offers perhaps the clearest tabulation of the theories of 16 different scholars ('Anstössige Freiheit in Korinth', 573–5).

⁴⁵ So for example H. Merklein, 'Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Korintherbriefs' *ZNW* 75 (1984) 153–83; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.63–71; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 36–41.

⁴⁶ *Erste Brief an die Korinther. Kapitel 1–4*, 68.

and thereby to increase its authority. (2) It was to signal that 1 Cor did not represent the thought of Paul alone, but reflected the consensus of his entourage who ‘underwrote’ what he had to say.⁴⁷

In the above article I had pointed out, not only the prominence of ‘I’ in the Thanksgiving (1:4–9), but its predominance in the rest of 1 Cor. This serves only to throw into relief the brutal shift to ‘we’ in 1:18 and 2:6, and the equally unexpected return to the first person singular (stressed by *kagô*) in 2:1 and 3:1, which unfortunately both Merklein and Schrage pass by without comment. Merklein’s reason for the mention of Sosthenes does not deserve comment, while those of Schrage fail to carry conviction. (Ad 1) There would have been little danger of a document addressed to ‘the church of God which is at Corinth’ by ‘an apostle of Christ Jesus’, and destined to be read publicly, being misinterpreted as a ‘private letter’. Further would any letter from the founder of the community (1 Cor 4:15) have been completely without authority? (Ad 2) If Paul intended to evoke his entourage, he would have written something like ‘all the brethren who are with me’ (Gal 1:2). There is not the slightest hint in any of the letters that Paul was so unsure of himself that he had to wrap himself in the support of others. In fact everything conspires to demonstrate that he never had the slightest hesitation in going his own way, even when that brought him into conflict with his followers.⁴⁸

My suggestions are mentioned without comment by Wolff,⁴⁹ Collins,⁵⁰ and Thiselton,⁵¹ but none offers a solution to the problems I raised. Raymond Brown is surprisingly ambiguous. In one place he quotes me to the effect that ‘in one way or another the co-senders have contributed to the *composition* of these writings’, whereas apropos of Sosthenes he will only ask, ‘Did Paul dictate the letter to him (16:21)?’⁵²

The most extended consideration of my proposal came from Eduard Verhoef, who rejected it completely.⁵³ First, he claims that there is no break between 1:17 and 18, and between 2:5 and 6, because ‘cross’ is mentioned in both of the former and ‘wisdom’ in both of the latter. I never suggested that there was a break in the subject matter. The shift to which I drew attention was in the way the matter was handled, and Verhoef does nothing to explain the obviously irritated *kagô* in 2:1 and 3:1. Second, he offers his unsupported opinion that Paul

⁴⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.101.

⁴⁸ I am thinking here of the leadership issue at Corinth, where Paul flatly refused to conform to the expectations of the Corinthians. An authentic leader, he believed, should represent the suffering Jesus, not the type of orator whose gifts and bearing made his followers feel proud.

⁴⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 16 n. 9.

⁵⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 42.

⁵¹ *1 Corinthians*, 71.

⁵² *An Introduction to the New Testament* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 413 (my emphasis) and 515–16.

⁵³ ‘The Senders of the Letters to the Corinthians and the use of “I” and “We”’ in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996), 417–25.

did not involve Sosthenes in the composition of any part of 1 Cor.⁵⁴ Why then is Sosthenes named in the address? 'A plausible reason is that Paul must have hoped to be more successful with the name of Sosthenes in the prescript of his letter . . . the appearance of that name in the prescript would give his argument more persuasive force and reliability in the eyes of the Corinthians.'⁵⁵ This discovery may surprise the rhetoricians. Were a simple name to have functioned as a *captio benevolentiae*, one would have expected Verhoef to provide a reference to the contemporary manuals of rhetoric. His silence underlines the extent to which he is unaware of both rhetorical theory and literary convention.

⁵⁴ Similarly Richter, 'Anstössige Freiheit in Korinth', 567 n. 14.

⁵⁵ 'The Senders', 421. On p. 425 the same suggestion is made regarding the presence of Timothy in 2 Cor 1:1.

2

1 Corinthians 5:3–5

(3) ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον· (4) ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, (5) παραδόναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.

The problems that make these verses a notorious crux can be summed up in two questions.¹ What do the adverbial phrases *en tō onomati* and *syn tē dynamei* qualify? How is *paradounai* to be construed?

With regard to the first question, the various hypotheses proposed throughout the years are all still reflected in the translations in current use:

- A. *En tō onomati* belongs to *synachthenton*, and *syn tē dynamei* to *paradounai* (JB).
- B. *En tō onomati* and *syn tē dynamei* both belong to *synachthenton* (NEB, Bible de la Pléiade).
- C. *En tō onomati* and *syn tē dynamei* both belong to *paradounai* (TOB).
- D. *En tō onomati* belongs to *paradounai*, and *syn tē dynamei* to *synachthenton* (BdeJ, Bible Osty).
- E. *En tō onomati* belongs to *kekrika*, and *syn tē dynamei* to *synachthentōn* (RSV, NAB).

The absence of any majority favourite is the clearest indication that all these opinions have their difficulties.

Hypotheses B and C are rightly rejected by Robertson-Plummer on the solid grounds that ‘It is most unlikely that either *synachthentōn* or *paradounai* is meant to have both qualifications, while the other has none.’² In either case the result is heavy and awkward. Elsewhere in Paul the phrase *en tē onomati (tou) kyriou* follows [240] the verb it qualifies (1 Cor 6:11; Col 3:17; 2 Thess 3:6). This constitutes an objection to hypotheses A and D, because in both these instances the verb is subsequent to the adverbial phrase. Hypothesis A, moreover, needlessly

¹ This article was originally published in *RB* 84 (1977) 239–45, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² *The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1911), 98.

emphasizes the obvious. As a Christian body the assembly will obviously meet in the name of the Lord Jesus. Equally clearly, handing over is an exercise of power. One would expect power to be predicated of the agent rather than the action, since it is power which gives the capacity for action. This alone confirms the association of *syn tē dynamēi* with *synachthentōn*. In hypothesis E *en tō onomati* does in fact follow the verb, but elsewhere in Paul this phrase is never so far away from the verb it qualifies. This would not be a difficulty if there were an appreciable gain in meaning, but such is not in fact the case here.

These difficulties make it all the more surprising that the commentators have consistently ignored the possibility that *en tō onomati* might belong to *katergasamenon*. Why should this logical possibility have been considered unthinkable? *Katergasamenon* is the proximate verbal antecedent, and this hypothesis is open to none of the objections that can be raised against the other opinions. One can only assume that exegetes believed that Paul could never have spoken of the sin of incest as committed ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’.

Not only is such a presupposition bad methodology in that it lays claim to a knowledge that no exegete can attain, but it is contradicted by the whole thrust of the epistle. The situation depicted in ch. 5 was seen by Paul as typical of the ‘arrogance’ (v. 2: cf. 4:6, 18, 19; 8:1) and ‘boasting’ (v. 6: cf. 3:21; 4:7) that characterized the Corinthian community.³ The specific act, however, was without parallel: ‘immorality of a kind which does not exist (even) among pagans’ (v. 1). This uniqueness, the Corinthians felt, redounded to the glory of the community (vv. 2, 6). It was a concrete manifestation of their superiority with respect to all who were still in bondage to attitudes and conventions from which they had been freed. They were possessed of a ‘wisdom’ (2:6) and a ‘knowledge’ (8:1) which transformed them into *pneumatikoi* (2:15), *teleioi* (2:6) and *sophoi* (3:18), and which permitted them to act as they pleased (6:12; 10:23). This overweening confidence in their own rightness was born of the sense of difference from others, which was rooted in the fact that they had [241] been baptized in the name of Jesus (cf. 1:13). Paul’s highly ironic statement ‘You are wise in Christ’ (4:10) is a very accurate estimate of what the Corinthians believed of themselves. In their minds, therefore, the rejection of societal norms implicit in their acceptance of incest was justified by their commitment to Christ who gave them access to a higher wisdom. Given this attitude, it seems almost inevitable that the sinner should have entered into the incestuous relationship ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’.⁴

³ The formulation *ephysiōthēsān tines* (4:18) as opposed to *hymeis pephysiōmenoi* (5:2) would seem to suggest that one section of the community was more radical than the rest. It, presumably, took initiatives which swayed others whose weakness made them co-responsible.

⁴ According to Irenaeus later gnostic pneumatics did not feel themselves bound to the observance of sexual prohibitions (*Adversus Haereses* 1.6.2–4; PG 7, cols. 505–10). Because of her deep involvement with gnostic material it is worthy of note that E. Pagels instinctively translates 1 Cor 5:3–4a as I have proposed (*The Gnostic Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 64).

In order to forestall a possible objection, it must be noted that it is not necessary that the offender should have used precisely these words. The Corinthians tended to exalt Christ at the expense of Jesus, and directed their attention more to glory than to the cross.⁵ It seems unlikely, therefore, that they would have spoken of 'the Lord *Jesus*'. This formula does not occur frequently in the Corinthian correspondence, and when it does appear it is in the context of disputed issues: Paul's conversion (2 Cor 11:31) and apostolic commission (1 Cor 9:1), the eucharist (1 Cor 11:23), and the resurrection (2 Cor 4:14).⁶ In consequence, it would appear to carry a polemic thrust, and it is best to understand the phrase here as a description of the offence which at the same time embodies an element of Paul's reaction.⁷ It must be kept in mind that the Apostle's objection is not merely to incest, but to the distorted form of Christianity that found it an occasion for pride.

If, as I suggest, *en tô onomati* belongs to *katergasamenon*, we can perceive a sharp contrast between the 'name' invoked by the offender and the 'power' attributed to the Corinthian assembly in association with Paul; a contrast which takes up the conclusion of the previous chapter, 'I will find out, not the talk of these arrogant people, but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in power' (4:19–20). The *words* of the kerygma had impressed themselves [242] on the Corinthians, but the true *meaning* eluded them (3:2; 14:20). For Paul their lack of authentic understanding was manifested by their behaviour (3:1–4).⁸ Conduct modelled (4:17; 11:1) on the altruism (2 Cor 5:15) of the crucified Christ (1:23) is the only acceptable evidence of authentically Christian knowledge. In such behaviour the power of Jesus is at work, otherwise there are only empty words.

There are two schools of thought regarding the construction of *paradounai*. Robertson and Plummer⁹ and Conzelmann¹⁰ construe it as an infinitive dependent on *kekrika*. Barrett¹¹ agrees in theory with this view, but in fact by translating 'we should... hand over' aligns himself with the contemporary versions, which supply *chrê* 'it is necessary, one ought' or *dei* 'one must' before

⁵ Cf. B. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos–Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 33.

⁶ 2 Cor 1:14 is an exception because the addition of 'Jesus' to the usual formula 'the day of the Lord' (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2) does not seem to have any special significance. There are, however, other exceptions to this formula; cf. 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:6, 10.

⁷ This provides an explanation for the absence of *hêmôn* in v. 4a, if this variant is in fact inauthentic.

⁸ B. Pearson has perceptively noted that 'When Paul attacks his opponents' 'wisdom' as a *sophia anthrôpôn*, he is engaging in polemics on the basis of the conduct exemplified by the 'wise' and 'perfect' within the community' (*Pneumatikos–Psychikos Terminology*, 30).

⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 98.

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 94 n. 9.

¹¹ *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: Black, 1968), 124.

paradounai.¹² The choice between these two possibilities is not without importance, because the meanings are significantly different. The implications of his option have been succinctly spelled out by Conzelmann, 'The community merely constitutes the forum; it does not share in the action.'¹³ Schweizer is equally clear regarding the meaning of the alternative, 'Bei Paulus wirken Apostel und Gemeinde zusammen. Ihrem gemeinsamen Tun ist die Vollmacht Christi verheissen (1. K, 5, 4). Dabei müht sich Paulus offenkundig, die Gemeinde als die eigentliche Trägerin der Verantwortung hinzustellen.'¹⁴ The evidence favours the latter rather than the former.

The first faint hint is provided by Paul's use of *édê* (v. 3). It betrays his impatience with the fact that the Corinthians have not done anything; their reaction is brought expressly to the fore in v. 2. In effect he appears to be saying, 'The situation is so clear-cut that, even from a distance, I have already come to a decision. Why then do you delay?' The assumption that Paul expects the Corinthians to act is confirmed by the natural association of *syn tē dynamēi* with *synachthentōn* (v. 4), because power is possessed to be used. It is highly significant that none of those who link *paradounai* with *kekrika* can [243] offer an adequate explanation of this phrase.¹⁵ The right and duty of judgement is attributed to the Corinthians in v. 12, and their exercise of this function is attested in 2 Cor 2:6.¹⁶ These convergent indications demand that v. 2b be understood, not as an instance of imperatival *hina* (so the RSV), but as a characteristically Pauline ellipse: 'Did you not rather go into mourning (and show the sincerity of your mourning by taking the necessary action) in order that he that had committed this deed might be removed from among you.'¹⁷ In other words, the Corinthians should have taken the decision themselves. In thus affirming the responsibility of the community for its own authenticity, Paul is in perfect harmony with the tradition preserved in Mt 17:15–17.¹⁸

¹² 'You are to deliver' (RSV); 'This man is to be consigned' (NEB); 'he is to be handed over' (JB); 'il faut que . . . nous livrions' (BdeJ); 'Qu'un tel homme soit livré' (TOB, Pléiade).

¹³ *1 Corinthians*, 97.

¹⁴ *Gemeinde und Gemeindeordnung im Neuen Testament* (Zurich: Zwingli, 1959), 175.

¹⁵ Conzelmann ignores it completely. Robertson-Plummer claim that it 'supplies a coefficient that is essential to the competency of the tribunal' (*1 Corinthians*, 98), but if Paul is the only judge the Corinthian assembly does not function as a tribunal. Power is not necessary for mere assent.

¹⁶ The thesis that the individual in question in 2 Cor 2:6 is the sinner of 1 Cor 5 has recently been argued by G. W. H. Lampe, 'Church Discipline and the Interpretation of the Epistles to the Corinthians', in *Christian History and Interpretation* (J. Knox Festschrift; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 350–4. The serious weaknesses of this view have been exposed by W. G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Heidelberg, 1965), 209. 2 Cor 2:6, therefore, is a precious indication, not only of how the Corinthians understood Paul, but of how he wanted to be understood.

¹⁷ So Barrett. Similarly Robertson-Plummer, Allo, and Conzelmann.

¹⁸ This point is well brought out by Lampe ('Church Discipline', 344). On the cleansing of the community, see C. Roetzel, *Judgment in the Community: A Study of the Relationship between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 116–23.

This understanding of the role of the community effectively frustrates any effort to treat *synachthentôn hymôn kai ton emou pneumatos syn tê dynamei tou kyriou hēmôn Iêsou* as a meaningless parenthesis.¹⁹ At the same time it provides the key to the understanding of Paul's emphasis on his presence with the Corinthians: *parôn de tô pneumati . . . hôs parôn . . . kai tou emou pneumatos* (vv. 3–4). The conventional nature of the allusion in Col 2:5, which parallels only the first element here, serves to highlight the unique character of his insistence. R. Funk rightly terms it a 'startling statement' but he offers no explanation as to why Paul should stress the importance of his spiritual presence.²⁰ Apart from one reference to the gospel (Col 1:6), *pareimi* [244] is elsewhere used by Paul of his physical presence (2 Cor 10:2, 11; 11:9; 13:2, 10; Gal 4:18, 20) and the implication is that he can do things when present that he cannot do from a distance, or at least not with the same effectiveness. His stress on the reality of his spiritual presence is, in consequence, all the more striking.²¹

It makes sense only if we recognize his awareness that responsibility belonged to the community as a whole, and not exclusively to its leaders. E. Best has grasped the point exactly, 'The obvious meaning of the passage is, not that Paul though absent agrees with their verdict, but that his spirit is gathered together with them in its formulation.'²² This being the case, Paul's involvement in the decision regarding the sinner was conditional on his presence. This forced him to use the distinction between physical and spiritual presence. Barrett misses the point when he interprets the latter as meaning that Paul 'will make his contribution, as the Corinthians reflect on what they remember of his convictions, character, and ways, and on what they know of his mind in the present matter'.²³ All this, of course, is true, but had it been Paul's primary concern he would have expressed himself otherwise (cf. 4:17).

He was caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, he was aware that growth in responsibility supposes a measure of autonomy; the dictates of authority conserve immaturity because they destroy the possibility of free decision.²⁴

¹⁹ The most extreme exponent of this view is J. Hainz, who declares, 'am wahrscheinlichsten scheint es mir zu sein, das Zusammenwirken mit der Gemeinde rein fiktiv zu verstehen' (*Ekklesia. Strukturen paulinischer Gemeinde-Theologie und Gemeinde-Ordnung* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1972), 54). His argument: 'Wenn hier *synagethai*—als hapax leg. bei Paulus—für das Zusammengeführtwerden der Gemeinde gebraucht wird und nicht das Gebräuchlichere *synerchesthai* (vgl. 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23, 26) könnte das den fiktiven Vorgang ausdrücken, der kein wirkliches Zusammenkommen der Gemeinde verlangt' (54 n. 5).

²⁰ 'The Apostolic Parousia: Form and Significance' in *Christian History and Interpretation* (J. Knox Festschrift; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 264–5.

²¹ There is no justification for translating *hôs parôn* by 'as if present'. The note of unreality thus implied is contradicted by the initial *parôn*. Hence, 'as one who is present'; cf. *hôs sarkinois hôs nêpiois* (3:1).

²² *One Body in Christ: A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: SPCK, 1955), 59.

²³ *1 Corinthians*, 124.

²⁴ See Gal 3:23–6, and my study *L'existence chrétienne selon saint Paul* (LD 80; Paris: Cerf, 1974), 61–5.

On the other hand, as the founder of the community he had a responsibility to discharge. The tension, thus engendered, is manifest in the broken language of this passage. The ellipse in v. 2 is one example. The hanging infinitive *paradounai* is another, and it is not impossible that when he began the sentence Paul conceived this infinitive as expressing the purpose of the Corinthian reunion. In this delicate situation, where he had to encourage without dominating, Paul stresses his involvement, because this gave him the right to speak without destroying their responsibility. His concern for the future is evident in the use of *toiouton* rather than *touton* in v. 5. They will have to deal with similar cases.

To sum up, therefore, I would suggest that the available evidence [245] supports three conclusions: (1) *paradounai* is to be construed independently of *kekrika*; (2) *en tô onomati* qualifies *katergasamenon*; (3) *syn tê dynamei* belongs to *synachthenton*. In consequence, the passage should be translated thus: 'As for me, absent in body but present in spirit, I as one who is present have already judged the one who has done this thing in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you are assembled, I being with you in spirit, and empowered by our Lord Jesus, such a person should be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh in order that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.'

POSTSCRIPT

Even though her article was published three years after mine, Adela Yarbro Collins apparently independently also proposed that the action of the incestuous man had been committed 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'.²⁵ Her real concern, however, was not with the motivation of the incestuous man, but with the action taken by the community (*paradidômi*), which was an aspect that I did not develop in any detail. She argued on extremely slender grounds that *paradidômi* 'is a technical term in Greek magic',²⁶ and inferred that it is the question of a magical formula which explains how 'the spoken word of the community is effective'.²⁷ This does not seem to be correct. Paul never speaks of a pronouncement by the community, but of an action to be taken by the community. Of course, the text implies that there would be a discussion and a decision at Corinth, but Paul does not give any importance to the verbal aspect. It is what the community *does* that matters.

According to Garland, 'an increasing number of interpreters' opt for the hypothesis put forward by A. Y. Collins and myself.²⁸ It also appears as an

²⁵ 'The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul' *HTR* 73 (1980) 253.

²⁶ 'Function', 255. The inadequacy of the parallels is also highlighted by Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 206 n. 46.

²⁷ 'Function', 256.

²⁸ He cites Harris, Snyder, Schrage, Hays, Horsley, and Goulder (*1 Corinthians*, 166 n. 22)

alternative translation in the NRSV. It would be a mistake, however, to think that unanimity had been achieved. There are still commentators with bibliographies that must have drawn the possibility to their attention, who find this solution so unthinkable that they pass it over in complete silence, namely Witherington,²⁹ Raymond Collins,³⁰ Thiselton,³¹ Keener,³² and Strobel.³³ Others, while conceding that it is the most natural reading, nonetheless argue explicitly against it.

Fee rejects it for two reasons: (1) ‘the difficulty of his [the incestuous man] using the actual wording “in the name of the Lord Jesus”’ and (2) ‘its role in the sentence; it seems an overstatement on Paul’s part to have added this considerable phrase in the midst of a sentence whose primary concern is not the basis on which the incestuous man is acting, but the authority on which Paul himself is acting’.³⁴

Fee’s failure to spell out exactly what he means by the first reason makes it difficult to counter. Whether ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’ were the actual words the incestuous man used or not is irrelevant. Paul gives us only a highly abbreviated report.

Fee’s second reason is reiterated independently by Garland.³⁵ Both forget, however that the novel element in the situation was precisely the motivation of the incestuous man, and of the community in accepting his behaviour. Other sins were committed in the community (e.g. 1 Cor 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20), but there is no hint that they were justified or that the community took pride in them. The difference in the situation of the incestuous man calls for explanation. It is not sufficient to rely on one’s knowledge of human nature, and to assert bluffly with Garland that ‘His deed stemmed from lust or greed, or both.’³⁶

This may have been true at the beginning of the affair but, once it became known, the incestuous man had to justify himself to friends and neighbours, who would have instinctively rejected his behaviour. It is clear from the text, however, that he not only succeeded, but did so in such a way that the community’s attitude was transformed into proud approbation. He could not have appealed to either Judaism or paganism, because both condemned this particular form of incest. Hence, he must have had recourse to some aspect of the new faith which governed the life of the community.

At the minimum the incestuous man must have claimed that his behaviour was in keeping with Paul’s teaching, and a plausible connection is easily found. There can be little doubt that Paul insisted that the comportment of believers

²⁹ *Conflict and Community*, 158.

³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 211.

³¹ *1 Corinthians*, 393.

³² *1–2 Corinthians*, 48.

³³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 97.

³⁴ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 207.

³⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 166.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 166. He refuses, however, to indulge in the rampant speculation of J. K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study in Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 130–41 and A. Clark, *Secular and Christian Leadership at Corinth* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 73–88. Both believe that the incestuous man was prominent and influential and escaped censure because of his position.

should be different from that of the ambient environment; 'they must shine as lights in the world' (Phil 2:15). Such tangible evidence of the power of God was the existential reinforcement of the preached word (1 Thess 1:8). Since incest was not practised either by Jews or by Gentiles, the Corinthians argued that a case of incest in the community unambiguously differentiated them from their neighbours. In a word they were doing exactly what Paul wanted, and could take pride in measuring up to his standards!

This line of argument, of course, is preposterous, but that is precisely why I think it is Corinthian. Paul twice had occasion to underline the 'childishness' of the Corinthians (1 Cor 3:1; 14:20). The same adjective can be predicated of their interpretation of incest as an example of the sort of 'difference' demanded by Paul. We shall see another example in 1 Cor 11:2–16, where the Corinthians interpreted Paul's 'no more male and female' (Gal 3:28) as a demand to blur the distinction between the sexes.

In an extraordinary example of eisegesis Fee without explanation transforms 'spirit' into 'Spirit',³⁷ and a simple judgement is transformed into a prophetic utterance.³⁸ This is totally unwarranted. Paul intended simply to contrast physical presence with spiritual presence, and nothing suggests an allusion to the Holy Spirit. Clearly Fee has not understood Paul's respect for the autonomy of the local community. Paul's stress on his spiritual presence was to give him a voice in deliberations that concerned only the Corinthians (1 Cor 5:2). This was a delicate matter, which goes a long way towards explaining the convoluted nature of this passage. Paul had to ensure that his criticism was heard, but he could not impose his opinion on the community. Hence his stress on a collegial response to the situation. The entire community must be involved,³⁹ and not only because it is question of a 'corporate sin'.⁴⁰

In a letter written perhaps a year earlier than 1 Cor Paul had formally spelt out his attitude towards the exercise of his authority. Onesimus was a slave who had injured his master Philemon. In the hope of mitigating his punishment he ran to Paul to beg him to intervene. Paul, of course, agreed, and his intercession is contained in the letter to Philemon. Paul tells Philemon that he has the authority to order him to do what is required, namely, to treat Onesimus as a brother in Christ and not as a guilty criminal. Yet, Paul continues, 'because I love you, I prefer to appeal to you' (v. 8). It would have been simpler for Paul to give command that expressed his desire for Onesimus, but he felt that he had no choice but to take the riskier option of persuasion. Why?

³⁷ Fee is not alone in this exaggeration; note the prudent reticence of Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.373.

³⁸ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 204–5.

³⁹ This is particularly well articulated by Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 158, and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 168. None of the recent commentators has espoused Conzelmann's view (see article) that Paul alone is the agent of excommunication.

⁴⁰ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 390.

Fortunately no speculation is necessary, because Paul himself answers the question, ‘I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion (*kata anagkên*) but of your own free will’ (v. 14).

Were Paul to have given Philemon a command, the latter would have felt himself bound to comply. As ‘bound’ he was a prisoner and could not have acted freely. His action would have been imposed by Paul, not freely chosen by himself. One has only to reflect for a moment on ‘goodness by compulsion’ to realize what a tremendous contradiction is implied. It goes against the very nature of the human being. Paul had to ‘appeal’ to Philemon to activate his ‘free will’. Only an action freely chosen has any moral value.

This incident involving Philemon is not unique in Paul’s letters. Precisely the same sort of moral issue was involved in the collection for the poor of Jerusalem. Naturally Paul wanted the Corinthians to be as generous as possible, and unthinkingly slips into the imperative mood, ‘see that you excel in this gracious work also’ (2 Cor 8:7). Immediately, however, he corrects himself, ‘I say this not as a command’ (2 Cor 8:8; cf. 1 Cor 7:6). Despite the form of his expression, the Corinthians should not understand it as a binding precept. Why? Once again no speculation is necessary, for Paul answers, ‘Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly nor under compulsion (*ex anagkês*), for God loves a cheerful giver’ (2 Cor 9:7). The freedom of cheerful choice contrasts vividly with reluctant acquiescence to outside pressure. The latter has no moral value. Personal initiative is of the very essence of a moral decision.

How did Paul come to this understanding of the deleterious effect of commands in the moral order? Ultimately it derived from his understanding of unredeemed humanity as ‘enslaved’ to Sin or the Law. Pagans were swept along by the consensus of false values (‘Sin’) that ruled society. Jews gave blind obedience to the Law; it commanded, they submitted. As prisoners neither Jew nor pagan could change their condition. They could not choose freely. Paul saw with the clarity that is typical of his incisive intelligence that salvation must above all be characterized by freedom. ‘You are set free for freedom’ (Gal 5:1). Thus, for Paul to give orders regarding moral actions to his flock would be to return them to their unredeemed state. It would be to reduce them to the level of dolls manipulated by a puppet-master. It would destroy the maturity that is indispensable for moral adulthood. In the case of the incestuous man the Corinthians had already shown their immaturity. Paul could not reinforce it by imposing on them a particular course of action.

3

Corinthian Slogans in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20

The interpretation of 1 Corinthians is greatly conditioned by the exegete's assessment of the situation at Corinth, because Paul's words can mean different things when read against various backgrounds.¹ Hence the need to determine as objectively as possible the positions adopted by the Corinthians. In any such investigation pride of place must be given to citations of Corinthian statements which occur occasionally in the Apostle's argumentation. The purpose of the present note is to focus attention on two such statements which occur in the difficult passage 1 Cor 6:12–20.

In 1934 E.-B. Allo calculated that there were between 20 and 30 explanations of the statement 'Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against his own body' (1 Cor 6:18). The contemporary situation is no better, with the commentators who attribute it to Paul divided into those who take him seriously and those who refuse to do so. The former generate a labyrinth of subtle distinctions designed to justify the idea that fornication is essentially different from any other sort of sin. The latter cannot see Paul in such scholastic reasoning and so postulate a laxity of expression which permits them to say what they will. As early as 1874, however, W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson suggested that the assertion 'Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body' should be ascribed to the Corinthians and not to Paul.² The influence [392] of a puritanical morality may explain why this hypothesis won no acceptance. An inspired statement that appeared to stress the unique evil of fornication was too valuable an ally to lose.

Some eighty years later C. F. D. Moule in the context of a discussion on diatribe and implied dialogue in NT Greek independently made the same suggestion.³ Apparently unaware of Moule's proposal, R. M. Grant felt constrained to postulate the same hypothesis.⁴ Neither of these authors appears totally convinced; their formulations are characterized by extreme diffidence. For Grant it merely *seems* to come from Paul's opponents, while Moule thinks that it is *possibly*

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 40 (1978) 391–6, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (New York: Scribner, 1874), 2.43.

³ *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 196–7.

⁴ 'Hellenistic Elements in I Corinthians', in *Early Christian Origins: Studies in Honor of Harold R. Willoughby* (ed. A. Wikgren; Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), 64 n. 19.

worth considering. Such reserve, particularly when coupled with the absence of any positive arguments, may have something to do with the fact that the hypothesis has had virtually no impact. The vast majority of commentators do not even mention it. To the best of my knowledge, only three commentators accept it,⁵ and only two have taken the trouble to formulate a refutation.

C. K. Barrett finds Moule's explanation attractive. The latter had claimed that the slogan meant: 'no sin can affect a man's true "body": physical lust cannot touch the secure "personality" of the initiated'.⁶ Barrett, however, finds that it is not entirely satisfying 'because Paul's reply seems to accept the general proposition, and make an exception to it (cf. vv. 12–13), which leaves us with the original problem'.⁷ This is not in fact the case, because the *ho de* introducing v. 18c is parallel to the *to de* introducing v. 13c which, as we shall see, is a flat negation of the preceding phrase.

R. H. Gundry also rejects Moule's formulation of the hypothesis arguing (a) that it is unjustifiable to give *sôma* the meaning 'personality', and (b) that

[393] the libertines at Corinth would hardly have divorced all sins from the physical body. Since they would rather have put sin on the side of the physical body and dissociated the true I (consisting in the spirit) from the body with its sin, a slogan from them would more naturally have read, 'Every sin . . . is outside the *spirit*.' . . . So long as any remnant of physicality remains in *soma*, the libertines could not have used the term for the true self in a slogan designed to separate the true self from the sins of its unessential physique.⁸

The validity of Gundry's first point is, in my opinion, beyond dispute. His careful analysis of all the available evidence demonstrates that the holistic definition of *sôma*, first proposed by J. Weiss in his commentary on 1 Cor 6:13 and given the status of common currency by R. Bultmann and J. A. T. Robinson, is not demanded by any text. Every passage in which the term appears is susceptible of a reasonable interpretation in which *sôma* carries its normal physical connotation. In consequence, it must be admitted that Moule's interpretation of the Corinthian slogan is no longer tenable. In his second point, however, Gundry goes on to deny the very existence of the slogan, but here his argument is wide of the mark because, instead of concentrating on the slogan in itself, he has permitted himself to be hypnotized by Moule's suggestion

⁵ L. Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Tyndale NT Commentaries; London: Tyndale, 1958), 103; F. C. Grant, *The New Testament: The Letters and Revelation* (Nelsons Bible Commentary; New York: Nelson, 1962), 7, 86; R. Kempthorne, 'Incest and the Body of Christ: A Study of 1 Cor 6:12–20' *NTS* 14 (1967–8). The last mentioned author, however, gives the slogan an aberrant twist by postulating that it was used by the Corinthians to justify their acceptance of the incestuous man (1 Cor 5). Since his stepmother was not a Christian, his sin was outside the Body, i.e. did not affect the church.

⁶ *Idiom Book*, 196–7. ⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 150.

⁸ *Sôma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 74.

regarding the purpose of the slogan. He says, in effect, that if the libertines had Moule's purpose in mind they would have expressed themselves otherwise. No doubt, but what reason is there to think that they had such a purpose in mind at all?

If we take the statement 'Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body' at its face value, the most natural meaning is that the body has nothing to do with sin. The physical body is morally irrelevant for sin takes place on an entirely different level of one's being. In the words of R. M. Grant, 'Motives, not actions, are important.'⁹ Thus understood, the statement could only come from someone who gave primary importance to the preservation of a spiritual commitment, and for whom the *feeling* of being true to that commitment carried greater weight than any objective contradiction between theory and practice. Tensions would be much less likely to arise, of course, if the body (essentially related to action) were ruled to be irrelevant in principle. For Paul, on the contrary, action was the only sphere in which commitment became real (e.g. Rom 6:19; 12:1–2; Gal 6:2). This last point goes some way towards proving that 1 Cor 6:18b was a Corinthian slogan, but a complete demonstration demands verification of the assumption that the Corinthians considered the body morally irrelevant.

[394] Within this same pericope we encounter another Corinthian slogan which has a *prima facie* right to be considered the essential argument. There is general agreement that the phrase 'Foods are for the belly and the belly for foods' (v. 13a) is to be attributed to the Corinthians. Opinion, however, is divided with regard to the words which follow, 'but God will destroy both one and the other' (v. 13b). The majority take this statement to be the beginning of Paul's reaction to the slogan just cited.¹⁰ This, however, necessarily involves imputing to Paul an inept contrast which does not serve his argument, and implies a distinction between *sôma* and *koilia* which Gundry's study has shown to be untenable.¹¹ Moreover, while Paul can use *katargeô* in the sense it has in v. 13b (e.g. 1 Cor 13:8–11; 15:24–6), he never does so in the same type of context. The existential use in Rom 6:6, which is the closest parallel, formally underlines the difference. Hence, with greater probability, a number of scholars maintain that 'but God will destroy both one and the other' formed part of the Corinthian slogan.¹²

⁹ 'Hellenistic Elements', 64 n. 19.

¹⁰ To the list of scholars provided by J. C. Hurd (*The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 68) can be added more recent studies, e.g. E. Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr* (FRLANT 90; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 229; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 110.

¹¹ *Sôma in Biblical Theology*, 55–6.

¹² A. Wickenhauser, *Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1937), 103; W. Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth* (FRLANT 66; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 196; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 146.

This hypothesis enables us to account for the proliferation of the particle *de* in vv. 13–14 because it becomes clear that Paul has taken the structure of the slogan as the basis of his response:¹³

Corinthians	Paul
<i>ta brômata tê koilia</i>	<i>to de sôma . . . tô kyriô</i>
<i>kai he kôilia tois bromasin</i>	<i>kai ho kyrios tô sômati</i>
<i>ho de theos</i>	<i>ho de theos</i>
<i>kai tautên kai tauta</i>	<i>kai ton kyrion êgeiren kai hêmas</i>
<i>katargêsei</i>	<i>exegerei</i>

There are too many links to be attributed to chance, and the intentionality of the parallelism is confirmed by the appearance of the phrase *kai ho kyrios tô sômati*. Many commentators (e.g. Barrett, Conzelmann, Lietzmann-Kummel, Orr-Walther, Spicq) make no attempt to explain it. Such discretion is at first a disappointment, but a survey of the proposed explanations makes it appear a virtue, because they must be classified as unintelligibly pretentious,¹⁴ [395] or ingeniously imaginative,¹⁵ or intolerably pious.¹⁶ The sole alternative to such desperate expedients is the recognition that the phrase has a purely formal function.¹⁷ It exists only to balance the parallelism, and this is the only adequate explanation for its uniqueness in the Pauline corpus.¹⁸

The structure of the ‘dialogue’ sets in relief the fundamental antithesis—*katargêsei*—*exegerei*—and, incidentally, provides a further argument in favour of the future reading as opposed to the present (*exegeirei*) and the aorist (*exêgeiren*) which are also attested. Paul’s obvious intention is to affirm what the Corinthians deny. We must presume, therefore, that the two verbs have the same object, for otherwise the two arguments would slip past without encountering each other. Hence, Paul must intend by *hemas* what the Corinthians intended by

¹³ The parallelism is noted by C. H. Gibling (*In Hope of God’s Glory: Pauline Theological Perspectives* (New York: Herder, 1970), 143), but he fails to exploit it because he attributes v. 13b to Paul.

¹⁴ ‘... eine christologische Relation zwischen dem *sôma* und dem *kyrios* besteht, die sowohl für den *Kyrios* als auch für das Menschsein so konstitutive ist, dass sei sogar umgekehrt werden kann: *kai ho kyrios tô sômati*’ (Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 230).

¹⁵ ‘Thus Paul states the full import of his enigmatic phrase in 1 Cor 6:13: *kai ho kyrios tô sômati* ‘the Lord for the body’. Into the body of the old world of sin and death enters the Prince of Life, Himself in a body of flesh, to redeem, quicken, and transfigure it’ (J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (SBT 5; London: SCM Press, 1952), 34). Similarly, though with greater restraint, Robertson-Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 124.

¹⁶ ‘Et ‘le Seigneur est pour lui’ parce qu’il est le modèle, le principe de vie surnaturelle qui peu à peu le change en sa parfaite image; il est même sol aliment, vivifiant et transformateur et s. Cyrille voit dans cette phrase une allusion à l’Eucharistie’ (Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 144).

¹⁷ So rightly E. Fuchs, ‘Die Herrschaft Christi. Zur Auslegung von 1 Kor 6:12–20’ in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz. Festschrift für Herbert Braun* (ed. H. D. Betz and L. Schottroff; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 188.

¹⁸ In view of the current consensus it must be emphasized that *sôma* means ‘body’ and not ‘personality’. Hence texts which suggest that Christ was *for us* are in no way parallel.

koilia, namely, the human person viewed precisely as corporeal (*sôma*).¹⁹ The resurrection is adduced by Paul as proof of the value of corporeity. If the body is to be the object of a divine action, if it is to benefit by a display of divine power, it cannot be unimportant. Such emphasis permits one certain inference regarding the Corinthian attitude. They considered the body to be irrelevant. Since the statement ‘Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body’ is merely the transposition of this attitude into the moral sphere, there can be little doubt but that it also must be attributed to the Corinthians.

[396] The fact that the two slogans of vv. 13ab and 18b demonstrate that, for the Corinthians, the body was beneath serious consideration, has obvious importance for the exegesis of many sections of 1 Corinthians, not least the important chapter in which Paul deals with those who say ‘that there is no resurrection from the dead’ (15:12). Here, it is sufficient to note that v. 18b establishes the parameters within which the Corinthians must have understood the third slogan *panta moi exestin* (v. 12). It is true only on the level of what is done in and through the body. Since no corporeal action has any importance, everything is permitted.²⁰ It cannot mean that the true Self of the initiated is totally secure,²¹ because the possibility of sin is implied in v. 18b.

POSTSCRIPT

This article focused on two problems, (a) the extent of the Corinthian slogan in 6:13, and (b) the possibility that 6:18b might be a Corinthian slogan.

The Slogan in 6:13

I was not the first to suggest that ‘and God will destroy both one and the other’ was part of the slogan in 6:13. My contribution was to provide a solid argument to support this hypothesis by showing that these words are necessary to justify Paul’s response, ‘And God raised the Lord and will raise us up by his power’ (v. 14).²² That very same year Thiselton independently came to the same

¹⁹ The use of the personal pronoun in place of the expected *sômata* in v. 14 is the classical basis for the holistic definition of *sôma*. But the use of the pronoun was probably dictated by stylistic considerations, and R. H. Gundry has sanely pointed out that ‘The three appearances of *sôma* before and after v. 14 should determine the nuance of the pronoun “us” rather than vice versa’ (*Sôma in Biblical Theology*, 60).

²⁰ So most accurately Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 145. Conzelmann (*1 Corinthians*, 109) is in fact correct, but provides no foundation.

²¹ As Schmithals seems to imply (*Die Gnosis in Korinth*, 194).

²² This is recognized by B. Byrne, ‘Sinning against One’s Own Body: Paul’s Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:18’ *CBQ* 45 (1983) 612 n. 12.

conclusion, and took issue with the RSV and the NEB for lending their authority to a slogan that effectively said nothing.²³

Thiselton maintains the same position in his commentary.²⁴ In this he reflects the preference of recent interpreters²⁵ for the long version of the slogan, e.g. R. Collins,²⁶ Wolff,²⁷ Witherington,²⁸ and Hays.²⁹ Schrage will admit only that ‘Selbst für V. 13b ist korinthische Herkunft nicht ganz auszuschliessen’,³⁰ apparently on the grounds that ‘*katargein* der eschatologischen Sprache des Paulus angehört’.³¹ The same observation evidently provoked Fee’s qualification of the long formula as coming from Paul’s own hand.³² The fact that Paul employs *kathargein* eight times elsewhere in 1 Cor has no force as an argument, because it was a common word that anyone could use. Of course, one must question whether the slogans in 1 Cor are Corinthian in formulation or only in substance. In my view, however, Paul was too well qualified a rhetorician to give arms to his opponents by publically attributing to them *words* to which they did not subscribe. He would not have wished to have his audience distracted by objections based on form alone. It seems more probable, therefore, that he would have used the words of his opponents.

The most distinctive feature of Garland’s treatment of 1 Cor 6:12–20 is his flat denial that Paul is interacting with Corinthian slogans. In his opinion neither 6:12ac nor 6:13 (long or short version) is to be attributed to the Corinthians. His first argument is that ‘Paul does not include any indicator that he is introducing a citation here in contrast to the instances elsewhere in the letter where he introduces citations from the Corinthians, from other literature, or from a hypothetical dialogue.’³³

Corinthian quotes, he claims, are introduced by ‘each of you says’ (1:12) and ‘one says’ (3:4). In these two instances it is a question of the formula ‘I belong to X’. It is most improbable, however, that any Corinthian ever used such words because Margaret Mitchell has convincingly shown that such formulae were most commonly used of parent–child or master–slave relationships.³⁴ Belonging implied inferiority and/or subservience. The formula in fact conveys Paul’s highly critical judgement of the factionalism at Corinth, and so is irrelevant to the question of the slogans.

²³ ‘Realized Eschatology at Corinth’ *NTS* 24 (1978) 517. The NRSV maintains the inverted commas of the RSV, but adds in a note, ‘The quotation may extend to the word *other*.’ The NJB does not indicate the Corinthian slogans, but the 1998 edition of the *Bible de Jérusalem* opts for the long version of the slogan.

²⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 462–3.

²⁵ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 56 is an exception.

²⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 244–5.

²⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.126.

²⁸ *Conflict and Community*, 168.

²⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 102–3.

³⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.11 n. 237.

³² *1 Corinthians*, 254 n. 28.

³³ *1 Corinthians*, 226.

³⁴ *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 85. For an alternative, but unconvincing, view see L. L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1997).

In the Corinthian correspondence scripture quotations are prefaced by 'it is written'³⁵ or 'it says' (6:16), but the citations in 1 Cor 2:16; 5:13; 15:27; 2 Cor 10:17; and 13:1 have no such introduction, which would suggest that Paul had no fixed practice in citing scripture. Moreover, his letters abound with allusions to the scriptures that he no doubt expected his readers to recognize.³⁶ This should alert us to the obvious point that Paul could certainly take it for granted that the Corinthians would recognize words that they had spoken. They did not need their slogans presented to them in inverted commas.

Garland's second argument is that 'it is surprising that they [the Corinthians] would have felt any need to offer a theological rationale for immoral behaviour'.³⁷ In other words, 'the moral problems were simply vestiges of former pagan habits that some had not yet purged from their lives'.³⁸ No doubt this is true, but Garland forgets that there must have been dialogue within the community regarding what type of behaviour was appropriate to their new status in Christ. Paul, we can be sure, had insisted on the need for believers to be 'different'. Thus, if challenged, those who were simply continuing a lifestyle which had become habitual (in this case frequentation of prostitutes) would have been forced to find a way to justify their behaviour. Their theological reasoning would have been a defensive reaction, not the operative principle that Garland imagines.

The Slogan in 6:18b

The initial reaction to my proposal that 'every sin which a man commits is outside the body' (1 Cor 6:18b) should be understood as a Corinthian slogan (meaning that the body had nothing to do with sin) was negative. Brendan Byrne argued that, were it a slogan, Paul's response in v. 18c is inadequate.³⁹ While conceding that my hypothesis is 'an attractive option and may well be right', Fee is more impressed by Byrne, and comments that Paul's retort 'does not seem to respond to their slogan as such, which emphasizes the noncorporeal nature of all sin'. In consequence, he treats the following *de* as exceptive, which transforms 'every sin' in v. 18b into 'every *other* sin'.⁴⁰

Without discussing the issue, Schrage takes v. 18b as a building-block in Paul's argument ('eine weitere Begründung').⁴¹ The positions of Wolff⁴² and Witherington⁴³ are similar. Thiselton presents my position sympathetically, adding a

³⁵ 1 Cor 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19; 9:9; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45, 54–5.

³⁶ See in particular R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

³⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 227.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.

³⁹ 'Sinning Against One's Own Body: Paul's Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:18' *CBQ* 45 (1983) 608–16.

⁴⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 262. In this he is followed by Brian Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7* (AGAJU 22; Leiden, 1994), 144, and by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 236.

⁴¹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.17.

⁴² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 129 n. 201.

⁴³ *Conflict and Community*, 169.

supporter of whom I was not aware,⁴⁴ but in the last analysis treats v. 18b as Pauline.⁴⁵

Unequivocal support comes only from Klauck,⁴⁶ Talbert,⁴⁷ Hays,⁴⁸ and Collins,⁴⁹ who on the basis of the congruence between the thought of v. 18b and vv. 12–13, conclude that v. 18b represents a Corinthian position. Keener will only concede that this *may* be the case.⁵⁰

Byrne's objection would be much more persuasive (a) were there a fixed pattern to Paul's response to an objection, and (b) were there general agreement on the meaning of 'The fornicator (*ho de porneuôn*) sins against his own body' (v. 18c). Since *sôma* always carries the connotation of corporeity,⁵¹ this would appear to mean that the fornicator sins against his own physical self, i.e. his self precisely in its corporeity, and in such a way as to be absolutely unique. What can this possibly mean? One has only to glance through the commentators to perceive very quickly that nothing resembling a consensus has emerged. Thiselton classifies the suggestions into four broad categories, but is conscious of the fact that 'the shadings and hypotheses of interpretation of this verse are almost limitless'.⁵²

To discuss each solution individually is rendered unnecessary by the fact that they all embody two common elements, which severely compromise them. (1) They fail to specify precisely what Paul means by 'Christ' in this context. (2) They forget that fornication is not the only sin in which the body of the other is physically penetrated. What Paul says about homosexuality is completely ignored even though it is most relevant to the debate.

Many interpretations of 6:18c attribute the unique nature of the sin of fornication to the fact that the believing fornicator's body in principle belongs to Christ, and by his sin it is wrenched away and given to a prostitute. The Christological dimension, we are told, is what gives the sin its peculiar character. Even though it is rarely, if ever, explicitly stated, the assumption of the great majority of interpreters is that the 'Christ' in question is the individual historical Jesus Christ. Those who attempt to take this point further very soon find themselves in a morass of speculation that has been dignified by the name Pauline 'mysticism'.⁵³

In assessing this approach to the problem Paul's usage in 1 Cor 8:12 ('sinning against your brethren . . . you sin against Christ') is of particular importance, even though rarely if ever invoked. There it is also question of a 'sin against Christ', but the issue is eating meat offered to idols. It is a question of a bodily action, but

⁴⁴ R. Ormanson, 'Acknowledging Paul's Quotation' *The Bible Today* 43 (1992) 201–13.

⁴⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 472. The possibility that 6:18b is a slogan is mentioned by R. Kirchoff, *Die Sünde gegen den eigenen Leib. Studien zu pornê and porneia in 1 Kor 6:12–20 und dem soziokulturellen Kontext der paulinischen Adressaten* (SUNT 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 178–9.

⁴⁶ *1 Korintherbrief*, 48.

⁴⁷ *Reading Corinthians*, 33–4.

⁴⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 105.

⁴⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 248, but he appears to deny it on p. 253!

⁵⁰ *1–2 Corinthians*, 58.

⁵¹ Gundry, *Sôma in Biblical Theology*.

⁵² *1 Corinthians*, 471–2.

⁵³ The prime example is A. Wickenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St Paul* (Freiburg: Herder, 1960).

fornication does not come into the picture. The characteristic of the 'sin against Christ' in 1 Cor 8 is that it is not a purely personal affair; it has an impact on other members of the community. The Weak are injured by the action of the Strong. When viewed from this perspective, the purpose of the formula 'to sin against his own body' would appear to be to limit the damage of fornication to the sinner alone. This is perhaps to move ahead a little too fast, because the use of 'Christ' in 1 Cor 6:15 ('members of Christ') is identical with that in 1 Cor 8:12.

In both cases 'Christ' is predicated, not of the historical Jesus, but also of the Christian community. This is unambiguous in 1 Cor 8:12 where 'brethren' and 'Christ' are interchangeable.⁵⁴ It is also clear in 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, *so also is Christ*' (1 Cor 12:12). 'Christ' here can only mean the corporate body of Christ. Once this is recognized, the interpretation of many other texts is greatly simplified. 'To be baptized into Christ' (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3) means to undergo the rite of initiation into the believing community. When the particle 'in' is locative, to be 'in Christ' (Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:6) is simply to be a member of the believing community.⁵⁵ 'To fall asleep in Christ' (1 Cor 15:18) means 'to die as a Christian', and 'the dead in Christ' (1 Thess 4:16) are 'the Christian dead'. There is no hint of mysticism here. As Rudolf Bultmann acutely pointed out long ago, Paul's vocabulary did not contain the word 'Christian', which forced him to use circumlocutions, notably 'in Christ' and 'in the Lord'.⁵⁶

When 'shall I take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?' (1 Cor 6:15) is read in this perspective, it is clear that the basis of Paul's objection to this form of fornication is that it is behaviour inappropriate to a member of the believing community. There is no question of a direct personal relationship to the individual Jesus Christ, no matter how this might be conceived.⁵⁷ This might appear to be contradicted by the subsequent words 'he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him' (1 Cor 6:17). In fact, however, 'Lord' here has the same corporate dimension as 'Christ' two verses previously. It should have been obvious⁵⁸ to the Corinthians that 'belonging' to

⁵⁴ This is recognized by W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS 68; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 107; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.267; and Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 389.

⁵⁵ For more on this point see my *Becoming Human Together: The Pastoral Anthropology of Saint Paul* (GNS 2; Wilmington: Glazier, 1982), 183–5.

⁵⁶ *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 1.328–9.

⁵⁷ Perhaps the most bizarre version of this approach is that of D. B. Martin, 'The man who has sex with a prostitute is, in Paul's construction, Christ's "member" entering the body of the prostitute' (*The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 176)!

⁵⁸ It is unnecessary to belabour the point that the rhetorical question introducing v. 15, 'Do you not know that' indicates Paul's 'belief that the principle at issue is axiomatic for the Christian, and should not have escaped attention as a cardinal element in the community's thinking' (Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 316).

the community was incompatible with ‘belonging’ to a prostitute. Whatever the intention of the fornicator, the sex act established a relationship. The Creator had given it a purpose in and of itself. In the divine plan it was designed to create a unity out of a duality, ‘The two shall become one flesh’ (Gen 2:24 cited in 1 Cor 6:16). This was its very nature. Copulation created something. By fornicating a man changed his allegiance. No longer did he give himself to the community but to a prostitute. He had effectively discharged himself from the community. This had consequences for the whole person. He was now vulnerable to Satan (1 Cor 5:5), whereas before he had been protected by the community. Even though nothing is said here about excommunication Paul had every right to expect the Corinthians to remember that he had warned them earlier in the letter ‘not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is a fornicator (*pornos*)’ (1 Cor 5:11).

Why would Paul complicate this simple truth by saying that the fornicator ‘sins against his own *body*’? In the first place, he wants to emphasize that fornication has consequences for the fornicator, whereas in 1 Cor 8:12 he is concerned with the consequences for others of the sin of the Strong. It hardly needs to be said that casual sex with a prostitute also has an effect on the community, e.g. the bad example given to young men by senior members, but Paul does not deal with this aspect here. Secondly, the formula is easily understood as a rhetorical flourish designed to get the attention of the Corinthians, who believed exactly the opposite. In this respect, it is parallel to the use of ‘head’ in 1 Cor 11:2–16, as we shall see in a moment.

This view, of course, is open to the objection that I fail to respect the emphasis that Paul gives ‘body’ in this context. To respond it is necessary to examine what Paul says elsewhere regarding physical sexual sin. Does he lay the same stress on ‘body’ with respect to punishment?

An affirmative answer would appear to be indicated by Paul’s description of the unrighteousness of humanity at the beginning of Rom. ‘Men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error (*tên antimisthian hên edei tês planês autôn en beautois apolambanontes*)’ (Rom 1:27). One is immediately tempted to think in terms of an impact on the sinner which is perceptible to others. For Brendan Byrne ‘the penalty is felt . . . in each individual’s own body’, because in v. 24 the sexual act has been qualified as ‘dishonouring their bodies’.⁵⁹ Sanday and Headlam are stronger and more explicit: ‘they received in their physical degradation a punishment such as they deserved’.⁶⁰ Neither goes into any detail, but one is implicitly invited to think in terms of the venereal diseases from which homosexuals sometimes suffer.

⁵⁹ *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 77.

⁶⁰ *Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 40.

This line of interpretation forces the text to say more than it actually does. Modern commentators recognize that Paul intends to say no more than the book of Wisdom, 'one is punished by the very things by which one sins' (Wis 11:16; cf. 12:23). Thus, for James Dunn 'the unnatural sexual practice is its own penalty'.⁶¹ In so far as this means that all first-century homosexuals considered their sexuality a burden, it is highly anachronistic. In Paul's world, homosexuality was not a crime nor the object of social opprobrium. In certain circles at least, as witnessed by Plato's *Symposium* and Plutarch's *Lycurgus*, it was highly regarded. It may be best, therefore, to take Rom 1:27 as no more than a dramatic way of suggesting that such sinners will suffer eternal punishment.⁶²

Another important allusion to homosexual sin is to be found in 1 Cor 11:2–16. The problem is the male liturgical leader. He is described as 'having something hanging down from his head' (v. 4), which is subsequently identified as 'long hair' (v. 14). There are abundant references in pagan and Jewish sources, which unambiguously demonstrate that a man who wore his hair long publicly proclaimed himself a practising homosexual.⁶³ The whole point of his elaborately dressed hair was to emphasize his femininity in order to attract men. When dealing with homosexuality earlier in 1 Cor (6:9) Paul listed *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* among those who are not worthy of the kingdom of God. If the most general meaning of *malakoi* is 'unmanly', the connotation of homosexual activity is conveyed to it by its association with *arsenokoitai*. Even though this is the first attested use of *arsenokoitês*, its meaning is clearly indicated by its etymology; *arsên* 'male' and *koitê* 'sexual intercourse'; thus 'one who has sex with a man'.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Paul's judgement on the long-haired man is unambiguously negative, 'he shames (*kataischynei*) his head' (v. 4) and 'it is degrading (*atimia*) to him' (v. 14). The use of 'head' would seem to emphasize the physical element, just as 'body' does in 1 Cor 6:18c, but this is not in fact the case. H. Schlier has accumulated evidence to show that *kephalê* could be and was used to mean 'the whole man', 'the person'.⁶⁴ Thus 'head' in this sense is interchangeable with the personal pronoun in v. 14, and carries no specifically physical connotation. In this respect one should also recall that *sôma* was a common synonym for 'slave' and so also could mean the whole person.⁶⁵

It is noteworthy that in all of these passages where Paul speaks of blameworthy sexuality he glides between a physical element ('body', 'head'), which can also carry a holistic meaning (but not exclusively), and the personal pronoun ('we', 'they', 'he'). Which carries the emphasis? In terms of meaning it can only be the personal pronoun. Punishment for sin falls on the person. The sins in question,

⁶¹ *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 65. Similarly C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1977), 1.126; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 97.

⁶² D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 116.

⁶³ See my articles on 1 Cor 11:2–16 in Chapters 9–11 below.

⁶⁴ TDNT 3.674.

⁶⁵ J. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10.

however, be they hetero- or homosexual, are identical in so far as they involve the act of penetration. Thus their physicality is never far from Paul's mind, but in no case does he unambiguously suggest that the punishment falls in some unique way on a corporeal element. Thus, the importance of 'against his own body' should not be exaggerated into an insistence that fornication stands in a moral category all by itself. Many have followed Byrne in his vision of the body as 'the possibility of communication', which leads him to write, 'No other sin engages one's power of bodily personal communication in precisely so intimate a way [as fornication].'⁶⁶ The homosexual act gives the lie to this.

Having achieved some clarity with respect to the meaning of 1 Cor 6:18c, we are now in a position to see how it might have functioned as a response to the slogan 'every sin which a man commits is outside the body' (v. 18b). One has the impression from Byrne and Fee that they would expect Paul to provide a reasoned refutation of such contempt for the body. Since he has not done so, they conclude that v. 18b cannot represent a Corinthian position. A quick survey, however, shows that Paul never reacted in this way to an objection.

His response to 'all things are lawful to me' (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) is a qualifying relativization preceded by *alla*. He rejects 'food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy both one and the other' (1 Cor 6:13) by a simple affirmation (introduced by *de*), which flatly contradicts each element of the slogan. He offers nothing by way of proof. Similarly his response to 'it is well for a man not to touch a woman' (1 Cor 7:1). His rejection is marked by *de* but he simply insists on the contrary, namely, that married couples should have sex. Paul is also quoting in 1 Cor 8:6, but from a baptismal acclamation not from the Corinthians;⁶⁷ naturally his response is different. I believe that 1 Cor 8:8 is also a Corinthian slogan.⁶⁸ Since there is a sense in which Paul could partially agree with it, his response is a qualification, even though introduced by *de*. In no case does Paul provide a reasoned refutation.

All that one should expect in 1 Cor 6:18c, therefore, is a reminder to the Corinthians that fornication though a physical act is nonetheless a sin.⁶⁹ They say one thing and he simply affirms the opposite. Whether this was the best pastoral technique is, of course, another matter. It is unfortunately typical of Paul in 1 Cor that he consistently refuses to enter the thought-world of those in the community who disagreed with him.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ 'Sinning against One's Own Body', 613.

⁶⁷ See my article on this verse in Chapter 6 below.

⁶⁸ See my article on this verse in Chapter 7 below.

⁶⁹ Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 49.

⁷⁰ See my remarks in *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 282–4.

4

The Divorced Woman in 1 Corinthians 7:10–11

As the earliest attestation of the dominical prohibition of divorce, 1 Cor 7:10–11 has been the object of much discussion.¹ However, to the best of my knowledge, no commentator confronts all the questions raised by these verses. In consequence, the literature offers no more than a series of partial, and often incompatible, solutions. The purpose of the present note is to propose a new interpretation designed to do justice to all aspects of the text.

When 1 Cor 7:10–11 is read critically certain questions are inescapable. Why does Paul begin *tois de gegamêkosin parangello*, which he then has to qualify by *ouk egô alla ho kyrios*, when it would have been easy to write *tois de gegamêkosin ho kyrios parangellei*? Why does he introduce a dominical logion? Why does he mention the wife first when the reverse order (followed in 7:12–13 and in Mk 10:11–12) would have been more natural? How is *mê chôrîsthênai* to be translated? Why is the refusal of remarriage introduced in a parenthetical clause and apropos of the woman when the synoptic form of the dominical logion (Mt 5:32; 19:9; Mk 10:11; Lk 16:18) contains this element as an integral part referring to the husband? Finally, how are we to understand the relationship between the prohibition in 7:10–11 and the permission in 7:15?

In any attempt to deal with these questions the translation of *parangellô... gynaika apo andros mê chôrîsthênai* has an obvious claim to priority. The RSV rendering, 'I command . . . that the wife should not separate from her husband,' is typical of the modern versions (NAB, NEB, WV, JB, BdeJ, TOB, Goodspeed, Spencer, Osty) and reflects the consensus of the commentators. However, J. A. Fitzmyer² has pointed out that *chôrîsthênai* is the aorist passive infinitive which should be translated 'the wife should not be separated from her husband'.³ The present infinitive *chôrisesthai* (which could justify the RSV translation) in fact appears in a number of witnesses (A D F G 1881 2945) but is obviously a *lectio facilisans*. Copyists saw the aorist infinitive as a problem

¹ This article was originally published in *JBL* 100 (1981) 601–6, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² 'The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence' *TS* 37 (1976) 200.

³ Similarly W. F. Orr and J. A. Walter, *1 Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 211.

since it did not harmonize with 7:13, which [602] envisages the wife as possessing the right to initiate a divorce action. By changing the original aorist infinitive (which can only be passive) into the present infinitive (which could be taken as middle) the copyists achieved a perfectly balanced version of the dominical directive, which at the same time brought it into the same cultural context as 7:12–13. The weight of manuscript evidence has forced exegetes to accept the reading *chôristhênai*, but their interpretation has obviously been influenced by the same unjustified assumption that gave rise to the reading *chôristesthai*, though few are as explicit as H. Lietzmann, who says bluntly, ‘Das *chôristhênai* muss parallel dem *aphienai* die aktive Handlung der Scheidung bedeuten.’⁴

Why this must be so is not explained. It is certainly not as if the passive voice makes nonsense of the text. On the contrary, it yields perfect sense, particularly when we recall that in Paul the passive is sometimes used with the connotation ‘to allow oneself to be’ (e.g. 1 Cor 6:7; Rom 12:2).⁵ If we translate 7:10a ‘the wife should not allow herself to be separated from her husband’ we have the reverse side of a coin whose obverse is inscribed ‘the husband should not divorce his wife’ (7:11c). If it is wrong for a husband to issue a writ of divorce, it must be equally against the divine intention for his wife to accept it; willing acceptance would be cooperation in disobedience to God.

In opposition to 7:13, which supposes a Graeco-Roman cultural setting in which a wife could initiate a divorce action, 7:10b reflects a Jewish milieu in which the right to divorce belonged exclusively to the husband.⁶ As might have been expected, the original dominical precept concerning divorce was addressed to the husband (Mt 5:31–2; 19:9; Lk 16:18),⁷ and it is perfectly possible that the logically necessary extension to the wife (7:10b) was effected in Palestine and reached Paul in the form in which we find it here. But if such logic had in fact been the motive for the extension we should expect the husband to be mentioned first, since the premise naturally precedes the conclusion. Hence, it seems more probable that *gynaika apo andros mê chôristhênai* should be attributed to Paul and that his formulation was inspired by something other than a concern for abstract logic.

The reversal of the normal order (woman–man rather than man–woman; compare 7:12–13) in itself suggests that Paul had a particular case in mind, and this hint is confirmed by the parenthetical clause, *ean de kai chôristhêi menetô agamos ê tô andri katallagêtô* ‘if she should have been divorced let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband’ (7:11ab) [603], which is

⁴ *An die Korinther I–II* (ed. W. G. Kümmel; Tübingen: Mohr, 1949), 31.

⁵ BDF §314.

⁶ *m. Yebamot* 14.1; Josephus, *AJ* 15.259. The wife could only petition the court, which had no authority to dissolve the marriage, to oblige her husband to give her a divorce (*m. Ketub.* 7.9–10; *m. Git.* 9.8; *m. Arak.* 5.6).

⁷ Mk 10:12 is a later development reflecting a Graeco-Roman setting.

best understood as a reference to a specific incident at Corinth.⁸ *Ean* with the aorist subjunctive can be used in conditions ‘referring to something which was impending in past time’,⁹ and this meaning is most appropriate here; a divorce was about to take place when Paul’s informants left Corinth and it could have been finalized by the time his response reached the city.¹⁰

Does the context provide any clue that would enable us to discern the concrete situation of the couple in question? In my opinion, 7:1–9 provides just this information.

The allusion to the Corinthian letter in 7:1 obliges us to treat 7:1–9, not as pure exposition of Paul’s mind on marriage, but as a reaction to a situation which had developed at Corinth, and entitles us to deduce the outline of that situation from the emphases in Paul’s response. Paul’s insistence that a married couple owe something physical to each other (7:3–4), and his stress that not all have the gift of celibacy (7:7b), permit us to infer that some at Corinth were advocating that married couples should not have sexual intercourse.¹¹ Since this is precisely what is said in 7:1b, *kalon anthrôpô gynaikos mê haptesthai* ‘abstinence from sexual intercourse is a moral good’,¹² the phrase should be taken as a Corinthian slogan introduced to indicate to the Corinthians the point in their letter that Paul is about to discuss.¹³ As in 1 Cor 6:13c, Paul introduces his qualification by *de* (7:2).¹⁴ His principal concern in this whole chapter is to transform doctrinaire idealists [604] into realists; what is best in theory is not always the best in practice for particular individuals. His personal preference (7:7a, 8) might incline him to sympathize with the ascetics at Corinth but his pastoral responsibility obliges him to subordinate it to the recognition that not all have been given the gift that he enjoys (7:7b).

⁸ *Ean de kai* is used to introduce a general condition in 1 Cor 7:28 and this sense is maintained here by exegetes who read 7:10–11 in isolation from the context. Thus, J. Dupont (*Mariage et divorce dans l'évangile. Matthieu 19, 3–12 et parallèles* (Bruges: Abbaye de Saint-André/Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), 59 n. 4), writes, ‘La nuance d’antériorité se mesure non par rapport au temps où Paul formule cette prescription, mais par rapport au devoir qui s’imposerait à la divorcée.’ Always a little forced, this view loses all plausibility when the passive *chôristhênai* is given its true value, because it is the one initiating the divorce who is suspected of an interest in remarriage.

⁹ BDF §373.

¹⁰ See in particular Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 163; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthiens*, 120; D. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul: The Use of the Synoptic Tradition in the Regulation of Early Church Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 90; Senft, *1 Corinthiens*, 92.

¹¹ Not all in the community shared this view, because a very different attitude towards sexuality appears in the previous chapter; see my study ‘Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20’ *CBQ* 40 (1978) 391–6. Even on particular issues it is unwise to assume unity of opinion at Corinth.

¹² This paraphrase is an effort to bring out the full force of *kalon*; see the full discussion in J. C. Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 158–61.

¹³ Hurd, *Origin*, 67, 163.

¹⁴ C. H. Giblin (*In Hope of God’s Glory* (New York: Herder, 1970), 147) maintains that 7:2 is also part of the Corinthian statement, but this I find difficult to accept. Not only does the point of 7:3–6 then become completely obscure, but it attributes to the Corinthians a measured reasonableness which I find impossible to reconcile with the doctrinaire attitude that Paul combats through the whole of ch. 7.

It is not clear whether the ascetics were advocating divorce but at the minimum we must assume that Paul had received information that intolerable situations were developing. 7:3–4 clearly hints that there was at least one marriage in which the two partners did not agree on abstinence from sexual intercourse. If a wife with common sense persisted in demanding her conjugal rights, it is easy to imagine a husband in the first flush of ascetic enthusiasm preparing to divorce her; her nagging would be just as much a distraction from the ideal as passion. Should the divorce go through, even against the opposition of the wife, it seems inevitable that she, unwillingly excluded from the nuptial couch, should think very seriously of remarriage. In this reconstruction we have a situation which explains all the aspects of 7:10–11.

Paul first mentions the wife who may have been dismissed. As the injured party she was likely to take precipitate action which could produce an impossibly complicated situation. Paul's desire is, and hers should be, that the misguided husband should undergo a change of heart. Should this occur, true charity demands that the marriage be re-established. Hence, it is imperative that the wife should remain 'unmarried' because only this state permits full 'reconciliation'.¹⁵ She should not accept the divorce, and to drive this home Paul has to insist that she should not contract a new marriage because a legal divorce automatically conferred the right of remarriage.¹⁶ No mention of remarriage is necessary with regard to the husband; since he had renounced sexual relations it would have been superfluous.

[605] The awkward formulation of 7:10a and the fact of a dominical logion have yet to be considered. It is undeniable that Paul felt sympathetic to the ideal proposed by the ascetics, but he could not permit it to be imposed as a general rule. The most he could counsel was temporary abstinence (7:5). This led him to a reference to his personal option (7:7a) which side-tracked him still further into a statement regarding 'the unmarried and the widows' (7:8–9). A new

¹⁵ Precisely the same type of solution is presented in *The Shepherd* of Hermas (Mandatum 4.1.4–11). The situation is one in which a wife commits adultery. The husband has to divorce her because otherwise he could be cooperating in her sin. He cannot, however, remarry because he would then make complete forgiveness impossible: 'if the husband does not receive her back he sins and covers himself with great sin; but it is necessary to receive the sinner who repents, but not often, for the servants of God have but one repentance. Therefore for the sake of repentance, the husband ought not to (re)marry. This is the course of action for wife and husband. . . For this reason it has been enjoined on you to remain by yourselves, whether husband or wife; for in such cases repentance is possible.' The complete text is given in Q. Quessnell, 'Made Themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt 19:12)' *CBQ* 30 (1968) 350–1.

¹⁶ For Roman and Greek law, see *PW* 5.1241–5, 2011–13. The relevant passage from the Mishnah is *Gît.* 9.3, 'The essential formula in the bill of divorce is "Lo, you are free to marry any man." R. Judah says: "Let this be from me your writ of divorce and letter of dismissal and deed of liberation, that you may marry whoever you wish." The essential formula in a writ of emancipation is, "Lo, you are a freedwoman. Lo, you belong to yourself.'" The understanding of a writ of divorce as a 'deed of liberation' justifies the juxtaposition of the two cases (wife and bondwoman) and explains why Paul wrote *ou dedoulôai* (rather than *ou dedetai*; cf. 7:27, 39) as the counterpart of *chôrizesthô* in 7:15.

introduction (*tois de gegamêkosin*, 7:10a) to his original topic was necessitated by his realization that he had not dealt with a crisis situation involving one particular marriage. *Parangellô* 'I give charge' indicates that he intended to make a personal statement. Then it suddenly struck him that the authority of a dominical logion would reinforce his position and that it could be expanded to cover precisely the case at issue.¹⁷ Hence, he switches, *ouk egô alla ho kyrios* (7:10a).

Finally, we come to the relationship between 7:10–11 and 7:15. Acting on the assumption that Paul cannot be inconsistent, efforts have been made to reconcile the prohibition of 7:10–11 with the permission of 7:15. According to the classical Roman Catholic interpretation a distinction is made between the two cases; divorce is forbidden when there is unity of cult but permitted when there is disparity of cult.¹⁸ In other words, Paul conceived the saying of Jesus on divorce as applicable only to marriages between Christians. That Paul thought in terms of such a distinction is highly unlikely, even if he was unaware of the synoptic tradition that in the saying on divorce Jesus was speaking to Jews and based his conclusion on an argument which envisaged humanity as such (Mk 10:1–12; Mt 19:1–9). J. K. Elliott, on the contrary, makes a distinction between *aphiêmi* (7:11b) and *chôrizesthô* (7:10, 15); the former meaning legal divorce, the latter simple desertion.¹⁹ In other words, Paul forbids divorce but permits separation. This explanation is untenable because, while *chôrizesthô* can mean 'depart', it is well attested as a technical term for 'divorce' in the strict sense,²⁰ and must have this meaning here because of the correspondence between *mê chôris-thênai* (passive) and *mê aphienai* (active) in 7:10–11. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary the same meaning must be assumed in 7:15.

A very different line is taken by Dungan, who claims that Paul saw the dominical logion principally as a prohibition of remarriage and, in consequence, had no difficulty in permitting a divorce (7:11, 15) provided that it [606] was not followed by another marriage.²¹ It is clear from Dungan's exposition that 7:15 is interpreted in the light of 7:11a understood as a general principle.²² However, 7:11a is not a general principle, Dungan having forgotten his earlier correct observation that 'Paul is not speaking theoretically any longer, but is dealing with an actual situation at Corinth.'²³ As an injunction directed to a particular case 7:11a cannot be applied to a very different type of situation, and

¹⁷ A specific incident is necessary to explain why Paul cites the saying of Jesus because elsewhere (1 Cor 7:39; Rom 7:2) he takes it for granted that everyone agrees that marriage is for life.

¹⁸ See, for example, St Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura* (8th edn. Cura R. Cai: Taurini-Romae: Marietti, 1953), vol. 1, 299 para. 336.

¹⁹ 'Paul's Teaching on Marriage in 1 Corinthians: Some Problems Reconsidered' *NTS* 19 (1972–3) 223–5.

²⁰ See the references assembled by Fitzmyer, 'Matthean Divorce Texts', 211.

²¹ *Sayings of Jesus*, 89–99.

²² 'It is clear that one of the things that this word of the Lord means to Paul is that it *forbids additional marriages after divorce*' (*Sayings of Jesus*, 91—his italics).

²³ *Sayings of Jesus*, 90.

so 7:15 must be interpreted in terms of the right to remarriage implicit in a legal divorce.

The truth of the matter is that Paul is not consistent, and recognition of this point is of crucial importance for a correct understanding of Paul's attitude towards the dominical logion. Paul refuses a divorce in 7:10–11 because in this instance he considered the grounds to be insufficient. In 7:15, on the contrary, he permits a divorce because he found the reason convincing. The dominical logion does not control Paul's thought in 7:1–11; it is brought in as an afterthought because of its pastoral utility. Nor does the logion constrain him in 7:15; he does precisely what the logion forbids. We are forced to the conclusion that Paul considered Jesus' prohibition of divorce, not as a binding precept, but as a significant directive whose relevance to a particular situation had to be evaluated by the pastor responsible for the community. Paul found it useful in one case but inappropriate in another.

POSTSCRIPT

The variety of interpretations of these verses is due, it would seem, to the assumption that Paul did not believe that circumstances alter cases. Thus, it is claimed that he is saying precisely the same thing (though in different words) in three situations, which he himself nonetheless distinguishes very carefully, namely (a) vv. 10–11, (b) vv. 12–14, and (c) v. 15. To achieve such consistency, however, against Paul's distinctions, commentators have to do violence to the texts.

There is not the slightest doubt that the verb in *gynaika apo andros me chōristhēnai* (v. 10b) is passive, and all commentators on the Greek text say so. Hence, the phrase should be rendered, 'the woman should not be separated from her husband'. The vast majority of commentators and versions, however, translate it as if it were middle or intransitive, 'the woman should not separate from her husband'.²⁴ Why this refusal to take the text at face value?²⁵ It is intriguing to look at the answers interpreters give. Fee simply states categorically, 'The passive of this verb functions as a middle when used of "divorce" and does not imply that the other person is the initiator of the action.'²⁶ Such bluster entirely fails to explain why a passive should not be understood as a passive, particularly when the

²⁴ I have found only one timid exception. Strobel has 'eine Frau von ihrem Mann nicht scheiden (lassen) soll' (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 120). Not only is 'lassen' in brackets, but it is in fainter type!

²⁵ The most extreme example of such a refusal is that of Neiryneck, who claims that v. 10b can be translated *ad sensum* in the plural, and that the use of the singular both here and in v. 11a is an 'exegetical dramatization' ('The Sayings of Jesus in 1 Corinthians' in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996), 165).

²⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 293 n. 14.

verb has a present infinitive *chôrisesthai* (chosen by a certain number of textual witnesses) that articulates precisely the meaning that Fee desires.

Schrage takes the same option, but is much more frank. He wraps himself in the authority of Lietzmann, who asserted that since *chôristhênai* is parallel to *aphienai* in v. 11b it must be given an active sense,²⁷ but is quick to add that a man cannot be excluded as the one who initiated the divorce. Schrage claims further support from BDF §314, which in fact only provides a cross-reference to §317 where we are told that the middle occasionally has the sense of ‘to let oneself be . . .’. This is precisely the opposite of what Schrage wants to prove! Thiselton avoids the burden of proof by blandly asserting that ‘the aorist passive *probably* carries a middle-voice sense here’, and then continuing as if he had established a certitude.²⁸

There can be little doubt that the interpreters mentioned so far are conditioned by the desire to make Paul utterly consistent in v. 10 and v. 13, even though he himself makes a clear distinction. Garland is not immune to this disease. He writes ‘the passive form of the verb is used in 7:15 where it is clear that the unbelieving spouse has initiated the separation. . . . It [the passive] also does not conform to legal realities: the wife could not refuse to accept being divorced.’²⁹ This is not convincing. The text of 7:15 reads, ‘If the unbelieving partner separates, let him/her be separated.’ The passive is perfectly in place here, because it refers to an action that has already taken place. The situation is entirely different to that envisaged in v. 10a. Moreover, while it is perfectly true legally that a wife could not refuse a divorce, this does not take into account what a wife, who was opposed to being divorced, could do on the personal and social level. Were she a strong enough personality, she could make life hell on earth for her husband. If she had her own money invested in his affairs, or furnished the guarantees for a line of credit, she could cause him severe financial difficulties.

I can only conclude that there is no convincing objection to taking Paul seriously when he uses the passive *mê chôristhênai* (v. 10b). It is a directive addressed to a woman to avoid having a divorce thrust upon her, *in so far as this is possible*. The qualification is not only demanded by common sense, but it is required by v. 11a. The divorce in question must have been initiated by her husband. Only when this point is taken as established does it become possible to have a serious discussion regarding the circumstances at Corinth, which created the need for Paul’s admonition.

Those who opt for the middle meaning of *chôristhênai* all subscribe, as I do, to the hypothesis that the basic problem at Corinth was an over-realized eschatology. There were those in the community who interpreted the gift of the

²⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.99 n. 267. Similarly Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 281. The quote from Lietzmann is on p. 33 of the article above.

²⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 519.

²⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 295.

Holy Spirit as meaning that they were raised above earthly things. They believed that they had risen from the dead, and so were more like the angels in heaven, who did not marry (Mk 12:25). At this point I separate from the others. Whereas I postulate a single man as holding this opinion, virtually all of my colleagues agree that this attitude was particularly prevalent among women. On the basis of well-known articles by Scroggs and Meeks, Fee wonders ‘whether we do not have here the first evidence for the so-called “eschatological women” in Corinth’.³⁰

This approach is taken a giant step further by Antoinette Wire, who sees this group of women as the root of most of the problems that Paul had to deal with at Corinth.³¹ They are believers whose first step towards independence was the choice of sexual abstinence. They ate in pagan temples to make the point that all food is the gift of the one God. They went bare-headed in public to proclaim that they were no longer subordinate to men. They approved an incestuous union to prove that they were not constrained by convention. None of the commentators subscribes to this reconstruction.³² Nonetheless they persist in seeing women as the main troublemakers in sexual matters at Corinth.

For Fee it is because the woman is mentioned first in v. 10.³³ This, of course, does not follow at all, as Wolff points out.³⁴ Senft believes that since the woman is exhorted to reconciliation in v. 11, she must have instigated the divorce.³⁵ Once again, the logic is defective. In my view the woman was the injured party, who in her justified anger was likely to repay her ill-treatment by contracting another marriage.³⁶ In this case, an exhortation to reconciliation is perfectly understandable, particularly since the erring husband is implicitly criticized in 7:1–7. Finally, we come to v. 13, where Paul explicitly envisages a wife who might have been prepared to exercise her right to divorce. It has no relevance to the interpretation of vv. 10–11, because in vv. 12–14 Paul is concerned with a completely different problem, as his introduction (v. 12a) makes clear.

According to Thiselton, ‘Whether the initiative to separate was taken by one specific man (Murphy-O’Connor) or by a group of women (Findlay, Moffatt, Hurd, Wire) cannot be determined with certainty.’³⁷ This is incorrect. As the

³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 269; see 270.

³¹ *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

³² While they agree in finding ‘spirituals’ at the root of most, if not all, the problems in 1 Cor, they recognize that it is impossible to accept the gratuitous assumptions of Wire that the ‘spirituals’ are not only women, but more specifically women ‘prophets’. See in particular Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 175 n. 21; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 281 n. 5.

³³ *1 Corinthians*, 290.

³⁴ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 141.

³⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 91 n. 5. Similarly Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 283.

³⁶ Thiselton shows that this was also the view of Origen, ‘You are not abusing her, you say, but claiming that you can be chaste and live more purely. But look how your poor wife is being destroyed as a result, because she is unable to endure your “purity”. You should sleep with your wife, not for your sake but for hers’ (*1 Corinthians*, 494, quoting ‘Origen, *1 Cor, Fragment 33*’ *JTS* 9 (1908) 500–1).

³⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 523.

previous paragraph shows, when *chôristhênai* is understood as a middle, there is no logic to the consequent speculation. If the woman divorced because of a commitment to celibacy, why would anyone have thought her interested in remarrying (v. 11a)?³⁸ On the contrary, when *chôristhênai* is accepted for what it admittedly is, namely, a passive, only my interpretation accounts for the evidence.

The condition *ean de kai chôristhê* (v. 11a) is of less importance than has been supposed. I translated this as referring to an event which was impending in past time, 'If she should have been divorced'.³⁹ I suggested that the idea of divorce was in the air when Paul was informed of the situation of this particular marriage, and that he thought that the divorce might have taken place by the time his letter was read at Corinth. This is accepted as the most obvious interpretation by Talbert⁴⁰ and thoroughly argued by Schrage, who writes,

Sprachlich das Normale wäre es zweifellos, wenn Paulus mit dem *ean*-Satz einen künftigen Eventualfall ins Auge fasste ('falls sie sich aber scheiden lässt'), und diese Deutung ist auch hier nicht auszuschliessen. Erheblich seltner, aber doch möglich ist auch die Übersetzung 'falls sie sich aber geschieden hat', d.h. die Beziehung auf eine bereits vollzogene Trennung. Diese Deutung macht sachlich weniger Schwierigkeiten, da 1. sonst die Beschränkung auf die Frau angesichts der sonstigen parallelen Behandlung von Frau und Mann in 1 Kor 7 nicht recht plausibel wird und 2. die Berücksichtigung eines *fait accompli* angesichts des zitierten Herrenwortes eher vorstellbar bleibt.⁴¹

Fee nonetheless insists that it is a present general condition meaning 'if for any reason this condition may possibly occur'.⁴² This is perfectly possible grammatically. It changes nothing (when read in conjunction with the passive in v. 10b), however, beyond forcing us to suggest that, without any specific knowledge of what was in the air at Corinth, Paul with elementary common sense thought that a divorce might be possible.⁴³ This is the type of situation in which Paul must have been acutely conscious of the slowness of communication with his churches (2 Cor 11:28).

Those who consider v. 11a to be a general theoretical condition inevitably use it to throw light on v. 15, where Paul, as we have seen above, permits a divorce. If v. 11a is what they claim, then it is made to function as a limitation of what Jesus said (v. 11b). In other words, Jesus' prohibition of divorce implied his rejection of remarriage. If believers had divorce thrust upon them, then a second

³⁸ For Wolff it is simply a reminder to her to be consistent (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 141).

³⁹ BDF §373. See also Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, 44.

⁴⁰ *Reading Corinthians*, 44.

⁴¹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.101.

⁴² *1 Corinthians*, 295. Similarly Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 523, who relies on B. A. Pearson, 'Jesus' Teachings as Regulations in the Early Church' *Interpretation* 26 (1972) 348–51.

⁴³ In order to avoid the possibility that Paul was dealing with a specific case Neiryck resorts to the Corinthian technique of gross exaggeration (cf. 1 Cor 5:10) in claiming that 1 Cor 7 gives 'the impression of a systematic treatment of all possible questions' ('The Sayings of Jesus in 1 Corinthians', 165). Nothing, in consequence, should be considered as referring to concrete reality at Corinth.

commandment came into effect restricting them to celibacy. Thus, we are told, the believers released from the bond in v. 15 could not remarry.

Proponents of this view, of whom the most decided is Fee,⁴⁴ no doubt have in mind the full form of the dominical prohibition, ‘Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery’ (Lk 16:18). In order to make sure that his audience understood what he meant, Jesus had to insist on the consequences of remarriage. While they might have differing ideas on divorce, all Jews knew that adultery was condemned in the Decalogue (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18; Lk 18:20), and that it carried the death penalty (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22).⁴⁵ In consequence those who divorced subsequently had to remain celibate. In effect, therefore, it was not worth their while to divorce. According to Fitzmyer, the substance of Lk 16:18 has been preserved by Paul, who prohibits remarriage in v. 11a.⁴⁶ If this is correct, it becomes impossible to explain how and why Paul recast the dominical command as he did. Why, for example, would he have split it into two parts and apply one to the woman and the other to the man? Moreover, as I have shown above, v. 11a is not a general principle, but a specific application to a concrete case where Paul believed that the divorce was not justified.⁴⁷

Perhaps the most important insight provided by the full dominical prohibition is its confirmation of the fact that, as far as Jews were concerned, divorce was in effect the authorization to contract another marriage. This was equally true of Gentiles.⁴⁸ Thus, if Paul intended to exclude remarriage on the part of the Christian partner as a matter of principle in v. 15, he would have had to say so explicitly, if he did not wish to be grievously misunderstood.⁴⁹ Thus Collins rightly notes that ‘remarriage was a likely possibility’.⁵⁰ Garland is much more creative in detecting clues to Paul’s attitude, ‘He encourages the unmarried and widows to remarry if they continue to have sexual urges and “burn with passion”, lest they fall victim to fornication (7:6–9). Would not the same principle also apply to the divorced to avoid unnecessary temptation from Satan (7:5)? What if they are not gifted with celibacy? Also, would Paul want the divorced woman to be sentenced to destitution because she was forbidden to remarry?’⁵¹

⁴⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 302–3. He is not alone. Remarriage is also denied by Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, 45. Others, e.g. Wolff, ignore the problem.

⁴⁵ Whether the death penalty was enforced in the first century is an open question. The episode of the woman taken in adultery might suggest that it was (Jn 7:53–8:11), but there were many royal remarriages in the Herodian family. Is this why the Temple Scroll insists that the wife of the king shall ‘alone be with him all the days of her life’ (11Q Temple 57:17–19)?

⁴⁶ *The Gospel According to Luke (X–XXIV)* (AB 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1120.

⁴⁷ Against Hays, who without any grounds says that ‘Paul articulates a general norm in verses 10–11’ (*1 Corinthians*, 119).

⁴⁸ See the references given in note 16 of the article above.

⁴⁹ Did Paul know the ‘adultery’-form of the dominical prohibition, as Fee appears to suggest (*1 Corinthians*, 295 n. 25) or did he simply have a vague memory that Jesus had condemned divorce? The question cannot be answered, which presumably is why commentators do not raise it.

⁵⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 272.

⁵¹ *1 Corinthians*, 296. For similar arguments, see Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 542.

If it is illegitimate to interpret v. 15 in the light of v. 11, the same is not true of the reverse. The prohibition of divorce (v. 11b) is a negative precept, which in both Jewish and Gentile legislation binds everyone, everywhere, under all conditions; it permits of no exceptions. Thus, by making an exception in v. 15, Paul unambiguously demonstrates that he did not understand v. 11b as a binding command. A. Lindemann is quite formal on this point, 'er damit im Widerspruch steht zur Weisung des *kyrios*'.⁵² Similarly Schrage in commenting on v. 15 says, 'Damit bestätigt sich, dass Paulus das in V 10 zitierte Herren word *nicht gesetzlich* versteht.'⁵³ Others read into 'a word of the Lord' an absolute-ness that does more honour to their religious beliefs than to their exegetical perception.

⁵² 'Die Funktion der Herrenworte in der ethischen Argumentation des Paulus im ersten Korintherbrief' in *The Four Gospels 1992* (BETL 100; Festschrift F. Neiryneck; ed. F. Van Segbroeck et al.; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1992), 687.

⁵³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.109, my emphasis. Fee also says, "No divorce" is not turned into law' (*1 Corinthians*, 295), but by this he means only that the woman is not threatened with excommunication!

Works without Faith in 1 Corinthians 7:14

If we abstract from the unwarranted adverb,¹ H. Conzelmann provides a perfect statement of the current state of research on this verse: ‘The explanations that have so far been suggested are almost without exception unsatisfactory.’² In somewhat less restrained language it seems fair to say that the net result of a century of critical endeavour has been to envelop this verse in ever greater obscurity. The diversity of opinions is bewildering. The admittedly incomplete spectrum of views outlined by G. Delling in 1958 comprised eight categories,³ and others have since been added.⁴ In terms of a solution nothing even remotely resembling a consensus can be detected. Nonetheless, a survey of the literature highlights a set of presuppositions that are accepted in whole or in part by all. Certain assumptions are made with sufficient regularity to legitimize the view that they constitute the framework within which the discussion is carried on. The fruitlessness of the debate strongly suggests that these assumptions need to be questioned. After doing so, I shall examine Paul’s concept of ‘holiness’ with a view to proposing an explanation which both fits the context and harmonizes with his habitual pattern of thought.

¹ The following was a paper delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the *Catholic Biblical Association of America* held in Detroit, 1977, and published in *RB* 84 (1977) 349–61, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² *1 Corinthians*, 122.

³ ‘Nun aber sind sie heilig’ in his *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum hellenistischen Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1970), 256–60. This paper was originally published in 1958.

⁴ J. Massingberd Ford understands *apistos* as meaning a person of rabbinically doubtful stock (cf. *m. Kidd.* 4.1ff.), and so paraphrases 1 Cor 7:14, ‘if there is mutual agreement to dwell together, then the “certain stock” (the Christian) makes the other party leuitically clean and consequently the children are *hagia* (*kosher*) and not *akatharta* (*mamzer*)’ in ‘“Hast thou tithed thy Meal?” and “Is thy Child Kosher?” (1 Cor 10:27 ff. and 1 Cor 7:14)’ *JTS* 17 (1966) 76–9. H. Conzelmann maintains that ‘Through the believing partner the marriage between a pagan and a Christian is withdrawn from the control of the powers of the world’ (*1 Corinthians*, 122), an explanation that is for all practical purposes identical with that put forward independently by O. Merk, ‘für den verheirateten Christen besteht nicht die Gefahr einer dämonischen Befleckung in der Ehe, da durch den christlichen Gatten der ungläubige aus dem dämonischen ausgeschieden ist.’ (*Handeln aus Glauben. Die Motivierungen der paulinischen Ethik* (Marburg: Elwert, 1968), 107).

Questionable Assumptions

[350] The first assumption is that the Corinthians feared that a mixed marriage would make the Christian partner and thus the community ‘unclean’.⁵ This is too specific. All that can be affirmed with certitude is that some members of the community were in favour of the dissolution of mixed marriages. Their reason for adopting this position is a matter of speculation. Some conjectures may appear more plausible than others, but none can be permitted to exercise a decisive influence on the investigation of Paul’s meaning. The appearance of *akathartos* in this context does not justify the assumption, because there is no evidence that it expressed the Corinthian perspective. Pauline usage would rather indicate that it was suggested by *apistos*, which in Paul’s lexicon means ‘non-Christian’.⁶ Non-believers existed in a mode of being which Paul regularly characterizes as *akatharsia*.⁷ Moreover, Paul had already used the contrast *akatharsia–hagiasmos* in 1 Thess 4:7 and would use it again in Rom 6:19. The language of 1 Cor 7:14, therefore, is part of the Apostle’s habitual vocabulary, and permits no inferences regarding the motive behind the attitude of the Corinthians.

The second assumption is that Paul is using *akathartos* and *hagios* in a ritualistic legal sense.⁸ In this perspective he would have taught the Corinthians that unbelievers were unclean and could communicate their uncleanness to Christians.⁹ No probability attaches to this assumption. Not only is there no hint that the primitive church was influenced by this Jewish attitude, but it is explicitly contradicted by the practice of the most conservative Christian community. Peter stayed many days in the house of Simon, who was unclean in virtue of his occupation as a tanner (Acts 9:43), and entered the home of Cornelius, who as a Gentile was unclean (Acts 10:25–6). His proclamation, ‘God has shown me that I should not call any man common or [351] unclean (*koinon ê akatharton*)’ (Acts 10:28), is echoed by Paul’s own words, ‘I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean (*koinon*) in itself’ (Rom 14:14). The most decisive argument, however, is the fact that Paul never uses *akatharsia*¹⁰ in a ritual sense; it always carries an ethical connotation.¹¹

⁵ e.g. Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, 31; Delling, *Studien*, 268; J. Blinzler, ‘Zur Auslegung von 1 Kor 7:14’ in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze* (Festschrift J. Schmid; Regensburg: Pustet, 1963), 25.

⁶ See 1 Cor 6:6; 10:27; 14:22–4; 2 Cor 4:4 in conjunction with Rom 11:20, 23. This meaning is so well attested in Paul that the opinion of J. Massingberd Ford (cf. note 4 above) cannot be granted any plausibility.

⁷ See 1 Thess 2:3; 4:7; Gal 5:19; 2 Cor 12:21; Rom 1:24; 6:19; Col 3:5.

⁸ So Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 166; J. Jeremias, *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 54; G. Walther, ‘Übergreifende Heiligkeit und Kindertaufe im Neuen Testament’ *EvTh* 25 (1965) 668–74.

⁹ ‘Im Judentum die Unreinheit als ansteckende und weiterwirkende Kraft gedacht ist’ (F. Hauck, *TWNT* 3.432).

¹⁰ For references see note 7 above.

¹¹ Cf. F. Hauck, *TWNT* 3.432; Blinzler, ‘Auslegung’ (note 5) 35–6.

The third assumption is the most important and the most widespread. It maintains that Paul here uses *hagiazô* and *hagios* in an absolutely unique sense. This is stated formally by W. G. Kümmel, 'da man den dinglichen Charakter des hier und nur hier bei Paulus verwendeten Heiligkeitsbegriffes nicht bestreiten kann'.¹² This hypothesis underlies a wide variety of opinions stretching from the concept of 'holiness' as a spiritual substance or power¹³ to that of 'holiness' as an objective relationship to the Christian partner,¹⁴ or to God,¹⁵ or to sanctity itself.¹⁶ It is easy to see how this assumption originated. Paul's use of *hêgiastai* here is clearly distinguished from the *sôseis* of v. 16 to which it looks forward. The *hêgiasmenos* of v. 14, therefore, is not a *sôzomenos*. But elsewhere Paul uses *hagiazô* and its cognates only of those who are in a state of salvation. Hence, the usage in v. 14 is unique. This conclusion cannot be disputed, and were the above-mentioned scholars to remain on this level there could be no objection. They, however, take a further step by assuming that, because the usage here is unique, it is radically different from Paul's usage everywhere.

The assumption is illegitimate on two counts. First, it is bad methodology to assume an absolutely unique meaning. One should rather assume that, while the usage in v. 14 is distinctive, it must have some relationship to Paul's habitual concept of 'holiness'. Secondly, in dealing with such a delicate issue in a community that was prone to misunderstand him (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–11), it is highly improbable that Paul would give a key term in his vocabulary a sense that was completely new to his readers. The mere fact that Paul argues from the attitude of the Corinthians towards their children is based on the presupposition that they knew what he meant when he said that their children were 'holy'. The whole point of v. 14 is the extension to a [352] pagan of a concept that had hitherto been applied only to Christians. It seems most probable, in consequence, that Paul intended *hêgiastai* and *hagia* to be understood in a sense that could easily be inferred from his normal usage. This brings us to the question of what Paul understood by 'holiness'.

Paul's Concept of Holiness

As a preliminary it must be noted that in Paul's writings there is no difference in meaning between any of the cognates of *hagiazô*. This is clear from the freedom with which they are interchanged in passages which are linked by other common denominators. Thus *hagiazô* (1 Thess 5:23) = *hagiôsynê* (1 Thess 3:12–13); *hagiozo* (Rom 15:16) = *hagiasmos* (2 Thess 2:13); *hagiazô*

¹² Anhang to Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, 177. Similarly Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 121 and Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 164.

¹³ R. Asting, *Die Heiligkeit im Urchristentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 208.

¹⁴ Dellling, *Studien*, 263.

¹⁵ H. Schlier, 'Zur kirchlichen Lehre von der Taufe' *TLZ* 72 (1947) 333.

¹⁶ J. Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London, 1959), 84.

(1 Thess 5:23) = *hagios* (1 Cor 7:34); *hagiasmos* (Rom 6:19; 2 Thess 2:13–14) = *hagios* (Rom 12:1; Col 1:22); *hagios* (Col 3:12–14) = *hagiosynê* (1 Thess 3:12–13). Moreover, no development can be discerned in Paul's usage.

The passages in which Paul employs *hagiazô* and its cognates can be divided into two categories, both of which are represented in 1 Cor.

In the first series 'holiness' appears as an attribute of those who have been baptized into Christ. 1 Cor is addressed to *hêgiasmenois en Christô Iêsou, klêtois hagiois* (1:2). These are those of whom he says *apelousasthe, hêgiasthête, edikaiôthête* (6:11), and who are presented as *sôsomenoi* (1:18). The goal of the Apostle's missionary endeavour is to present the Gentiles to God as an offering *hêgiasmenê en pneumati hagiô* (Rom 15:16). In consequence, all who have been brought to faith in Christ are qualified as *hagioi*,¹⁷ and the community can be described as *ho naos tou theou hagioi* (1 Cor 3:17). Despite the cultic resonances of this last text, it seems clear that the fundamental connotation of 'holiness' in this category is separation. In virtue of their response to the divine call articulated by the ministers of the word (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2) the believers have been separated from the world dominated by Sin (Rom 6:22) and have been brought into the grace and fellowship of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:6).¹⁸ By [353] submitting themselves to the rite of baptism (1 Cor 6:11) they have entered a community whose existential attitudes sharply distinguish it from its surrounding environment (Phil 2:14–16). Those who do not know Christ are incapable of giving glory to God (Rom 3:23) but those who are in Christ, who is our sanctification (1 Cor 1:30), have been rendered capable of glorifying God (1 Cor 11:7).¹⁹

This capacity, however, may or may not be actualized, and it is on this aspect that Paul's concern is focused in the second series of texts. In the immediate context of the verse under discussion we read, 'The unmarried woman and the virgin cares for the things of the Lord in order that she may be holy in body and spirit (*hina ê hagia kai tô sômati kai tô pneumati*), but the married woman cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband' (1 Cor 7:34). Here

¹⁷ The members of Paul's own communities: Rom 8:27; 12:13; 16:2, 15; 2 Cor 1:1; 13:12; Phil 1:1; 4:21–2; Col 1:1, 2, 4; 3:12; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Thess 1:10; Philem 5, 7. The community in Jerusalem: Rom 15:25–6; 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12.

¹⁸ By interpreting *klêtoi hagioi* as simply an appropriation of the community of Israel as *mikrà godesch* (Exod 12:16; Lev 23:2–44; Num 28:25), L. Cerfaux fails to recognize the specific value that Paul attaches to *kalein* (*La théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948), 88ff.). God's call is an ever present reality (Gal 5:8; 1 Thess 5:24) and the call to salvation is prolonged in the call to eschatological reward (1 Thess 2:12; Phil 3:14; Col 1:5, 23). H. Schlier has formulated the Apostle's thought with admirable precision, 'Der *kletos* ist nicht der einmal Gerufene und dann von dem Ruf fort und anderswohin Entfernte, sondern er ist der nun in diesem Ruf als einem Nachruf bleibend Stehende' (*Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1962), 83). Hence, although in a state of salvation, the *klêtoi hagioi* stand under an imperative which gives this state an essentially dynamic dimension.

¹⁹ For this sense of *doxa theou*, see my 'The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Cor 11:2–16' *JBL* 95 (1976) 619–20 = Chapter 9.

it is clearly a question of a pattern of behaviour which is contrasted with that of the 'world'. The state to which she has been called imposes a demand which must be met if the title of 'saint' is not to be evacuated of all meaning.

The obvious ethical dimension of 'holiness' here is confirmed by equation between 'to care for the things of the Lord' and 'to please the Lord' established by the previous verse (1 Cor 7:33), because this latter phrase also appears in 1 Thess 4:1–7: 'Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you should walk and please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. For you know what counsels we gave you in the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God your sanctification (*touto gar estin thelêma tou theou ho hagiastos hymôn*); that you abstain from immorality; that each one of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honour, not in the passion of desire like the heathen who know not God . . . For God has not called us for uncleanness but in holiness (*ou gar ekalesen hêmas ho theos epi akatharsia all'en hagiastô*).'²⁰ The Thessalonians had been called into a state of 'holiness', but God's purpose was not to sanction the 'uncleanness' that had characterized their conduct as pagans. In order to be pleasing to God, their behaviour must manifest different qualities. It must avoid the self-centredness that is typical of unredeemed [354] existence, and must establish the conditions in which love can become active (1 Thess 4:9–12).²⁰ This is the realized 'holiness' willed by God.

Precisely the same contrast between the two modes of existence open to humanity appears in Rom 6:19–22: 'Just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and to ever greater lawlessness (*tê akatharsia kai têtê anomia eis têtên anomian*), so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification (*têtê dikaiosynê eis hagiastomon . . .*). But now having been freed from Sin, having been enslaved to God, your fruit is sanctification, and the end is eternal life.' Now that they have passed from one mode of being to another the behaviour pattern of believers must undergo a change. *Hagiastos* is contrasted with *akatharsia*, which is more precisely defined by *anomia*. The behavioural element is strongly underlined by the reference to 'your members', and by the hortatory character of the imperatives. Although nothing in the language provides unequivocal confirmation, it seems most natural to give *hagiastos* here a progressive connotation.²¹

This interpretation is reinforced by a parallel text in which the same verb (*paristaô*) is associated with *hagios*: 'I appeal to you . . . to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Do not permit yourselves to be conformed to this age, but permit yourselves to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may determine what is the will of God, the good and

²⁰ For a more detailed analysis of these directives, see my *L'existence chrétienne selon saint Paul* (LD 80; Paris: Cerf, 1974), 106–14.

²¹ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 169.

acceptable and perfect' (Rom 12:1–2). Believers have to make themselves²² holy and acceptable to God. This is achieved through the progressive renewal of their mind (*tê anakainsôe tou noos*), which enables them to perceive and respond to the demand of God in the concrete circumstances of their lives.²³ The influence to which they must submit themselves is not that of the 'world', but that of the Spirit which conforms them to the image of the Son (Rom 8:29) 'who loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal 2:20). As the discernment that is born of authentic love (Rom 12:9; Phil 1:9–10) grows, and their response becomes more perfect, they progress in 'holiness'.

In consequence, Paul prays that God and Christ will aid the believers as they grow in 'holiness'. 'May the Lord make you abound and [355] increase in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness (*amemptous en hagiôsynê*) ... at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints' (1 Thess 3:12–13); 'May the God of peace himself sanctify your whole being (*hagiasai hymas holoteleis*), and may your entire being, spirit, soul and body, be kept blamelessly at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess 5:23). The evocation of the Parousia highlights the aspect of judgement which has been implicit in the texts hitherto considered. The imperative of growth in 'holiness' implies the possibility of failure. Here the believers are warned that in order to obtain a favourable verdict they must be completely 'holy'. It is clearly indicated that this involves, not only a blameless life, but a vital and all-embracing love. To this end Paul proposes his own conduct as an example, and what this involves is clearly spelt out in 2 Cor 1:12, 'We behaved in the world, and especially towards you, with holiness and sincerity (*en hagioteti kai eilikrineia*), not with fleshly wisdom but with the grace of God.'

The juxtaposition of *amemptos* and *eilikrineia* unambiguously underlines the ethical dimension of 'holiness' in these passages. The same association appears in another passage which also stresses the conditional aspect. 'You who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable (*parastêsai hymas hagiou kai amômous kai anegklêtous*) before him, provided you continue in the faith' (Col 1:21–3). 'Holiness' is not given once and for all. It demands a continuous effort of fidelity which involves both truth and behaviour.

This rapid survey reveals that 'holiness' for Paul is essentially a dynamic concept. Those who in virtue of a divine call have been separated from the 'world' are expected to exhibit a pattern of behaviour that is the antithesis of their former conduct. The 'holiness' which is the fruit of love in action is what gives meaning to the qualification of the believers as 'saints'. There can be no doubt about the

²² As in Rom 6:19, *paristanô* here is virtually equivalent to 'render, make'; cf. Col 1:22; Eph 5:27.

²³ On the meaning of the will of God in this passage, see Dodd, *Romans*, 193.

accuracy of R. Asting's conclusion regarding the theme of 'holiness' in the Pauline letters, 'Das neue Gepräge, das er dem Heiligkeitsbegriff gegeben hat, besteht auch hier in einer Heraushebung des Ethischen.'²⁴

If this is kept clearly in mind we are in a position to consider a passage whose significance for the interpretation of 1 Cor 7:14 has [356] not been given the importance it deserves. In writing to the Thessalonians Paul provides a concise but complex statement of the process of salvation, 'God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief in the truth, to which he also called you through our gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess 2:13–14). The goal of the divine choice, which is actualized in the call, is expressed in two parallel phrases introduced by *eis*, namely, *eis sôtêrian* and *eis peripoîsîn doxês tou kyriou Iêsou Christou*. Salvation consists in the acquisition of a mode of being which honours God by corresponding exactly to his intention for humanity.²⁵ The objective means to this end is the preaching of the gospel introduced by instrumental *dia*, while the subjective means, introduced by instrumental *en*, englobes two aspects qualified as *hagiasmos pneumatos* and *pistis alêtheias*. These are most naturally understood as referring to the behavioural and intellectual components of the Christian life. This dimension of *hagiasmos* has been adequately demonstrated above, and *pistis* is the recognition of the truth of the gospel (Rom 10:8–10; Phil 1:27). The two aspects are intimately associated, but they can be formally distinguished.

Works without Faith

The notional distinction between *pistis* and *hagiasmos* in 2 Thess 2:13–14 throws light on 1 Cor 7:14 because there only the latter is present while the former is merely Paul's hope (v. 16; cf. 1 Pet 3:1–2). The pagan partner is *hagios* but at the same time *apistos*. In the light of what we have seen of Paul's understanding of 'holiness', the most natural interpretation is that, although the pagan has not committed him/herself to Christ in faith, he or she nonetheless exhibits a pattern of behaviour that is analogous to the conduct expected of the *hagioi*.

Can this be verified? An affirmative answer is imperative. By consenting to live with the Christian the pagan brings his/her behaviour into line both with the intention of the Creator concerning marriage ('The two shall become one flesh' Gen 2:24 = 1 Cor 6:16) and with the dominical directive prohibiting

²⁴ *Heiligkeit*, 202.

²⁵ For B. Rigaux 'glory' here is Christ's 'qualité de Seigneur: la puissance dans la splendeur qui éclatera en son jour, c'est-à-dire lorsque son royaume sera complet. . . . Les saints en seront les bénéficiaires' (*Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1956), 686). On the contrary, the use of the aorist *ekalesen* shows that 'glory' is already a present possession, because in Paul the 'call' is always effective. This passage is parallel, not to 2 Thess 1:10; Rom 5:2; 8:18, but to 1 Cor 11:7 and 2 Cor 3:18. *Peripoîsîs* does not carry a future connotation, as the formula *eis peripoîsîn sôtêrian* (1 Thess 5:9) demonstrates; see Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 570–1.

divorce (1 Cor 7:10–11). [357] In this precise respect, therefore, the behaviour of the pagan is identical with the conduct that Paul expects of Christians, and so the predication of ‘holiness’ is justified. There is, of course, a difference. The ‘holiness’ of believers is intimately related to an internal attitude, namely, explicit commitment to Christ and responsiveness to his demands. This is not necessarily true of the pagan because his motives for maintaining the marriage may be unworthy of a Christian. This is why I say that his or her behaviour is only analogous to that of Christians. There is an external identity, but there may be an internal difference. We do not know what Paul assumed regarding the motives of the pagan, but since Paul was a totally committed follower of Christ, it is at least arguable that, in default of any evidence, he assumed the best and attributed the pagan’s decision to love.

Such speculation, however, is irrelevant. The important point is that Paul predicates ‘holiness’ only on the basis of behaviour. It is not an automatic concomitant of belief. This is clearly demonstrated by his attitude towards the Galatians. Even though they had responded to the call of God in Christ he never once applies *hagiazô* or any of its cognates to them. Given the freedom with which he uses ‘holiness’ in all other epistles, this silence can only be deliberate, and the whole tenor of the letter permits only one plausible explanation: their conduct did not merit the qualification. In Galatia, therefore, we have the reverse of the dichotomy in 1 Cor 7:14. The Galatians were *pistoi* but not *hagioi*; the pagan is *apistos* but nonetheless *hagios*.²⁶ Just as Paul hopes that the *pistoi* will become *hagioi*, so he hopes that the *hagios* will become *pistos*. In each case the presence of one element of what should be an indissoluble pair founds the hope that the other will come into existence.

In speaking of the pagan Paul uses the verb *hêgiastai*, which carries a temporal connotation. The ‘holiness’ of the unbeliever, therefore, began at a fixed moment. Can this be determined? The fact that Paul uses *syneudokei*, when *oikeô* alone would have been adequate to describe the factual situation, indicates that he attaches importance to the consent of the unbeliever. Hence, we are entitled to infer that his or her ‘holiness’ dates from the moment of decision, since this is the only [358] element that the context provides. The conduct of the unbeliever, therefore, is not simply a fact, but a consciously chosen pattern of behaviour.

This aspect is completely ignored by those who contend that ‘holiness’ here has a thinglike character or is simply an objective relationship.²⁷ For these, sanctity is transferred, or the relationship comes into being, when one party is converted to Christ. Not only does this have no basis in the text, but such

²⁶ The force of this argument cannot be diminished by claiming that the Galatians were no worse than the Corinthians. This is denied by the difference between Gal and 1 & 2 Cor. In Galatia it was a question of a radical perversion of the gospel. The fundamental insight of the Corinthians was correct, because they assumed the responsibility of freedom in Christ. They certainly made errors in reducing theory to practice, but these were born of inexperience.

²⁷ See notes 12–16 inclusive above.

so-called 'solutions' are nothing but meaningless verbalism. One the basis of what we have seen, a thinglike 'holiness' would have been completely unpalatable to Paul. To speak of an objective relationship to God, as Blinzler does, conveys nothing intelligible as he himself concedes, 'Wie sich der Apostel die Zueignung des Heiligkeitscharakters im einzelnen vorgestellt hat, lässt sich nicht sagen.'²⁸ Blinzler forces himself into this sorry impasse through his refusal to attach any importance to the subjective dispositions of the unbeliever.²⁹ The willingness of the unbeliever to continue the relationship is formally underlined by Paul, and this subjective attitude has had a decisive influence on his or her behaviour. It is on this observable phenomenon that Paul bases his predication of 'holiness'.

To this Blinzler will object that the particle *en* (*en tē gynaiki—en tō adelphō*) must have an instrumental meaning and, in consequence, that the 'holiness' of the unbeliever must be caused by the Christian. This is in no way evident. The texts that he cites (Rom 5:9; 3:24; 1 Cor 6:2; Rev 17:51) prove only what no one has ever disputed, namely that the particle *can* have this meaning. It is perfectly clear, however, that *en* does not always have this meaning in Paul. Very often it is impossible to determine its precise signification (e.g. *parakaloumen en kyriō Iêsou*, 1 Thess 4:1), and we have to be content with a translation which expresses a vague relationship. 'On account of', suggested by BAGD for 1 Cor 7:14, and adopted by Delling,³⁰ adequately satisfies the context. The unbeliever has been sanctified on account of the believer, since the decision to maintain the marriage necessarily involves the Christian, whose quality is what brings the matter within Paul's ken. The state of the unbelieving partner is conditioned by that of the Christian, but only [359] in the sense that without the latter it would not have been brought to Paul's attention.

Blinzler exaggerates in claiming that the decisive factor is 'der Umstand, dass seine Frau glaubig und als solche "heilig" ist'.³¹ The text makes no mention of the 'holiness' of the Christian, and the evidence of Gal prohibits any such facile equation of belief and 'holiness'. Delling, on the other hand, does not go far enough in his claim that 'holiness' refers only to the marriage relationship as such: 'In der Beziehung auf das christliche Familienglied ist das unchristliche, noch unter der Gewalt der Sünde stehende, noch nicht neugeschaffene in der Weise rein, dass jenes ohne Schaden mit ihm zusammenleben kann.'³² This tautology is as meaningless as Blinzler's solution, because it makes Paul say that because the believer is in fact married, he or she can stay married. Delling's view makes v. 14 simply reiterate v. 13, and takes no account of the *gar* which introduces v. 14 and which suggests that this latter verse contains the justification for the assertion that

²⁸ 'Auslegung', 37. ²⁹ Ibid. 33–4. ³⁰ *Studien*, 289.

³¹ 'Auslegung', 34. In speaking of a transference of the 'holiness' of the believer to the unbeliever (31 n. 43) he contradicts his assertion that the 'holiness' of the pagan consists in a purely objective relationship which is not based in anything that the unbeliever possesses (37).

³² *Studien*, 263; cf. 268–9.

the marriage should continue. In keeping with Paul's habitual understanding of 'holiness' this justification is rooted in the behaviour of the unbeliever.

Paul, however, recognized that he had hitherto spoken of 'holiness' to the Corinthians only in the context of commitment to Christ. Here he was using the same concept but only in an analogous sense. Hence, he had to provide a link which would permit them to understand him. To this end, therefore, he evokes their attitude towards their children, 'Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy.' The meaning of this statement is one of the most controverted problems in the NT. How old are the children? Are they baptized or unbaptized? Are they children of Christian or mixed marriages? Such questions have been occasioned by the dispute regarding the fundamental issue: What is the parallel between the Corinthian children and the unbelieving marriage partner?

The diversity of responses is due in great measure to the fact that commentators have been operating within a mental framework which Paul did not share. They assume an understanding of baptism, and concepts of 'holiness' and 'uncleanness', that diverge significantly from the Apostle's, and they interpolate aspects to which he [360] does not allude. If we keep strictly within the frame of reference provided by the context, the complications fall away and a simple answer becomes apparent.

If Paul presents the children as 'holy', it is to justify his attribution of 'holiness' to the unbeliever. Since the pagan is presented as *apistos*, the most obvious hypothesis is that the children are also *apistoi*.³³ For salvation Paul demanded an explicit act of faith in Christ, 'If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved' (Rom 10:9–10). Such a confession is an act of maturity. Jewish³⁴ and Roman³⁵ law is perfectly clear on the age of legal responsibility, but completely vague on the question of the age of moral responsibility. It would seem reasonable, however, to place it around the advent of puberty (12–14 years). Prior to this date a child is incapable of a mature act, of which the act of faith is but one example. Objectively, therefore, children could be classified as *apistoi*. That Paul does not employ the term in their regard is perhaps to be explained by the fact that in itself *apistos* implies the possibility of choice.

Delling has shown that *teknon* in itself does not imply any particular age.³⁶ It seems extremely unlikely, however, that Paul would have referred to adult members of the community in terms of their relationship to their parents. To have done so would have made sense only if the community contained individuals who had refused to make the act of faith, but who were recognized as members

³³ The situation has been falsified by the introduction of the question of baptism. The pagan is certainly unbaptized, but what Paul formally underlines is lack of faith. The baptismal practice at Corinth (about which we are totally uninformed) has nothing to do with the point at issue.

³⁴ See *m. Niddab* 5.6.

³⁵ See *PW* 15/2.1769–71; Supplement 14.571–81.

³⁶ *Studien*, 270–80.

because of their family relationship. But in this case Paul would surely have employed a different and more explicit formulation, because his argument would have been greatly strengthened. Moreover, is it plausible that adults who had refused the act of faith would want to be associated with the community? Hence, it seems most natural to understand *to tekna hymôn* as referring to children who had not reached maturity, with a possible extension to include dependent children who had passed this age. The general character of Paul's formulation suggests a generic situation which is verified only in this interpretation, which has the [361] additional advantage of bypassing the unanswerable questions regarding the baptism of children or the marriage situations of which they are part.

Even though such children have not formally committed themselves to Christ in faith their behaviour makes them *hagia*. Paul's basis here is the simple fact of experience that children assimilate the behaviour pattern of their parents. If the conduct of the parents is categorized as 'holy', then that of the children merits the same qualification. This remains true even of mixed marriages, because Blinzler has correctly pointed out: 'Keiner Mutter war es, nachdem sie sich zum Christentum bekehrt hatte, etwa eingefallen, ihren Kindern, die gleich ihrem Gatten ungläubig blieben, aus dem Weg zu gehen. Kein Vater, der als einziges Familienmitglied die Taufe empfangen hatte, war je auf die Idee gekommen, seine Kinder, um durch sie nicht verunreinigt zu werden, zu verstossen oder zu verlassen.'³⁷

The Corinthians recognize that the behaviour of their children, who are not yet formally believers, is appropriate to the community's new being in Christ. It is not a foreign element which would corrupt the moral tone of the community. Hence, they should recognize that the behaviour of the pagan who desires to remain united to a Christian convert belongs to the same category, and they should no more desire to exclude him than they would their own children. More positively, just as children whose conduct has been formed according to Christian standards grow naturally into the act of faith, so there is hope that the unbeliever, whose conduct (in a least one area) already conforms to Christian standards, will also come to accept Christ one day.

By interpreting 'holiness' in 1 Cor 7:14 in terms of behaviour, therefore, it is possible to propose an explanation which harmonizes with Paul's habitual use of *hagiazô* and its cognates, which brings out the unity of vv. 12–16, and which highlights the organic link between this section and its context.

POSTSCRIPT

The originality of my article was to stress ethical behaviour as the key component of 'holiness' in this context. Paul predicates 'holy' of the unconverted partner in

³⁷ 'Auslegung', 40.

a mixed marriage, and of the Corinthian children, on the basis, not of their relationship to the Christian community (his normal use of 'holy'), but of their comportment. They were acting as Paul would wish Christians to behave.

This hypothesis has been adopted only by Thiselton, for whom the major advantage is that it offers a unified explanation of the predication of 'holiness' in both parts of the verse.³⁸ According to Fee, on the contrary, my theory '[has] some especially attractive features, but finally [does] not fit the context as well . . . Although correctly stressing the behavioral aspect of holiness in Paul, it is less than clear in the context that Paul's use of the perfect tense, modified by the preposition *en*, will sustain that suggestion.'³⁹ This criticism is also taken up by Garland. My view, he says, 'does not comport well with the use of the perfect tense. Paul is referring to a state, not an action.'⁴⁰ This last point is reiterated by Schrage, who argues, 'Zudem ist *en* instrumental, d.h. die Heiligkeit kommt den Nichtchristen durch die Christen und nicht durch sie selbst zu'. Just previously he had written, 'Aber so wie es keinen Imperativ ohne Indikativ gibt, so auch keine Heiligkeitspraxis [as I proposed] ohne ein Heiligkeitswiderfahrnis.'⁴¹

Before dealing with these objections, it will be helpful to see how these authors interpret the 'holiness' acquired by the pagan partner through remaining in the marriage. For Schrage, 'Der Christ lebt sozusagen in einem Ausstrahlungsbzw. Kraftfeld, das auch Nichtchristen nicht unberührt lässt, in das sie wie mit magnetischer Kraft mit hineingezogen werden.'⁴² Such wonderfully profound-sounding theological language, alas, immediately disintegrates once it is pressed for meaning. What is the evidence among contemporary Christians, who are essentially no different from their Corinthian predecessors, for this postulated 'forcefield' that reaches out to embrace an unbelieving partner? Moreover, why should it be limited to a husband or wife? Why not a blood brother or sister?

Fee avoids such meaningless verbiage. The key to a correct interpretation, he maintains, is to be found in Paul's words in Rom 11:16, 'if the root is holy, so are the branches'. Thus, as long as unbelievers remain in the marriage 'the potential for their realizing salvation remains',⁴³ by which he means that 'they have been set apart in a special way that hopefully will lead to their salvation'.⁴⁴

There is no real analogy between 1 Cor 7:14 and Rom 11:16, as Wolff⁴⁵ and Garland⁴⁶ have pointed out. Both in addition correctly protest against giving the perfect *hēgiastai* here a future meaning.⁴⁷ Not only is that rare in the New Testament,⁴⁸ but it never occurs when the verb appears at the beginning of a sentence. Moreover, if Paul understood 'holy' in the sense of a hoped-for result,

³⁸ 1 Corinthians, 530.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians, 299–300 n. 20.

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians, 287.

⁴¹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.105.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.105.

⁴³ 1 Corinthians, 300.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 301. This future-oriented view of 'holiness' is also put forward by Strobel, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 122, and by Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 169.

⁴⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 143–4.

⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians, 287.

⁴⁷ So also Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.105.

⁴⁸ BDF §344.

he could have predicated it of the Galatians! The world would have been peopled by 'saints', if he was thinking in terms of *potential* converts!

Garland acquiesces in Schrage's view by claiming that the unbelieving partner is brought into 'a power sphere of holiness',⁴⁹ but he also is attracted by the view, first put forward by Z. W. Falk,⁵⁰ and taken up by R. Collins,⁵¹ that in Jewish wedding ceremonies of the period the groom said to the bride, 'you are made holy to me'. This meant that she now shared his covenanted status. What we have in 1 Cor 7:14, therefore, is 'holiness' by association. To reinforce this interpretation Garland evokes the transferability of 'holiness' which Rosner found in Exod 29:37 and 30:29,⁵² but without noting as the latter did, that here it is a question of things (notably the 'altar') not persons. The problem with such 'holiness by proxy' is that it does not even remotely resemble any concept of 'holiness' that can be ascribed to Paul. Those who enjoy the title 'saints' earn it by their behaviour. Here the failure of the Galatians must be kept constantly in mind.

A variant of this halakic approach is put forward by Y. M. Gillihan, 'If we understand the phrase *hēgiasthai en* instrumentally and recognize it as a Greek appropriation of the Pharisaic/rabbinic betrothal idiom קדושב then the problem is resolved: Paul simply means that the marriage is licit, since by Jewish convention the eligible status of one spouse was confirmed by the other's act of entering into a "holy" or licit marriage contract.'⁵³ In consequence, the 'holiness' of the children simply meant that they were legitimate. The text on which she relies in fact condemns her hypothesis, 'A man betroths a woman by himself or through his agent. A woman is betrothed by herself or through her representative' (*m. Qidd.* 2.1). Clearly the woman can only accept the offer of marriage. She cannot initiate it. Paul, on the contrary, puts the female partner on exactly the same footing as the male. A Pharisee might have understood what Paul said of the man as a halakic ruling, but the moment he heard 'the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife' (v. 14) he would immediately infer that Paul must be thinking in completely different categories. Gillihan is aware of this problem because she distinguishes the male act of betrothing (*piel*) and the female act of being betrothed (*hithpael* or more usually *pual*). Her way around the difficulty, however, is merely to say blandly, 'Paul's usage puts the believer, male or female, in the more powerful "male" role of sanctifying/causing licit betrothal, while the unbeliever implicitly becomes "feminized".'⁵⁴ The only way to make her halakic interpretation convincing would be to provide unambiguous parallels in rabbinic sources to such 'masculinization' of a Jewish woman.

⁴⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 288.

⁵⁰ *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth* (AGAJU 11; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 285.

⁵¹ *1 Corinthians*, 266.

⁵² *1 Corinthians*, 289.

⁵³ 'Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, the Defilement of Offspring, and the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:14' *JBL* 121 (2002) 738.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 718.

It is against the background of such unsatisfactory answers that we must now return to the objections raised against my hypothesis. The first is that the perfect tense of *hēgiastai* militates against the emphasis that I laid on the comportment of the unbelieving partner, who *de facto* was behaving as a Christian. The perfect tense evokes a state, we are told, not an action. This is to reduce the debate to a *lis de verbis*. As far as I am concerned, a consistent pattern of behaviour is a state. It is the way the person is.

The second objection is that, for Paul, the ‘holiness’ of the unbelieving partner is something that is done to him, and not something that he himself does, as I claimed. Schrage is correct in insisting that *en* must be instrumental. Not only is that the way it would instinctively be understood, but Wolff has pointed out that when Paul associates *hagiazein* in the passive with *en* (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; and Rom 15:16) the preposition indicates the means whereby sanctification is achieved. Even if *en* is given a locative value in these texts, it still must carry an instrumental dimension.

So then what does sanctification ‘through the believing partner’ mean? If we are to avoid the unacceptable suggestions criticized in my article and above, we can only say that it was through his/her marriage to a believer that Paul came to think of an unbeliever in terms of ‘holiness’. Without that instrumental/causal link Paul would never have thought of categorizing the behaviour of the unbeliever in terms appropriate only to a believer (‘saint’).⁵⁵ Of course, one can also speculate that the unbeliever was influenced both initially and continuously by the comportment of the believing partner.⁵⁶ In general Schrage is right in insisting that there is no imperative without an indicative, but this case is an exception. Paul knew that the Corinthians would have some difficulty in understanding what he meant, since he departed from his usual practice in predicating ‘holiness’. Thus he clarified it for them by evoking the ‘holiness’ of their children.

A number of commentators have recognized that Paul’s argument carries no force unless there is a clear and unforced analogy between the children and the unbelieving partner. Thus, they say that the children cannot have been baptized.⁵⁷ Nothing in the context suggests a reference to baptism, which once brought in gives rise to a series of unanswerable questions that are a distraction from the point that Paul is trying to make.⁵⁸ As I stressed in the above article,

⁵⁵ This demands that the original event evoked by the perfect tense be either the baptism of the converted partner, if they were already married, or the marriage of one who is already a Christian to an unbeliever. So rightly Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 266.

⁵⁶ So rightly Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 144; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 528.

⁵⁷ So Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 53; Strobel, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 122; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.107; Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 144.

⁵⁸ e.g. they ask why the children were not baptized, and speculate on the possible reasons, namely, an objection by the unbelieving partner or by the child him/herself, or on the grounds that in Jewish law a child born to a female proselyte need not be baptized as his mother was. So Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.107–8; Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 144. The underlying assumption that

since the non-Christian partner is presented as ‘unbelieving’, then it is most probable that Paul thought of the children as ‘unbelievers’.⁵⁹ This they were technically because they had not made the act of faith required for salvation (Rom 10:9–10).⁶⁰

In this respect, it is important to keep in mind that for Paul (*ta tekna hymôn akatharta estin, nyn de hagia estin*) the Corinthian children (like the unbelieving parent) were both ‘unclean’ and ‘holy’ *at the same time*.⁶¹ Despite the ‘now’, it is not as if in the past they had been ‘unclean’ but now in the present they are ‘holy’. Clearly the children are viewed simultaneously from different perspectives. When looked at in one way (faith) the children were ‘unclean’, but in another sense (behaviour) they were ‘holy’. They were in fact unbelievers but one could think of them as Christians.

Whose children are in question? In my article I assumed that they were the children of believing Corinthians in general. It now seems more likely that the primary referent is the children of the mixed marriages under consideration, but an extension to all the children of the community should not be excluded.⁶² In what sense were they ‘holy’? Garland suggests that they were ‘too young to be responsible for their own behaviour’.⁶³ Not only does this assume a knowledge of the situation at Corinth that no exegete can have, but it makes nonsense of Paul’s argument, because the unbelieving spouse was certainly morally competent. The children must be ‘holy’ in the same way that Paul thought the unbelieving partner to be ‘holy’. Thiselton’s formulation can hardly be bettered, ‘If the spouse falls under the influence of the Christian partner’s faith, lifestyle, prayer, and living out of the gospel, how much more shall not the children? . . . Even if only one parent is Christian the children will be marked by an element of shaping and “difference” from a wholly pagan environment.’⁶⁴

the Corinthians practised infant baptism is unwarranted, as Dunn points out (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 458).

⁵⁹ To the best of my knowledge Wolff is the only commentator to make this explicit, ‘kann es sich dabei nur um ungläubige Kinder handeln’ (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 144—his emphasis).

⁶⁰ Senft came very close in writing, ‘Aucun couple chrétien ne songe à considérer ses enfants comme *impurs*, sous prétexte qu’ils ne sont pas au même titre que leurs parents des membres de l’Église!’ (*1 Corinthiens*, 93–4).

⁶¹ I owe this to a personal communication from Leif Vaage.

⁶² So rightly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.107.

⁶³ *1 Corinthians*, 289.

⁶⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 530. This must be what Hays means in writing ‘Holiness is, as it were, contagious’ (*1 Corinthians*, 121).

6

Corinthians 8:6: Cosmology or Soteriology?

ἀλλ' ἡμῶν
εἰς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ
εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.¹

For us

one God, the Father, from whom (come) all things and towards whom we (go), and
one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom (come) all things and by whom we (go).²

There would be few authors who would disagree with H. Lietzmann's admirably brief interpretation of this verse, 'Gott ist letzter Urgrund und Zweck, Christus Vermittler des Weltgeschehens wie des Christenlebens.'³ The passage is widely accepted as the earliest attestation of belief in the pre-existence of Christ. This, however, is but an inference drawn from the conclusion that the verse presents Christ as having had a role in the creation of the universe. It is not denied that the verse also has a soteriological connotation, but to interpreters this has much less importance than the cosmological dimension. In this article I shall argue that the verse has an exclusively soteriological meaning, and that the cosmological interpretation is unfounded.

It is necessary to begin with the question of whether 1 Cor 8:6 is a citation, because this raises the possibility of two levels of meaning, that intended by the original author and that intended by Paul, when he incorporated it into his letter. This will lead naturally into an investigation of its literary form and Sitz im Leben. Then I shall examine the factors which have led exegetes to find a cosmic meaning in the text, before passing to what I believe to be its true interpretation.

¹ This article was originally published in *RB* 85 (1978) 253–67, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² For the justification of this translation, see F. M. M. Sagnard, 'A propos de 1 Cor 8:6' *ETL* 24 (1950) 54–8.

³ *An die Korinther I–II*, 37. Similarly R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'It is generally agreed that in this passage Paul identifies Christ with hypostatized, pre-existent Wisdom, through whom "the all" was created . . . (God) is the source and goal of all things, including ourselves. Christ is he through whose mediation the universe and the Church came into being' (*Pre-existence, Wisdom and the Son of Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 130).

A Citation?

[254] Some commentators consider the hypothesis of a citation so obvious that they do not feel the need to offer any arguments.⁴ Others, however, find no difficulty in thinking of Paul as the author,⁵ if not in the course of writing 1 Cor at least at some earlier stage.⁶

It is undeniable that the verse gives the impression of a 'foreign body' in the midst of 1 Cor 8. The parallel verbless phrases have a ringing cadence which sharply distinguishes them from the discursive prose in which they are embedded.⁷ It is possible that Paul could have experienced a surge of enthusiastic emotion at just this point but, in the absence of any evidence, this is a rather gratuitous hypothesis. The impression of 'otherness' suggested by the structure is confirmed by an examination of the style.

The combination *heis theos ho patêr* does not appear in any of the authentic letters of Paul, even though he certainly conceived of only one God and frequently combined the notions of divinity and fatherhood. When these two ideas appear together his formulations are:

theos patêr: 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; Gal 1:1, 3; Col 3:17.

theos kai patêr: 1 Cor 15:24.

theos kai patêr hêmôn: 1 Thess 1:3; 3:11; Gal 1:4; Phil 4:20.

theos ho patêr hêmôn: 2 Thess 2:16.

theos patêr hêmôn: 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:2; Rom 1:7; Col 1:2.

ho theos kai patêr tou kyriou hêmôn: 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Rom 15:6.

ho theos patêr tou kyriou hêmôn: Col 1:3.

Kerst's observation, 'Paulus verwendet (abgesehen vom Vokativ) [255] nur in 1 Kor 8.6 *ho patêr* absolut'⁸ is contradicted by Rom 6:4. When Paul combines *heis* and *theos*, the formula is either *heis ho theos* (Rom 3:30) or *ho de theos heis estin* (Gal 3:20). Paul uses *dia* when speaking of the mediation of Christ but the

⁴ e.g. H. Lietzmann, 'Symbolstudien XI' ZNW 22 (1923) 268–71; O. Cullmann, *Les premières confessions de foi chrétienne* (Paris, 1933), 33. These, however, do not suggest that it is a quotation from the letter of the Corinthians to Paul as does F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 192. This view has nothing to recommend it, and is not in fact held by any other recent commentator.

⁵ e.g. the commentaries of Allo, Héring, Robertson-Plummer, and J. Weiss. Similarly J. Dupont, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de saint Paul* (Louvain/Paris, 1949), 346; A. Feuillet, *Le Christ Sage de Dieu d'après les épîtres pauliniennes* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1966), ch. 3.

⁶ So W. Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum. Studien zum Verhältnis von Christozentrik und Theozentrik in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), 225.

⁷ K. Wengst notes, 'Der Anschluss von v. 6 an v. 5 is anakoluthisch. Das und die genaue Parallelität der beiden Teile machen es wahrscheinlich, dass Paulus hier eine ihm vorgegebene Formel zitiert' (*Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1973), 136). The same arguments are put forward by W. Kramer, *Christos Kyrios Gottessohn* (Zurich: Zwingli, 1963), 91, and by R. Kerst, '1 Kor 8:6—ein vorpaulinisches Taufbekenntnis?' ZNW 66 (1975) 130. Formulated in this way these arguments carry no weight. The Pauline letters contain many anacolutha, and the Apostle was surely capable of formulating phrases in parallelism.

⁸ '1 Kor 8:6', 133.

formula is either *dia ton kyriou hêmôn Iêsou Christou* (1 Thess 5:9; 1 Cor 15:57; Rom 5:1) or *dia Iêsou Christou ton kyriou hêmôn* (Rom 5:21).

Slight as they are, these indications have a convergent force. They are complemented by an observation on the level of the ideas because, while a relation between Christ and *ta panta* is established in 1 Cor 15:25–8 and Phil 3:21, the point is that he subjects all things to himself. Here, on the contrary, it is question of mediation.

Hence, even though the evidence is not as strong as one would wish, it is more probable that 1 Cor 8:6 is a citation. This hypothesis will be reinforced by an investigation of the literary form.

Literary Form and Sitz im Leben

The most thorough discussion of the literary form of 1 Cor 8:6 remains that of H. Lietzmann, who maintains that it is a two-member credal formula closely related to 1 Tim 6:13 and 2 Tim 4:1. Whereas the first of these texts is a true confession of faith, in all probability that pronounced by Timothy on the occasion of his baptism, the second at best contains elements appropriate to a confession of faith.⁹ Strictly speaking, therefore, Lietzmann's argument depends on 1 Tim 6:13:

ὡμολόγησας τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων.
 παραγγέλλω [σοι] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζωογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα
 καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρήσαντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου τὴν καλὴν
 ὁμολογίαν

However, when this passage is compared with 1 Cor 8:6 only one point of contact is apparent. Both mention God before Christ—a phenomenon that is not limited to credal formulae; cf. the superscriptions to all the Pauline letters except 1 Thess. On every other point they differ. The verbless relative clauses of 1 Cor 8:6 contrast with the measured participles of 1 Tim 6:13, and the emphatic *hemeis* of the former is lacking in the latter. 1 Cor 8:6 has no parallel to the *homologeîn* which, implicitly at least, introduces the baptismal confession.

[256] It is perhaps significant that Lietzmann's argument is not taken up by H. Conzelmann, who also classifies this verse as a 'confession'. His sole argument is that *all' hêmîn* 'is the "we" of the confession; cf. John 1:14'.¹⁰ Precisely what he means is not clear to me, because *all' hêmîn* is quite different from the *en hêmîn* of John 1:14. This is not important, however, because *all' hêmîn* stands outside the citation and cannot be used to determine its original form. The first person plural does in fact occur within the formula, and W. Kramer claims that the double *hemeis* corresponds to the general style of confessions.¹¹ The sole

⁹ So rightly C. Spicq, *Les épîtres pastorales* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 569–70 and 798.

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 144 n. 51.

¹¹ *Christos Kyrios Gottessohn*, 94.

presence of the first person plural cannot prove the existence of a confessional formula, and it does not appear in the list of twelve formal criteria listed by E. Stauffer.¹²

Hence, we are forced to look more closely at the alternative which Lietzmann rejected, namely, that 1 Cor 8:6 is an ‘acclamation’. He recognized the affinity between the verbless *heis theos*—*heis kyrios* and the many pagan *heis*-acclamations addressed particularly to Serapis, but he rejected this possibility because ‘Durch ihre Zweiteilung hebt sie [1 Cor 8:6] sich von den heidnischen wie von den christlichen Akklamationen scharf ab.’¹³

This argument does not carry any weight because it fails to take into account the difference between the situation of the pagan and that of the Christian. It would be natural for a Christian (particularly one belonging to a Pauline community) to think in terms of two persons because, if God initiated the process of salvation, Christ was the effective agent. One necessarily implied the other. A pagan, on the contrary, would tend to focus exclusively on the god related to his specific need.

More importantly, Lietzmann relied on factual data now known to be inaccurate. E. Peterson¹⁴ cites a two-member pagan acclamation:

Ἐἷς Ζεὺς Σάραπις
Μεγάλη Ἴσις ἡ κυρία

And C. Spicq¹⁵ rightly classifies 1 Tim 2:5 as an acclamation:

εἷς () θεός,
εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς

[257] Since Lietzmann’s objection no longer holds water, the structural parallels between 1 Cor 8:6 and the acclamation form become determinative. Our text is an acclamation.¹⁶ It is more developed than the pagan parallels, but such elaboration does not change the nature of the literary form.

At first sight it might seem pointless to quibble as to whether 1 Cor 8:6 is a confession or an acclamation, because both forms can be used to express the faith of the community. A little reflection, however, reveals a significant difference. A confession of faith is a considered declaration which may be rendered necessary by a variety of causes. Since it is theoretical and abstract in nature, it is essentially independent of any particular set of circumstances. It can be part of a program of instruction for new members or of the ritual of exorcism. It can be used to

¹² *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1948), 316.

¹³ ‘Symbolstudien XI’, 269.

¹⁴ *Eis Theos. Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926), 230.

¹⁵ *Épîtres Pastorales*, 336

¹⁶ See Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 138–41; Kerst, ‘1 Kor 8:6’, 138.

ensure the unity of the community or as a gesture of defiance in the face of persecution.¹⁷

An acclamation, on the other hand, is rooted in the wonder inspired by the experience of power, as its earliest use in religious or royal ceremonies demonstrates.¹⁸ It was originally a spontaneous reaction to benefits received by oneself or another, with the implicit hope of continuance or transfer. Inevitably the formulation tended to become stylized, but the relationship to power as experienced remained constant, particularly in the religious sphere which is the only one with which we are concerned here. A rather crude instance of this relationship is provided by the acclamation of the Ephesian silversmiths, *megalê hê Artemis Ephesiôn* (Acts 19:28, 34); they saw the goddess as the source of their prosperity (19:24–5). A much better illustration is provided by the frequent use of *heis theos* acclamations in miracle stories.¹⁹ The many *heis Zeus Serapis* inscriptions most probably were authored by those who experienced his healing power, and the element of power is explicitly attested by the use of this formula in exorcisms.²⁰

This dimension of power as experienced confirms the classification of 1 Cor 8:6 as an acclamation, because this precise aspect is highlighted by the *hêmeis di' autou* which produces the effect *hêmeis eis auton*. [258] Supplementary proof is provided by the way in which Paul uses the acclamation. E. Peterson claimed that *heis* in the formula *heis Zeus Serapis* was used merely in an elative sense to mean that Serapis was the greatest of the gods.²¹ K. Wengst, however, finds this to be contradicted by the absence of *estin*, which gives the acclamation a unique force. In consequence, he takes *heis* as an attribute, i.e. there is only one god, Serapis.²² In either case it is clear that 'as far as I (the writer) am concerned' must be understood. This is exactly what is conveyed by Paul's *all' hêmin*, which in context implies a comparative value judgement.²³

The whole purpose of determining the literary form of a statement is to permit further inferences. Two are possible here. The first concerns the meaning and the second the *Sitz im Leben*.

Since an acclamation is essentially related to power as experienced, which in the concrete amounts to the awareness of benefits received, it is most natural to understand the power of which there is question in 1 Cor 8:6 as being the salvific action of God in Christ.

Christians were much more vividly conscious of this than of the power displayed in the creation of the universe. To think in terms of cosmology is to

¹⁷ See Lietzmann, 'Symbolstudien XI', 262; Cullmann, *Premières confessions*, ch. 2.

¹⁸ T. Klausner, 'Akklamation' in *RAC* 1.216–33. ¹⁹ See Petersen, *Eis Theos*, ch. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 5. ²¹ *Ibid.*, 231. ²² *Christologische Formeln*, 139.

²³ This aspect is finely brought out by J. Weiss, 'An dem Dativ kann man sich klar machen, was vielfach "ein Werturteil" genannt wird. Wir urteilen, und zwar aus eigener Erfahrung, dass er all ein den Namen "Gott" verdient, und wir wollen auf Grund solcher Erfahrung nur zu ihm und keinem andern in ein religiöses Verhältnis treten' (*1 Korintherbrief*, 223). Similarly the commentaries of Robertson-Plummer and Barrett.

introduce an abstract and theoretical element which is not in keeping with the nature of the literary form.

An acclamation has the character of a public utterance, and this suggests that the *Sitz im Leben* of Christian acclamations was the liturgical assembly.²⁴ It was on such occasions that Christians were found grouped together, and there the saving power of God in Christ was experienced most intensely. The acclamation *kyrios Iêsous* (1 Cor 11:3) is commonly interpreted as an ecstatic cry expressive of the surging enthusiasm of the assembly. Is it possible to be more specific by choosing between eucharistic and baptismal liturgies? R. Kerst prefers the latter as the more probable *Sitz im Leben*,²⁵ and what evidence there is supports this option.

[259] In baptism the believers pass from 'death' to 'life' (Col 2:12–13). They put on Christ (Gal 3:27) and so are enabled to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). Their mode of existence has changed, and their being has been given a new orientation. Instead of being opposed to God, it is now directed towards him through the reconciling ministry of Christ. The means and finality of this new orientation is perfectly expressed by the *hêmeis di' autou* and the *hêmeis eis auton* of 1 Cor 8:6. It is in the ceremony of baptism, moreover, that the saving power of God is most dramatically displayed and most intensely experienced. Thus, in the baptismal liturgy we have precisely the circumstances which provoke acclamation.

It is instructive at this point to take note of Col 1:12–14, 'Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.' E. Käsemann has argued that these verses represent a liturgical thanksgiving which Paul found associated with the baptismal hymn in vv. 15–20.²⁶ There is insufficient evidence to support this view, and it is more prudent to accept Lohse's opinion that these verses 'deal with the event of baptism—and also take up traditional phrases—but do not form any continuous liturgical context'.²⁷ Apart from *ho patêr* there are no verbal contacts with 1 Cor 8:6, but the same fundamental pattern of thought is easily detected. The Father initiates a process which is mediated by Christ (*en hô*) for our benefit (*hêmas*). Just as Col 1:12–14 echoes a baptismal confession, so 1 Cor 8:6 represents a baptismal acclamation.

The preceding investigation into the form and *Sitz im Leben* of 1 Cor 8:6 has not only furnished an important clue to the meaning of the verse, but raises the

²⁴ So rightly Kramer, *Christos Kyrios Gottesohn*, 93; Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 141.

²⁵ '1 Kor 8:6', 138. The study of T. Michels, 'Akklamationen in der Tauf liturgie' *HLW* 8 (1928) 76–85 was not available to me.

²⁶ 'A Primitive Christian Baptismal Liturgy' in his *Essays on New Testament Themes* (SBT 41; London: SCM Press, 1964), 153–4.

²⁷ *Colossians and Philemon*, 40 n. 3.

hypothesis of a citation to a very high level of probability. It is most unlikely that Paul composed a phrase which is so much at home in a liturgical setting.

Stoic Parallels?

The cosmological interpretation of 1 Cor 8:6 is inspired by the presence of the double *ta panta*. *Ta panta* is essentially a relative term. It means ‘all things’ within a given framework, and it derives [260] its specific meaning from the context in which it is found. E. Norden was not the first to point out an affinity between certain phrases in Paul and the terminology of Stoic philosophy, but his collection of parallels has exercised a decisive influence on the interpretation of our text since the appearance of his *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* in 1913. Ever since then it has been taken for granted that the mental context which determines the meaning of *ta panta* has been Stoicism. Not all commentators articulate this explicitly, but J. Dupont can serve as their spokesman, ‘La correspondance entre nos textes [1 Cor 8:6; 11:12; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16–20] et ceux de la philosophie ne réside pas seulement dans le recours aux mêmes procédés oratoires; il y a parallélisme étroit entre les formules elles-mêmes, et cela dans le même cadre de pensée, ou l’on confronte unité divine et pluralité de l’univers. Autrement dit, on retrouve dans les expressions de saint Paul, non seulement les termes, mais aussi le point de vue cosmologique des affirmations de la philosophie sur l’unicité divine.’²⁸

The vigour of this statement would lead one to suppose that the parallels between the formulae found in Paul and those of Greek philosophy are precise and exact. This is true for Rom 11:36: *ex autou kai di’ autou kai eis auton ta panta*, where all the prepositional phrases refer to the same subject, since this is precisely what we find in the best of the parallels adduced by Norden:²⁹

Ω φύσις ἐκ σοῦ πάντα ἐν σοὶ πάντα εἰς σὲ πάντα
Marcus Aurelius 4.23.

Ἐν τῷ πᾶν καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ τὸ πᾶν καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ πᾶν
Magic ring inscription.

Τοῦτο (τὸ θεῖον) γάρ ἐστι τὸ πᾶν καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὸ πᾶν καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ τὸ πᾶν
Zozimos, *Alchimista*, 11.1.

Omnia Deus et ab se omnia et eus omnia voluntatis... omnia enim ab eo et in ipso et per ipsum
Aesclepius, n. 34

If one compares 1 Cor 8:6 with these texts, however, the immediate impression is not of similarity but of difference. Not only do we have a twice-repeated shift

²⁸ *Gnosis*, 344.

²⁹ *Agnostos Theos*, 240–50. A very convenient summary is provided by Kerst, ‘1 Kor 8:6’, 131. Precise source references can be found in either of these studies.

from *ta panta* to *hêmeis*, but the four prepositional phrases (*ex hou—di' hou—di' autou—eis auton*) do not refer to the same subject. If we are to judge on strictly formal [261] grounds (and no other is methodologically legitimate), there are no precise parallels to 1 Cor 8:6.

Norden and Dupont explicitly recognize this. The former tendentiously speaks of a 'paraphrase',³⁰ while the latter prefers the vague 'l'echo d'une formule hellénistique',³¹ An echo constitutes a very weak basis on which to build an hypothesis of borrowed ideas. We shall see later if the formula of Rom 11:36 is used in a cosmological sense, but even if it were, it would prove nothing with regard to 1 Cor 8:6 because the two are simply not parallel. This, it should hardly be necessary to point out, leaves the cosmological interpretation of the verse without any scientific foundation.

In recent years a number of efforts have been made to get around this fundamental objection by postulating an evolution of the formula in 1 Cor 8:6. This has the effect of appearing to legitimize comparisons between Greek philosophical texts and *parts* of the formula. Thus, according to W. Kramer,³² the original element was a Jewish missionary formula, *heis theos (ho patêr) ex hou ta panta, di' hou ta panta, eis hon ta panta*. This was christianized by the introduction of *heis kyrios Iêsous Christos*. At the same time *di' hou ta panta* was transferred to Christ, and the confessional *hêmeis* inserted. For H. Langkammer,³³ the starting point was also a missionary statement, but in the form *heis theos ho patêr—heis kyrios Iêsous Christos*. Since God was the Creator the idea of creativity was introduced and overflowed on to Christ. At this second stage the formula read: *heis theos ho patêr ex hou ta panta kai ta panta eis auton (kai) heis kyrios Iêsous Christos di' hou ta panta*. Finally, Paul inserted the double *hêmeis*, and so was the first 'die Protologie in den Dienst der Soteriologie zu stellen'.³⁴ K. Wengst³⁵ prefers an entirely different approach. The starting point was a Christological acclamation *heis kyrios Iêsous (Christos)*. Then this was expanded by means of a *heis theos* acclamation to which the idea of creativity expressed in the Stoic formula was attached. Once this had been done, balance [262] required that the original Christological element be expanded in the same perspective.

Each of these studies presents a line of development that in itself is entirely possible, but there is not a scrap of hard evidence which would give any one a probable status. From their references it is clear that Langkammer, Wengst, and Kerst were fully aware of the proposals made by their predecessors. Yet none of them even attempts to remove prior hypotheses from competition in order to

³⁰ *Agnostos Theos*, 243.

³¹ *Gnosis*, 345.

³² *Christos Kyrios Gottessohn*, 91–4. Similarly though less clearly C. Bussmann, *Themen der paulinischen Missionspredigt auf dem Hintergrund der spätjüdisch-hellenistischen Missionsliteratur* (Berlin-Frankfurt: Lang, 1974), 75–80.

³³ 'Literarische und theologische Einzelstücke in 1 Kor 8:6' *NTS* 17 (1970–1) 193–7.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 197. Similarly Kerst, '1 Kor 8:6', 135–6, but he seems to suggest that *hêmeis* is pre-Pauline.

³⁵ *Christologische Formeln*, 140.

leave the field clear for his own. This can only be interpreted as recognition of the obvious fact that, where evidence is lacking, it is just as impossible to prove that an hypothesis is wrong as to prove that it is right. The various hypotheses are nothing more than suggestive speculation. No convincing argument has been brought forward to show that at any stage the formula had a purely cosmological meaning. Hence, there is no reason to think that such a meaning was carried forward into its present form.

The hypothesis that Greek philosophical theories regarding the relationship of the All to the One (purified of their pantheistic associations by being drawn into the Jewish view of creation) constitute the background against which the *ta panta* of 1 Cor 8:6 is to be interpreted is to a great extent conditioned by the view that such theories are reflected in other Pauline texts. A number of passages in the epistles do in fact embody terminology which is evocative of Stoic parallels, notably Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 11:12; Col 1:16–20; Eph 4:5. Many commentators group these with 1 Cor 8:6 to suggest that Paul was accustomed to think in cosmological terms. Once this point has been insinuated, it seems natural to take it for granted that a cosmological dimension is also present in 1 Cor 8:6. It is important, therefore, to undertake a brief examination of these passages.

From a methodological point of view it is impossible to grant decisive weight to either Col 1:16–20 or Eph 4:5. Even if one abstracts from the question of authorship, these two letters are much later than 1 Cor. It should also be noted that it is not entirely clear that either of these texts is to be interpreted in a cosmological sense. I do not intend to develop this point which would take us much too far afield, and it must suffice to record that F. Zeilinger has recently argued that Col. 1: 16–20 refers, not to the first creation, but to the eschatological new creation,³⁶ and that M. Dibelius has commented [263] a propos of Eph 4:5, ‘Wenn der Autor des Epheserbriefes seinen Gott verkündet, als *den epi pantôn kai dia pantôn kai en pasin*, so ruht sein und unser Blick auf den *pantes* der christlichen Gemeinde. Das ist seine “Welt”’.³⁷

In context, the *ta de panta ek tou theou* of 1 Cor 11:12 is most naturally understood of the creation of man and woman with their respective differences. The allusion is to the first creation, but in a very restricted sense. Nothing suggests that *ta panta* means ‘das All’.³⁸ In form Rom 11:36 is, as we have seen, the best witness to Stoic language. The context, however, does not lend any support to the assumption that Paul is here thinking in cosmic terms. The formula occurs in a passage (vv. 33–6) which hymns ‘the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God’ (v. 33). These are known through God’s salvific

³⁶ *Der Erstgeborne der Schöpfung. Untersuchungen zur Formalstruktur und Theologie des Kolosserbriefes* (Vienna: Herder, 1974), 180–205.

³⁷ ‘Die Christianisierung einer hellenistischen Formel’ in his *Botschaft und Geschichte. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1956), 2.20.

³⁸ So rightly Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum*, 226.

actions in both Old and New Dispensations.³⁹ Hence, U. Wilckens concludes, 'Insofern sind die abschliessenden weisheitlichen Aussagen in R 11, 33–36 im Sinne des Paulus sachlich wesentlich auf die heilgeschichtliche Funktion Christi zu beziehen.'⁴⁰ It is probably going too far to evoke Christ explicitly, but it is certain that the perspective of Rom 11 is that of salvation-history. This is the framework within which *ta panta* must be interpreted. Once again, nothing permits us to assume a cosmological dimension.

At the very most, therefore, the two Pauline passages closest in date to 1 Cor 8:6 contain only material parallels to Stoic texts. Stoic *ta panta* language is used, but in each case the context indicates that it is put at the service of a radically different world of ideas. We have been conditioned to think cosmologically and, in consequence, cannot rely on our first impression of the meaning of *ta panta* passages in which God appears as subject. The meaning assigned to *ta panta* must be justified contextually. In this respect it is important to keep in mind a series of passages which refer *ta panta* to God in an exclusively soteriological sense, 1 Cor 2:10–13; 12:4–6; 2 Cor 4:14–15; 5:18; Rom 8:28, 31–2. None of these employ Stoic formulae. Hence, the assumption should rather be that, when [264] Stoic *ta panta* formulae do appear, they are used to articulate Pauline soteriology.

The Meaning of 1 Cor 8:6

Interpretations of 1 Cor 8:6 which find a cosmological meaning in the text ignore the methodological rule that parts of a text retain their intended meaning only within the framework of the whole. This rule has particular importance in the present instance where all the elements form an obvious unity. As has been pointed out by F. M. M. Sagnard, the prepositions in a nominal or pronominal phrase 'sont très proches de leur sens primitif d'adverbes. Elles sont d'abord l'indication d'un *mouvement*, d'une *direction*.'⁴¹ With respect to our text this means that 'Le point de départ du mouvement est marqué par *ex*, son point d'arrivée par *eis*, et l'endroit par où il passe par *dia*.'⁴² The unity of the text derives from the unity of a single movement.

The fundamental question concerns the nature of this movement. Is it cosmic or salvific? If the structure of the verse suggests a single movement, it must be one or the other. It cannot be both. The structure of the verse, therefore, militates against the interpretation of F. Godet (who is followed by many), 'Ce que Paul veut dire, c'est que, comme le monde est *de* Dieu et l'Eglise *pour* Dieu, ainsi le monde est *par* Christ et l'Eglise aussi *par* lui.'⁴³ This view labours under

³⁹ As Dupont has pointed out *gnôsis theou* in v. 33 is a reiteration of the theme of knowledge with which the chapter opens (v. 2). It functions as an inclusion which highlights the unity of the chapter (*Gnosis*, 91).

⁴⁰ *TWNT* 8.519. ⁴¹ 'A propos de 1 Cor 8:6', 55–6.

⁴² Feuillet, *Le Christ Sagesse de Dieu*, 64.

⁴³ *Commentaire sur la Première Épître au Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel: Monnier, reprinted 1965), 2.15.

the major disadvantage of assuming four radical shifts in perspective within the space of a few words: cosmic—salvific—cosmic—salvific. It also involves two movements because, unless they were consummate metaphysicians, the first Christians envisaged God's action in the first creation and his action in the new creation as belonging to two discrete moments in time. This is certainly true for Paul, for whom the saving action of God in Christ began at a specific moment of time (Gal 4:4: *hote de êlthen to plêrôma ton chronou exapesteilen ho theos ton hyion autou . . . hina tous hypo nomon exagorasê*) which must be distinguished from the moment of creation (Rom 1:20: *apo ktiseôs kosmou*).

The nature of a movement can be determined both from its origin and from its term. However, since the same agent can produce [265] different types of movement, and since for believers the same God is responsible for both the original and the new creation, the term of the movement is by far the more significant. Here the term (*hêmeis eis auton*) is unequivocally soteriological. Since 1 Cor 8:6 is a baptismal acclamation, the *hêmeis* cannot be interpreted as meaning the human race in general; it means Christians. The unified thrust of the verse, therefore, is exclusively soteriological. In this perspective the meaning of the verse can be summarized in the following paraphrase: From God come all things which enable us to return to him. All these things are given through Christ and in him we go to the Father.

Taken in themselves some elements of 1 Cor 8:6 are susceptible of a cosmological meaning. Hence, it is not impossible a priori that Paul could have given the citation a cosmological dimension when he incorporated it into his discussion with the Corinthians. The question, then, is: Did he in fact do so?

The majority of exegetes incline towards an affirmative answer on the basis of *ta panta* formulae in 1 Cor 11:12 and Rom 11:36. We have seen, however, that neither of these texts carries a generalized cosmological meaning, and that Paul uses *ta panta* most frequently in strictly soteriological contexts.⁴⁴ F. Godet, on the contrary, argues for a cosmological meaning strictly on the basis of the context, '(Paul) veut dire que rien de ce qui fait partie de l'univers créé par un tel Etre (les viandes sacrifices en particulier) ne saurait souiller le croyant.'⁴⁵ In other words, if everything comes from God, then food offered to idols comes from God, and so may be eaten by Christians. This argument misses the point of ch. 8, which is directed to the 'strong'. These had already concluded that there was no moral objection to the eating of such food, and Paul's concern is to persuade them to refrain because of the injury they might inflict on weaker members. The situation does not demand that he reinforce their arguments. Had he wanted to do so, it seems likely that he would have been much more specific (cf. 1 Cor 10:26).

⁴⁴ In addition to the list of texts in the last paragraph of the previous section, see 1 Cor 9:22–3; 2 Cor 12:19.

⁴⁵ *1 Corinthiens*, 15.

A negative answer is preferable for a number of reasons. The introduction of the idea of God and Christ as united in the creation of the universe goes far beyond the needs of the situation.⁴⁶ More [266] importantly, the introduction of this theme would have had the effect of prolonging the discussion along the purely speculative line that the Corinthians preferred. The subsequent context (1 Cor 8:7–13) shows very clearly that Paul is concerned to get the Corinthians to accept that the basis of a Christian moral judgement is not abstract reasoning but the fraternal charity that Christ manifested.⁴⁷ The criterion that Christians must use is not speculative truth (1 Cor 8:1), but the demands of brotherhood; note the calculated repetition of *adelphos* in vv. 11–13.

It now becomes evident why Paul should have found it appropriate to quote a baptismal acclamation in v. 6. The brotherhood of believers is founded on the fact that they have been baptized into Christ (Gal 3:26–9). The citation is intended to function as an emotional trigger which will alert the ‘strong’ to this aspect which they are in danger of forgetting because of their delight in abstract speculation. In this perspective it seems highly unlikely that Paul would have altered the meaning of the acclamation.

In essence Paul, by means of the citation, is saying that Christians cannot judge as do unbelievers, because they do not exist in the same way as unbelievers. He touched on this point in 1 Cor 3:1–4 but, since the Corinthians did not get the message, he was forced to return to it in more explicit detail in 2 Cor 5:15–18, ‘Christ died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we know no one in a fleshly way. Even though we once knew Christ in a fleshly way we know him so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold they have become new. All things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.’ The point at issue is the nature of authentic Christian knowledge.⁴⁸ The Christian can no longer judge *kata sarka* because he is a new creation. Other men can no longer be dealt with according to the standards of the world, because a new criterion has been given in the person of Christ whose death proclaims the message that ‘those who live might live no longer for themselves’. Although susceptible of wider application, the relevance of this teaching for the [267] situation envisaged by 1 Cor 8 is beyond question. The position of the

⁴⁶ This is recognized by Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 144 n. 38, and by Kerst, ‘1 Kor 8:6’, 130, 138. Both of these authors, however, use it as an illegitimate argument to prove that Paul is here citing a pre-existent text.

⁴⁷ C. H. Giblin is the only commentator, to my knowledge, who emphasizes the importance of these verses for a correct understanding of 1 Cor 8:6 (‘Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul’ *CBQ* 37 (1975) 529–37).

⁴⁸ See R. Bultmann, *Exegetische Probleme des zweiten Korintherbriefes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), 12–20; L. Martyn, ‘Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Cor 5:16’ in *Christian History and Interpretation* (J. Knox Festschrift; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 269–87.

‘strong’ regarding idol-meats was based on precisely the same type of knowledge held in honour by their unbelieving contemporaries. Once this fundamental identity of perspective is recognized, the number of verbal contacts between this passage (which everybody admits to be exclusively soteriological) and 1 Cor 8:6 takes on a new significance: *ek tou theou—ta panta—dia Christou—hêmas—heautô*. In both Paul is concerned with the new being of the Christian,⁴⁹ which creates the possibility of a new type of knowledge. In both the *panta* which are *ek tou theou* and *dia Christou* are the realities which found and maintain that new mode of existence. ‘He who did not spare his own Son but gave him for us all, will he not give us all things with him?’ (Rom 8:31–2).

POSTSCRIPT

In this article I argued that 1 Cor 8:6 originated as a liturgical acclamation, which acknowledged all the soteriological blessings received in baptism.

The thesis has been widely discussed, and the reaction has been accurately summed up by Schrage, who speaks of ‘die mit Recht allgemein abgelehnte exklusiv-soteriologische Bedeutung von V 6 durch Murphy-O’Connor, auch wenn V 6 von solchen stammt, die die Heilsmacht Gottes und seines Christus erfahren haben’.⁵⁰ I am reproached for adopting an ‘either–or’ approach, as my title suggests, whereas the text demands a ‘both–and’ interpretation. The essential criticism is that I gave too much importance to what is said of Christ, and too little to what is said of God. A correct reading should be as sensitive to cosmology as to soteriology.

I now think that I made a mistake in focusing exclusively on Stoic *ta panta* parallels to the detriment of comparative material to be found in Hellenistic Judaism, notably as regards its understanding of creation. Every Jew knew the first verse of the Torah, ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth’ (Gen 1:1). They also recognized that God’s creative activity did not cease once the universe came into existence. Ps 104, which is a meditation on Gen 1, hymns

⁴⁹ The importance of this theme in 1 Cor should be noted. In *ex autou de hymeis estê en Christô Iêsou* (1:30), the verb *estê* is not a mere copulative but a statement concerning the new being of the believer. So rightly the commentaries of Allo, Barrett, Héring, and Robertson-Plummer against that of Conzelmann. The same theme appears in 4:15, *en Christô Iêsou dia tou evangeliou egô hymas egennêsa*, because the Apostle’s understanding of the gospel as *dynamis theou* (1 Cor 1:18; Rom 1:16) by which the believers are saved (1 Cor 1:21; 15:2) means that this assertion of fatherhood goes far beyond the rabbinic dictum ‘If a man teaches his neighbour’s son the Law, the Scripture counts it to him as if he had begotten him’ (*Sanbedrin* 19b); cf. P. Gutierrez, *La paternité spirituelle selon saint Paul* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1968), 134. With regard to 1 Cor 13:2, *agapên de mê echo, outhen eimi*, C. Spicq perceptively comments, ‘Ici la négation . . . n’est pas synonyme d’inutilité ou d’inanité. Il faut rapprocher la formule de 1 Cor 1:30 où saint Paul déclare aux Corinthiens qu’ils *existent* dans le Christ Jésus, *estê en Christô Iêsou*. Semblablement, ils existent par la charité; *en agapê* et *en Christô* sont deux expressions équivalentes de l’être chrétien’ (*Agapê dans le Nouveau Testament* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1959), 2.115).

⁵⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.222 n. 51.

the continuing contribution his power makes to all aspects of life in the world; 'when you open your hand, they are filled with good things' (v. 28). Reflection on the goodness and organization thus displayed stimulated two lines of thought within Judaism.

First, God was thought of as a benevolent Father. The earliest attestation of this insight is perhaps, 'Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?' (Malachi 2:10). This carries into a new dimension the thought of Deutero-Isaiah, for whom the God who creates is also the One who redeems.⁵¹ The best witness to this development is undoubtedly Philo. The essence of Jewish belief was that 'there was but one God, their Father and Creator of the universe' (*Leg.* 115). God is 'the Creator and Father of the universe' (*Spec. Leg.* 2.6), or even more simply 'the Father of the universe' (*Ebr.* 81). The climax of Philo's argument against idolatry is that 'all created things are brothers to one another, inasmuch as they are created; since the Father of them all is one, the Creator of the universe' (*Decal.* 64).

The second line of thought is more complex. Just as Philo took the divine commands of Genesis seriously and ascribed an instrumental role in creation to the Word (*logos*), others were more impressed by the marvellous interrelated complexity of the universe, and attributed instrumentality to Wisdom. 'The Lord by Wisdom founded the earth' (Prov 3:19). 'The Lord created me at the beginning of his work. . . . When he established the heavens I was there' (Prov 8:22–30). 'On the sixth day I commanded my Wisdom to create humanity' (2 Enoch 30:8). This theme is very rare in Philo. He once refers to 'wisdom by means of which the universe was completed' (*Det.* 54). This is not because Philo was opposed to intermediate beings. On the contrary, they were essential to his system. The Word, however, was his preference for the supreme intermediary.⁵² He thus summarizes the four causes of creation, 'God is the cause of it [the universe], by whom it was made. The materials are the four elements, of which it is composed. The instrument is the Word of God, by means of which it was made. And the object of the edifice you will find to be the display of the goodness of the Creator' (*Cher.* 127).

Citations (such as the above) in the commentaries would appear to suggest the belief of their authors that the Palestinian and Alexandrian wisdom tradition, together with the thought of Philo, were known in each and every diaspora Jewish community. Otherwise their vague references to Hellenistic Judaism are meaningless. Such an assumption, however, is bad methodology because completely unverifiable. The argument acquires weight only when a plausible connection between the source and an individual community can be established.

⁵¹ J. Scullion, 'God (OT)' in *ABD* 2.1044.

⁵² For an excellent brief summary see Jenny Morris in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135)* (ed. G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 3.881–5.

Fortunately this can be done for Corinth. Philonic thought was brought into the church by Apollos.⁵³ It is only when this touch of realism has been injected into the discussion that a rhetorical question such as ‘How could a first-century reader have failed to understand “the all” when described as “from” the “one God” and “through” the “one Lord” as other than a reference to creation?’⁵⁴ acquires the force of a serious argument. It has persuaded me that 1 Cor 8:6 embodies a reference to creation, while retaining my conviction that this verse was originally a baptismal acclamation.

This classification of the form has been accepted by Klauck.⁵⁵ Hays⁵⁶ and Schrage⁵⁷ hesitate, however, regarding the occasion, be it liturgical or otherwise. The majority will admit only that 1 Cor 8:6 is a non-Pauline citation, and fail to deal with the question of its form.⁵⁸ Against this current swim Dunn,⁵⁹ and Fee, who maintain that 1 Cor 8:6 is a Pauline creation. The latter clarifies Dunn’s position by arguing that the formula ‘so thoroughly fits the present argument that the question of background or origin is ultimately irrelevant’.⁶⁰ This, of course, proves nothing. Would Paul have introduced a citation that did not serve his purpose perfectly?

To return to Corinth. The teaching of Apollos would have made it perfectly possible for some at least among the Corinthians to acclaim the power of God in terms of first, final and instrumental causes. Further it is precisely the group likely to have been influenced by Apollos that created the problem with which Paul is dealing in 1 Cor 8.⁶¹ That they should recall the occasion of the acclamation was essential to his argument. It was designed to remind the Strong of the moment when they became ‘brothers’ with all in the community by submission to the rite of baptism.

Once an allusion to creation has been established, the essential question concerns the relationship between the cosmological dimension and the soteriological dimension, which no one denies. It is precisely at this point that the question of the verbs to be supplied in the verbless acclamation becomes crucially important. Taking up the observation of Sagnard, I argued that the prepositions *ek*, *eis*, and *dia* demanded verbs of motion. Hence the translation at the beginning of my article. It is surprising that this point has received no extended discussion.

⁵³ See my *Paul: A Critical Life*, 280–2.

⁵⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 329 n. 69. Similarly in his *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 270.

⁵⁵ *1 Korintherbrief*, 61.

⁵⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 139.

⁵⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.223.

⁵⁸ To the best of my knowledge only J. Fotopoulos considers 8:6 to be a Corinthian slogan (*Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1* (WUNT 2.151; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003)). This is impossible. Not only is the Christological aspect the foundation of Paul’s argument in 8:11, but it is alien to the argument of the Strong, which is exclusively theistic, as the Corinthian slogan in 8:8 shows.

⁵⁹ *Christology in the Making*, 179, 181.

⁶⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 374.

⁶¹ See my *Paul: A Critical Life*, 280–2.

Thiselton quotes Sagnard approvingly, but it has only minimal impact on his translation; he introduces one verb of motion (out of four), ‘one Lord Jesus Christ, *through whom all things come*’.⁶² The same curious feature appears in Garland’s rendering, but the verb of motion is not attached to the same preposition, ‘one God the Father *from whom all things come*’. Moreover, in his commentary Garland supplies four verbs of motion as I do.⁶³ Such indirect evidence of the natural meaning of the text is far from negligible.

All other commentators continue to supply static verbs of existence. Fee is the only one to even hint at what might possibly be their justification. He reproaches me for using the verbs of motion to argue that the text exhibits the unity of a single movement, from which I then inferred that the meaning was exclusively soteriological. This, however, cannot be correct, he says, because while I am ‘right in seeing the main concern as soteriology, . . . that does not preclude that the first member in each clause refers to creation’.⁶⁴ In other words, even though the option for static verbs is not the most natural, it is nonetheless preferable in that it somehow simplifies the interpretation of 1 Cor 8:6 by detaching it from its context.⁶⁵

It is understandable that some commentators should tend to give primacy to the cosmological aspect. Not only is it the more striking and unusual, but it appears to offer an unusual insight into the person of Christ. The first impression has been well articulated by Dunn, ‘it seems to lift early christology on to a wholly new plane—where *pre-existence and a role in creation are clearly attributed to Christ* . . . the lines of *deity* are being clearly sketched into this christology’.⁶⁶ As we shall see, Dunn in reality does not go anywhere as far along this line as Fee, who writes, ‘Although Paul does not here call Christ God, the formula is so constructed that only the most obdurate would deny its Trinitarian implications . . . the designation “Lord,” which in the OT belongs to the one God, is the proper designation of the divine Son.’⁶⁷

From a Pauline perspective this conclusion is unacceptable.⁶⁸ For Paul Christ is accorded the title ‘Lord’ as a reward (Phil 2:11); it is not his by nature. Furthermore, the power of lordship is given to Christ for a specific purpose, and when it is accomplished, that power will be surrendered (1 Cor 15:20–8). Finally, the sonship of Christ is not his by nature, but is consequent on the resurrection (Rom 1:3–4; 14:9; 1 Thess 1:10) and is the fruit of obedience

⁶² *1 Corinthians*, 638 and 613.

⁶³ *1 Corinthians*, 363 and 375.

⁶⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 374 n. 23.

⁶⁵ Thus, for Fee the point is that ‘our existence is for His purposes’ (*1 Corinthians*, 375), whereas Paul is concerned with the behaviour (movement) of Christians.

⁶⁶ *The Parting of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991), 195, his emphasis.

⁶⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 375. The methodological error of those who insist on the ‘natural meaning’ of 1 Cor 8:6 is well spelt out by Dunn, *Parting of the Ways*, 199–200.

⁶⁸ So rightly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.243, ‘Die enge Zuordnung bedeutet keine Identität’.

(2 Cor 1:19–20). When read in the light of these texts, 1 Cor 8:6 cannot be understood as a statement of the divinity of Christ, unless we are to assume that Paul subscribed to completely contradictory understandings of who Christ was. This, in consequence, implies that ‘pre-existence’ cannot be understood simplistically as meaning that Christ was coexistent with the Father from all eternity. Col 1:16 would seem to militate against this conclusion. This verse, however, comes from the Colossian hymn, which Paul quotes only in order to correct it. He accepts its statements, not because they are true, but because they provide him with highly effective *ad hominem* arguments against his opponents.⁶⁹

Dunn, who shares my view that Paul never thought of Christ in terms of divinity,⁷⁰ stands alone in his effort to determine in what possible sense Christ can be said to be ‘pre-existent’. Christ is presented as the instrument of creation, a role that Jewish tradition attributed to Wisdom and to the Word. These ‘pre-existents’, however, were never seen as threats to monotheism. ‘The Word of God denotes what we would call the rationality of God’s dealings with humankind, just as Wisdom denotes their wisdom.’⁷¹ They were ways of speaking about God’s self-revelation. Hence when Christ is identified with Wisdom (1 Cor 1:24, 30), or with the Word, this means ‘not so much that Christ as Jesus of Nazareth had preexisted as such, but that preexistent Wisdom was now to be recognized in and as Christ’.⁷² This may appear overly subtle and convoluted, but only an approach along these lines can satisfy all the data that Paul provides.

Paul’s concern with the present rather than the past is underlined by the shift from ‘all things’ to ‘we’ in both members of 8:6. In theory ‘all things’ can reach all the way back into the immensity of the past, but in practice ‘we’ focuses *ta panta* on the present. The power displayed in the creation of all things interests Paul only in so far as it now has an impact on the members of the community.⁷³ Creation is evoked, not in or for itself, but because of the inconceivable power therein displayed. Believers are to understand that power of the same magnitude is at work in their redemption.

Despite the intensity of the discussion, it is surprising that greater importance has not been given to the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah, who displays the same intimate association of creation and redemption as 1 Cor 8:6, e.g. ‘Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who forms you in the womb: I am the Lord who makes all

⁶⁹ See my ‘Tradition and Redaction in Col 1:15–20’ *RB* 102 (1995) 231–41.

⁷⁰ *Christology in the Making*, 255. ⁷¹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 271. ⁷² *Ibid.*, 274.

⁷³ It is a mistake to imagine that the point of the reference to creation is that ‘alles Geschaffene essen kann’ (so Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.244). Jews accepted the doctrine of creation, and yet refused to eat ‘everything’. Lev 11 distinguishes ‘the creatures that may be eaten from those that may not be eaten’ (v. 47). One should also keep in mind the traditional Jewish attitude towards creation. According to B. W. Anderson, ‘In the Bible (with the possible exception of wisdom literature) the doctrine of creation does not stand by itself but depends upon and elaborates the redemptive activity of God in history’ (‘Creation’ in *IDB* 1.725).

things' (Isa 44:24).⁷⁴ Some scholars rightly translate the verbs here in the present tense, 'because the prophet here presents the *first* creation as an on-going work in the *present* redemption of Israel'.⁷⁵ The ancients were interested in the creation of the physical world only as an explanation for the appearance of the human race or a particular people. As regards the Jews, creation is clearly subordinate to their redemption. 'Because of what Yahweh does redemptively for and in Israel, he is Israel's creator.'⁷⁶ The finality of creation is redemption. The power that brought their world into being is the same power that saves them. This is not the place to go into further detail. It is sufficient to note that the perspective of Deutero-Isaiah provides an illuminating precedent for the smoothness of the shift from cosmology to soteriology in 1 Cor 8:6. Even though two dimensions may be distinguished, creative redemption is the single movement demanded by the verbs of motion.

⁷⁴ The other important texts are Isa 42:5; 45:9–13; 51:12–16. See E. Haag, 'Gott als Schöpfer und Erlöser in der Prophetie des Deuterjesaia' *TTZ* 85 (1976) 193–213, and the study mentioned in the next note.

⁷⁵ C. Stuhlmüller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (AnBib 43; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 197.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Corinthians 8:8

The legitimacy of eating meat which had been offered to idols was but one of the questions posed to Paul by the Corinthians (1 Cor 8:1; cf. 7:1).¹ His response is so subtly argued that a correct interpretation of every verse is essential if we are to understand not only his position but that of the Corinthians. As translated in the RSV 1 Cor 8:8 appears limpidly clear, 'Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.' In fact it abounds in problems.

Which combination of the rich selection of variant readings is most likely to represent the authentic text? Is the verse a citation from the Corinthian letter to Paul, or part of the latter's response? Why the shift from the future tense in the first part to the present tense in the second part? Within what framework are *perisseuô* and *hystereô* to be understood? Some of these questions are ignored by the commentators who, moreover, adopt very different positions on the issues they do take up. Hence, it seems appropriate to undertake a new investigation of these problems whose significance for an accurate determination of the complex situation at Corinth is evident.

It would seem logical to begin with the textual problem but, as will become apparent, assumptions regarding the authorship of the verse have been permitted to exercise a determinant influence in the choice of variants. Hence, it is imperative to begin with the question: is 1 Cor 8:8 a Corinthian or a Pauline statement? Fortunately, there is no question of creating a vicious circle because the elements which contribute to a reply are not among [293] the significant variants.

Opinion on the authorship of the verse is divided. J. C. Hurd, Jr lists ten authors who maintain that it is of Corinthian origin.² Others either modify the hypothesis,³ or reject it.⁴ In my opinion, the evidence clearly favours the view that Paul is here quoting a Corinthian statement. G. Heinrici highlights the switch from the 1st per. pl. in v. 8 to the 2nd per. pl. in v. 9 which 'den

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 41 (1979) 292–8, whose original pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² *The Origins of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 68.

³ For Barrett (*1 Corinthians*, 195) v. 8a is a Corinthian citation. The remainder of the verse is to be attributed to Paul.

⁴ So Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, 38; Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 204; Hurd, *Origin*, 123; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 148

Wechsel der Redenden genugsam markiert'.⁵ F. W. Grosheide⁶ and J. Jeremias⁷ note that the *de* in v. 9 serves the same function with respect to v. 8 as does the *alla* of v. 7 with respect to the Corinthian slogan in v. 1. A perfect parallel to this usage is provided by 1 Cor 6:13 and 18 where the Pauline reaction to Corinthian statements begins with *de*.⁸ It should be noted that v. 8 also begins with *de*, which here is best interpreted as the introduction to an adversative parenthesis.⁹ The probative force of these formal indications is greatly enhanced if we compare v. 8 with v. 13. They have in common the substantive *brôma* and the verb *phagô*, but v. 13, which is indisputably Pauline, contradicts v. 8. No matter which variant is selected, v. 8 affirms that eating is always morally neutral; it makes one neither better nor worse. Verse 13, on the contrary, insists that under certain conditions eating has a moral dimension; it can be a sin against Christ (v. 12).¹⁰ The perspective of v. 8, therefore, is opposed to that of Paul, and accords perfectly with the Corinthian slogan in 1 Cor 6:13, 'Foods are for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both one and the other,' which is intended [294] to affirm that bodily actions (e.g. eating) are morally irrelevant.

Only one serious objection has been raised against the hypothesis that v. 8 is a Corinthian statement. Hurd supports the contention of Lietzmann and Allo that if v. 8 were part of the Corinthian letter it would have been formulated otherwise than in the received critical text.¹¹ The validity of this objection is conditioned by the reliability of the received critical text. This forces us to an examination of the variant readings for v. 8bc. If we leave aside for the moment the particle *gar* we are confronted by three readings:

1. *oute ean mê phagômen perisseuomen, outh ean phagômen hysteroumetha.*
2. *oute ean phagômen perisseuomen, outh ean mê phagômen hysteroumetha.*
3. *oute ean mê phagômen hysteroumetha, outh ean phagômen perisseuomen.*

The witnesses to these readings are:

1. A² 17.
2. D F G vulg^{mss} Tert Cyrp Ambst Aug Pel; syr eth Clem Orig Has Chrys Chr Thdrt.
3. P⁴⁶ 1739 [1908]B A* (33*) 181–1836–1898 917 1288 vulg^{mss} sah boh arm.

⁵ *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896), 262.

⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 194.

⁷ *Abba. Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 273.

⁸ See my 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 391–6. ⁹ BDF §447.

¹⁰ Conzelmann (*1 Corinthians*, 148) claims that v. 13 is in agreement with v. 8. He can do so only because he interprets v. 8 to mean that Paul 'repudiates the *direct* demonstration of freedom. No work, not even freedom practiced as a work, makes us acceptable before God. The neutrality of food does *not* mean neutrality of *conduct*.' None of these ideas are mentioned in v. 8. Verse 8bc has to be interpreted in function of v. 8a. Were the former a correction of the latter, as Barrett maintains (*1 Corinthians*, 195), we should expect an adversative particle v. 8b. Its absence constitutes a major objection to Barrett's interpretation, which we shall touch on later.

¹¹ *Origin*, 123. Similarly Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 195.

Only readings 2 and 3 are discussed by Zuntz, who claims that reading 2 'is vastly superior, not only in numbers but in weight. To reject it is impossible, unless the P⁴⁶ B reading can be shown to be intrinsically superior. In fact it is inferior.'¹² In the last analysis his conclusion rests on his understanding of Paul's claim, 'In elaborating this thesis Paul could not but begin with the claim which is under discussion, "for if we eat, we have no additional merit";. . .'¹³ The vast majority of textual critics and commentators, however, disagree with Zuntz and resolutely opt for reading 3. Unfortunately, not all give their reasons for this choice, but it seems legitimate to presume that they agree with Lietzmann, 'Der bestbezeugte Text aber lasst sich nur wie oben als Wort des Pls verstehen. . .'¹⁴ In other words, there are two arguments, the authority of MSS and Paul's intention. Both sides invoke this last argument, but an argument that can be used to support diametrically opposed conclusions is immediately suspect of subjectivism. In [295] the present instance it is also illegitimate because, as we have seen, it is more probable that v. 8 was not written by Paul.

The partisans of readings 2 and 3 also rely, perhaps unconsciously, on the impression of security given by the long lists of witnesses that support these readings. The majority can hardly be wrong! However, as A. E. Housman has pointed out, counting manuscripts cannot be accepted as a substitute for thought,¹⁵ and the mechanical approach to textual criticism has regularly been called into question.¹⁶ Undue deference to numbers and authority of witnesses has led to the neglect of reading 1. Its manuscript support is minimal, and it has been adopted only by Lachmann.¹⁷ Yet it is precisely what one would have expected the Corinthian men of knowledge to have said!¹⁸ In consequence, reading 1 is the one best adapted to the context. According to the principles of eclectic textual criticism, this gives it a strong claim to be the original reading.

This conclusion also receives support from Griesbach's principle: the reading to be preferred is the one which explains the origin of the other variants. If we assume that reading 1 is the original, readings 2 and 3 appear as conscious corrections based on the assumption that v. 8 is a Pauline statement. Given the general thrust of 1 Cor 8 the assertion *oute ean mê phagômen perisseuomen* (reading 1) stands out as a complete anomaly. Copyists who noticed this attempted to bring the statement into closer harmony with Paul's thought either by switching the place of the negative particle (reading 2) or by transposing the verbs *perisseuô* and *hystereô* (reading 3). With a little ingenuity *oute ean phagômen perisseuomen*

¹² *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (Schweich Lectures 1946; London: British Academy, 1953), 161.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 162. ¹⁴ *An die Korinther I-II*, 38.

¹⁵ *M. Manilii Astronomicon* (ed. A. E. Housman; London: Richards, 1903), 1.xxxiii.

¹⁶ J. K. Elliott, 'Plaidoyer pour un écclectisme intégral appliqué à la critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament' *RB* 84 (1977) 5-25.

¹⁷ *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine* (Carolus Lachmannus recensuit, Philippus Buttmannus Ph. F. Graecae lectionis auctoritates apposuit; Berlin, 1842-50), in loc.

¹⁸ This is explicit in the reconstructions of Barrett (*1 Corinthians*, 195) and Hurd (*Origin*, 123), and implicit in the commentaries of Lietzmann and Allo.

(readings 2 and 3) can be interpreted in a sense that fits Paul's argument. Barrett's explanation is far from untypical, 'No man is saved because he is an "advanced" Christian with liberal views.'¹⁹ This interpretation, however, is without foundation because there is no hint that the men of knowledge believed anything of the sort. Moreover, as we shall see, the verb *perisseuô* reflects a completely different perspective. Hence, the objection against the Corinthian authorship of v. 8 based on its formulation is without foundation, for the original text read *oute ean mê phagômen perisseuomen, oute ean phagômen hystereoumetha*.

The first clause of v. 8 poses two problems. Should we read the future [296] *parastêsei* or the present *paristêsi*? Is *paristêmi* to be given the meaning 'to place beside, to present' or 'to bring before (a judge)'? Weiss²⁰ and Godet²¹ are the only authors to prefer the present tense.²² They feel that it is more appropriate to a general maxim. However, copyists may have felt the same, and this would explain why the original future tense was replaced. Alternatively, it is possible that the copyists were influenced by the present tense of the two verbs in v. 8bc. This latter fact makes it difficult to conceive why anyone would have substituted a future tense in v. 8a. Hence, *parastêsei* has certainly the best claim to be the authentic reading.

Opinion is sharply divided on the meaning of *paristêmi* in v. 8a. The majority take one of the basic dictionary definitions, 'to place beside, to prevent', but because this does not make sense when taken literally, they resort to paraphrase to convey the idea that food is not a guarantee of divine approval, e.g. 'Food will not commend us to God' (RSV, WV); 'Food cannot bring us in touch with God' (JB); 'Ce n'est pas un aliment qui nous rapprochera de Dieu' (BdeJ, TOB). With typically English understatement Robertson-Plummer note that "'Commend" (AV, RV) is perhaps a trifle too definite for *paristêmi*.'²³ In fact there are no linguistic parallels that would justify this translation.²⁴ A survey of this interpretation of the verse shows that exegetes begin with the assumption that Paul is the speaker, and then proceed to interpret *paristêmi* as if it were *synistêmi*.²⁵ We have seen that the initial assumption is unjustified, and so we are not required to pass judgement on the legitimacy

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians, 195. ²⁰ 1 Korintherbrief, 229 n. 1.

²¹ *Commentaire sur la première épître aux Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel: Monnier, 1965 reprint), 2.23–4.

²² Among contemporary versions the NAB alone prefers the present tense, 'Food does not bring us closer to God.'

²³ 1 Corinthians, 170. ²⁴ As Lietzmann has pointed out (*An die Korinther I–II*, 38).

²⁵ The authority always cited for the meaning 'to bring close to God' is R. Reitzenstein, 'Religionsgeschichte und Eschatologie' *ZNW* 13 (1912) 19–20. He writes, 'Richtig deuteten einzelne Schreiber, die für *paristêsin* das allgemeiner bekannte *synistêsin*, ... Aber warum sagt Paulus dann nicht *synistêsin* oder *syntêsi*? Ich denke, weil es graduelle Unterschiede dabei nicht gift; er aber will von einem Näherbringen oder Fernerlassen reden, *hystereoumetha* und *perisseuomen* haben ihm wesentlich räumliche Bedeutung.' He adduces no evidence for the 'spatial meaning' of *perisseuô* and *hystereô*. This is hardly surprising since there is none available. The meanings of *paristêmi* and *synistêmi* overlap to some extent, but not completely, and there is no justification for the introduction here of nuances proper to *synistêmi*.

of rewriting a text in order to bring it into line with the commentator's expectations.

[297] Hence, we are left with the alternative:²⁶ 'Food will not bring us before (the judgement seat of) God.' This meaning of *paristêmi* is considered possible by BAGD and Barrett,²⁷ and is accepted by Heinrici²⁸ and Weiss.²⁹ It is explicitly rejected by Godet as 'beaucoup plus étranger au contexte'.³⁰ In fact the opposite is true if we envisage v. 8 as a statement directed against the 'weak' members of the Corinthian community. This assumption is not only justifiable but necessary if we are to reconcile the position of the men of knowledge in ch. 8 with their attitude in 1 Cor 6:12–20. There, as I have shown elsewhere,³¹ the men of knowledge claimed that the body and its actions are morally irrelevant. The intention of the person is all-important and cannot be contradicted by corporeal behaviour. Actions do not weigh in the balance against motives. Since no physical activity has any moral significance, everything is permitted (*panta exestin*: 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). If this principle explains the attitude of the men of knowledge towards sex, it equally well accounts for their attitude towards eating (cf. 6:13). They did not need the arguments developed in 8:1, 4, 8 to convince themselves of the legitimacy of eating meat offered to idols. It is even improbable that it would have occurred to them that there might be a problem. The eating of such meat can have become an issue only through the protestations of the 'weak' who had adopted an aggressively critical stance.³² They had accused the men of knowledge, not merely of being in error, but of acting in bad faith.³³

In this perspective the translation 'Food will not bring us before (the judgement seat of) God' appears perfectly appropriate. The men of knowledge deny that they are in any danger of incurring the wrath of God, and in order to drive this point home offer a concrete criterion. Merely to say that they were not committing an indictable offence in God's eyes could have been dismissed as wishful thinking, because verification lay in the future. Hence, they needed to provide a contemporary test of their position. This is [298] why we get the shift from the future tense in v. 8a to the present tense in v. 8bc where the verbs *perisseuô* and *hystereô* appear.

At this point we have to recall that the Corinthian community was strongly influenced by Paul despite all its failures. Most, if not all, of its errors were the result of misunderstandings related to the way in which he had presented the gospel. Now, if we except Phil 4:12, 18, Paul invariably uses *perisseuô* in

²⁶ Conzelmann rightly rejects (*1 Corinthians*, 148 n. 21) Godet's suggestion that *paristêmi* is used here as a technical term of sacrificial language (*1 Corinthians*, 2.21).

²⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 195.

²⁸ *1 Korintherbrief*, 262.

²⁹ *1 Korintherbrief*, 229.

³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 2.21.

³¹ 'Corinthian Slogans', 391–6 = Chapter 3.

³² See R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Situations* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 430.

³³ For the justification of this point, and for Paul's reaction to the arguments of the men of knowledge, see my 'Freedom or the Ghetto', which is the next chapter in this volume.

reference to the spiritual goods of the New Age, to the point where F. Hauck is entirely justified in terming it 'an eschatological catchword'.³⁴ The resonances of *hystereô* are not as univocal but, out of the seven instances in Paul, two reflect the eschatological orientation of *perisseuô*: those who do not know Christ lack the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 1:7). This latter text is particularly illuminating because *perisseuô* is also used with respect to *charismata* (1 Cor 14:12; 2 Cor 8:7).

The importance that the Corinthians attached to *charismata* needs no emphasis. Such gifts were of divine origin (1 Cor 12:6). Consequently, they could be used as a tangible test of one's standing before God. Is it reasonable to expect (argued the men of knowledge) that God would give such gifts to those with whom he was displeased? On the contrary, he would be more likely to withdraw them. This interpretation, of course, is hypothetical, but it is not entirely gratuitous. It is suggested by the Pauline usage of *perisseuô*, and remains within the category of divine approval/disapproval clearly insinuated by v. 8a.³⁵ Moreover, it enables us to retain the literal meanings of *perisseuô* and *hysterô*, and thus renders unnecessary the recourse to paraphrase that characterizes contemporary translations.

Even though the men of knowledge ate meat that had been offered to idols, their spiritual gifts were in no way diminished. Conversely, abstention from such food did not produce any increase in spiritual gifts. Hence, idol-meat was morally neutral.³⁶ One can detect a polemic sneer in the fact that the reference to abstention is placed first; the weak did not show any signs of being better off in terms of spiritual gifts. And so, puffed up with knowledge (v. 1), the strong went their contemptuous way (v. 10).

POSTSCRIPT

In my article I argued (a) that all of 1 Cor 8:8 was a Corinthian slogan, and (b) that the correct text of v. 8bc was the minority reading of A*, namely 'we are no better off if we do not eat, and no worse off if we do'.

When I wrote, I shared what was probably the majority opinion regarding the origin of v. 8.³⁷ Subsequent opinion is very divided. My view is maintained by Lang,³⁸ Fee,³⁹ Klauck,⁴⁰ Witherington,⁴¹ Wolff,⁴² and

³⁴ TDNT 6.59.

³⁵ M. Coune ('Le problème des idolothytes et l'éducation de la *syneidêsis*' RSR 51 (1963) 508) offers a different definition of the context of *perisseuô* and *hystereô*, but his solution is vitiated by the assumption that Paul is the speaker.

³⁶ *Gar* is found after *oute* (v. 8b) in a number of witnesses (D E F G L P). Even if it is not authentic, it accurately defines the relationship between v. 8a and v. 8bc.

³⁷ See note 2 to the article above.

³⁸ *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 112

³⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 384.

⁴⁰ *1 Korintherbrief*, 62.

⁴¹ *Conflict and Community*, 199.

⁴² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 179.

Hays.⁴³ The existence of a slogan is denied by a slightly larger number, namely, Senft,⁴⁴ Strobel,⁴⁵ Delobel,⁴⁶ Collins,⁴⁷ and Schrage.⁴⁸ Compromise is the choice of Talbert,⁴⁹ Kremer,⁵⁰ and Thiselton,⁵¹ who will accept only v. 8a as Corinthian. The rest of the verse is Paul's reaction. The same type of solution is adopted by the NRSV, which puts only v. 8a in inverted commas, but continues in a footnote, 'The quotation may extend to the end of the verse.'

The Debate about the Slogan

Those who reject v. 8 as a Corinthian slogan either in whole or in part justify their view in various ways. First, they say that it is not presented as a statement by the Corinthians, and in particular that it lacks the *oidamen*, which introduces the slogans in 8:1 and 4. Schrage, to do him credit, recognizes the fatal weakness of this argument by admitting that the universally admitted slogan in 6:12 lacks any identifying introduction.⁵²

Second, what characterizes a slogan is its opposition to Paul's thought. Here in v. 8, we are told, he would agree with every word. Fee can serve as the spokesman for this point of view, 'both sentences [v. 8a and v. 8bc] reflect what the Corinthians were arguing in their letter, whether they are direct quotations or not. The reason for the lack of quotation marks [in Fee's translation] is that they also fully accord with Paul's own point of view.'⁵³

The fundamental criterion for detecting a slogan is stated with exactitude. It is also correct that Paul attached no salvific value to food. Fee makes a perfectly valid point in pointing out that what is said about food here is almost exactly what he writes elsewhere about circumcision. Whether one was circumcised or not made no difference (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15). Similarly whether one ate or not made no difference.⁵⁴ Paul makes it perfectly clear that among pagans he ignored the dietary regulations under which he had lived as a Jew (1 Cor 9:21). This generalization (to food as such), according to Fee, is justified by the use of the generic *brôma* 'food', rather than the specific *eidôlothuta* 'idol food', in v. 8a.⁵⁵

I find it extraordinary that Fee can write as he does about v. 8, and then go on to contradict himself in his treatment of the following verse, on which he approvingly quotes Conzelmann, 'Neutrality of food does *not* mean neutrality

⁴³ 1 Corinthians, 141. ⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians, 113. ⁴⁵ Erste Brief an die Korinther, 137.

⁴⁶ Joël Delobel, 'Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Siamese Twins?' in *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 7; ed. B. Aland and J. Delobel; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994), 98–117, here 107.

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians, 322. ⁴⁸ Erste Brief an die Korinther, 2.252.

⁴⁹ Reading Corinthians, 58. ⁵⁰ Erste Brief an die Korinther, 176.

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians, 647. ⁵² Erste Brief an die Korinther, 2.252 n. 245.

⁵³ 1 Corinthians, 383. ⁵⁴ Ibid., 384. ⁵⁵ Ibid., 382 n. 33.

of *conduct*.⁵⁶ There is a difference between theory and practice. This point is well brought out by Garland, 'We should not take this statement [v. 8bc] to hint that Paul sides with those who think that eating idol food is unobjectionable. Life is not lived in the theoretical abstract, and eating food offered to idols can lead to partnership with demons (10:20).'⁵⁷ Verse 8 does not belong to a theoretical discussion regarding kashrut. It is part of an argument in which Paul is endeavouring to correct the views of those at Corinth who believed that eating idol food was permissible.⁵⁸ It is integral to a concrete situation. It is also obvious that in using *brôma* in 8:13 Paul is thinking primarily of meat (*krea*) that had been sacrificed to idols.⁵⁹ In place of a command indicating the course of action to be followed, which would have been foreign to his principles (cf. Philem 14), he offers his personal example as a model to be followed.

Since v. 9 contradicts v. 8 (note the adversative conjunction *de*) we must conclude that v. 8, or at least part of it, is a Corinthian slogan. It represents a view with which Paul disagrees. The question now is: which part of v. 8, or both, should be attributed to the Corinthians? The problem can be somewhat simplified by breaking this down into two separate questions (a) is v. 8a Pauline or Corinthian? and (b) is v. 8bc the continuation of v. 8a?

An answer to the first question is complicated by the difficulty in determining the precise meaning of *parastêsei*. The best documented discussion is perhaps that of Thiselton. He rightly rejects 'will commend' or 'will bring close' to God as lacking any real lexicographical foundation. The most basic meaning of the verb *paristêmi* is 'to bring before, to introduce', which can be used in both social and legal contexts. In order to avoid making a choice some commentators prefer 'to bring us into God's presence'. The very vagueness immediately inspires the question: With what consequences? In Jewish tradition God inspired awe, and the reaction to his presence was trepidation, the expectation of blame (cf. Isa 6:1–7). Thus, I argued that we should translate v. 8a by 'food will not bring us before (the judgement seat of) God'. Somewhat more subtly P. D. Gardner has suggested the rendering 'food will not affect our standing before God'.⁶⁰ I cannot see that there is any substantial difference, because it is a question of God's approval, which involves a divine judgement.

There is no doubt that Paul could have said that food will not win God's favour. But why would he have said it in this context? While he had theoretical

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 384 n. 42. ⁵⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 385.

⁵⁸ These are traditionally termed 'the Strong', but there is a definite gain in clarity by adopting Thiselton's identification of them as 'the Secure', both in socioeconomic status and in 'knowledge' (*1 Corinthians*, 644). The 'Weak' would then be 'the Insecure'. Unfortunately to do so could generate confusion regarding my articles, which use the old-fashioned terminology.

⁵⁹ Klauck rightly stresses that in context there is no difference between *brôma* and *eidôlothuta* (*1 Korintherbrief*, 63).

⁶⁰ *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 48.

ideas about the neutrality of food, he was not dealing here with an abstract possibility. The issue concerned a use of food which was destructive of other believers. Verse 8a makes much more sense in context as a defensive argument on the part of the Strong. It must be kept in mind that the question of idol food had been brought to Paul for judgement. In the Corinthian letter (1 Cor 7:1) the opposing factions must have presented arguments that they thought would sway him. The Strong, with some reason, believed that v. 8a should appeal to Paul, because it was no more than a lapidary formulation of his own teaching on food. In this perspective the initial *de*, if it is given adversative force, is an echo of a retort of the Strong to the Weak, whose position is evoked in v. 7.

If, as now seems most probable, v. 8a should be understood as a Corinthian slogan, v. 8bc must be either its continuation or its refutation. The second hypothesis is the first to be tested. We can say at once that it is not recommended by the absence of the adversative *alla* or *de* by which Paul almost invariably reacts to statements by the Corinthians.⁶¹ Moreover, the partisans of this hypothesis fail to offer a satisfactory explanation as to how v. 8bc functions as a refutation of v. 8a. In the above article I criticized the solution of Barrett. Talbert formally says that v. 8bc is in fact *confirmation* of v. 8a. Paul's correction begins in v. 9.⁶² Kremer is not as explicit, but his explanation amounts to the same thing.⁶³ While putting only v. 8a in inverted commas, Thiselton is so sensitive to the values of the two alternatives it is difficult to see where his real sympathies lie.⁶⁴

Thus, we are forced back to the alternative. Verse 8bc continues v. 8a and is part of the Corinthian slogan. The basic objection to this hypothesis was first formulated by Fee, 'The natural elaboration of sentence 1 [v. 8a] would be, "therefore, abstaining is of no advantage to anyone, nor is eating of any disadvantage" But that is *not* what Paul says. His elaboration is precisely the opposite: "the one who abstains is not *dis*advantaged; and the one who eats is not advantaged"'.⁶⁵ Precisely the same objection was formulated without reference to Fee by Delobel⁶⁶ and Schrage.⁶⁷ Both of the latter formally concede that the formulation required by v. 8bc as the continuation of v. 8a is my reading 1, which is attested in A*.⁶⁸ But, they insist, its isolation, when contrasted with the age and widespread evidence of reading 3, which is the one accepted by Nestle-Aland (and Fee), makes it unacceptable. In other words, they object to my hypothesis on the grounds that I have opted for the wrong reading.

⁶¹ I fail to understand what justification Thiselton has for writing, 'The sequence of the bipartite clause reflected in the UBS [text] obviates an expectation of *de* or *alla*' (1 Corinthians, 648).

⁶² *Reading Corinthians*, 58, my emphasis. ⁶³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 176.

⁶⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 648. ⁶⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 382–3.

⁶⁶ 'Textual Criticism and Exegesis', 106. ⁶⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.259.

⁶⁸ For Nestle-Aland, it will be remembered, * 'identifies the original reading when a correction has been made' (*Editio XVII*, 11*).

The Text of the Slogan

Here, then, we have one of the instances where exegesis and textual criticism are, to use Delobel's graphic term, 'Siamese twins'. They are inseparable, but cannot be of equal weight. Which is to be given priority? This question is discussed with his usual insight and fairness by Delobel, precisely apropos of the verse at issue.⁶⁹ He rightly challenges my cavalier dismissal of external criticism, which I now think was an illegitimate short-cut.⁷⁰

In order to give external criticism a fair say, Delobel weighed the three readings, and concluded that 2 could have evolved accidentally from 3 (the two clauses were inverted), and 1 accidentally from 2 (the place of the negative was changed). A similar 'accident' explanation is provided by Fee, '[reading 1] represents his [the scribe's] confusion between the two other readings one of which he was copying and the other of which he apparently also knew. In changing from one to the other he switched verbs but left the negative in its original position.'⁷¹ Both of these hypotheses are certainly possible, but I am suspicious of the coincidence of two such convenient 'accidents'. Normally accidents result in gibberish, but here miraculously they result in a reading that fits perfectly into a particular understanding of the context! It is asking a little too much to be acceptable. It remains more plausible to me, as I explained in the above article, to postulate that the scribes of readings 2 and 3, each in his own way, deliberately chose to change reading 1, which they recognized could not represent Paul's thought. Thus, in terms of external criticism, I and my critics are reduced to unavoidable subjective assessment, not of what is possible but of what is plausible. I continue to believe, however, that intelligent choice on the part of scribes is a better explanation of the appropriate than blind chance.

Delobel concedes that 'external criticism can rarely lead to a final conclusion concerning the original text', and continues, 'The identification of the source reading will ultimately have to be made on the level of intrinsic probability. Which reading fits best in the context?' No doubt conditioned by his provisional conclusion of the superiority of reading 3 in terms of external criticism, he concludes that reading 3 meets this criterion, 'v. 8bc as Paul's own statement, is an attempt to convince the strong not to eat'. Unfortunately he goes no further, because the crucial question is: how or why should it convince the Strong? Thiselton speaks vaguely about a 'cancelling off of advantages',⁷² but I do not see what evidence there is that the Strong thought in terms of 'advantage' when they ate idol food. There is no hint that they thought they were proving something, or making a statement.⁷³ All that we are entitled to assume is that they enjoyed

⁶⁹ 'Textual Criticism and Exegesis', 105–6.

⁷⁰ Nonetheless it must be said that those who disagree with me use external criticism as a short-cut, e.g. Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 180 n. 93; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 394.

⁷¹ *1 Corinthians*, 377 n. 6. ⁷² *1 Corinthians*, 648.

⁷³ Against H.-D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 70, and Gardner, *Gifts of God*, 48.

good meat when it became available, and had the intelligence to realize that there could be no objection just because it had once formed part of a pagan sacrifice.

Since we do have evidence that there were those at Corinth who disagreed with the Strong (v. 7), then it is only reasonable to suppose that the Strong were called upon to justify their position.⁷⁴ I have found nothing to make me waver in my belief that the whole of v. 8 represents that justification. It cleverly evokes Paul's ideas on the neutrality of food (v. 8a), and then takes the thought a step further in theistic and individualistic categories typical of the intellectuals at Corinth. God had neither punished them, nor rewarded the Weak (v. 8bc). This in itself should have been a warning signal to those prepared to accept v. 8 as Pauline, because Paul's argument against the Strong is exclusively Christological (8:10–11). Paul's main problem with the Corinthians was their tendency to drift away from the clarity of the demand to follow Christ into speculation about the will of God, which is easily manipulated to serve one's self-interest. Christology is the touchstone of authentic theism.

⁷⁴ Believing in the moral irrelevance of the body and all its activities (1 Cor 6:12–20), the Strong had no need to persuade themselves. If they developed the slogans in 1 Cor 8, it was because they were forced onto the defensive. The aggressiveness of the Weak is a theme that I shall develop in the next article.

8

Freedom or the Ghetto (1 Corinthians 8:1–13; 10:23–11:1)

The problem of the legitimacy of eating meat which had formed part of pagan sacrifices is, in itself, of very limited interest.¹ Yet Paul's treatment is of perennial value because he saw that fundamental principles were involved. The way in which the issue was raised forced him to deal with such basic questions as the nature of Christian freedom, the place of the believer in a non-Christian society, and the education of conscience. Having preoccupied the church for several centuries,² the specific problem is no longer a concern of ours, yet the principles that Paul develops remain relevant to critical areas of our Christian lives.

Paul deals with the question of idol-meats on two occasions in 1 Cor, first in 8:1–13 and later in 10:23–11:1. Why he felt it necessary to return to the topic is a problem, but it is clear that it was not as the result of new information. I personally do not find the arguments for the division of 1 Cor into a number of letters convincing, but this is perhaps less important than the fact that all those who consider 1 Cor a collection of letters attribute ch. 8 and 10:23(24)–11:1 to the same document.³

The plan of this study falls naturally into two parts. In the first I shall attempt to determine in as much detail as is possible the situation at Corinth which gave rise to the problem. The second part will concern itself with Paul's response.⁴

[544] The form of the introduction, *peri de tôn eidôlôthytôn* (8:1), clearly indicates that the problem was one of those referred to Paul by the Corinthian community (cf. 7:1). It is generally agreed that a dispute arose within the

¹ This article was originally published in *RB* 85 (1978) 543–74, whose original pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² E. Ehrhardt, *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964), 276–90; D. Molland, 'La circoncision, le baptême et l'autorité du décret apostolique (Actes XV.28 sq) dans les milieux judeo-chrétiens des Pseudo-Clementines' *Studia Theologica* 9 (1955) 1–39.

³ In addition to the tabular presentation in J. C. Hurd, Jr, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 45, see W. Schenk, 'Der 1. Korintherbrief als Briefsammlung' *ZNW* 60 (1969) 219–43; R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 23–5.

⁴ Paul also deals with the question of what Christians are permitted to eat in Rom 14:1–15:13. In order to avoid the perhaps unwarranted assumption that Paul is saying precisely the same thing in both letters, I intend to abstract completely from the material in Rom.

Corinthian church and that an appeal for guidance was made to Paul. This, however, is denied by J. C. Hurd, Jr, who maintains that the Corinthians were not divided on this issue, and that they were objecting as a unified block to Paul's attempt to proscribe the eating of idol-meat.⁵

It is undeniable that Hurd's reconstruction of the events carries a certain plausibility, but in the last analysis it fails to carry conviction. Not only does he exaggerate the import of 10:1–22, and depreciate the force of 8:7, but his hypothesis, as Hurd himself recognizes, leads to 'the somewhat strange conclusion' that 'Paul devoted the major part of his reply to vigorous disagreement with them, and only at the close did he give them permission to behave as in fact they had been behaving'.⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that this view has won no acceptance.

No evidence contradicts the traditional opinion that there were two groups within the Corinthian church. One group had no doubts about the legitimacy of eating idol-meat, the other had serious reservations. The former possessed 'knowledge', the latter (at least in some sense) lacked 'knowledge'. The first group could be termed 'Gnostics', and many commentators in fact use this designation. Even though it is justified etymologically, I prefer not to use it because it is susceptible of interpretations that are, to say the least, misleading.⁷ One could speak of 'the men of knowledge' (cf. 8:1), but this is a rather cumbersome expression. Hence, for convenience, since Paul speaks of their interlocutors as 'weak' (8:9, 11), I shall term them the Strong, but only because it is the most natural antithesis.

The Position of the Strong

[545] There is general agreement that *pantes gnôsin echomen* (8:1) was a slogan of the Strong.⁸ In the light of 1 Cor 2 it seems that a distinction was made at Corinth between *pneumatikoi/teleioi* and *psychikoi* and that the former claimed a *sophia* which the latter lacked.⁹ It would seem more natural for the superior group to have said *gnôsin echomen* in an exclusive sense. This would mean that *pantes* is a Pauline addition. However, no motive for such an addition can be adduced, and the hypothesis is explicitly excluded by Paul's qualification *ouk en pasin hê gnôsis* (8:7).

⁵ *Origin*, 115–49. Note particularly his reconstruction of the Corinthian letter (146), which he sees as a reaction to Paul's attempt to impose acceptance of the Apostolic Decree (261).

⁶ *Origin*, 148.

⁷ With regard to Corinthians Gnosticism the most that one can say is that 'There are also isolated traces of the beginnings of what later presented itself as "Gnosticism", that is Gnosticism *in statu nascenti*' (Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 15).

⁸ In addition to the list of authors given by Hurd, *Origin*, 68, see the more recent commentaries of Conzelmann, Barrett, and Orr-Walther.

⁹ B. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul in its Relation to Gnosticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

Those who propounded the slogan, therefore, did not believe that the knowledge in question was a privilege reserved to an elite. It was shared by all members of the community. From this we can infer that it must be concerned with something very basic to Christian belief. This conclusion is confirmed by 8:4 where two parallel clauses *ouden eidôlon en kosmô* and *oudeis theos ei mê heis* are prefaced by the *oidamen* which introduced the slogan in 8:1. These formulae are generally considered to stem from the Corinthian letter,¹⁰ but the decisive argument is provided by C. H. Giblin, who points out, ‘In passages where he expresses simply his own ideas, Paul generally employs only one *hoti* and introduces a correlative clause, if there is one, by *kai* alone, not by *kai hoti*. On the other hand, when he is quoting a known passage (like the kerygmatic formulation in 1 Cor 15:3b-4) he repeats *hoti* after *kai* (*hoti . . . kai hoti*), as he does here.’¹¹

The knowledge that all are presumed to have, therefore, is the conviction of monotheism which is articulated both negatively and positively. The Strong were fully entitled to make this assumption. Not only was the unicity of God a fundamental element of the kerygma, but the opposition between the one true God and idols was a key element in Paul’s own preaching (1 Thess 1:9; Gal 4:8; cf. Acts 14:15).

The two statements *ouden eidôlon en kosmô* and *oudeis theos ei mê heis* [546] are perfectly clear in their general intention, but the various translations highlight the possibility of different nuances.¹²

When viewed in the perspective of Paul’s preaching *oudeis theos ei mê heis* can only mean that one God alone enjoys the prerogative of existence, and nothing that we know of the Corinthian attitude contradicts this interpretation. A qualitative meaning is a purely theoretical possibility.

Ouden eidôlon en kosmô is a little more ambiguous, because *ouden* can be understood either as an attribute (‘No idol exists in the world’) or as a predicate (‘An idol is nothing in the world’). The majority of commentators prefer the first option, pointing out that *ouden eidôlon* is parallel to *oudeis theos*. In point of fact, however, the two nominal sentences are not identical in form, and nothing proves that parallelism was intended. They may even have been separated in the Corinthian letter. Taken at its face value the statement that no idol exists in the world is untrue (cf. 8:10). It can be made to yield an acceptable meaning only by means of a radical transformation which involves speculation regarding the relation of the god to its image. The alternative translation, ‘An idol is nothing in the world,’ creates no such difficulties,¹³ and is recommended by two arguments. Thus understood, the statement falls into the pattern of assertions which highlight the change in value-perception consequent on the advent of Christ, e.g. *hê peritomê ouden estin, kai hê akrobystia ouden estin* (1 Cor 7:19).

¹⁰ Hurd, *Origin*, 68.

¹¹ ‘Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul’ *CBQ* 38 (1975) 530.

¹² See Giblin, ‘Monotheistic Texts’, 530–1.

¹³ J. Weiss terms this rendering ‘sprachlich unhaltbar’ (1 *Korintherbrief*, 219), but *ouden* is placed first as a predicate object in 1 Cor 4:14 and 13:2; cf. 2 Cor 12:11.

Realities which were once significant are now seen to be entirely without meaning or effectiveness. Moreover, the anarthrous *en kosmô* accords better with this interpretation. Generally ignored by the commentators, this phrase is illuminated by the analogy drawn by Giblin¹⁴ between *en kosmô* and the anarthrous use of *thalassa*, *gê*, and *ouranos* which, according to BDF §253, expresses the ‘particular characteristic’ or the ‘specific quality’ of these realities. In this perspective *kosmos* would evoke ‘createdness’ which, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, is the basis of reality. Hence, the paraphrase of the RSV, ‘An idol has no real existence,’ appears fully justified. The adjectival force of *en kosmô* is objectively justified, and to this extent the Strong were correct. But an idol may have another form of existence, and it is precisely this [547] aspect that Paul evokes in 8:5. From this we can infer that the approach of the Strong was too cerebral. It was too abstract to take into account all the facets of reality.

In my opinion 8:8 is also a Corinthian statement which reflects the attitude of the Strong. There are a number of significant variant readings, and I depart from the current consensus by maintaining that the original reading is: *brôma de hêmas on parastêsei tô theô. oute ean mê phagômen perisseuomen, oute ean phagômen hysteroumetha*. Since I have discussed these points in detail elsewhere,¹⁵ it is unnecessary to repeat the arguments here, and I can content myself with a summary of my conclusions. As I understand it, this verse is intended to demonstrate that the eating of idol-meats is not an indictable offence in the eyes of God. The Strong claim that the eating of such food will not bring them before the judgement seat of God (v. 8a), and to show that this confident expectation is justified they shift to the present tense in v. 8bc where a concrete criterion is proposed. Those who ate experienced no diminution of their spiritual gifts, and those who refused to eat showed no evidence of an increase in their gifts. Hence, the eating of idol-meats was morally neutral, since God did not react one way or the other.

It has been pointed out that the Corinthian arguments in 8:1, 4 and 8 present a consistent line of argument to justify the eating of idol-meats.¹⁶ This, of course, is perfectly true, but no one seems to have remarked that the Strong had no need of such arguments! It is clear from the slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20 that the Strong believed the body to be morally irrelevant. It was destined for destruction (6:13a), and in consequence ‘Every sin which a man may commit is outside the body’ (6:18b). Motives were what counted, not actions.¹⁷ As a corporeal activity eating had no moral dimension. Given this attitude, it is inconceivable that the Strong should have developed arguments to justify the eating of idol-meats unless

¹⁴ ‘Monotheistic Texts’, 530 n. 20.

¹⁵ ‘Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8’ *CBQ* 41 (1979) 292–8 = Chapter 7.

¹⁶ J. Jeremias, ‘Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen’ in his *Abba. Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 273–4; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 197.

¹⁷ See my ‘Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20’ *CBQ* 40 (1978) 391–6 = Chapter 3.

they had been accused by the Weak, who asserted that to eat such food was to incur God's wrath.¹⁸ In dealing with 1 Cor 10:29b–30 we [548] shall see that the Weak in fact adopted an aggressive stance. In order to counter this attack, the Strong did not argue on what was the real base of their own conviction but evoked principles to which the Weak had subscribed. The argumentation in 1 Cor 8 was designed to show the Weak that they were being illogical in refusing to eat idol-meats.

Thus, in addition to the pressure that they brought to bear on the Weak (8:10), the Strong also tried rational persuasion. Further support for this conclusion is derived from the use of *oikodomeô* in 8:10. It is clear from the following verses that this verb is not used in the positive sense customary in Paul (cf. 8:1). We are forced to suppose a strong note of irony. The question, then, is: why would Paul ironize such a key concept in his theology? Irony is dangerously double-edged, and it is inconceivable that Paul should have introduced it gratuitously, particularly when writing to a community which had already manifested a tendency to misunderstand him (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–13). The only adequate explanation is that Paul here takes up an expression of the Corinthian letter which reflected the position of the Strong.¹⁹

What exactly did the Strong say? According to R. Jewett they asked *ouchi hê syneidêsis antou asthenês oikodomêthêsetai?*²⁰ Certitude, of course, is impossible, but this is a working hypothesis worthy of respect. Not only does it enable us to understand Paul's response more adequately, but it conveniently summarizes the conclusions of three convergent lines of argument. Two we have already seen, namely, the attitude of the Strong towards the Weak, and the odd use of *oikodomeô*. There remains the formula *hê syneidêsis asthenês*. The statistics regarding *syneidêsis* in the Pauline letters have long been recognized to point in only one direction. The term first appears in that section of 1 Cor where the Apostle is replying to the Corinthian letter. Of the 14 instances in the Pauline corpus, 11 occur in 1 & 2 Cor, and 8 of these are concentrated in the section concerning food offered to idols. The natural inference is that Paul adopted the term because the Corinthians used it. This conclusion is reinforced by the observation that Paul touches on the phenomenon of conscience [549] in 1 Thess 2:2–6 without using the technical term *syneidêsis*.²¹ In the context in

¹⁸ One of the arguments used by Hurd (*Origins*, 123) to justify his thesis that the Corinthians were not divided on the question of idol-meat is the fact that the slogans reflect only the position of the Strong. This is undeniable, but the radical difference between their arguments in 1 Cor 6:12–20 and 1 Cor 8 suggests that the situation at Corinth was more complicated than he is prepared to concede. If the Strong felt that the arguments used in 1 Cor 6:12–20 were sufficient to convince Paul, it seems highly improbable that they would have proposed different reasons to persuade him in 1 Cor 8.

¹⁹ So the commentaries of Heinrici, Weiss, Robertson-Plummer, Lietzmann, Allo and Barrett.

²⁰ *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 422. Why he includes the possessive pronoun is not clear from his commentary. It is unnecessary and may be simply a mistake.

²¹ According to Jewett (*Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 437), Paul did so 'frequently', but in order to justify the adverb Gal and Phil have to be dated earlier than 1 Cor.

which it first appears *syneidêsis* is always associated with the idea of ‘weakness’ (8:7, 12). As the context shows, the meaning of *asthenês* and *asthenousa* here is ‘too easily defiled’ (8:7) or ‘too easily wounded’ (8:12). This usage falls outside Paul’s habitual pattern.²² It seems likely, therefore, that Paul was dependent on the Corinthians, not only for the term *syneidêsis*, but for the concept of ‘weak conscience’.²³

The interrogative form proposed by Jewett could be replaced by a flat statement, ‘The weak conscience should be built-up,’ but there is no substantial difference between the two forms, since *ouchi* expects an affirmative answer. Whether the Strong simply stated their position or whether, in addition, they expected Paul to agree with them is only a minor point. What is important is the evidence that the Strong were fully conscious of what they were doing. Originally, one may presume, the Strong simply ate idol-meat without even suspecting that there might be a problem. Their practice came to the attention of the Weak because they participated in temple banquets. In reaction the Weak accused them of sinning. The response of the Strong was to attempt to show the Weak that they were being inconsistent by drawing out the implications of the monotheistic principles that the Weak had accepted. It seemed entirely natural to the Strong that this discrepancy between theory and practice on the part of the Weak should be corrected by edification of their consciences.

The attitude of the Strong becomes comprehensible if we assume that they identified *syneidêsis* and *nous*.²⁴ There should have been no problem with the Weak since they possessed ‘knowledge’ (8:1). When a problem did emerge, the reaction of the Strong was to try to elicit knowledge by word (8:8) and example (8:10). This approach makes sense only on the assumption that a mind informed by correct knowledge would not suffer the pangs of conscience.²⁵ [550] A ‘weak conscience’ was a mind that was not really influenced by the knowledge that it possessed; it did not appreciate the implications of the principles it had accepted.

The fully assimilated ‘knowledge’ of the Strong gave them an *exousia* (8:9) which permitted them to claim *panta exestin* (10:23). Dupont has shown that, in terms of its practical application to matters of food and sex, this principle is

²² See Dupont, *Gnosis*, 272–3.

²³ Similarly Weiss, *1 Korintherbrief*, 230, and Dupont, *Gnosis*, 274.

²⁴ So Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 425.

²⁵ Since Paul took over the term *syneidêsis* from the Corinthians who had imbibed it from their environment, it is preferable from the point of view of methodology to assume the meaning that was current among Greek-speakers unless something in the text of Paul makes the assumption of another meaning imperative. C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament* (SBT 15; London: SCM Press, 1958), has shown convincingly that ‘The fundamental connotation of the syneidesis group of words is that man is by nature so constituted that, if he overstep the moral of his nature he will normally feel pain—the pain called *syneidêsis*’ (p. 50). *Syneidêsis*, therefore, can be defined as ‘the painful awareness of past transgressions’. This meaning is always applicable in Paul’s discussion of idol-meats; see Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 402–30.

equivalent to the cynico-stoic *panta tou sophou einai*.²⁶ The basis of this idea was that the wise man possessed an *exousia* which can only be understood as a universal sovereignty. Since all things belong to the wise man, he can do with them as he wills; everything is permitted to him. In consequence, only the wise man is truly *eleutheros*.

There are a number of indications which confirm that this popular philosophy influenced the Strong or, at the very least, that Paul interpreted the attitude of the Strong in terms of this philosophy. This is clear in *panta hymôn estin* (3:21) and *eploutêsate . . . ebasileusate* (4:8), but also in the equivalence between *exousia* (8:9) and *eleutheria* (10:29). In addition there are the qualifications which Paul attaches to *panta exestin*, namely, *ouk egô exousiasthêsomai hypo tinos* (6:12) and *on panta sympherei* (6:12; 10:23), which stem from the same popular Stoic philosophy.²⁷

This popular philosophy, however, does not explain the attitude of the Strong to the body (cf. 6:18b). Barrett is perhaps the only commentator to have noticed that the framework of *panta exestin* in 1 Cor 6 is essentially corporeal: 'nothing done *in the body* really matters, and therefore anything may be done'.²⁸ We are forced, therefore, to postulate the influence of a form of Hellenistic-Jewish speculation on Gen 3:7 similar to that which appears in the works of Philo.²⁹ This text permitted Philo to claim, 'In consequence there are two classes of men, those who exist by the reasoning divine spirit (*to men theiô pneumati logismô biountôn*) and those who live by blood and the pleasure of the flesh (*to de haimati kai sarkos hêdonê zôntôn*). The second is moulded of earth, the first is the faithful imprint of the divine image.'³⁰ Dupont comments, 'L'homme [551] céleste, qui est né à l'image de Dieu, n'a pas de part à une substance corruptible ou terrestre; l'homme terrestre, au contraire, est issu d'une matière éparse.'³¹ It is not difficult to see how this insight could have given rise to a conviction of the essential irrelevance of the body, particularly since the influence of Platonism had penetrated Hellenistic Judaism by way of the sapiential literature which accorded the soul a relative independence vis-à-vis the body.³²

The Position of the Weak

Why did some of the Corinthian community experience difficulty in accepting the legitimacy of eating meat which had been offered to idols? The only clue is provided by 8:7, *tines de tê synêtheiai heôs arti tou eidôlou hôs eidôlothyton esthiousin*. In place of *synêtheiai* (* A B P 17, Copt. Aeth.) a number of witnesses

²⁶ Dupont, *Gnosis*, 301–5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 305–7.

²⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 145, my italics.

²⁹ Dupont's thesis that 1 Cor 2:13–14 and 15:44–6 are explicable only in terms of Jewish speculation (*Gnosis*, 151–80) has been confirmed and deepened by Pearson, *Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology*.

³⁰ *Heres* 57; cf. *Leg. All.* 1.31.

³¹ *Gnosis*, 173.

³² See C. Larcher, *Études sur le livre de la Sagesse* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 236–79.

have *syneidêsei* (⌘³ D E F G L, Vulg. Arm.). The critical editions unanimously prefer the former, but the commentators are divided. The case for *syneidêsei* is argued most fully by M. Coune, who maintains (a) that it is the *lectio difficilior* because then the same term would be used in the same verse with two different meanings; (b) that the singular *tou eidôlou* goes better with *syneidêsis* than with *synêtheia*; and (c) that *dia syneidêsin theou* in 1 Pet 2:19 provides a perfect sense parallel.³³ The third argument is irrelevant. The second argument proves nothing because *tou eidôlou* can be understood as a generic singular.³⁴ R. Jewett classifies the first argument as ‘admirably daring but hardly convincing’; and continues, ‘it is no accident that Coune does not produce a precise translation of the verse; it is doubtful that anything better than a long paraphrase could be distilled from such oblique and disparate references.’³⁵ The fundamental objection to Coune’s position is the fact that Paul, as we have seen, adopted the term *syneidêsis* from the Corinthians, who in all probability used it in the sense of painful awareness of transgression. It seems unlikely that he would immediately proceed to use it in a different sense, and then at once revert to the Corinthian meaning. This [552] greatly strengthens the case in favour of *synêtheia*, a term which Paul uses in 1 Cor 11:16. *Tê synêtheia* is obviously governed by *tou eidôlou*. Some copyists (A L P) must have felt that the intervening *heôs arti* disturbed this relationship, and so moved it to follow *eidôlou*.³⁶

The Weak, therefore, are those who ‘up to now have been accustomed to idols’, and who as a result of this conditioning see such meat as having been really offered to an idol. Are they converts from paganism or from Judaism? It is a question of an habitual attitude towards idols which remains up to the present moment (cf. 4:13; 15:6). The continuance of this attitude is what makes some ‘weak’. It is not, therefore, a good thing in itself. It is part of the baggage of one’s past which should have been left behind at conversion.

This can be verified in the case of pagan converts who, despite the formal disavowal of the confession of faith, continued to be influenced by an emotional conviction of the existence of idols. It can also be verified in the case of Jewish converts who, while convinced of the non-reality of idols, nonetheless considered anything associated with idols to be a source of legal impurity. To the former the eating of idol-meats would seem to be a return to a past from which they were striving to be free, while to the latter it would seem to be the repudiation of an element that Christianity had in common with Judaism.³⁷

³³ ‘Le problème des idolothytes et l’éducation de la *syneidêsis*’ *RSR* 51 (1963) 515–17. His arguments are repeated and improved by K. Maly, *Mündige Gemeinde. Untersuchungen zur pastoralen Führung des Apostles Paulus in 1. Korintherbrief* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967), 110–11.

³⁴ BDF §139.

³⁵ *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 417.

³⁶ So rightly Weiss, *1 Korintherbrief*, 227 n. 5.

³⁷ For Heinrici and Conzelmann (in their commentaries) *heôs arti* in itself is sufficient to prove that the Weak cannot be Jewish Christians. The assumption underlying this view is that *tê synêtheia tou eidôlou* means ‘having been accustomed to worship idols’. This is obviously much too specific. The text speaks only of an undefined habitual attitude.

The appearance of the verb *molynein* (8:7) does not provide a decisive argument. Its Jewish character might seem to favour the hypothesis that the Weak were Jewish Christians,³⁸ but if such is the case, *typtô* (8:12) favours the alternative. Arguments of this type rest on the assumption that the Corinthians used one or the other of these terms. There is no evidence that they did. They occur in statements made by Paul and represent his assessment.

The situation is not really clarified if we turn to 10:23–11:1. The twice repeated *mêden anakrinontes dia tèn syneidêsin* (10:25, 27) suggests that Paul was asked if meat should not be examined to see if it came from a pagan temple. The question must have been raised by the Weak. Since the Strong were prepared to eat in a pagan temple (8:10) they would have been most unlikely to have [553] asked questions regarding the provenance of what was available in the market. If Jewett is correct in suggesting that the phrase *dia tèn syneidêsin* comes verbatim from the Corinthian letter,³⁹ the absence of the pejorative qualification confirms this conclusion; the Weak would not have thought of themselves as possessing ‘weak’ consciences. The question of whether meat had been offered to idols would be the first question to come to the mind of scrupulous converts from paganism. Jewish converts would first have asked the more fundamental question of how the meat had been killed, but would also have been extremely concerned to know if the killing had taken place in a pagan temple.

To find a decisive argument we have to consider the type of pressure that the Strong could bring to bear on the Weak. *Esthiousin* (8:7) can be understood as a confident assertion regarding the future.⁴⁰ It could equally well be a purely factual statement, and this is confirmed by the reference to *syneidêsis*, because conscience makes itself felt only after an action has been placed. One might conceivably argue that it is a question of the fear of pain, and that in consequence the reference is future, but this is to forget that such fear can only be rooted in the memory of experienced pain. The Strong, therefore, were able to exert a pressure sufficiently strong to overcome the instinctive revulsion that the Weak experienced regarding idol-meats. In order to overcome an instinctive reaction one must be able to bring into play another deep-rooted urge which will prove more dominant. Pride comes immediately to mind. The desire to be thought liberal and advanced can force individuals to adopt positions that they instinctively reject. One cannot exclude this possibility but it does not seem the most likely.

We are put on the right track, I believe, by a passage from the Clementine Homilies. As part of his description of the Christian way of life Peter says to Mattidia, the mother of Clement who has become a believer:

³⁸ This argument is used by Dupont, *Gnosis*, 284, and by Coune, ‘Problème des idolothytes’, 504.

³⁹ *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 427.

⁴⁰ BDF §323.

We do not partake of food from the table of Gentiles, nor indeed are we able to share their hospitality, because they live uncleanly. But when we have persuaded them to mind the truth and do it, and have baptized them with the thrice-blessed invocation, then we have table-fellowship with them. Otherwise, even if it be father or mother or wife or child or brother, or any other who by nature has our affection, we cannot dare to eat with him. For by our religion we make this distinction. So do not take it as an insult that your son does not eat with you until you adopt this belief and practice. (Homily 13.4)

[554] Here we have a situation where family ties are broken by religious commitment. Perhaps without understanding it, the mother can respect the attitude of her son because the group to which he belongs has a uniform policy to which all submit. Suppose, however, that some members did eat with Gentiles. In this case the emotional climate would change radically, for the son's behaviour could only be explained as lack of consideration for his parent.

At Corinth the ex-pagans in the community had relatives and friends who had not become Christian, and Paul did not forbid association with them (5:10). Marriages and funerals normally involved meals in the temple precincts.⁴¹ Participation would inevitably involve the eating of idol-meats, and such participation was a matter of family and/or social duty. The fact that the Strong took part in such affairs (8:10) put the Weak in a most invidious position. They could not explain their refusal to participate on religious grounds and, in consequence, could only give the impression that they simply wanted to have nothing more to do with their families or friends. The Weak, in other words, found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They were forced to choose between following their instinct and gratuitously insulting those who loved them. It is difficult to envisage Jewish Christians finding themselves in this position. Their unbelieving friends and relatives were in no way associated with pagan temples and as a general rule it seems unlikely that they would have friends who would invite them to private meals at which idol-meats were served (10:28).⁴²

It is more probable, therefore, that the Weak were Gentile Christians whose intellectual conviction that there was only one God had not been fully assimilated emotionally. Having been conditioned from their youth to think of idols as enjoying a real existence, it was inevitable that there should be a time-lag between intellectual and emotional acceptance of monotheism. The intellectual arguments of the Strong (8:4, 8) simply repeated what the Weak already knew theoretically. In themselves they were unlikely to force the Weak to override their instinctive objection to the eating of idol-meats, [555] a practice which, on the emotional level, seemed to be a reversion to a way of life which they had (perhaps at some cost) abandoned. The social pressure generated by the practice of the Strong was another matter, for this touched the Weak precisely on the

⁴¹ Cf. F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig, 1909), 274, 503–13.

⁴² See P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1926), 3.421–2.

emotional level. However, it did not solve the emotional tension under which the Weak lived. It simply forced them to suppress one of the stress elements, and this inevitably provoked the pain which is *syneidêsis*. The destructive effect (8:11) of such repression hardly needs to be emphasized.

How did the Weak react in this situation? It would be a mistake to imagine that they crumpled quietly. In dealing with 8:8 we caught a hint that they threatened the Strong with divine condemnation. This suggestion of an aggressive attitude on their part appears to be confirmed by 10:29b–30: *hinati gar gē eleutheria mou krinetai hypo allês syneidêseôs; ei egô chariti metechô, ti blasphêmourai hyper hou egô eucharistô*.

These verses are notoriously difficult. They have been considered a post-Pauline marginal gloss which later crept into the text,⁴³ but this is a counsel of desperation which merits attention only if no satisfactory explanation can be found. Although Paul speaks in the first person singular the perspective is that of the Strong, for the *eleutheria* mentioned here corresponds to the *exousia* of 8:9.⁴⁴ Equally, the verbs *krinetai* and *blasphêmourai* correspond to the attitude of the Weak as suggested by 8:8, but take it a step further. A defamatory judgement is here related to *syneidêsis*. Elsewhere in this context the classical meaning of this term as the painful awareness of past transgressions is always appropriate. Here, at first sight, it seems less so, because *syneidêsis* is given a judgemental function with regard to the acts of another person. This would be a radical departure from the traditional usage on which the Corinthians depended. Hence, we need to look more closely at *krinetai hypo allês syneidêseôs*. The fact that it is manifestly parallel to *blasphêmourai* immediately suggests that it need not be taken at its face value. Defamation is an act of the person, as is judgement. Once this is recognized it becomes possible to retain the traditional sense of *syneidêsis* and to explain why it is used in this original context.

The Weak had ceded to the pressure generated by the Strong and had eaten idol-meat. In consequence, they suffered the pangs of [556] conscience. They naturally blamed the Strong for the pain they experienced, and in their anger projected into the consciences of the Strong the reaction of their own consciences.⁴⁵ In other words, aware that they had acted against their own instinctual judgement, the Weak assumed that the Strong were doing the same. In this situation the question that one of the Strong would ask is precisely *ti blasphêmourai*, since he felt himself to be acting morally, both in terms of his own principles *and* in terms of the principles to which the Weak had theoretically subscribed. In this perspective it becomes clear why the Strong developed the arguments that appear in 1 Cor 8. They were not animated by any genuine concern for the Weak but by a desire to defend themselves by showing the Weak to be unfaithful to their own principles.

⁴³ So Weiss, *1 Korintherbrief*, 265; Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 17.

⁴⁴ Dupont, *Gnosis*, 286.

⁴⁵ So rightly Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 430.

If the above analysis is correct the situation at Corinth was much worse than is generally recognized. An apparently minor issue had provoked bitter antagonism. The contemptuous superiority of the Strong was opposed by the spiteful malice of the Weak. The potential for a deep and permanent rift was evident and Paul was fully aware that it would be very easy to put a foot wrong and do irreparable damage. This explains the cautious and sometimes hypothetical nature of his response.

The complexity of the situation would have dismayed a lesser man, but Paul rose to the occasion magnificently. The entanglements of intellect and emotion met their match in his subtlety. Since the question ‘To eat or not to eat?’ had to be decided one way or the other, with the consequent risk of alienating one group, Paul contents himself with letting his position be understood. It would have been easy to condemn the unchristian behaviour of both sides, but instead he draws out the implications of their attitudes so that they can perceive this for themselves. He counters arrogance with irony, and brings abstract theory into contact with reality. He confronts emotion with his own carefully calculated explosions of passion.

Objective Truth

On the issue of whether the eating of idol-meat was right or wrong [557] in itself Paul certainly adopts the conclusion of the Strong (10:19, 25, 27). Given his Pharisaic upbringing (Phil 3:5–6), the radical liberalism is so astounding that we must ask what induced him to adopt this point of view.

The reason he himself gives is *tou kyriou gar hē gē kai to plērōma autēs* (10:26). At first sight this appears eminently satisfying but on closer examination difficulties arise. The verse is a citation of Ps 24:1, which was used by Jews to justify the use of benedictions over food (*t. Ber* 4.1).⁴⁶ It is not clear how ancient this tradition is, but even if the usage is late, it demonstrates that no Jew would have understood the verse as legitimizing all foods. It was read within the framework of the Law’s division of foods into clean and unclean. Ps 24:1, therefore, does not explain the shift in Paul’s attitude, and we have to look elsewhere.

Barrett is certainly correct in directing our attention to 1 Cor 10:11, ‘... for us upon whom the end of the ages had come’, but I cannot follow him when he specifies the new eschatological circumstances, in which Paul found himself, exclusively by reference to demons, ‘But precisely because the cause of the demons is lost, they have no power to infest or infect a piece of meat.’⁴⁷ He refers to his study *From First Adam to Last* (London, 1962, 83–94) to justify his statement that the demons ‘have lost their power to inflict radical injury upon

⁴⁶ See E. Lohse, ‘Zu 1 Kor 10:26, 31’ *ZNW* 47 (1956) 277–80.

⁴⁷ Barrett, ‘Things Sacrificed to Idols’ *NTS* 11 (1964–5) 149.

the elect'.⁴⁸ However, the evidence he there adduces is drawn almost exclusively from the epistle to the Colossians. In 1 Cor, on the contrary, the rulers of this age are only in the process of being brought to naught (2:6: *tôn katargoumenôn*), and can still inflict radical injury on the believers. The Strong who participate in temple meals (8:10) enter into partnership with demons (10:20) because they do the work of the demons by destroying the Weak (8:11).⁴⁹ The anti-God forces of the world can operate through the power that men give to false gods, but they can also be effective through a *gnōsis* which is not informed by *agapē* (8:1).

The true answer, I believe, is much simpler. Paul saw Christ as the unique mediator of salvation. The Law, in consequence, no [558] longer had a salvific function: *telos gar nomou Christos*.⁵⁰ It had been superseded, and its precepts were no longer binding, since obedience was owed only to Christ.⁵¹ In this perspective the words of Ps 24:1 take on a new extension and become truly universal.⁵² All foods were created by the one true God, and were in no way modified by being offered to a non-god.

Paul's radical antinomianism also greatly simplifies the problem created by the fact that his decision regarding the legitimacy of eating idol-meats contradicts the Apostolic Decree, which ordered Gentiles to abstain from food offered to idols (Acts 15:29; 21:25). A multitude of theories have been propounded to explain Paul's silence concerning the Decree in 1 Cor.⁵³ Since Paul held a view of the function of law which permitted him to quote dominical directives (1 Cor 7:10–11; 9:14) and then do precisely the opposite,⁵⁴ it seems obvious that he would have simply ignored the Apostolic Decree whenever he felt that it would not aid the realization of his vision of the gospel. While Paul could accept the charitable intention that the Decree was designed to embody, he could not give it the binding authority that its authors intended because he believed, as John Knox has clearly seen, that 'law is no longer valid for the Christian'.⁵⁵ He saw the Decree as nothing more than an instructive guideline.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁴⁹ See C. Hinz, 'Bewahrung und Verkehrung der Freiheit in Christo. Versuch einer Transformation von 1 Kor 10:23–11:1 (8:1–10:22)' in *Gnosis und Neues Testament. Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* (ed. K. W. Troger; Berlin, 1973), 410–11.

⁵⁰ This point is made most effectively by E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 482, 497, 506.

⁵¹ See my *L'existence chrétienne selon saint Paul* (LD 80; Paris: Cerf, 1974), 61–5.

⁵² Lohse ('Zu 1 Kor 10:26, 31', 279) claims that *gar* in 10:26 is intended to introduce a citation and so carries the meaning 'for it is said'. *Gar* is in fact associated with citations in 1 Cor 2:16 and 15:27, but when Paul wants to stress that he is in fact quoting the OT he uses *gegraptai gar* (1 Cor 1:19; 3:19). There are no good reasons to think that in 10:27 Paul bases his argument on the authority of the OT.

⁵³ See Hurd, *Origin*, 253–9.

⁵⁴ See D. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), and my review in *RB* 80 (1973) 452–4.

⁵⁵ *The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 99; see also my *L'existence chrétienne selon saint Paul*, ch. 4.

Election

The Strong had Paul's support on the level of objective truth, but it stopped there. He could not accept the cold speculative reasoning which dominated their approach. Stripped to its essentials his objection was that their strictly rational logic failed to take into account the complexity of real life. It was because they ignored [559] certain aspects of reality that they could preen themselves in the complacency of certitude (8:1c–2a).

The most fundamental aspect that the Strong failed to take into account was the fact that they were *Christians!* Their argument was based on purely theistic principles: *oudeis theos ei mē heis* (8:4); *broma hēmas ou parastēsei tō theō* (8:8). While true in themselves such principles could lead to a distorted perspective, if used in isolation from other factors. Hence, Paul's first concern was to remind the Strong of who they were. Only when they had fully assimilated this could they 'know as they ought to know' (8:2b).

Once this is seen to be Paul's approach, *ei de tis agapa ton theon, houtos egnōstai hyp' autou* (8:3) appears as perfectly in place.⁵⁶ The theoretical ambiguity of the second phrase has been noted by Robertson-Plummer and Barrett, but the general context of Paul's thought permits no doubt: *houtos* refers to the human subject and *hyp' autou* to God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12b; Gal 4:8–9). In the alternative hypothesis one would expect the present tense rather than the aorist. *Egnōstai* evokes a particular moment in past time and, in consequence, suggests something more specific than the generalized knowledge that God has of his creatures. Even if we suppose an OT background it is impossible to agree with Spicq that *ginōskō* in itself conveys the idea of election,⁵⁷ because Dupont has shown that 'L'Ancien Testament ne révèle donc pas un sens technique de la notion de connaissance de Dieu, qui ferait de celle-ci un acte d'élection divine en faveur de ceux qui sont connus.'⁵⁸ However, the idea of a benevolent choice can attach to *ginōskō* (cf. Jer 1:5) and such is in fact the case here. Barrett has pointed out, 'If a man loves God *this is a sign that God* has taken the initiative.'⁵⁹ In Paul *ei tis agapa ton theon* is paralleled only by *tois agapōsin ton theon/auton* (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9).⁶⁰ Whatever be the provenance of the citation in 1 Cor 2:9 'those who love God' certainly stand in a special relation to him, which can only be the effect of a divine initiative. This is unambiguously the case in Rom 8:28 where *tois agapōsin ton theon* [560] is explained as *tois kata prothesin klētois ousin*; they are the *hagioi* (8:27), the *eklektōi theou* (8:33). In Paul's lexicon, then, 'those who love God' are the community of believers, and anyone who loves God is a Christian,

⁵⁶ Zuntz prefers the shorter reading *ei de tis agapa, houtos egnōstai* on the grounds that 'It alone gives the logical continuation of the preceding verse' (*Text of the Epistles*, 31–2). This, of course, is a perfect explanation of why a copyist would have shortened the original text. His other arguments rest on a misunderstanding of what Paul is trying to achieve.

⁵⁷ *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, 1.225.

⁵⁸ *Gnosis*, 81.

⁵⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 190.

⁶⁰ See J. B. Bauer, '... *tois agapōsin ton theon* Rom 8:28 (1 Kor 2:9; 1 Kor 8:3)' *ZNW* 50 (1959) 106–12.

since love is but another name for the new being of those who are in Christ (1 Cor 13:2; 2 Cor 5:17). In this perspective *egnôstai* must have the same force as *proegnô* in Rom 8:29 and *mutatis mutandis* in Rom 11:2. Paul avoids the prefix in 8:3 in order to preserve the theme of ‘knowledge’ introduced by the Strong, and he avoids his more habitual reference to faith in order to highlight the theme of ‘love’ which the Strong had left out of account.

In 8:3, therefore, Paul very adroitly reminds the Strong that their new being (1 Cor 6:15) is constituted by love, and is the result of a divine choice. At the same time he manages to insinuate that love and knowledge should be intimately associated. Those who reflect on their possession of knowledge (8:1c–2) adopt an egocentric stance which is in effect a denial of the other-directed mode of being which makes authentic knowledge possible. This is still rather theoretical but it shows Paul’s pedagogic skill. He had to deal with a group puffed up (8:1) by pride in their intelligence and their delight in abstract thought. His subtlety was intended as a compliment, which he hoped would win their sympathetic attention, but his astringent tone serves notice that real difficulties have to be overcome.

Christian Monotheism

The repetition of the introductory formula in 8:4 is most exceptional. It is true that this verse more accurately restates the problem posed in 8:1. It is a question not of idol-meats in themselves, but of the ‘eating’ of such food. This, however, could have been inferred without much difficulty. It would appear, therefore, that the repetition is designed to focus attention on the nub of the problem. In 8:4 Paul cites two arguments put forward by the Strong, and then takes up each one in turn. In neither case does he offer a refutation. Both statements can bear an acceptable meaning. The behaviour of the Strong, however, showed that their perspective was too narrow. Hence, Paul’s concern is to fill out the picture. In 8:5 he amplifies the statement *ouden eidôlon en kosmô*, and [561] in 8:6 he puts *oudeis theos ei mê heis* in its correct setting.⁶¹ Paul’s response is essentially complete in these two verses, which contain in embryo the rest of the discussion.

1 Cor 8:5 does not have the theological density of the following verse. It is nonetheless crucial to Paul’s argumentation because it conditions the concrete circumstances in which the moral decision taken by the Strong must be worked out. These latter had insisted *ouden eidôlon en kosmô* (8:4). Paul was equally convinced that idols had no real existence, but he was too experienced to confuse theory with reality. The Strong simply abstracted from the fact that there were many *legomenoi theoi*. For Paul this was to ignore a critical aspect of the problem. In the world in which the Corinthians lived ‘god’ was predicated of mythical

⁶¹ A number of commentators have maintained that 8:5–6 is also a citation from the Corinthian letter (Hurd, *Origin*, 68). The evidence in favour of this hypothesis is so fragile as to be worthless, as Hurd has pointed out (*Origin*, 121–2).

beings who inhabited the stars (*en ouranô*), and of some of the kings who sat on the thrones of great nations (*epi gês*). Such 'gods' had a subjective existence. They were 'gods' for those who believed in them. The reality of this relationship was not destroyed by the bland assertion, 'An idol has no real existence.' In order to force the Strong to recognize this facet of reality Paul had to insist *hôsper eisin theoi polloi kai kyrioi polloi*. In choosing this formulation it is highly probable that Paul was inspired by the acclamation that he intended to cite in the next verse, but it was also factually correct.

The *all' hêmin* which introduces 8:6 confirms that Paul is thinking in terms of the subjective dimension. If 'for us' there is only one God and one Lord, equally 'for them' there are many gods and lords. In both cases it is a question of belief and subjective truth. This truth was not of equal validity in the two instances, and it was certainly not Paul's intention to argue that it was. What he intended to emphasize was that persons live in their subjective worlds, and that the subjective world of one differs from that of another. The Strong assumed that the subjective world of all believers was the same, simply because all subscribed to the same objective truth. Their abstract logic did not allow for the time-lag between intellectual acceptance of truth and its emotional assimilation. For some this interval was very short, but not for all. By thus underlining the subjective reality of idols Paul prepares for 8:7 where he highlights the subjective difference that can obtain among believers. Some had not shaken off the emotional attitude towards idols that had [562] dominated their previous existence. In hidden corners of their hearts they still thought of them as possessing power and were afraid to come anywhere near their orbit.

The Strong thought of others as merely thinking beings, and did not see them as persons. In other words, they lacked love, and this stemmed from a failure to remember the true nature of the Christian community. Hence, Paul immediately turns to this point in 8:6 which, as we shall see, also serves as a summons to the Weak to internalize their formal act of faith.

The lapidary character of 8:6 has attracted much attention, but its true function in Paul's argumentation has not always been grasped.⁶² The slight formal indications which suggest that this verse is a citation are confirmed by its literary form which is that of an acclamation. An acclamation has the character of a public utterance, and so its *Sitz im Leben* is to be sought on those occasions when Christians were found grouped together. A choice between eucharistic and baptismal assemblies is facilitated by the very nature of an acclamation. As its earliest use in religious or royal ceremonies confirms, an acclamation is rooted in the wonder inspired by the experience of power. This directs our attention to baptism rather than to the eucharist, for it is in baptism that the saving power of God is most dramatically displayed and most intensely experienced. In baptism

⁶² For detailed justification of the interpretation proposed here, see my '1 Cor 8:6—Cosmology or Soteriology?' *RB* 85 (1978) 253–67 = Chapter 6.

the believers pass from 'death' to 'life' (Col 2:12–13; cf. 1 Cor 6:11). Their being is given a new orientation. Instead of being opposed to God, it is now directed toward him through the reconciling ministry of Christ. The means and finality of this new orientation is perfectly expressed by *hêmeis di' autou* and *hêmeis eis auton* (8:6).

Why does Paul cite a baptismal acclamation? First, it develops the idea of election suggested in 8:3. It is through baptism that the divine choice became effective. The Strong are thereby made aware that their privileged position was due, not to their intelligence, but to the fact that they had been graced by God in a very specific way. Secondly, the baptismal acclamation reminds them that this God was not discovered by wisdom or philosophical speculation, but had revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Here we find the essential corrective supplement to *oudeis theos ei mē heis* (8:4); Christology is the touchstone of authentic theism. It is through Christ that the Strong are what they are, and their relationship to God is mediated [563] through Christ. Theoretical speculation, therefore, must yield to the challenge of an historical person who is 'the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor 1:24). Thirdly, baptism is the rite of initiation into a community, and through it the Strong had become integral parts of an organic whole, the Body of Christ, 'By one spirit we were all baptized into one body' (1 Cor 12:13). The relevance of this theme to the discussion is highlighted by its presence in the parallel discussion regarding the use of sex (1 Cor 6:15). Paul intended the citation of the baptismal acclamation to function as an emotional trigger which would alert the Strong to the fact that they belonged to a community of brothers. It thus prepares for the calculated repetition of *adelphos* in 8:11–13.

In essence, Paul's response is not to deny the validity of speculative reasoning,⁶³ but to insist that it must begin from premises of faith, premises which highlight the historical dimension that the Strong had ignored. For Christians there is no question of God as such, but of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Equally, it is not Jesus Christ the ahistorical Lord of Glory (1 Cor 2:8),⁶⁴ but the historical person who died for his brethren (8:11). Just as the historicity of Jesus Christ should have modified their vision of God, so baptism had modified their historical situation. Speculative reasoning has a place in this new historical context but, unless it is to relapse into a purely pagan mode, it must conscientiously integrate the new realities which constitute being-in-Christ.

Christ and Freedom

This is driven home most effectively in the statement *hamartanontes eis tous adelphous kai typtontes autôn tēn syneidēsīn asthenousan eis Christon harmatanete* (8:12).

⁶³ See G. Bornkamm, 'Faith and Reason in Paul's Letters' *NTS* 4 (1957–8) 93–100.

⁶⁴ See Pearson, *Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology*, 33.

This is the only occasion on which Paul speaks of a 'sin against Christ'. It is generally assumed that 'Christ' here means the historical Jesus who is mentioned in the previous verse, and by way of interpretation we are simply referred to Mt 25:45.⁶⁵ At first sight attractively simple and clear, this view does not resist critical examination. If it were Paul's intention to evoke the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, or the [564] words of the Lord in Acts 9:5, it would have been more natural to continue with the singular *ho adelphos* of v. 11 rather than shift to the plural, particularly since he returns to the singular in v. 13. Moreover, in this context, it is by 'destroying' a brother that one 'sins against' him; this is the point of the emphatic *houtos*. The natural inference is that to 'sin against Christ' is to destroy 'Christ'. The perspective differs radically from that of the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

Since it is inconceivable that Paul thought of the destruction of the Risen Lord, we are forced to enquire whether he used 'Christ' in any other sense. An immediate affirmative answer is provided by the parallel discussion on sex where Paul says, *ouk oidate hoti ta sômata hymôn melê Christou estin* (1 Cor 6:15). 'Christ' here is certainly not the historical Jesus. The reference is to the Christian community as is clear from 1 Cor 12:12, *kathaper gar to sôma hen estin kai melê polla echei, panta de ta melê tou sômatos polla onta hen estin sôma, houtos ho Christos*, which is immediately followed by a reference to baptism (12:13). 'Christ' is interchangeable with 'Body of Christ'. The community is the physical presence of Christ in the world, the human group in which the saving love of God is incarnated. The identity with the historical Jesus is dynamic and functional.⁶⁶ In this perspective 8:12 yields an immediately intelligible meaning. To destroy a brother is to destroy the community. The community dimension is formally stressed by the shift from the singular *ho adelphos* (8:11) to the plural *hoi adelphoi* (8:12) because, for Paul, to sin against one was to sin against all (1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor 2:5). The 'sin against Christ' is the (inchoative) destruction of his incarnate presence in the world with the consequent (inchoative) negation of the effectiveness of his saving death.

By acting in accordance with his principles, but without concern for his weaker brethren, the man of knowledge puts himself at risk. As Conzelmann has pointed out (though for different reasons), 'He can destroy his existence as a believer through his conduct toward his brother.'⁶⁷ As a member of the Body of Christ the being of a believer is that of a part within an organic whole whose shared life is love (1 Cor 1:30; 4:15; 13:2; 2 Cor 5:17). To act without love is to dissolve the unity, which is the very ground of his new being, and the consequence is a return to the state of non-being which [565] Paul terms 'death' (2 Cor 2:16; Rom 6:13; Col 2:13). By acting on intellectual principles uninformed by love the Strong

⁶⁵ So the commentaries of Heinrici, Weiss, Robertson-Plummer, Allo, Barrett, and Conzelmann.

⁶⁶ For a more extended development of this point, see my *Becoming Human Together* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1977), 199–203.

⁶⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 150 n. 40.

destroy not only the Weak whom Christ had brought from 'death' to 'life', they destroy themselves.

This approach highlights the danger implicit in the Corinthian slogan *panta exestin* (10:23). Paul had preached 'freedom', but the Strong understood it, not in the perspective provided by Christ, but within framework of popular Cynico-Stoic philosophy.⁶⁸ As a result they gave it an individualistic interpretation, which in the last analysis is not very different from that which has become the common coin of Christian exegesis and theology. For Paul, on the contrary, freedom was essentially a property of the community, and its reality was conditioned by the vitality of the community.⁶⁹ Man was released from the compulsion of Sin⁷⁰ by entering an alternative environment (through faith and baptism) where the power of Sin was not operative. He remained free only to the extent that he remained a vital part of the organic whole infused by the spirit of Christ. His freedom, therefore, was conditioned by dependence, and a believer who asserted his independence compromised his freedom. The fundamental error of the Strong was to transfer the absolute character of 'freedom from Sin' to the level of decision and action. Since they were absolutely free, they argued, they could do anything they liked. In other words, they confused 'freedom from something' with 'freedom to do something' without realizing that their exaggeration of the latter would necessarily involve the destruction of the former.

Hence, Paul had to insist *ou panta sympherei . . . ou panta oikodomei* (10:23). Not everything is 'advantageous' because some attitudes and actions are destructive. Not everything 'builds up' because some attitudes and actions tear down. To act on the principle that 'all things are lawful to me' is to set out on a course that will inevitably bring one into conflict with the rights of others. The same principle favours an egocentrism which renders one oblivious to the needs of others. If the principle is taken seriously and absolutely, the inevitable consequence is the dissolution of the community which is the basis of freedom from Sin. Automatically, those who live by the principle revert to the pre-conversion state where all were subject [566] to the power of Sin (Rom 3:9). It is in this perspective that *ouk egô exousiasthêsomai hypo tinos* is most naturally understood. To make freedom of action absolute is to return to a state of servitude. The basis of *panta hymôn estin* (3:21) is *hymeis de Christou, Christos de theou* (3:23). The vitality of this latter relationship is manifested by imitation of Christ (11:1) which in practice means 'Let no one seek his own good, but the good of the other' (10:24).

It should now be perfectly clear why Paul could not accept the criterion proposed by the Strong in 8:8. It was exclusively theistic and individualistic. The refutation is implicit in 8:6, so instead of discussing the criterion to which

⁶⁸ Dupont, *Gnosis*, 282–308.

⁶⁹ In addition to my *Becoming Human Together*, ch. 8, see in particular F. Mussner, *Theologie der Freiheit nach Paulus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976) and my review in *RB* 83 (1976) 618–23.

⁷⁰ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 1.332.

he could have formulated objections—God does not always do what men expect him to (cf. 1 Cor 1:26–9; Rom 11:33–5)—he simply substitutes a more authentic standard of judgement (8:9). The question that the Strong should have asked themselves was not ‘Does our proposed course of action have God’s approval?’ but ‘Is our proposed course of action likely to prove a stumbling-block to others in the community?’ He shifts the basis from the impersonal to the personal, from the abstract to the concrete. Instead of a judgement imposed on reality without any concern for its diversity, he insists on a judgement rooted in the individuality of persons.

The Education of Conscience

The catchword ‘conscience’ greatly facilitated the Corinthians’ flight from reality. This was true not only of the Strong, but also of the Weak, for both groups, though in different ways, treated this abstraction as somehow distinct from the personality. The Strong thought of it as something that could be transformed by the simple infusion of speculative knowledge. Since they ignored the emotional aspect of the personality they saw it as something that could be manipulated at will. To the Weak, on the other hand, conscience virtually appeared as a superior being, whose ability to inflict pain was to be feared. In consequence, it could not be touched or altered.

Neither of these views was acceptable to Paul. The Strong ignored the precept of love, while the Weak found an excuse to avoid obedience to it. Paul, however, did not want to do away with the term *syneidêsis* because it enshrined a value that could be integrated into his theology. He shows this very subtly by retaining the Corinthian terminology while at the same time giving it a new dimension.

The Strong had spoken of ‘the weak conscience’ and Paul repeats [567] this formula in 8:7, 12, but he introduces a significant modification in 8:10 where he speaks of *hê syneidêsis autou asthenous ontos*. The possessive pronoun is paralleled in 8:7, 12, and it is easy to infer that ‘the weak conscience’ belongs to ‘the weak’ (8:9, 11). Here, however, it becomes clear that the conscience is weak because it belongs to a weak person. ‘The weak conscience’ and ‘the conscience of a weak person’ are not at all the same thing. The first formula abstracts from the personality. The second emphasizes the intimate relationship between conscience and the person, and this point is driven home by Paul’s irony which extends beyond *oikodomêthêsetai* to the very structure of the phrase, which attributes the action of eating to conscience! In the next verse Paul goes a step further because there *ho asthenôn* is defined as *ho adelphos di’ hon Christos apethanen* (8:11). Paul’s technique is now evident. In a series of carefully calculated steps he has shifted the emphasis from an abstract impersonal ‘weak conscience’ to a highly concrete ‘weak brother’ who possesses a conscience.

A formulation similar to that of 8:10 appears in 10:28 where, instead of the expected *dia tèn syneidêsin autou*, we find *di’ ekeinon ton mênysanta kai tèn*

syneidêsîn, which necessitates the further qualification *syneidêsîn de legô ouchi tèn heautou tèn tou heterou*. Weiss tries to explain this awkwardness, but he contents himself with the suggestion that Paul is simply repeating the formula used by the Weak.⁷¹ This is certainly true, but it does not go far enough. Paul instinctively corrects the *dia tèn syneidêsîn* of the Weak into *di' ekeinon ton mênsanta*. It is the person who matters. *Kai tèn syneidêsîn* is simply a gesture to the Corinthians designed to show that he is aware of their concern. In effect he is saying, 'Do not eat for the sake of the person or, as you would put it, for the sake of conscience.' Or alternatively, 'Do not eat for the sake of the person and, of course, for the sake of conscience if that is the term you insist on.' In the light of ch. 8 the hint is subtle but perfectly clear. What Paul wants to get across is the fact that the conscience belongs to the person. This may appear banal in the extreme but, while according it theoretical recognition, both the Strong and the Weak ignored it in practice.

In his treatment of both these texts (8:10; 11:28) Jewett emphasizes 'the autonomy of conscience'.⁷² His explanation is confused and easily lends itself to misinterpretation, but in the last analysis [568] he gets to the heart of Paul's position by writing, 'He [Paul] does not believe that it [the conscience] is subject to education by any direct method.'⁷³ The operative term is the adjective 'direct'. The Strong believed that the conscience could be educated directly, while the Weak seemed to think that it could not be educated at all. Paul, on the contrary, was convinced that the conscience could be educated, but only indirectly. As an instinctual reaction born of prior conditioning, conscience was an integral part of the personality. Change of conscience, therefore, could come about only through transformation of the personality. In opposition to the Strong who appeared to see increase of knowledge as the only real modification, Paul thought in terms of the conformity to Christ achieved through imitation (1 Cor 4:16–17; 11:1). This is why he insists *hê gnôsis physioi, hê de agapê oikodomei* (8:1). Ostensibly a warning to the Strong, these words also carried a message for the Weak. If they could be 'built up' their perspective could change.⁷⁴

Transforming the Weak

The Weak had to change. Their aggressivity was in its own way just as destructive as the lack of concern of the Strong. Their instinctive revulsion against eating idol-meat was understandable in so far as they had not succeeded in fully interiorizing the fact that idols were nothing.⁷⁵ They had a legitimate grievance

⁷¹ 1 Korintherbrief, 265.

⁷² Paul's Anthropological Terms, 425, 428.

⁷³ Ibid., 425.

⁷⁴ On transformation as a pervasive theme in Paul's theology, see G. Montague, *Growth in Christ: A Study in St Paul's Theology of Progress* (Fribourg: St Paul's, 1961).

⁷⁵ Apropos of 'knowledge' 8:1 uses *echomen*, whereas 8:7 has *ouk en pasin*. Robertson-Plummer comment, 'There is perhaps a difference between having knowledge (v. 1) and its being *in* them as an effective and illuminating principle' (1 Corinthians, 168–9).

against the Strong, but to insist that these were acting in bad faith was neither 'helpful' nor 'edifying' (10:23). This is why Paul had to give explicit attention to the position of the Weak, after having dealt with the attitude of the Strong (both directly and indirectly) in 8:1–10:22.

His first point, *mèdeis to heautou zêteitô alla to tou heterou* (10:24) was applicable to both Strong and Weak whose behaviour betrayed self-centred superiority and fear respectively. By acceptance of this directive, the love which builds up becomes a vital reality. What the directive meant to the Strong was clear in terms of the preceding discussion. What it would mean to the Weak was another matter. They could claim that they were acting in the interests [569] of the others by trying to prevent them from eating idol-meats. Paul did not make the mistake of the Strong by attempting to confront this attitude directly. He was aware that its emotional roots could not be dealt with intellectually. The instinctive reaction of the Weak could be overcome only as a by-product of their growth towards Christian maturity. Hence, Paul was content to initiate a process of edification whose key-element was the loving concern that he himself showed and which he hoped the Strong would also demonstrate.

Paul, however, had to deal directly with the disruptive aspects of the behaviour of the Weak, and he does so with a magnificent combination of pragmatism and passion.

The first point he makes is that the Weak should not go looking for trouble. Their consciences should not bother them unless they are absolutely sure that the meat has in fact been offered to idols, and they can avoid being absolutely sure by asking no questions as to the provenance of the meat they buy (10:25) or which is offered to them (10:27). As Jewett has recognized, Paul is here operating on the principle that 'what you don't know won't hurt you'.⁷⁶ In this Paul once again shows himself to be anything but an orthodox Jew for whom ignorance was never an obstacle to culpability.⁷⁷ The pragmatism of his directive, however, is admirably calculated to wean the Weak from their erroneous conception of wrong.

No sooner had Paul written 'eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience' (10:27) than he recalled that his words would also be read by the Strong. This is precisely what they were doing, and they could take it as a reversal of the position taken by Paul in ch. 8, particularly since it is not made absolutely clear whether the meal takes place in a temple or in a private home. The latter seems more probable because the formula *kai thelete poreuesthai* shows that Paul has no objection. If the meal were held in a pagan temple this would contradict 8:10 and 10:21. Since there was no guarantee that the Strong would devote themselves to such a detailed exegesis, Paul had to introduce a parenthetical qualification (10:28–29a) in order to underline that

⁷⁶ *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 428.

⁷⁷ 'An ignorant man cannot be saintly' (*m. Aboth* 2.6). 'Be heedful in study, for an unwitting error in study is accounted wanton transgression' (*m. Aboth* 4.13).

the principle of behaviour enunciated in ch. 8 remained valid. *Hymin* (10:28) certainly covers the Strong, but it would equally well apply to those of the Weak who had followed Paul's injunction in 10:27, a factor which facilitated the transition from v. 27 to v. 28.

[670] The hypothetical informant was certainly a weak Christian.⁷⁸ Whatever the motive that inspired his statement, the Christian 'must make a practice of abstaining from eating'.⁷⁹ Paul does not give a reason, and so we must assume that he intends to evoke the point made in ch. 8, i.e. the danger of creating a situation in which a weak brother would be subjected to pressure to act in a way which would result in his suffering the pangs of conscience. To confront such a person with a situation in which he is likely to make the wrong choice is the antithesis of the charity that Christians owe to one another.

Having recalled this point, Paul immediately swings back to the Weak in 10:29b whose introductory *gar* parallels that in 10:26. The shift to the first person singular repeats the technique used in ch. 8. The sudden explosion of passion was designed to command attention, but there was more to it than that. Aware that he could not impose a moral option (Philem 8, 14), Paul could only indicate what he would do in similar circumstances. In this we see the authentic exercise of Christian authority which will be perfectly summed up in 11:1. The introduction of the first person here was also justified by the fact that, in terms of objective truth, Paul sided with the Strong. The harsh questions were intended to shock the Weak into a realization of the unchristian character of their attitude.⁸⁰ They, and not only the Strong, had a responsibility to those whose consciences react differently.

Héring best brings out the relationship between v. 29a and v. 29b, 'Déjà le vers 29a rappelait que la liberté de conscience de celui qui cède par condescendance reste libre et indépendante. 29b souligne [571] expressément ce fait en interdisant aux faibles de juger les forts...'⁸¹ However, it is rather an association of ideas than a logical progression because the *gar* of v. 29b refers

⁷⁸ The hypothesis that he is a pagan (Lietzmann, Conzelmann) is to be rejected. (1) The only argument to support it is the use of *hierothyton*, which can be explained in other ways. (2) The eating of idol-meat would not be a problem of conscience for a pagan (so rightly Weiss, Robertson-Plummer, Barrett). (3) This latter argument can be avoided only by assuming (with Heinrici and Lietzmann) that *heteros* refers to someone other than *mênysas*, but this is to introduce totally unnecessary complications.

⁷⁹ 'As *esthiete* (v. 25) means "make a practice of eating", *mê esthiete* means "make a practice of abstaining from eating"' (Robertson-Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 222).

⁸⁰ So rightly W. Bousset, 'Der erste Brief an die Korinther' in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments neu übersetzt und für die Gegenwart erklärt* (ed. W. Bousset and W. Heitmüller; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 2.127; Héring, *1 Corinthiens*, 88; Grosheide, *1 Corinthians*, 244. Other commentators understand 10:29b–30 to be addressed to the Strong (so Godet, Robertson-Plummer, Allo) and interpret it as a further reason for abstention, viz. 'You should abstain, because if you eat, you will put yourself in the unpleasant position of being judged and defamed by other Christians.' Even if we abstract from the undue influence of Rom 14:16, this exegesis is too complicated to inspire conviction (so rightly Barrett).

⁸¹ *1 Corinthians*, 88.

back to v. 27. Fundamentally v. 29b is intended as justification of Paul's advice to preserve ignorance in order to avoid problems of conscience. In reality Paul does not provide a reason. His intention was to force the Weak to discover it themselves by asking them 'what good does it do'⁸² to project onto others the condemnation of their own consciences. Here the educational aspect of his approach is most evident. He obliged them to reflect along productive lines by pointing out that the suggestion that the Strong were deliberately acting against their own consciences could not be justified, since the fact that they 'gave thanks' to God for what they ate (10:30) manifested the conviction that they were not doing anything wrong.⁸³

To the Glory of God

In order to balance the negative tone of much of the preceding discussion Paul concludes on a highly positive note by enunciating a general principle which covers the point at issue but which is susceptible of much wider extension, *panta eis doxan theou poieite* (10:31).⁸⁴ The basic thrust of this injunction has been perfectly defined by Weiss 'dass durch solches Tun fur Gott geworben wird'.⁸⁵ But in order to be fully intelligible the latent riches of this phrase need to be brought to light.

The Pauline concept of *doxa* has multiple aspects,⁸⁶ but we need to consider only those texts where *doxa tou theou* is related to humanity. Even here there must be a limitation because only one of three series [372] of passages⁸⁷ is relevant to our purpose, namely, those texts which speak of the *present* glory of believers. In this respect Paul reflects the Jewish tradition enshrined in the *Apocalypse of Moses*.⁸⁸ According to this work, Adam and Eve on account of their sin were deprived of 'the glory of God' (20:1–2; 21:5–6), but it was promised that this glory would be restored in the eschaton (39:2). *Doxa* here is unambiguously

⁸² This colloquialism renders *hinati (gentai)*, which is literally 'in order that what might happen'. Excellent alternatives are: 'à quoi cela peut-il servir' (Godet); 'what good will you gain' (Robertson-Plummer); 'to what end' (Barrett). 'Why' is a possible translation, but less exact. 'Why should' (RSV, Conzelmann) is unjustified because it inevitably connotes a purely rhetorical question, which mistakes Paul's intention.

⁸³ So rightly Robertson-Plummer, 'This suggests, if it does not imply, that one's being able to thank God for it is evident that the enjoyment is innocent' (*1 Corinthians*, 223).

⁸⁴ Note the parallel injunction in the discussion concerning sex, *doxasate de ton theon en to somati hymôn* (1 Cor 6:20). The precise meaning of *sôma* here is not clear. It may be a distributive singular (BDB §140), but there also may be an allusion to the Body in view of 6:15, which is reinforced by *ouk este heautôn* (6:19), which is the complement of *hemeis de Christou* (3:23). This brings 6:19 into line with 3:16.

⁸⁵ *1 Korintherbrief*, 266.

⁸⁶ An excellent synthesis is provided by H. Schlier, 'La notion de *doxa* dans l'histoire du salut d'après saint Paul' in his *Essais sur le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Casterman, 1968), 379–91.

⁸⁷ J. Coppens, 'La gloire des croyants d'après les lettres pauliniennes' *ETL* 46 (1970) 389–92.

⁸⁸ R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), 2.123–54.

defined as ‘righteousness’.⁸⁹ With the expected modification the same pattern is evident in Paul. Without Christ *pantes gar hêmarton kai hysteronoutai tês doxas theou* (Rom 3:23), but as a result of the advent of Christ believers are *eikôn kai doxa theou* (1 Cor 11:7),⁹⁰ because the end of the ages has already come (1 Cor 10:11).

This radical change is effected because believers are in the process of being changed into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29), who is the image and glory of God (2 Cor 4:4). For Paul, in consequence, ‘the glory of Christ’ and ‘the glory of God’ are interchangeable terms. The understanding of *doxa* as ‘righteousness’ fits perfectly into this perspective. As those who are now righteous before God,⁹¹ the believers have reacquired the capacity to give him glory.⁹² They are what God intended Adam to be because they have been recreated in Christ the New Adam (2 Cor 5:17–21; cf. 1:20), and Adam before the Fall was the revelation of what God intended humanity to be.⁹³ Paul, therefore, conceives ‘the glory of God’ in terms of the being of the believers. Being, however, is realized in action. It is at this point that we can integrate the fundamental [573] aspect of the OT concept of ‘the glory of God’ which appears in Rom 1:23; 2 Cor 3:7ff., and which has been defined by Schlier as ‘*éclat de la puissance*’.⁹⁴ Those who in Christ constitute the New Man (Gal 3:28; Col 3:10) have obtained the glory of Christ (2 Thess 2:14) who is ‘the power of God’ (1 Cor 1:24) and the love of God (Rom 8:39). In consequence, they must ‘shine as lights in the world’ and radiate the love which empowers ‘life’ (Phil 2:14–16).

In this perspective *panta eis doxan theou poieite* (10:31) appears as a summons to the Corinthians to realize the possibility that has been given them. Their whole comportment must be a manifestation of power-in-splendour in imitation of Christ (11:1). For Paul, Christ was above all the one ‘who loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal 2:20), who ‘died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves’ (2 Cor 5:15). The Corinthians must manifest a similar other-directed love (10:24).

This strong positive approach suggests that *aproskopoi ginesthe* should be translated ‘be blameless’ rather than ‘be without offence’. Not only is this the

⁸⁹ ‘In that very hour my eyes were opened and I knew that I was bare of the righteousness with which I had been clothed (*hoti gymnê êmênês dikaiosynês hês êmên endedymenê*) and I wept and said to him, ‘Why have you done this to me in that you have deprived me of the glory with which I was clothed (*hoti apêllotriôthên ex tês doxês mou hês êmên endedymenê*).’ (*Apocalypse of Moses* 20:1–2).

⁹⁰ *Apoc Mos* 10:13 and 12:2 predicate ‘image of God’ of fallen humanity. Ben Sira reserves this concept to Israelites (17:1–13), and a further limitation appears in Wisdom where it is restricted to those who possess wisdom (Wis 2:23–4). Paul’s addition of *doxa* to *eikôn* is designed to distinguish his use of ‘image of God’ from that of his contemporaries. See A. Feuillet, ‘L’homme “gloire de Dieu” et la femme “gloire de l’homme” (1 Cor 11:7b)’ *RB* 81 (1974) 161–82.

⁹¹ Just as *doxa theou* in 1 Cor 11:7, so *dikaiosynê theou* is predicated of believers in 2 Cor 5:21.

⁹² As Bultmann has acutely observed, ‘It is as one who is righteous before God that man is what he should and can be’ (‘Romans VII and the Anthropology of Paul’ in his *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of R. Bultmann* (ed. S. Ogden; London: Collins, 1964), 178).

⁹³ See A. Liéger, *Péché d’Adam et Péché du Monde* (Paris: Beauchene, 1960), 316–18.

⁹⁴ *Essais sur le Nouveau Testament*, 381.

only meaning attested elsewhere in the letters (Phil 2:10), but it is the only meaning which justifies the *kathôs* introducing 10:33. Paul has dedicated himself to 'seeking the advantage of many in order that they may be saved' (10:33). It is not enough that the Corinthians avoid creating stumbling-blocks, they must positively empower the conversion of Jews and Gentiles and the continuing growth of their fellow-Christians. The obligation to build up one another is clearly articulated by Paul, *panta pros oikodomên ginesthô* (1 Cor 14:26), as is the missionary impact of such behaviour (1 Cor 14:3, 24; cf. Phil 2:14–16; 1 Thess 2:6–8). Only when they have acquitted themselves of these complementary obligations can the Corinthians be considered *aproskopoi*.⁹⁵

Through fear the Weak would have forced the community into a self-imposed ghetto. Through a destructive use of freedom the Strong would have committed the church to a pattern of behaviour indistinguishable from that of its environment. If either group had prevailed, the identity and mission of the church would have been gravely compromised. Paul's response was to focus the vision [574] of the Corinthians on their roots in Christ and on their responsibility to each other and to a wider world. His passionate prudence is a perfect illustration of *hê agapê oikodomei* (8:1).

POSTSCRIPT

I wrote this article, not because I felt that I had any particular insight that would illuminate the much debated question of Paul's position on food offered to idols, but because I was invited to present a paper at the *VII Colloquium Ecumenicum Paulinum* at the Abbey of Saint-Paul-Outside-The-Walls, Rome, in September 1978. At that point the group was systematically working through 1 Cor, and I was assigned these two passages as part of a four-day session devoted to 1 Cor 8–10 and Rom 14–15. This is why the article also appeared in the proceedings, *Freedom and Love: The Guide for Christian Life (1 Co 8–10; Rm 14–15)* (ed. L. De Lorenzi; Rome: St Paul's Abbey, 1981), 7–38, where it is followed by a verbatim report of the ensuing discussion (38–55).⁹⁶

Since then 1 Cor 8–10 has not ceased to command the attention of exegetes. There are so many different aspects to be considered, and so many different opinions to be evaluated, that these chapters have become the happy hunting ground of those in search of dissertation topics. Just a check on the books sent to me for review brought to light in chronological order:

⁹⁵ Note the related terms *amemptoi kai akeraioi, tekna theou amôna* in an apostolic context (Phil 2:14–16). In NT usage *amemptos* carries the connotation of a state resulting from the fulfilment of an obligation (Lk 1:6; Phil 3:6; Heb 8:7). A thing or person is said to be *akeraios* if it is in its true and natural condition, uncontaminated by any foreign admixture (Rom 16:19).

⁹⁶ This volume had been preceded by *Paolo a una Chiesa divisa (1 Co 1–4)* (ed. L. De Lorenzi; Rome: St Paul's Abbey, 1980) and would be followed by *Charisma und Agape (1 Ko 12–14)* (ed. L. De Lorenzi; Rome: St Paul's Abbey, 1983).

- H.-J. Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* (NTAbh NF 15; Münster: Aschendorff, 1982).⁹⁷
- W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS 68; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).
- H. Probst, *Paulus und der Brief. Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Form der Paulinischen Korintherkorrespondenz (1 Kor 8–10)* (WUNT 2.45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).⁹⁸
- P. D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8–10 in its Context* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 5; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1993).⁹⁹
- P. D. Gardner, *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994).
- K. K. Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Cor 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic* (Biblical Interpretation Series 9; Leiden: Brill, 1995).
- D. Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth* (JSNTSup 169; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).¹⁰⁰
- A. T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy* (JSNTSup 179; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).¹⁰¹
- J. Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1* (WUNT 2.151; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).¹⁰²

This list takes into account only the published doctorates on the subject. It is unlikely to be complete, and leaves out of account numerous articles on aspects of these chapters.

The unity of 1 Cor 8–10 remains a matter of some debate, because there are still those who maintain that it is an amalgam of material from two independent Pauline letters. Senft claims that there were two or three letters, whose chronological order, if I understand him correctly, was: (a) 9:24–10:22; (b) 8:1–13 + 9:19–23 + 10:23–11:1; and (c) 9:1–18.¹⁰³ Klauck, for his part, assigns 10:1–22 together with 9:1–18, 24–7 and 11:2–34 to an earlier letter in which Paul forbade Christians to participate in pagan sacrificial meals. This gave rise among the Corinthians to queries concerning market food and invitations to pagan homes. In response Paul wrote 10:23–11:1 + 8:1–13 + 9:19–23.¹⁰⁴ According to Witherington, Paul had already condemned Christian participation in cultic meals, but he gives no details.¹⁰⁵

The majority of commentators rightly give no credence to partition theories of 1 Cor. A number point to the variety of hypotheses, as if this were adequate

⁹⁷ Reviewed in *RB* 90 (1983) 465–6.

⁹⁸ Reviewed in *RB* 100 (1993) 152–3.

⁹⁹ Reviewed in *RB* 103 (1996) 145–6.

¹⁰⁰ Reviewed in *RB* 108 (2001) 304–5.

¹⁰¹ Reviewed in *RB* 108 (2001) 305–6.

¹⁰² Reviewed in *RB* 112 (2005) 149–51.

¹⁰³ *1 Corinthians*, 107.

¹⁰⁴ *1 Korintherbrief*, 10–11, 77.

¹⁰⁵ *Conflict and Community*, 186.

condemnation.¹⁰⁶ Such variety in fact does nothing but underline the reality of the problem. The unity of chs. 8–10 is not self-evident. Scholars who have not been convinced by earlier solutions are tempted to try anew, and will no doubt keep trying until a fully satisfying solution has been achieved. The fundamental flaw in the partition hypotheses that have been published is that none of their authors has even attempted to explain what the editor could possibly have been thinking of in cutting up the letters he had at his disposition and assembling the pieces into our present chs. 8–10. What objective did he have in reconfiguring what Paul had written? An answer to this question is required methodologically if any partition theory is to carry conviction. It is relatively easy to reduce a text to its component elements, but such dissection will command serious attention only when the author provides a plausible explanation of how and why the pieces were combined to create the existing text. As things stand, therefore, the tensions between the various parts of chs. 8–10 have to be solved by careful exegesis.

Reviewing the literature it becomes obvious that the exegesis of detail is controlled by the interpreter's understanding of the problem with which Paul is dealing. Here, once again, a consensus is lacking. In what can be called the traditional view, which I adopted in the above article, Paul has been invited by the letter from Corinth (1 Cor 7:1) to arbitrate between those members of the community who saw no difficulty in eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols (the Strong) and those for whom it created serious problems (the Weak). This option, which is also known as the 'marketplace food' hypothesis, is still favoured by Harrisville,¹⁰⁷ Strobel,¹⁰⁸ and Wolff.¹⁰⁹

The Weakness of the Cultic Meal Hypothesis

The first serious and sustained attack on this position came from Fee. While with the Corinthians, Paul had forbidden his converts to participate in cultic meals eaten in a temple in the presence of the god; it was a form of idolatry.¹¹⁰ These meals, however, were such an integral part of the religious and social life of the city that, once Paul had left the city, some believers reverted to the practice, and in the letter from Corinth made three theological points against his ruling: (1) idols have no existence (8:4); (2) food is morally neutral (8:8); and (3) baptism and eucharist make one immune to temptation (10:1–13). These were supplemented by a two-part fourth argument, which questioned Paul's authority to make such a ruling: (a) he had refused financial support while with them (9:12), and (b) he himself ate marketplace food (9:19–23). In addition to the slogans in 8:1, 4, 8, Fee suggests that Paul probably alludes to the Corinthian letter in 8:10; 9:1; and 10:1–4.¹¹¹ The view that Paul was concerned exclusively with eating

¹⁰⁶ So Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 15; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 610.

¹⁰⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 134.

¹⁰⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 165.

¹¹⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 359, 387. Similarly Willis, *Idol Meat*, 267.

¹¹¹ *1 Corinthians*, 362.

in pagan temples is also supported by Hays,¹¹² and Witherington, who further claims that the essential difference between Rom 14 and 1 Cor 8–10 is that the former is concerned with meat *in itself* whereas the latter focuses on *where* it is eaten.¹¹³ For convenience this interpretation can be called the ‘cultic meals’ hypothesis.

The first difficulty with this hypothesis is the introduction to this section of 1 Cor, *peri de tôn eidôlothytôn* (8:1). The substantitive is a combination of the Greek words for ‘idol’ (*eidôlon*) and ‘sacrifice’ (*thyma*) and means literally ‘sacrificed to an idol’.¹¹⁴ If Paul’s unique concern was with cultic meals, why did he not say so? Fee has an answer, ‘This means that *eidôlothyta* does not primarily refer to marketplace food, but to the eating of sacrificial food at the cultic meals in pagan temples.’¹¹⁵ This greatly increased specification, as its formulation indicates, clearly owes everything to Fee’s assumption regarding the meaning of chs. 8–10. No doubt he felt safe in making such a guess because one would not expect inscriptional or other evidence to contradict him. The term was not in use among pagans, who would have used *theothyton* ‘offered to the god’. Witherington attempted to give some objectivity to Fee’s conclusion by a survey of actual usage. He concluded, ‘*eidôlothyton* in all its first century AD occurrences means an animal sacrificed in the presence of an idol *and eaten in the temple precincts*’.¹¹⁶

Unfortunately there is a strong element of special pleading in Witherington’s treatment of the data. Two examples must suffice here. The first text he discusses is the order given by Antiochus to force Jews to eat ‘pork and food sacrificed to idols’ (4 Macc 5:2). The key element in his argument, however, is provided by the previous verse, ‘The tyrant Antiochus sitting in state with his counselors on a certain high place (*epi tinos hypselou topou*)’ (NRSV). Witherington invites us to assume that this ‘high place’ is one of the places associated with pagan worship condemned by the prophets, and so glides to the suggestion that the king wanted the Jews to participate in an act of idol worship.¹¹⁷ It is much more probable that the author of 4 Macc intended only to say that the king was seated on a slight eminence where he could see and be seen.

The second text is *Sibylline Oracles* 2.95, ‘Do not eat blood. Abstain from what is sacrificed to idols.’¹¹⁸ Witherington comments, ‘The specific prohibition of “eating blood” when coupled with the term *eidôlothyton* makes it quite probable that the author has the image of eating in the temple in mind.’¹¹⁹ The logic is

¹¹² *1 Corinthians*, 142. ¹¹³ Fee, *Conflict and Community*, 186–7.

¹¹⁴ BAGD 221a. For a discussion of different translations, see Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 617–18.

¹¹⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 359.

¹¹⁶ ‘Not so Idle Thoughts about *Eidôlothuton*’ *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993) 240, his emphasis. So also his *Conflict and Community*, 189.

¹¹⁷ ‘Not so Idle Thoughts’, 240–1.

¹¹⁸ J. J. Collins in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. Charlesworth; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1.347.

¹¹⁹ ‘Not so Idle Thoughts’, 241.

unusual to say the least, and carries no conviction. The highly precise meaning attached to *eidōlothuton* by Fee and Witherington is rightly refused by Thiselton, but without argument.¹²⁰ Since Paul's use of the term is the earliest attested, it is more prudent to give it the generic meaning 'food sacrificed to an idol', and to infer from the context that 'meat' is the food in question (cf. 8:13). Hence, 'meat associated with offerings to pagan deities'.¹²¹

The key element in the argument of Fee and Witherington regarding Paul's purpose in chs. 8–10 is 8:10, which Fee translates, 'if anyone (meaning the person with the weak conscience referred to in the apodosis) sees you, the one having knowledge, sitting at table in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, being weak (exactly as in v. 7), be "built up," leading him to eat sacrificial foods ("himself" being implied)?'¹²² Attention must first be drawn to a blatant error. As I pointed out in my article, Paul moves with great skill from 'weak conscience' (v. 7 – taken from his opponents) to 'weak persons' (v. 9) to 'the conscience of a weak person' (v. 10) to 'a weak person' who is a 'brother' (v. 11). In a series of carefully calculated steps he shifted the emphasis from the abstract and impersonal to the highly concrete, a fellow Christian with a conscience, which is a completely different matter.

Contrary to what Fee says, it is the Weak who are in the forefront of Paul's mind. He is preoccupied by what is happening, or might happen, to them. The Strong are in the wrong *only* because they exhibit no concern for the Weak.¹²³ They are not condemned here for idolatry. This is all the more striking in that, according to Fee, Paul envisages eternal damnation for the Weak who eat against their conscience (8:11).¹²⁴ There is no injunction against idolatry until 10:14. Such silence, of course, is extremely embarrassing for Fee. In opposition to Witherington, he does face up to the problem, but only to dismiss it as unimportant.¹²⁵ This is not good enough. And it is not sufficient to talk vaguely about the Pauline strategy of the indicative in ch. 8 preceding the imperative in ch. 10.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 617. For argumentation see E. C. Still, 'The Meaning and Uses of *Eidōlothuton* in First Century Non-Pauline Literature and 1 Cor 8:1–11:1: Towards a Resolution of the Debate' *Trinity Journal* 23 (2002) 225–34.

¹²¹ So Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 612.

¹²² *1 Corinthians*, 385–6.

¹²³ So rightly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.213.

¹²⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 387, which for some extraordinary reason he sees as clinching the argument that 'real idolatry (i.e., eating cultic meals) is the issue at hand'. He does recognize that *apollytai* is present tense, and so translates 'already he is experiencing [eternal] ruin', which must be the weirdest form of realized eschatology. Common sense demands that the verb must be understood as referring to some form of existential disintegration. So rightly Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 653. Fee dismisses this as 'altogether too modern', completely forgetting the destructive internal tension implied by the plaint of Medea, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* 'I see the right, and I approve it too, Condemn the wrong and yet the wrong pursue' (line 20; rendering of Sir Samuel Garth). For the context of her love for Jason, see, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.1–58.

¹²⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 386 n. 54.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 363 n. 23.

Garland, who supports Fee's position, says simply, 'He [Paul] does not start by condemning outright the [idolatrous] behaviour, as presumably he had done in the previous discussion on this issue.'¹²⁷ If Paul had already made his position clear (or thought he had, as in 1 Cor 5:9) why should he hesitate to reiterate it? It would not have been very complicated. Paul could simply have said, 'if anyone sees you a man of knowledge *endangering yourself* at table in an idol's temple...'. He would have made his position on cultic meals perfectly clear.

The extent to which Fee has to struggle to make 8:10 say what he wants is evident in his treatment of its conditional form, 'Even though the explanation takes the form of a present general supposition, the urgency of the argument suggests that we are dealing with a real, not merely a hypothetical situation.'¹²⁸ The stress on 'urgency' is pure bluff. In reality Paul is giving a 'for instance' of the way the Strong could possibly bring pressure on the Weak to eat idol meat.¹²⁹ Thiselton is much more accurate in writing, 'the aorist subjunctive *idê* with *ean* introduces an indefinite possibility, but the existence of the insecure [= the Weak] at Corinth is itself actual rather than merely rhetorically hypothetical'.¹³⁰ Paul is *guessing* at how the Weak might have come under pressure. There is not the slightest hint in 8:10 that the Strong were actually eating in pagan temples, still less that it was their regular practice. It must be said, however, that it did not come naturally to Paul to put himself in the position of others by imagining what might be.

This is not to say that Paul would have been unconcerned by Christians participating in cultic meals. 10:14–22 demonstrates the opposite.¹³¹ I strongly suspect, however, that this topic did not move to the front of Paul's consciousness until he realized the impact it was having on weaker members of the community. To give colour and drama to his warning that those who thought themselves saved could still fall, he put forward incidents from the history of his people, one of which involved a meal (10:7), in which they slipped back into idolatry. This brought him to the realization that the Strong by participating in cultic meals were not only putting pressure on the Weak, but were putting themselves at risk. Not, however, for the reason that Fee and Witherington postulate, as we shall see.

¹²⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 360.

¹²⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 385. The reality of the situation is again stressed on p. 387. On this point Witherington rightly disagrees with Fee (*1 Corinthians*, 387 n. 14).

¹²⁹ Dismayed by the silence of commentators I developed a possible scenario in my *St Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 189. It is important to determine 'how' things come about, 'how' they work in practice.

¹³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 652. This must be what Schrage intends by '*ean* charakterisiert den Fall als möglichen, aber nicht bloss als hypothetisch konstruierten' (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.262).

¹³¹ Schrage perhaps offers the most adequate title for chs. 8–10, 'Die Frage des Essens von Götzenopferfleisch und der Teilnahme an Kultmahlen'.

The Reality of Cultic Meals

This hypothesis assumes that at the beginning Paul had not taken seriously the presence of some Corinthian Christians at cultic meals. Is this reasonable? Willis provides an affirmative answer. After a thorough analysis of all the available evidence for Greek religion he concludes (a) that 'even in the mysteries, religious meals were not regarded as sacramental occasions',¹³² and (b) cultic meals were seen 'as occasions of good company, good food, and good fun'.¹³³ In other words, the focus of meals in temples was overwhelmingly on conviviality. Thiselton thinks that Willis may have gone too far, but provides no evidence to back up this assessment.¹³⁴ Garland objects to the reduction of the religious dimension of such meals, claiming that in the ancient world there was no separation between the secular and the religious, and that 'the location of the banquet would cast its idolatrous shadow on the meal'.¹³⁵ The rhetoric of this phrase does nothing to enhance its argumentative value.

The literature abounds in suggestions that at such cultic meals the god was considered to be present in one way or another.¹³⁶ There can be no doubt that this is correct. The real question, however, is: How seriously was the presence of the deity taken? Was the comportment of the diners characterized by decorum inspired by awe at being in the company of the divinity? Willis has assembled a significant body of data ranging from Aristophanes to Athenaeus which makes a negative answer the only one possible.¹³⁷ One quotation from the latter makes the point adequately:

The men of today pretend to sacrifice to the gods and call together their friends and intimates, curse their children, quarrel with their wives, and drive their slaves to tears and threaten the crowd (*Deipnosophists*, 363f–364b).

In Greek religion the mood of cult was festivity, and all too often it got out of hand. Thus dining groups had to introduce regulations to govern behaviour, and fines were levied for misconduct.¹³⁸ If the piety of Greece was relaxed and unthreatened,¹³⁹ then the gods might be accorded lip-service, but little real respect. Athenaeus describes a dinner where the god is so disgusted at the behaviour of his worshippers, who evidently came to play and not to pray, that he covers his face and departs, abandoning not only the house but the city.¹⁴⁰

Against this background one can see how at the beginning Paul could have been prepared to tolerate the presence of some of his converts at cultic meals. He saw them as primarily social occasions that posed no threat to believers who were

¹³² *Idol Meat*, 47, 62. ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 63. ¹³⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 653 n. 251.

¹³⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 349. ¹³⁶ e.g. Plutarch, *Moralia* 1102AB. ¹³⁷ *Idol Meat*, 56–61.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 54–6.

¹³⁹ R. Parker, 'Greek Religion' in *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (ed. J. Boardman et al.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 272.

¹⁴⁰ *Deipnosophists* 420e.

solidly grounded in their new faith, and who explicitly affirmed their conviction that idols were nothing.¹⁴¹ One of these was Erastus, who should play a much greater role in the exegesis of chs. 8–10 than has been allowed.¹⁴²

Paul gives him the title *ho oikonomos tês poleôs* ‘the city treasurer’ (Rom 16:23). His role has been needlessly complicated by attempts to identify him with the person commemorated by the famous inscription found near the theatre at Corinth, ‘Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.’¹⁴³ This may be the case, but it is not necessarily so. The name Erastus was more common than is usually recognized, and the inscription cannot be dated as confidently as in the past.¹⁴⁴ The probable difference of the two individuals has focused attention on the question of the status of Paul’s Erastus. In reality it is irrelevant whether he was free, freed, or a slave.¹⁴⁵ The point is that he was a financial official within the local government of Corinth.¹⁴⁶ Thus necessarily he was a participant in all the religious acts of the municipality, which certainly involved sacrificial meals.¹⁴⁷ But he was also a Christian. Nonetheless Paul makes no objection. The fact that he gives Erastus his civic rank excludes the possibility that he had failed to persuade Erastus to resign, which he should have done, were Fee and Witherington correct regarding Paul’s opposition to cultic meals.

Paul’s Example in 8:13 and ch. 9

Once again, were they right, in 8:13 Paul should have said, ‘I will never eat in an idol’s temple’, but this is not what he wrote. Fee is alert to the objection, but the best he can do is to claim that, ‘since he would never have participated in the cultic meals as such, he must broaden the principle to refer to scruples about food in general, and animal flesh in particular’.¹⁴⁸ This is gratuitous, particularly since Paul never specifies how far he would go, but 9:21 is very suggestive. It

¹⁴¹ So also R. Oster, Jr, ‘Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 7:1–5; 8:10; 11:2–16); 12:14–26’ *ZNW* 83 (1992) 66.

¹⁴² He appears as an unanswered question in Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 348 n. 3, but I have not found him mentioned in any other study.

¹⁴³ See D. Gill, ‘Erastus the Aedile’ *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989) 293–301, and A. Clark, ‘Another Corinthian Erastus Inscription’ *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (1991) 146–51.

¹⁴⁴ See in particular J. Meggitt, ‘The Social Status of Erastus (Rom 16:23)’ *NovT* 38 (1996) 218–23. Meggitt forgets, however, that ex-slaves could rise to the highest positions, which necessarily implied possession of great wealth, e.g. Babbus Philinus, who attained the rank of *duovir* of Corinth; see my *St Paul’s Corinth*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ See the balanced discussion in J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (WBC 38B; Dallas TX: Word Books, 1988), 911.

¹⁴⁶ I entirely fail to understand how Meggitt could even raise the possibility that ‘the apostle might be referring to an office *within* the church: Erastus may be *the* steward or treasurer, overseeing, for example, the financial contributions towards the “collection”’ (‘The Social Status of Erastus’, 218). Had Paul written *ho oikonomos tês ekklēstias*, there might be a remote possibility of confusion, but he has *tês poleôs*, which is completely unambiguous.

¹⁴⁷ Just being a full citizen imposed such obligations, which Jews tried to avoid; see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.126.

¹⁴⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 390.

is more important to draw attention to the fact that in this verse Paul does not speak merely of 'meat' (as the RSV, NRSV, NJB, NAB imply). He uses *krea*, which is the plural of the collective noun *kreas* 'meat'.¹⁴⁹ Thiselton is the first commentator to underline the fact that this means 'meat in any form', 'all kinds of meat'.¹⁵⁰ Paul broadens the perspective beyond idol meat to include, for example, ordinary non-kosher meat that would be offensive to Jewish converts (9:20).

It is a problem for Fee that Paul concludes ch. 8 by a reference to his own example. His solution is that it was designed to lead into ch. 9, where Paul speaks of his financial sacrifice.¹⁵¹ In fact it is more likely to be the other way round. 8:13 articulates the decision to which Paul wishes the Corinthians to come. Since he will not impose it as a command, because that would rob their compliance of all value (Philem 14),¹⁵² he has little choice but to lay out for them the line of behaviour that he personally would follow. 'Imitate me' is implicit in what he says (cf. 4:19; 11:1). It is this, it seems to me, that guided Paul to continuing in the first person singular in ch. 9.

There is now general agreement that ch. 9 is not an intrusive element from another letter, but a classical *digressio* in a typically Pauline A–B–A pattern. It was not part of the brief for my original article, but one or two points deserve consideration.

One of the two dominical logia in the Pauline letters appears in 9:14. In the gospels it appears as 'the labourer deserves his food/wages' (Mt 10:10 || Lk 10:7), but the form given it by Paul is, 'The Lord commanded (*dietaxen*) those who proclaim the gospel to get their living by the gospel.' Paul understood Jesus to have ordered preachers to be so entirely committed to their work that they would have no time to earn their living. They would have to be supported. The problem arises when this verse is combined with 9:15–18, where Paul vociferously insists that he will support himself. In other words, Paul flatly disobeys a dominical precept.

A surprising number of commentators refuse to recognize the problem, contenting themselves with saying that Paul reinterpreted a 'command' as a discretionary 'right' or 'privilege'.¹⁵³ This is in fact what he does, but what authorized him to do so? Orders are intended to be 'binding', and cannot simply be transmuted into 'non-binding' by the will of the inferior. A reluctance to think of Paul as disobedient to Jesus manifestly colours such exegesis.

Other interpreters clearly see the problem, but attempt to solve it in ways which betray the same reluctance to face facts. The simplest way around the

¹⁴⁹ BAGD 449b; BDF §47(1).

¹⁵⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 657. So also Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 390–1. Much less clearly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.268.

¹⁵¹ *1 Corinthians*, 390.

¹⁵² See Chapter 2 above.

¹⁵³ For example, Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 66; Strobel, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 146; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 342; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.319, 321; Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 152; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 694.

difficulty is to translate 9:14 in such a way that the onus of support rests on the hearers, not on the preachers, e.g. ‘The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel’ (RSV, NRSV, NJB). This is also the exegesis of Fee,¹⁵⁴ followed by Witherington.¹⁵⁵ If the precept was not addressed to Paul, then there could be nothing disobedient about his practice. Despite the neatness of this sleight of hand, it cannot stand against the grammar of the verse. ‘Verbs of commanding prefer the dat. of the person addressed with the infinitive.’¹⁵⁶ The precept is addressed to the preachers.

A most original solution is to claim that *diatassô* does not have the meaning ‘to order, direct, command’ which it always has in our literature.¹⁵⁷ It should be translated by ‘to arrange’ as in classical literature.¹⁵⁸ This is the rendering of Collins.¹⁵⁹ Prudently he does not try to explain what this could have meant. Garland is more courageous, ‘Since Jesus considered the preaching mission to be a full-time task that prevented the missionary from earning income in a normal occupation, he established their right to be supported.’¹⁶⁰ And so once again the responsibility is removed from the preachers to their hearers, and Paul is no longer disobedient! The same sleight of hand is attempted by Thiselton, who distinguishes between mandatory and permissive injunctions.¹⁶¹ A permissive precept is a highly original concept.

To the best of my knowledge, the only author to insist on the flat contradiction between 9:14 and 15, and to attempt to deal seriously with the problem is David Horrell. He begins by asserting that we cannot talk of Paul as being disobedient, and then proceeds to say just that but in different words, ‘faithful discipleship of Christ—obedience to the gospel—can mean, for Paul, *setting aside the letter of what Jesus commanded* in order to do what, in his view, conforming to Christ’s example would demand (in a particular situation)’.¹⁶² This is precisely what happened, but Horrell has not realized the full implications of his words.

Even though he fully recognized the authority of Jesus, Paul refused to give his commands the force of law. He considered them useful directives but not binding precepts. This is also evident in his treatment of the prohibition of divorce (1 Cor 7:10–11), because in 1 Cor 7:15 he permits a divorce.¹⁶³ He found Jesus’ attitude towards divorce useful in one set of circumstances, and irrelevant in another.

It must also be kept in mind that in rejecting the constraining force of a dominical command regarding financial support, Paul was also adopting a course

¹⁵⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 413 n. 96. ¹⁵⁵ *Conflict and Community*, 210.

¹⁵⁶ BDF §409(1). So rightly Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 415. ¹⁵⁷ BAGD 189b.

¹⁵⁸ LSJ 414b. ¹⁵⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 342. ¹⁶⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 415.

¹⁶¹ *1 Corinthians*, 695 n. 173.

¹⁶² ‘“The Lord commanded . . . but I have not used . . .”: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Reflections on 1 Cor 9:14–15’ *NTS* 43 (1997) 600, my emphasis.

¹⁶³ See Chapter 4 above.

of action which was contrary to his own reading of Deut 25:4 as quoted in 1 Cor 9:9. With his usual acuity Hays brings out the implications of this, ‘Paul allows the *imitatio Christi* paradigm (renunciation of privilege for the sake of others) to override all particular ethical rules and prescriptions, even when the rule is a direct command of Scripture.’¹⁶⁴ In other words, Paul was radically antinomian. The scriptures were the Word of God, which enshrined the religious insights of his people. His respect shows in his frequent references, but he refused to treat them as Law.

I find it extraordinary that those who recognize that the *imitatio Christi* was Paul’s ultimate ethical principle (according to Gal 6:2), fail to see that in refusing to give the force of law to the scriptures Paul was behaving exactly as Jesus himself had done. On the basis of texts such as Mt 5:17–19, it is regularly assumed that Jesus not only had no problem with Jewish Law but was an active proponent (e.g. Mt 8:4). This was certainly true early in his career, when he served as a deputy prophet to John the Baptist (Jn 3:22–4). Then he undoubtedly preached obedience to the Law. This, however, changed at some point during his ministry in Galilee.

Jesus would never have been condemned as a rebellious son for associating with Sinners (Mt 11:19) if his purpose was to convert them and to induce them to restore their ill-gotten gains. Such criticism becomes intelligible only if his table-fellowship with Sinners was understood to declare symbolically that they were not what the Law said they were. In other words, he accepted Sinners *as Sinners*.¹⁶⁵ This put him in opposition to the Law, and such opposition was accentuated by his conscious and deliberate order to a potential disciple to disobey the fourth commandment (Mt 8:22), and by his refusal to accept divorce, which was authorized by the Law (Mt 19:1–9). It will be remembered that in Judaism there was no justification for selectivity regarding the precepts of the Law. All the commandments were equally binding, and to refuse one was to reject all.¹⁶⁶ In sum, therefore, it is probable that Paul modelled his negative attitude towards the Law as commandment on that of Jesus. As regards 1 Cor 9:14–15, in consequence, he had a precedent for transforming an order into an optional piece of advice.

Another point worth noting in 1 Cor 9 is the use of the verb *katachraomai* in v. 18. BAGD comments, ‘As a rule the prep. gives the simple verb a special coloring (“make full use of”, “misuse”, “use up”)... where it occurs in our lit. (both 1 Cor) this word differs little, if at all, from the simple verb: *use*’ (420b). Most of the standard translations render ‘not making full use’ (RSV, NRSV, NAB). Fee was the first commentator to realize that the intensive form posed a problem, and

¹⁶⁴ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 166 and footnote 36 on p. 225.

¹⁶⁵ This insight of J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, vol. 1: *The Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 177, has been developed by E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 207–8.

¹⁶⁶ See Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 246.

was driven to suggesting that the context gave the verb a negative connotation, and so translated 'misuse'; 'it is difficult to understand why Paul would have used the stronger construction if he intended nothing by it'.¹⁶⁷ In my commentary I pointed out that hindsight revealed a perfect appropriate meaning. Paul stressed that he was not making *full* use of his right to support because he was certainly making *some* use of that right.¹⁶⁸ Using what Catholic theology called a 'mental reservation' Paul was telling the truth but not the whole truth. While refusing support from the Corinthians, he was being subsidized from Macedonia (2 Cor 11:9). No doubt Paul thought he was being clever, but the partial dishonesty of his boast did him a grave disservice. How could he have hidden the visit of a delegation from a sister church, who would certainly have spoken of their mission? 2 Cor 11:7–11 is the bluster of a trickster whose bluff has been called.

The Shift of Perspective in ch. 10

We now turn to ch. 10 and Fee's thesis that Paul's sole concern in these chapters is cultic meals. Fee's attitude towards the evidence is betrayed by his wistful hope that Héring might be correct in translating *pheugete apo tês eidôlolatrias* (10:14) by 'flee pagan temples'.¹⁶⁹ In fact, *eidôlolatria* here has its normal meaning of 'idolatry'. The phrase creates an objection to my treatment of 8:13 above, because it is certainly an imperative, and I had argued that Paul did not issue orders to his converts. I should perhaps formulate that position more precisely by saying that for Paul only two moral precepts were binding on believers, namely, 'flee idolatry' and 'love your neighbour'. These were so fundamental that one could not *be* a Christian without observing them. Turning to the one true God necessarily implied turning away from idols (1 Thess 1:9); no middle road was possible.¹⁷⁰ As regards love, Paul is more explicit: 'If I have not love, I am nothing' (1 Cor 13:2), i.e. I do not exist.¹⁷¹

The normal Paul surfaces some verses later when he writes, *ou thelô de hymas koinônous tôn daimoniôn ginesthai* 'I do not wish you to become partners with demons' (10:20). He expresses his desire without imposing it. The reference to 'demons' introduces a new dimension. In reality, however, it is nothing more than the human urge to have one's cake and eat it. Jewish monotheism denied the existence of all gods other than Yahweh, but this was accompanied by the

¹⁶⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 421 n. 45.

¹⁶⁸ *1 Corinthians* (NT Message 10; Wilmington: Glazier, 1979), 89. So also, apparently independently, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 427.

¹⁶⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 464 n. 11.

¹⁷⁰ Garland (*1 Corinthians*, 354) tends to exaggerate the amount of detail that Paul would have employed in denouncing idolatry. It would be most unlike him to have descended into casuistic details. He expected his converts to work things out for themselves. An instructive parallel is his admonition not to associate with immoral men, which he specified only when he was forced to do so (1 Cor 5:9–13).

¹⁷¹ So rightly C. Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, 2.71 n. 2.

irrational feeling that nonetheless such beings were capable of malignant power. Bad things (e.g. illness, natural disasters) demanded an explanation. Hence, the postulate of the evil spirit. Thus the development of a belief that behind the powerless statue of an idol stood a malevolent demon.¹⁷² In attempting to convey to the Strong that they are putting themselves in danger by participating in cultic meals, Paul spoke in such a way as to appear to deny what had already been agreed regarding the non-existence of idols (8:4). He immediately corrected himself, 'No! I really meant demons' (10:19).

Some commentators go out of their way to highlight the objective reality of such evil powers. 'For Paul, demons are very real and exert formidable power.'¹⁷³ Not surprisingly these are the ones who insist that Paul's sole concern in chs. 8–10 is with cultic meals, because this makes the danger of visiting a pagan temple very graphic. However, they are unlikely to be correct. Paul is not concerned with 'the worship of demons'.¹⁷⁴ For Paul to imagine demons as real autonomous spiritual entities is contradicted by his conviction regarding the victory of Christ (1 Cor 2:6). Moreover, what can demons achieve, if believers cannot be tempted beyond their strength (10:13)? Finally, Paul has no interest in demons as such.

The key word in 10:20 is *koinônoi* 'partners'. Demons have no reality, and hence no power. What Paul has in mind is that believers (in this case the Strong) by their malignant impact on other members of the community (8:11–12) act as Jewish tradition supposed demons to act. They are destructive. They do nothing creative. Paul's concern is with the activity of the Strong. One could say that their cooperation gives reality to demons, or that it empowers demons, but these are only dramatic and colourful words, which would come naturally to a well-trained rhetorician (as Paul was), and do not describe reality.¹⁷⁵ There is a force of evil, whose effect is demonstrable, but its origin is human selfishness and carelessness, and its manifestation is human action. There can be little doubt that Paul's principal concern is still on what the Strong are doing to the Weak.

At the same time it is completely understandable that Paul should be worried about the Strong. From the very beginning of this letter he had warned the Corinthians that they were only in the process of being saved (1 Cor 1:18), and he had just illustrated what could happen to those who had responded to God's call, if they relaxed their vigilance (10:1–13). If, as I have argued above, Paul considered temple meals to be essentially convivial events, he

¹⁷² See 'Demons' in *ABD* 2.138–42.

¹⁷³ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 480. Similarly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 472. Thiselton is confused, 'They [demons] represent active evil powers which are hostile to God; but they are also "nothings" in themselves' (*1 Corinthians*, 775).

¹⁷⁴ So Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 472.

¹⁷⁵ Thiselton comes very close to the truth in writing, 'these former agencies [of evil] have become reduced to *pockets of power* operating where human social "worlds" or value systems still offer them ground and sway' (*1 Corinthians*, 776, his emphasis). His mistake is to hint that demons have some sort of existence apart from their human partners.

cannot have been unaware of the difference between their opulence and the austerity of the Christian liturgical meal, which involved only bread and wine (10:16). It did not take great imagination to foresee the danger that some of his converts, if they had sufficient exposure, might become more interested in the former rather than the latter. This could lead to a shift in their allegiance.

Paul's criticism of the Strong should not lead to the inference that he was completely on the side of the Weak. They had their reasons for their behaviour (8:7), as had the Strong, but in their own way they were also blameworthy. 10:23–11:1 deals with this dimension of the problem.¹⁷⁶ This section is addressed to the Weak. It is not surprising that this should be flatly denied by Fee, for whose position it is disastrous. He offers a series of arguments.¹⁷⁷ (1) vv. 23–4, he claims, must be spoken to the Strong. This might be true only if we assume that the Weak were completely blameless, that all their actions were helpful, that they were totally dedicated to building up the community and to the good of their neighbours. As I argued, this is demonstrably false, and in consequence the qualifications that Paul appends to the Corinthians are just as applicable to the Weak as to the Strong. (2) vv. 25–6 obviously address the scruples of the Weak, but Fee insists that Paul would not change audiences without giving a clear sign. This objection, however, is based on his misinterpretation of vv. 23–4. (3) vv. 27–9 is a more complicated matter. Verse 27 clearly has the Weak in mind, but I argued that it could send a false signal to the Strong because it does not make it absolutely clear whether the meal in question takes place in a temple or in a private home. Thus I postulated that Paul had to introduce a parenthetical qualification in vv. 28–29a addressed to the Strong, advising them that the opinion he expressed in 8:10–11 is still in force. This naturally displeases Fee, but his only objection concerns 'sudden changes of audience with no internal clues'.¹⁷⁸ In my view, there are such internal hints, if one reads the text dispassionately.

The *gar* that follows the parenthesis (v. 29b) refers back to v. 27, and attention returns to the Weak. What I said in my article can be made clearer by a translation of v. 29b, 'For what good does it do for my freedom to be judged by another's conscience?' The sharp question in the first person singular was designed to shock the hearers of the letter into the recognition that something new and different is being said. The published opinions as to what Paul meant still cover a wide spectrum.¹⁷⁹ The diversity is due in great part to what exegetes have already decided regarding earlier parts of chs. 8–10. The concern to impose a rigid

¹⁷⁶ One of the most important studies of this passage is D. F. Watson, '1 Cor 10:23–11:1 in the Light of GrecoRoman Rhetoric: The Role of Rhetorical Questions' *JBL* 108 (1989) 301–18.

¹⁷⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 477 n. 10.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 486 n. 52.

¹⁷⁹ The widest survey is that of Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 788–92, but care should be taken in using it, because the presentation of my position is not quite accurate, which insinuates the possibility that the same might be true of others.

consistency on Paul, to which attention has been drawn in previous chapters, is again noticeable.

I had argued that Paul here articulates a legitimate objection of the Strong,¹⁸⁰ who had been defamed by the Weak. The latter projected the judgement of their consciences onto the Strong, and proclaimed that these were hiding the internal struggle that the Weak experienced. The Strong, the Weak argued, knew they were wrong and just would not admit it. There have been two lines of objection to this proposal.

The first attacks the suggestion of some of its proponents that it is articulated in the form of the diatribe. Were this the case, we are told, one should expect the next sentence (v. 30) to answer the question. Since this is not the case, an objection of the Strong can be ruled out.¹⁸¹ Apart from the fact that I never mentioned diatribe, this objection attacks the form alone while leaving the substance intact. Nor has sufficient attention been paid to the fact that Paul employs the rare *hinati* ‘what good does it do?’ (only here in the letters) precisely in order to force the Weak to discover the answer for themselves.¹⁸² It is rhetorically much more effective, as my article pointed out, to guide the hearers towards the answer rather than to stuff it down their throats. The nudge in the right direction is reinforced by the following question in v. 30.

The second objection is that such criticism of the Weak clashes with Paul’s ‘very firm support of “the weak” in 8:11–12 and 10:24’.¹⁸³ To carry conviction this argument demands the assumption that Paul believed the Weak to be beyond criticism, which is ridiculous.¹⁸⁴ Paul subscribed to the commonsense view that no one is perfect (Phil 3:12), and in 10:25 he had already warned the Weak not to go looking for trouble by raising unnecessary questions when they bought meat. Moreover, one should not assume that the moral judgement made by the Strong on those who disagreed with them (‘weak persons’) was also valid for their social persona. They could well have been forceful personalities, are as so many religious conservatives today. It would be surprising if their pride had not been touched by the intellectual arrogance of the Strong.

I made two points regarding 10:31–11:1, which is the conclusion of chs. 8–10. The first was that ‘glory of God’ should be interpreted in the highly specific Jewish tradition enshrined in the *Apocalypse of Moses*. Before the Fall Adam and Eve were clothed in ‘the glory of God’, which is defined as ‘righteousness’. Thus ‘to do everything to the glory of God’ means to ensure that one’s comportment

¹⁸⁰ So also Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 76; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 228. The latter, however, claims that it does not reflect Paul’s view.

¹⁸¹ So Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.471, followed by Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 789.

¹⁸² Fee’s objection to giving any importance to *hinati* (*1 Corinthians*, 386 n. 52) is refuted by Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 790.

¹⁸³ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 789, following Watson, ‘1 Cor 10:23–11:1 in the Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric’, 310, and Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.472.

¹⁸⁴ Thiselton had correctly written earlier, ‘Paul sides neither entirely with “the weak” nor entirely with “the strong” in all respects and in relation to every context or occasion’ (*1 Corinthians*, 640).

must be a manifestation of power-in-splendour in imitation of Christ (11:1). This is mentioned, apparently as a curiosity, by Fee,¹⁸⁵ and ignored by everyone else. This is all the more curious in that Rom 3:23, ‘all have sinned and lack the glory of God’, clearly betrays Paul’s awareness of the tradition of the *Apocalypse of Moses*.¹⁸⁶ And earlier in this letter he had exhorted the Corinthians, *doxasate de ton theon en to somati hymon* ‘glorify God in your (pl.) body’ (6:20), which is a clear reference to their behaviour. In terms of the immediate context Willis comes closest to articulating Paul’s mind, ‘Living “to the glory of God” is living for the highest regard of other people, seeking not to offend them.’¹⁸⁷

My only problem with this formulation is the second phrase, because I had argued that *aproskopoi ginesthe* is better translated ‘be blameless’ than by ‘be without offence’. I had pointed out that it is the only meaning attested elsewhere in Paul (Phil 1:10), and the only one that justifies the *kathōs*, which opens v. 33. Exegetes still prefer the alternative, but I consider that not doing harm, not creating problems, is far too weak to express Paul’s understanding of the missionary function of the church. He thinks in strongly positive terms. The preaching (‘the word of the Lord’) and comportment (‘your faith in God’) of the Thessalonians had made Paul’s ministry unnecessary, ‘we need not say anything’ (1 Thess 1:8). Equally he saw the Philippians as his partners in the gospel (Phil 1:5) ‘shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life’ (Phil 2:15–16).¹⁸⁸ Above all, Paul wants the Corinthians to be *attractive* to non-believers. Individually and collectively they must positively empower conversion, and not merely avoid creating stumbling-blocks.

Those who claim that the Corinthians were unified in their opposition to Paul’s ruling on the legitimacy of participation in sacrificial meals in pagan temples have no adequate explanation as to why Paul should wind up chs. 8–10 with an exhortation to missionary endeavour.¹⁸⁹ It becomes perfectly clear once it is recognized that for Paul the world was characterized above all by divisions, both on macro (Gal 3:28) and micro levels (any of the vice lists, e.g. Rom 1:29–31),¹⁹⁰ and that the division in the church at Corinth between Strong and Weak made it identical with the world. The absence of existential difference (cf. Phil 2:15–16) made it impossible for the church to exercise the missionary influence that was its *raison d’être*. The serious difference within the community regarding eating meat offered to idols was just one example of the divisions that preoccupied Paul in 1 Cor 1–4, and he had to bring out this point in wrapping up the discussion in chs. 8–10.

¹⁸⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 488 n. 62.

¹⁸⁶ See for example the commentary of Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 167–8.

¹⁸⁷ *Idol Meat*, 254.

¹⁸⁸ So rightly NJB against RSV, NRSV, and NAB. The intransitive meaning of *epechō* (BAGD 285b) is recommended by *phainesthe* ‘you shine’ in the previous verse.

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 385.

¹⁹⁰ For details see my *Becoming Human Together*, 124–36.

Throughout this postscript I have used ‘conscience’ as the translation for *syneidêsis* simply because that was the term that appeared in the original article. A number of studies, however, have argued convincingly that this rendering is inappropriate, because the modern connotations of ‘conscience’ are not those of *syneidêsis* in the first century.¹⁹¹ What the ancients meant by the term is better conveyed by ‘consciousness’ or ‘self-awareness’. The Strong were confidently self-aware of their knowledge regarding the non-existence of idols. The Weak were unconscious of the implications of their monotheistic confession; their self-awareness was not complete.

¹⁹¹ The most notable are R. A. Horsley, ‘Consciousness and Freedom among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8–10’ *CBQ* 40 (1978) 574–89; H.-J. Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidêsis bei Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983); and P. Gooch, ‘“Conscience” in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10’ *NTS* 33 (1987) 244–54.

9

The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?

In a recent issue of this journal¹ Wm. O. Walker, Jr put forward a most ingenious hypothesis as a solution to the notorious difficulties of 1 Cor 11:2–16.² He argued (a) that the whole section is an interpolation, (b) that it is composed of three originally separate texts, and (c) that none of these texts is from the pen of Paul. Anyone who has struggled with the problems of this passage is at once inclined to welcome such radical surgery, but closer examination reveals that the arguments used to justify it are highly questionable on both factual and methodological grounds.

I

Walker opens his case by stressing the presence of interpolations elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. I have accepted 1 Cor 14:34–5 and 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 as post-Pauline insertions,³ but find other suggestions much less plausible.⁴ The number of interpolations is much less than Walker seems to think, and there is no basis for the assumption that the text of the epistles has been heavily retouched by an editor or editors. Hence, one cannot rely on ‘the general probability of the presence of interpolations in the Pauline writings as they now stand’ (p. 99) to give authority to weak arguments. Each case must be judged on its own merits.

¹ This article was originally published in *JBL* 95 (1976) 615–21, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² ‘1 Corinthians and Paul’s Views Regarding Women’ *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110. The bracketed page numbers in the text refer to this study.

³ See my *L’existence chrétienne selon saint Paul* (LD 80; Paris: Cerf, 1974), 101, 174.

⁴ No confidence can be placed in the methodology employed to discern interpolations in J. C. O’Neill, *The Recovery of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1972); see my review in *RB* 82 (1975) 143–4. The occasional suggestions that 1 Corinthians 13 should be considered an interpolation have not been well received because the arguments advanced do not raise the hypothesis to the status of a probability. The analysis of U. Borse (‘Abbild der Lehre’ [Rom 6, 17] im Kontexte’ *BZ* 12 (1968) 95–103) shows that many, if not all, of Bultmann’s hypotheses regarding interpolations in Romans (‘Glossen im Römerbrief’ *TLZ* 72 (1947) 197–202; reprinted, *Exegetica* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), 278–84) may be rendered unnecessary by a better understanding of what Paul was trying to say.

Walker offers three arguments to show that vv. 3–16 are an interpolation introduced by v. 2 which he attributes to the redactor. First, vv. 2 and 17 contain significant common terms and are separated by a self-contained unit, which when removed leaves a smooth connection between what precedes and what follows. Second, the textual variations in v. 17 betray the efforts of editors or copyists to improve what must have been a rough transition (p. 98). [616] Third, vv. 2–16 break the context of the letter: ‘As they now stand, chs. 8–11 deal in general with matters pertaining to “eating” and “drinking” and other more or less related questions. . . . Immediately after 11:2–16 the letter again deals with matters of eating and drinking. The passage under discussion clearly interrupts this discussion with its totally unrelated concern for the roles and relationships of men and women in the church’ (p. 99).

The first argument is an accurate statement of principle, but in itself it proves nothing. In the present case its value is nil because it is a question only of the verb *epainô* whose repeated use is entirely natural in this context. The second is an equally valid theoretical observation because textual variants can highlight difficulties caused by redactional insertions (e.g. Jn 2:3; 19:38). In v. 17, however, the variants are caused by the awkward combination of *parangellô* and *epainô*, a difficulty which remains even if the supposed interpolation is removed.

Everything, therefore, hinges on the validity of the third argument from which the other two draw their force. The argument carries conviction only if one is prepared to accept the illusion created by the references to ‘eating’ and ‘drinking’. Close observation, however, reveals the sleight of hand. 11:17–34 can be said to be concerned with eating and drinking, but the issue arises in the context of public worship (vv. 17b, 20, 33–4). The passage under consideration, however, deals with ‘praying or prophesying’ (vv. 4–5), activities which are understood to pertain to the domain of public worship and which Walker does not dispute. Ch. 11, therefore, has an unambiguous principle of unity. Paul passes from questions of dress at public liturgies (vv. 2–16) to the more serious matter of selfishness on the same occasions (vv. 17–34). The transition from ch. 10 is also perfectly comprehensible, for there Paul has been dealing with other social occasions, viz., participation in pagan liturgies (10:14–22) and participation in banquets given by pagans (10:23–11:1). It seems entirely natural that these topics should engender the associated idea of public occasions *within* the Christian community. This adequately explains the theme introduced in ch. 11.

Finally, it must be noted that Walker admits that he cannot postulate a satisfactory reason why the interpolation was made at precisely this point in the letter (pp. 99–100). An editor would have had means and opportunity, but in the absence of a plausible motive his intervention must be judged problematic, to say the least.

II

Walker then attempts to solve the problems of internal logic that all commentators have noticed in 11:3–16 by postulating three originally separate self-contained units. Pericope A is a general statement on the relationship of man and woman in the church and consists of vv. 3, 8–9, 11–12. Pericope B deals with the question of head-covering in worship and is composed of vv. 4–7, 10, 13, 16. Pericope C, constituted by vv. 14–15, treats of the proper length of hair for men and women.

[617] Apart from one very generic, and rather subjective, remark concerning the style of writing, one looks in vain for any statement regarding the criteria which permitted Walker to assign individual verses to one pericope rather than to another. This serious methodological fault throws serious doubt on the objectivity of Walker's reconstruction. One is led to suspect that he started with v. 3 and assigned to Pericope A the verses that seemed to fit the theme there announced. Verses 14–15 also seemed to set themselves apart. The remaining verses were then considered to constitute Pericope B.

A claim that the internal logic of Walker's three texts is a significant improvement on that of Paul would be difficult to substantiate. Pericope A would seem to offer the best chance of success, but within its brief span we encounter two problems. Verse 3 enunciates three theses: Christ is the head of man; man is the head of woman; God is the head of Christ. But v. 8 concentrates on only one of these, the man–woman relationship. Why were the other two ignored? Or why were they introduced in the first place if, as Walker claims, the author was exclusively concerned with the headship of man over woman? Moreover, in Paul *plên* (v. 11) is used to break off a discussion and to emphasize what is important.⁵ Its appearance in the fourth verse of Pericope A is inexplicable. The discussion has hardly begun, and there have been no digressions.

Neither of these problems arises if we assume the unity of vv. 2–16. It goes without saying that *plên* is perfectly in place two-thirds of the way through a complex argument. Far from creating a problem, the triple thesis of v. 3 provides the framework within which the basic thrust of the whole section becomes clear, once it is recognized that, as often in Paul, 'Christ' designates not the Risen Lord but the community of believers (e.g. 1 Cor 12:12).⁶ Just as God has authority over the community, so the community has authority over the individual member. The basis of this authority in both cases is causal priority in the order of being.⁷ The community owes its existence to God, and the believer owes his/her *Christian* existence to the community. Both these points command the subsequent discussion concerning the relationship of man to woman. Paul in

⁵ BDF §449(2).

⁶ See my *L'existence chrétienne selon saint Paul*, 79–86.

⁷ See S. Bedale, 'The Meaning of *kephalê* in the Pauline Epistles' *JTS* 5 (1954) 211–15.

his specific directives conceives himself as the authoritative representative of the authentic community (cf. v. 16), and he draws his arguments from the order of creation established by God (vv. 7–9, 14–15). The order of creation reveals that man and woman are different, and on the practical level Paul's concern is that their manner of dress should manifest, not obscure, this difference (vv. 4–6, 13). This outline highlights the underlying links which bind Walker's supposed three texts together.

Perhaps the greatest defect in Walker's reconstruction is his failure to face the problem of what the redactor was trying to do by combining the three texts in the way he did. Any division of a passage into its sources must be considered suspect unless a plausible explanation can be offered for the way in which they [618] are put together. Otherwise the subjectivity of the interpreter is given free rein. If we assume Walker's three texts, it is certainly possible to suggest how the section acquired its present structure, because there are few limits to the ingenuity of exegetes. The justification, however, becomes very complex, and its very artificiality is highlighted by the fact that there is a much easier and more natural way to combine Pericope A and Pericope B (on the assumption that they were originally independent). Pericope A is concerned with the relationship of man and woman, and it culminates in a mention of God (v. 12). This ending provides a natural transition to Pericope B which deals with man and woman in the worship of God. A redactor would need a strong reason in order to reject such a simple solution. The fact that no such motive can be suggested makes the proposed reconstruction of his sources extremely questionable.

III

Walker offers three arguments to show that each of the three source texts is non-Pauline, and regards the cumulative effect of these arguments as a decisive confirmation of the hypothesis that vv. 2–16 are an interpolation. Where these arguments overlap they will be treated together.

Passages A and B are declared inauthentic because the ideas they contain regarding the relationship between man and woman 'are not in agreement with what Paul appears to say in his authentic writings' (pp. 104, 106). Walker has in mind 'the clear statement of equality in Gal 3:28 and his very positive references to female co-workers' (p. 104). The harmony between the last part of this assertion and 11:11–12 robs it of any force as an argument in favour of Walker's position. It rather points in the opposite direction.

The relationship to Gal 3:28 demands delicate evaluation. Those who see it as an evident contradiction must recognize that it gives rise to precisely the same problem that we encounter with regard to the relationship of Gal 3:28 to 1 Cor 7:20, as Walker explicitly concedes (p. 110), and the same explanation is valid

for both cases. Paul denied the practical application of his principle of equality in situations where he saw its application was in danger of becoming a major distraction from the central concerns of Christian life, or where it was likely to prove an obstacle to the credibility of the church. These reasons carried greater weight with him than they possibly do with us because of his eschatological expectation, and because of his extremely pragmatic concern for the success of his mission.

It is also possible that the contradiction may be more apparent than real. Paul certainly speaks of the subordination of woman to man, and contemporary problems of church discipline arise because it is assumed that this point is central to the apostle's concern. In fact it is only a *means* relative to his goal which is to insist that there is a difference between men and women which should be expressed in their respective modes of dress (cf. vv. 7–9). It is the latter point that Paul is concerned to *teach*, and behind which he throws the full weight of his authority. Paul uses the Genesis narrative to serve his [619] purpose. It appears to do so, but the logic is questionable. How little importance he himself attached to it seems evident from the fact that the difference between men and women on which he insists has nothing to do with their roles in the church. It is limited exclusively to matters of dress. From the point of view of their roles men and women are put on the same level (vv. 4–5). In other words, they are equal, as Gal 3:28 says.

Passages B and C are, moreover, considered inauthentic because 'in his undoubtedly authentic writings Paul nowhere indicates any concern for such "incidental" matters as whether men and women should pray or prophesy with their heads covered or uncovered or whether their hair should be long or short or confined or loose' (p. 106). This argument has logical force only on the assumption that Paul *could not* have been concerned with such issues, and on any scientific terms such knowledge is inaccessible to the exegete. The argument is completely illegitimate.

Passage A appears inauthentic because 'it is so similar in tone and vocabulary to Col 3:18–19 and Eph 5:22–23, both of which, of course, are widely regarded as pseudo-Pauline' (p. 104), and because of its non-Pauline use of the word 'head' (p. 105). This point is a classical example of 'evidence which fits' as opposed to 'evidence which proves'. The latter permits of only one interpretation whereas the former can be turned to suit the presuppositions of the exegete.⁸ The evidence brought to light by Walker fits equally well with the hypothesis that the deutero-Pauline letters owe their Pauline character to the fact that they borrowed and built on ideas and terminology found in the authentic letters. From this point of view what Paul says in so-called Pericope A would have legitimized the inclusion of the *Haustafeln* in Col 3 and Eph 5, and would have inspired the

⁸ See H. Palmer, *The Logic of Gospel Criticism* (London: Macmillan/New York: St Martin's Press, 1968), 152.

development of the notion of 'head' found in these epistles. Failure to recognize that there are two possibilities whose relative merits have to be weighed is a serious defect in Walker's methodology. For those who accept the authenticity of Col, and I am one, his argument, of course, proves the reverse of his intention.

The definition of man as 'the glory of God' (v. 7) is given by Walker as a reason for declaring Pericope B inauthentic, because for Paul "glory" is essentially an eschatological concept, applied not to man's present life but to the new creation which is still to be consummated in the future' (p. 107). He claims that the basis for this assertion is given in Rom 3:23, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. In the present context, however, Paul is concerned with those who are 'in Christ' (v. 11) and whose sins have been forgiven. There is a presumption, therefore, that 'glory' has been restored, and this finds a measure of confirmation in the equivalence established between 'glory' and 'righteousness' in the *Apocalypse of Moses* (20:1-2). Thus, Paul can say, 'To this he called you through our gospel so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess 2:14). 2 Cor 3:18 forbids an [620] interpretation of this verse which would bring it into line with Rom 5:2 and 8:18 where it is a question of a 'glory' reserved for the future. As one who is now righteous before God, the believer has already reacquired the capacity to give Him honour, which is the basic ingredient in the concept of 'glory' in this context.⁹ From the believers' point of view there is no difference between 'the glory of Christ' (2 Thess 2:14; 2 Cor 3:18) and 'the glory of God' (1 Cor 11:7), because through conformity to the image of God's Son (Rom 8:29) they have been recreated (2 Cor 5:17) in the state that Adam lost. In Christ humanity once again exists as God intended from the beginning, for Christ is the model of authentic humanity (2 Cor 4:4-6).¹⁰ The theme of 'glory', therefore, is intimately related to the imitation of Christ which is evoked by Paul in the immediate context (1 Cor 11:1). Far from being a 'lapse' from Paul's habitual pattern, as Walker tries to suggest (p. 107 n. 47), v. 7 is fully at home in the authentic letters.

The idea of being taught by nature (v. 14) is adduced by Walker as a reason for declaring Pericope C inauthentic. 'Rom 1:26-27; 2:14 are not really parallels at all, for they do not represent a "hypostasizing" of "nature" as a "quasi-divine" reality or power such as is found in Stoicism and in 1 Cor 11:14' (p. 107). Walker feels no need to justify this interpretation, because he views Pericope C as an independent unit. In this perspective the Stoic ring becomes the key to the interpretation. Taken in context, however, a quite different impression is

⁹ See A. Feuillet, 'L'homme "gloire de Dieu" et la femme "gloire de l'homme" (1 Cor 11:7b)' *RB* 81 (1974) 161-82.

¹⁰ See most recently M. Thrall, 'Christ Crucified or Second Adam? A Christological Debate between Paul and the Corinthians' in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule* (ed. B. Lindars and S. Smalley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 145.

given, because Paul has been arguing from the order of creation (vv. 8–9) and v. 14 easily lends itself to interpretation within this framework. Stoic language is not always used to express Stoic ideas. Hence, we must look more closely at the reasons that Walker gives for separating vv. 14–15 from the rest of the section. Of the four reasons he gives only two have a right to serious consideration, the differences in vocabulary and subject-matter.

The argument from vocabulary has no cogency because the basis is far too slight. There is no good reason why an author should not shift from *aischros* (v. 6) and *kataischynein* (vv. 4, 5) to *atimia* (v. 14). Paul uses the latter term five times elsewhere, and in one case it appears as the antithesis to *doxa* (2 Cor 6:8), just as it does here. *Doxa* is predicated of different realities in vv. 7 and 14, but the same meaning ('giving honour') is applicable in both cases.

The argument from subject-matter is thus formulated by Walker: 'Pericope B is concerned with the question of head-covering in worship, while Pericope C deals with the proper length of hair for men and women and actually implies rather strongly that women do not need any artificial head-covering, since they have their long hair as a natural covering' (p. 103). Walker himself, however, cites a study by J. B. Hurley, who argues that 11:2–16 is concerned with proper hair-style and length rather than with head-covering.¹¹ [621] I had independently come to the same conclusion, and Walker's objection (pp. 103–4 n. 37), as he himself recognizes, is very weak, particularly since women's hair-styles at this period probably incorporated some form of head-covering however small.¹²

Walker's final objection to the authenticity of Pericope C is the improbability that a Jew such as Paul would have adopted such an attitude towards long hair on men (p. 108). It is difficult to establish with any accuracy just what the Palestinian custom was at this period, but in any case such evidence is less significant than the harmony between vv. 14 and 4. The latter verse criticizes a man for 'having (something) hanging down from the head' (*kata kephalês echôn*).¹³ This is a rather unusual circumlocution for 'veil' (why should a circumlocution be employed?) and it would seem more natural to understand the phrase as referring to long hair, as John Chrysostom apparently did: *hoi de andres kai ekomôn*.¹⁴

¹¹ 'Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 1 Cor 14:33b–36' *WJT* 35 (1973) 193–204. Though marred by a number of rather bizarre interpretations, basically the same view was put forward by A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt 19:13–12 [sic] and 1 Cor 11:3–16* (ASNU 24; Lund: Gleerup, 1965), 165–86.

¹² Str-B 3.428.

¹³ See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), 606–7; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax* by N. Turner (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 268; F.-M. Abel, *Grammaire du grec biblique suivie d'un choix de papyrus* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 221.

¹⁴ *In Ep. 1 ad Cor. Hom 26.1* (PG 61.213); see W. J. Martin, '1 Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation' in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce* (ed. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin; Exeter: Paternoster, 170), 233.

None of Walker's arguments, therefore, stands up to close analysis, and in consequence the hypothesis that 1 Cor 11:2–16 is a post-Pauline interpolation must be rejected. Despite my negative judgement I must stress that I consider it well worth while for Walker to have put forward this hypothesis for the first time. It is only when all the possibilities have been thoroughly explored that we can come to a correct interpretation of Paul's understanding of the place of women in the church.

This problem preoccupies many at present, and it seems worthwhile to underline the fact that, even if Walker were correct in claiming that 'the genuine Pauline corpus contains none of the passages which advocate male supremacy and female subordination in any form. On the contrary, the only direct Pauline statement on the subject is Gal 3:28 which insists on absolute equality in Christ' (p. 109), the problem would remain intact. This conclusion would certainly rehabilitate *Paul*, but the objection to improving the position of women is based on the fact that the *New Testament* seems to be against it. The so-called post-Pauline passages belong to a document that was received by the church as authoritative. The basic issue, therefore, concerns the authority of the New Testament, and I believe that the true solution is to be sought in what *is formally taught* by the inspired writers. The statements regarding the subordination of women form part of the presuppositions of the sacred writer and do not belong to this category.

POSTSCRIPT

The immediate reaction to my criticism of Walker came from Lamar Cope.¹⁵ He leapt to Walker's defence, which he modified to the extent of attributing 11:2 to Paul, but produced no new arguments. These came from G. W. Trompf, who simplified Walker's hypothesis by treating 11:3–16 as a literary unity, but nonetheless maintained on different grounds that it was an interpolation.¹⁶ I responded to Trompf in the article 'Interpolations in 1 Corinthians', which appears as the last chapter in this volume. Here I want to focus on Walker, who has continued to maintain his position.

My rejection of the suggestion that 11:3–16 was inserted into 1 Cor some time after it had left Paul's hands was immediately approved by J. P. Meier,¹⁷ and that has proved to be the unanimous response of commentators. After citing my articles, Fee points out that rejection of Pauline authorship is not really

¹⁵ '1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further' *JBL* 97 (1978) 435–6.

¹⁶ 'On Attitudes towards Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3–16 and Its Context' *CBQ* 42 (1980) 196–215.

¹⁷ 'On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2–16)' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 218 n. 12.

based on grammatical and linguistic difficulties, but on the alleged non-Pauline character of the passage, whose subjectivity he stresses. Nothing in language or style, he maintains, is non-Pauline.¹⁸ According to Witherington, 'All of Walker's arguments for interpolation are arguments from silence or from unverifiable hypotheses. Cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor's compelling arguments.'¹⁹ Similarly Thiselton, 'Murphy-O'Connor has addressed Walker's arguments convincingly, and they are endorsed by Schrage and the majority of writers.'²⁰

There is, of course, another explanation for what is seen as the awkwardness of 11:3–16 in its present context, namely, that it belonged to an originally independent Pauline letter consisting of 11:2–34, which was eventually incorporated into 1 Cor by an editor. Variations of this solution are represented by Klauck²¹ and H.-F. Richter.²² In response I can only repeat what I said in chapter 1, namely, that I see no serious grounds for the fragmentation of 1 Cor. All the supposed difficulties can be solved by more serious exegesis.²³ I should also point out to partisans of partition theories that they are obliged to provide plausible explanations of why the editor(s) assembled their sources in the way they did. It is not sufficient to break 1 Cor down into its component elements, one must also show how and why the present form of 1 Cor was achieved.

Walker returned to 11:3–16 in a collection of his essays published in 2001.²⁴ The chapter, he says, represents a fused revision of two articles, the one that I criticized and 'The Vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 11:3–16. Pauline or Non-Pauline?'²⁵ He begins by praising Trompf (whose article I have mentioned above) for furnishing 'the most significant and impressive arguments for the non-Pauline character of the passage'.²⁶ Walker's footnotes show that he is fully aware of my refutation of the position adopted by himself and Trompf, but having paid that lip-service to academic dialogue, he carries on as if no objections had ever been raised. I must conclude that he found them impossible to answer. Thus in assessing his final statement I shall concentrate on what is new in his argument.²⁷

¹⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 492 n. 3.

¹⁹ *Conflict and Community*, 231 n. 2.

²⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 806. Virtually the same words are used by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 505 n. 1. For Schrage, see his thorough discussion in *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.496–7. See also Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 394, and Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 247, who in addition argues against Walker's three source documents.

²¹ *1 Korintherbrief*, 10–11.

²² 'Anstössige Freiheit in Korinth. Zur Literarkritik der Korintherbriefe (1 Kor 8:1–13 und 11:2–16)' in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996), 561–75.

²³ So also H. Merklein, 'Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Korintherbriefs' *ZNW* 75 (1984) 153–83; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.63–71; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 36–41.

²⁴ *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 213; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 91–126.

²⁵ *JSNT* 35 (1989) 75–88.

²⁶ *Interpolations*, 93.

²⁷ The page numbers in the text are those of the chapter in *Interpolations*.

Walker's New Arguments

Walker accepts my insistence that the two parts of ch. 11 concern public worship, but points out that they are very different in tone and content. This is certainly correct, but it proves nothing. He attaches particular weight to the use of *prôton* in 11:18 (p. 99), asserting that the first point to be made regarding the assembled community was its divided character. 'This would make little sense if he had just discussed the attire and/or hairstyle of men and women in Christian worship' (p. 99). Even if *prôton* were to be understood as enumerative, Walker still does not have an argument, because Paul had already dealt at length with divisions within the community in 1 Cor 1–4. He is not dealing with factions for the first time. Thus it is better to consider *prôton* as emphatic.²⁸ In 11:18 Paul is moving on to something much more serious than the apparent unanimous approval of homosexuality.

Walker divides the linguistic evidence of 11:3–16 into four categories (p. 102). He concludes: '(1) very few, if any, of these features are "distinctively Pauline"; (2) that many are "Pauline but not distinctively so"; (3) that some are "non-Pauline but not identifiably post-Pauline"; and (4) that a significant number are "distinctively post-Pauline" and indeed pseudo-Pauline' (p. 112). The value of this type of argumentation is nil, not only because the statistical base is far too small, but also because Paul in 11:3–16 is dealing with a community problem that he did not have to confront elsewhere. Understandably his vocabulary will be different. Furthermore, as regards category (4), which is the most important for Walker's thesis, his argument depends on the inauthenticity of 2 Thess, Col, and Eph. As usual, he simply adopts a convenient consensus, and manifestly has done no personal work on the problem. I, on the contrary, am convinced that the first two letters are authentic,²⁹ and that the third contains genuine Pauline material.³⁰ Thus what for Walker are signs of inauthenticity for me signify the contrary.

Walker goes on to add what he calls 'ideational' evidence for interpolation. The first is that the attitude towards women in 11:3–16 is identical with that in 1 Cor 14:34–5 (a post-Pauline interpretation that I accept) and a series of other texts, notably 1 Tim 2:9–15 (which I believe is inauthentic) (p. 113). Nothing could be further from the truth. As I show in the next two articles, Paul in 11:11–12 explicitly refutes the interpretation of Gen 2, which made women second-class citizens. Naturally this point is not discussed by Walker, who as his second reason blithely accepts Trompf's misguided suggestion that the use of Gen in

²⁸ So rightly Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 421, referring to BDF §447(4).

²⁹ A powerful case for the authenticity of 2 Thess, which has never been refuted, has been made by R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). As regards Col, see my 'Colossians' in *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (ed. J. Barton and J. Muddiman; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1191–2.

³⁰ See J. Muddiman, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (BNTC; London and New York: Continuum, 2001), and my review in *RB* 112 (2005) 436–41.

11:7–10 is similar to its use in 1 Tim 2:13–15 (p. 114). His third point is that elsewhere Paul never bothers with such ‘incidental’ matters as dress or hairdo. I have argued, however, that the issue in 11:3–16 is the differentiation of the sexes with overtones of deviant sexuality, a much more important matter that certainly deserved Paul’s attention.³¹

In fourth place Walker points out the unusual use of *doxa* in 11:7. Here he does refer to my objection that, in opposition to Rom 3:23, Paul in this verse is referring to the status of man prior to the Fall, and retorts, ‘Such an argument, however, has no basis in the text itself and would appear to depend upon certain theological and/or literary presuppositions than an exegesis of the passage in question’ (p. 116). Unfortunately he does not spell out what these ‘presuppositions’ might be, and completely ignores the fact that 11:8 is an unambiguous reference to the creation of Eve in Gen 2:21–3. The state of humanity before the Fall is certainly envisaged in 11:7–9.

For his fifth reason Walker claims that references to *physis* elsewhere in Paul ‘do not represent a “hypostasizing” of “nature” as a “quasi-divine” reality or power such as is found in Stoicism and in 1 Cor 11:14’ (p. 117). This is an exaggeration. By ‘nature’ here Paul simply means the conventional wisdom of his age, i.e. what was accepted as ‘natural’.³² This makes it unnecessary to follow up Walker’s refusal of the parallels in Rom 1:26 and 2:14; in his view they belong to another interpolation running from 1:18 to 2:29.³³

In the last point of his ‘ideational’ reasons for interpolation Walker claims ‘the improbability that Paul would have stated that “for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him” (v. 14b)’ (p. 118). Why? ‘Robert C. Dentan points out “long hair on men was greatly admired” in the Old Testament, and it appears that Palestinian Judaism, at least, preserved the custom of long hair for men in New Testament times’ (p. 118). I am not at all sure that Dentan has read the evidence correctly. In Ezek 44:20, for example, long hair is forbidden to priests. Moreover what might have been acceptable in antiquity tells us nothing about the first century AD, because fashions change. For the NT period Walker relies on John L. McKenzie’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, which is certainly not an authority. McKenzie, I am sure, simply took for granted the accuracy of portraits showing Jesus with long hair. In the next two articles I accumulate evidence to show that long hair on a man was the self-advertising of the active homosexual, which Paul condemned in 1 Cor 6:9. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should do so again in 11:14.

To his credit Walker is aware of the methodological need to justify the insertion of the interpolation at just this point in 1 Cor ‘since it so obviously breaks the context’ (p. 120), and irredeemably damages his own case by confessing that

³¹ As it did of others, see Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.16.9–14.

³² See in particular Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 527. In this connection Collins very aptly quotes Plutarch, *Moralia* 478D–479 (1 *Corinthians*, 413).

³³ *Interpolations*, 166–89.

neither he nor Trompf has any convincing explanation. If the pieces do not fit when reassembled, they probably should not have been taken apart in the first place.

Christopher Mount

The same objection can be made to another proposal, which uses a novel line of argument in an attempt to demonstrate that 11:3–16 was not written by Paul. Christopher Mount argues that there is a great difference ‘between the situation presupposed by this passage and the situation presupposed by its immediate context in 1 Corinthians and in Paul’s thought in general’.³⁴ If I understand him correctly this difference consists in the way the writer exercises authority. In 1 Cor 12–14 the community is a Spirit-filled charismatic group, and the writer is the authority figure because he is the most gifted. In 11:3–16, on the other hand, it is a question of an institutionalized group to which the author dictates as the summit of a hierarchy. In Mount’s own special language,

This difference of situations presupposed by the thought of 11:3–16 and the thought of chs. 12 and 14 is evident in the construction of authority. In chs. 12 and 14, as elsewhere in Paul, authority resides in the ‘I’ possessed by the spirit in relation to the larger spirit-possession cult construed as a new creation. In 11:3–16 authority resides in the practice of churches construed as a bulwark for the divine order of this world. Paul’s argument about prophesying and speaking in tongues in chs. 12 and 14 culminates with the possessed ‘I’ who speaks the commands of the Lord (14:37); the argument of 11:3–16 culminates with the ‘we’ who speaks for the consensus of the churches. (p. 337)

Mount characterizes Pauline Christianity as a spirit-possession cult, whose members are possessed by the spirit of Jesus (Rom 8:9–11). More specifically this means that ‘individuals within the community had come under the control of an alien spirit that subordinated the “I” of the individual to that of the occupying spirit. The individual acts within the community as a possessed “I”’ (p. 317), e.g. ‘I no longer live but Christ lives in me’ (Gal 2:20). Mount then goes a step further, ‘For Paul, to know Jesus Christ is to manifest the power of Jesus’ crucifixion in one’s body through spirit possession and performance characterized by possession phenomena’ (p. 320). Such phenomena are the spiritual gifts with which Paul deals in chs. 12 and 14.

It is not necessary to go any further into Mount’s exposition, which follows a predictable line based on his typological option in describing Pauline Christianity. He regularly emphasizes the marginal at the expense of the essential. He entirely fails to recognize that for Paul only the isolated sinner can use ‘I’. Believers are members of the Body of Christ and can no more use ‘I’ than the arm or the leg. Moreover, for Paul, possession by the spirit of Jesus meant that

³⁴ ‘1 Corinthians 11:3–16: Spirit Possession and Authority in a Non-Pauline Interpolation’ *JBL* 124 (2005) 313–40, here 314. The page numbers in the body of the text refer to this article.

‘those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised’ (2 Cor 5:15). There is no place in Mount’s account for love (even though ch. 13 is the kernel of chs. 12–14) or for any stress on a life dedicated to the service of others. Thus Mount’s analysis of chs. 12 and 14 has to be read with great scepticism.

Regretfully Mount’s exegesis of 11:3–16 is much worse.³⁵ He does everything possible, no matter how absurd, in order to introduce an institutional dimension. Thus he insists that v. 3 should be read as a hierarchical ranking (because it introduces a contradiction with 1 Cor 12:28–31 or 14:37). He refers to the well-founded opposition to this interpretation, but does not deign to formulate a response, on the grounds that the distinction between ‘man’ and ‘woman’ is ‘inescapably hierarchical in the context of the first century’ (p. 331).³⁶ This view, however, is explicitly repudiated by Paul in vv. 11–12, which insists on the full equality of men and women as Christians. Understandably in view of his bias, Mount interprets these verses as meaning that ‘men and women are codependent for reproduction’ (p. 332). This is to completely miss the point of Paul’s reversal of the chronological order used by Jews to prove the inferiority of women. How far Mount is from Paul’s meaning becomes obvious in his insistence that ‘Paul’s argument from nature in 1 Cor 11:13–15 contrasts long hair in women with testicles in men’ (p. 333). It would be hard to find a more blatant example of eisegesis, and the convoluted argument to adapt it to the context defies summary.

³⁵ Here I take for granted the points that I demonstrate in the two following articles.

³⁶ This is also the position of Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 184.

10

Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16

In¹ his reply to my rejection² of W. O. Walker's hypothesis that 1 Cor 11:2–16 is a post-Pauline interpolation,³ Lamar Cope argues that the absence of any inherent unity in this passage makes the interpolation theory the most plausible solution of its difficulties despite the lack of 'any certainty in the separation of sources, identification of sources, or a clear picture of redactional intent'.⁴ The advantages of his choice are not apparent to me, but it is evident that surgical solutions⁵ will continue to be proposed as long as we lack [483] a convincing demonstration of the internal coherence of this passage. To a great extent the failure to perceive the force of Paul's logic has been due to a misunderstanding of the problem he was facing. If we can clarify this issue, it should be possible to see all the points he makes in their proper perspective.

The Situation at Corinth

The titles given to 1 Cor 11:2–16 in the major commentaries and translations attest the widespread conviction that the point at issue concerned women alone.⁶

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 42 (1980) 482–500, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² 'The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16' *JBL* 95 (1976) 615–21.

³ '1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women' *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110. The conclusions of this study are also rejected by J. P. Meier, 'On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2–16)' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 218 n. 12, and by A. C. Thiselton, 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth' *NTS* 24 (1977–8) 520–1.

⁴ '1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further' *JBL* 97 (1978) 436. Cope modifies Walker's thesis only to the extent of attributing v. 2 to Paul, but this does nothing to change the situation. He shows only that vv. 3–16 *could* be removed from ch. 11 but advances no serious reason which would *oblige* us to do so. He counters none of my objections, and the two new points he makes have no probative force. There is no question of a 'head-body' analogy here; the 'body' is neither mentioned nor implied. Paul did not think of only one 'church of God' made up of several 'churches of Christ'; each local community was a 'church of God' (cf. 1 Cor 1:2, etc.).

⁵ At one stage in the history of the exegesis of this text it was common to solve problems by treating certain verses or parts thereof as later interpolations; see in particular F. Godet, *1 Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel: Monnier, 1965), 2.145; J. Weiss, *1 Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 268–77. None of these suggestions has ever won significant support.

⁶ 'Die Entschleierung der Frauen' (J. Weiss); 'Über die Verschleierung der Frauen' (Wendland); 'La tenue des femmes dans les assemblées liturgiques' (Allo); 'Women in Divine Worship' (Conzelmann); 'The Veiling of Women in Public Worship' (Robertson-Plummer); 'La tenue des femmes' (BdeJ); 'Headresses of Women' (NAB).

Acceptance of this consensus inevitably colours the exegesis of the passage, to the point where some commentators refuse to take seriously the reference to men.⁷ In fact, men figure equally prominently in this section,⁸ and neither grammar nor language distinguishes this reference from those concerned with women. The problem, therefore, involved both sexes,⁹ and C. K. Barrett alone provides an adequate title, 'The Christian Assembly: Men and Women'.¹⁰ If an approach to the text which concentrates on the woman has created difficulties regarding Paul's logic,¹¹ it would seem appropriate to begin by focusing on what the Apostle says about the man.

Paul criticizes a man who prays or prophesies *kata kephalês echon* (v. 4). In the light of *ouk opheilei katakalyptesthai tèn kephalèn* (v. 7), this phrase is regularly translated as 'with his head covered' (RSV, NAB, etc.). Were this Paul's meaning, it is difficult to imagine why he failed to mention the nature of [484] the head-covering, and we should certainly expect either *kata kephalèn* or *epi tès kephalês* (as in v. 10). Elsewhere he uses *kata* with the genitive twelve times and (with the exception of 1 Cor 15:15 and 2 Cor 8:2) the meaning is always adversative, 'against'. His usage, therefore, retains the nuance of motion proper to *kata*, making it unlikely that he would have employed this preposition with the genitive to designate something 'resting upon' the head. This is not absolutely impossible, provided we conceive what is on the head as exercising a downward motion;¹² but such usage is unusual, and, unless there are conclusive arguments to the contrary, it is preferable to retain the normal meaning of *kata* with the genitive as defined by F. M. Abel, 'Avec le génitif, cas de l'origine, du point de départ auquel la prépos. ajoute la direction de haut en bas, s'opposant a *ana*.'¹³

⁷ 'There is no reason for supposing that men at Corinth had been making this mistake in the congregation. The conduct which would be improper for men is mentioned in order to give point to the censure of women' (Robertson-Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 229). Similarly Godet, *1 Corinthiens*, 2.129; Grosheide, *1 Corinthians*, 253.

⁸ See the synoptic layout in M. Adinolfi, 'Il velo della donna e la relettura paolina di 1 Cor 11:2–16' *RivB* 213 (1975) 147–73.

⁹ This is beginning to be emphasized in more recent studies, e.g. W. J. Martin, '1 Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation' in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on his 60th Birthday* (ed. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin; Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 232. R. Scroggs, 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman' *JAAAR* 40 (1972) 298.

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 246.

¹¹ These are explicitly mentioned by Héring, *1 Corinthiens*, 91; Scroggs, 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman', 297.

¹² The only real example of this usage that I have been able to find is the oft cited *kata tès kephalês echôn to himation* (Plutarch, *Moralia* 200E). All the other instances (e.g. Héring, *1 Corinthiens*, 92 n. 1; and LSJ 882) contain a verb of motion.

¹³ *Grammaire du grec biblique suivie d'un choix de papyrus* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 221. Similarly A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), 606–7; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax* by N. Turner (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 268. To the examples given in LSJ 882 one can add Mt 8:32 and Acts 27:14. BDF §225, regrettably, combines grammatical precision with a debatable exegetical option in rendering *kata kephalês echôn* by 'hanging down from the head, on the head'. 'From the head' and 'on the head' mean quite different things.

In this perspective the most literal translation is provided by E. B. Allo, ‘ayant [quelque chose a lui pendre] du chef’.¹⁴

This rendering highlights the problem of the object of *echein*. Many supply *kalymma*,¹⁵ but nowhere in the context is a ‘veil’ mentioned.¹⁶ The context does, however, furnish one clear hint, viz., *ean koma* (v. 14). Long hair is certainly ‘something hanging from the head’, and it is hardly surprising that John Chrysostom supplied *komen* in v. 4.¹⁷ If we assume Paul’s structure in v. 4 to be addressed to a long-haired male, not only do we have a text which harmonizes with v. 14, but we avoid the conclusive objection to the current interpretation (‘with his head covered’). Since Paul grew up in a tradition [485] where priests prayed with turbans on their heads,¹⁸ it is impossible to imagine him being disturbed to the extent indicated by the emotional tone of this passage simply because a man prayed with something on his head.

Long hair on a man did upset him badly; *kataitschynei tèn kephalèn autou* (v. 4) and *atimia autô estin* (v. 14). In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the proposed interpretations of the first phrase,¹⁹ it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to the remark of J. Weiss, ‘P. hätte auch sagen können *heauton, beautèn*, wie aus V. 14.15 erhellt.’²⁰ Such neglect may have been due to the fact that Weiss adduced only one unconvincing text (Rom 1:24) to justify this usage of *kephalê*. In the meantime, however, H. Schlier has accumulated evidence to show that ‘*kephalê* is used in secular speech for the “whole man,” the “person”’.²¹ The same is true for religious Greek because *to aima sou epi ten kephalèn sou* (2 Sam 1:16) means exactly the same thing as *to aima autou ep’ hêmas* (Mt 27:25). There can no longer be any objection to taking *kataitschynei tèn kephalèn autou* (v. 4) as a synonym for *atimia autô estin* (v. 14), and the simplicity of this explanation is a positive recommendation when one considers the diverse complications which attend the acceptance of any other option.

In order to discover what perturbed the Apostle we can turn to two Hellenized Jews who were his contemporaries. Pseudo-Phocylides, who possibly

¹⁴ *1 Corinthiens*, 255–6.

¹⁵ ‘With a veil hanging down from his head’ (Barrett); ‘having (a veil) down over his head’ (Robertson-Plummer).

¹⁶ *Katakalyptô* (vv. 6–7), *akatakalyptos* (vv. 5, 13), and *peribolaion* (v. 15) are all more generic terms.

¹⁷ *In Ep. 1 ad Cor. Hom 26.1* (PG 61.213). Similarly A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt 19:13–12 [sic] and 1 Cor 11:3–16* (ASNU 24; Lund: Gleerup, 1963), 166. Martin, ‘1 Cor 11:2–16’, 233; J. Hurley, ‘Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women’ *WTJ* 35 (1973) 199.

¹⁸ ‘The High Priest ministers in eight pieces of raiment, and a common priest in four—in tunic, drawers, *turban* and girdle. To these the High Priest adds the breastplate, the apron, the upper garment and the frontlet’ (*m. Yoma* 7.5). This tradition goes back at least to the post-exilic period (Exod 28:1–43; Ezek 44:18).

¹⁹ See in particular Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 257–8, and Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 250.

²⁰ *1 Korintherbrief*, 271. ²¹ *TDNT* 3.674.

wrote between 30 BC and AD 40,²² advised parents, ‘If a child is a boy, do not let locks grow on his head. Braid not his crown nor make cross-knots on the top of his head. Long hair is not fit for men, but for voluptuous women (*arsesin ouk epeike koman, chlidanais de gynaixin*). Guard the youthful beauty of a comely boy, because many rage for intercourse with a man’ (vv. 210–14). Not only is long hair effeminate, but the transition from vv. 207–12 (treatment of children) to vv. 213–17 (protection of children) is intelligible only if, in the author’s mind, long hair was associated with homosexuality.

In the tirade of emotionally charged invective which Philo directed against homosexuals he criticized ‘the provocative way they curl and dress their hair’ (*tas tês kephalês trixas anaplekomenoi kai diakosmoumenoi*) (*Spec. Leg.* 3.36). This whole section is also an important indication of the [486] Jewish attitude towards homosexuals: ‘Such people merit that one should burn with zeal to spill their blood in obedience to the Law which commands that one should kill with impunity the pervert who falsifies the stamp of nature, not permitting him to live a day or even an hour, since he is a disgrace to himself (*oneidos hautou*), to his family, to his country, and to the whole human race’ (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.38). Since many men have naturally curly hair, Philo’s comment must mean that homosexuals let their hair grow longer than usual. His condemnation contains three contacts with 1 Cor 11:2–16; the homosexual falsifies the stamp of nature (cf. v. 14), is a disgrace to himself (cf. vv. 4, 14), and to the human race (cf. v. 16).

The assumption underlying these two texts, which provide an adequate background for Paul’s reaction to long-haired men, is that at this period men normally wore their hair short. This is certainly verified for Greece,²³ but Billerbeck has argued that Jews must have worn longish hair.²⁴ However, his interpretation of *m. Nazir* 1:2 is based on an opinion of Rashi, the currency of which in the 1st cent. AD is unproven. In my opinion the tractate *Nazir* demonstrates the contrary. Since a lifelong Nazirite presumably died with his hair on, his long hair must have been intended as a visible sign of his consecration, an inference that is confirmed by the LXX of Num 6:7. The minimum period for which the vow could be made was 30 days (*m. Nazir* 1:3; 6:3), but if Jews of the period habitually wore their hair long, 30 days’ growth would pass entirely unnoticed. Hence, they must have had rather short hair, precisely as Ezek 44:20 lays down.

The association of long hair with homosexuality was not limited to Paul and his Jewish contemporaries; it was shared by many others. In his Second Satire,

²² P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides with Introduction and Commentary* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 81–3.

²³ ‘Die Geschichte der Haarschur gegen die Tracht des langen Haares dar’ (Bremer, *PW* 7.2112). Short hair began to predominate from the 4th cent. BC; see the illustrations in E. Pottier, M. Albert, and E. Saglio, ‘Coma’ in *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* (ed. C. Daremberg and E. Saglio; Paris: Hachette, 1887), 1355–60, and in particular the portrait busts illustrated in *BCH* 2 (1878) 626, 632, plates iv, v, vi.

²⁴ Str-B 3.441.

when describing the behaviour of a group of men who, rigidly excluding all women (line 88), gathered to venerate the goddess Cotys (or Cotytto), Juvenal depicts one of the participants as ‘filling with his enormous locks a golden hair-net’ (*reticulumque comis auratum ingentibus implet*, line 96). Horace, with brisk cynicism, proclaims that nothing shall sunder him from his present love save a ravishing young woman or ‘a well-shaped youth whose long hair is tied in a knot’ (*aut teretis pueri longam renodantis comam*, *Epodes* 11:28). The Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus devoted a whole [487] discourse to hair-cutting (no. XXI (Teubner edition by O. Hense)). Since hair is given as ‘a covering by nature’, it has only a utilitarian value and so ‘should be cut only to take away what is useless and not for beauty’. He particularly objected to the practice of ‘cutting the hair on the front of the head differently from that on the back of the head’ because this is ‘to appear as women and to be seen as womanish, something that should be avoided at all cost, if indeed they were men’. An encounter with a young man ‘whose hair was arranged much too carefully’ (*Diss.* 31.1) provided Epictetus (a disciple of Musonius Rufus) with the opportunity for a discourse on masculine beauty, in which it becomes clear that for a man to give exaggerated care to his appearance, particularly to the hair of his head and chin, is to blur nature’s distinction between the sexes. ‘Man, with what do you reproach your nature? To have made you a man? What, then, should it make all beings women? . . . Transform yourself completely into a woman so that we cannot deceive ourselves. Do not be half man and half woman’ (*Diss.* 3.1, 30–1).²⁵

Both Jewish and pagan texts manifest a close relation between length of hair and its arrangement; hair was grown long in order that it might be artistically decorated. The real issue was the way hair was dressed. The slightest exaggeration was interpreted as a sign of effeminacy; it hinted at sexual ambiguity. Paul mentions length of hair in v. 4 and a womanish arrangement in v. 7 (where he uses *katakalyptô* because it was used of the woman in v. 6). Given the temper of the time, we are forced to conclude that he viewed what the man was doing as an affront to the natural distinction of the sexes.²⁶ What, then, of the woman?

In v. 5 the woman performs the same functions as the man in v. 4 (praying and prophesying), and she is criticized in the same manner: *kataischynei tèn kephalèn autês*. A strict antithesis on the level of conduct is, moreover, suggested by the use of *katakalyptô* of the two sexes in vv. 6–7a, and this is reflected in many translations, e.g. ‘with his head covered . . . with her head unveiled’ (RSV). If my interpretation of v. 4 is correct, it must change our understanding of the antithesis. As W. J. Martin has pertinently noted, ‘To make the wearing of a

²⁵ Many other classical references are given in H. Herter, ‘Effeminatus’ in *RAC* 4.629–30.

²⁶ Both Barrett (*1 Corinthians*, 257) and Scroggs (‘Paul and the Eschatological Woman’, 297) have already suggested that Paul was concerned about homosexuality in this section, but neither develops the point. Neither Lietzmann (*An die Korinther I–II*, 55) nor Conzelmann (*1 Corinthians*, 191 n. 98) document their refusal of this hypothesis, and I fail to see how they could.

head-covering [in v. 5] the opposite of short hair [in v. 4] would be a false antithesis.²⁷ However, if we follow Martin, we must assume [488] that the woman is criticized for having short hair, an option that is excluded by vv. 5b–6. He was led into this dead-end by his failure to define accurately the problem regarding the man. The parallels accumulated apropos of v. 4 show that the issue was not so much long hair in itself, but long hair as the indispensable prerequisite for an elaborate arrangement. If this is correct, the antithesis must be ‘untended hair’. The woman is rebuked because her hair was not neatly arranged in the fashion becoming a woman. Is this initial deduction supported by the letter of the text?

Akatakaluptos occurs only once in the LXX.²⁸ In Lev 13:45 *hê kephalê autou akatakaluptos*, ‘his head uncovered’, translates *r’ sw yhyh prw^c*, ‘his head shall be unbound’. The reference is to a man, but there is no difference as regards a woman, because in Num 5:18 we find the same Hebrew verb (*pr’*) translated by *apokaluptô*.²⁹ The relationship between ‘to cover/uncover’ and ‘to bind/unbind’ is clarified by Lev 10:6 where the Hebrew ‘do not unbind your heads’ is translated as *teên kephalên hymôn ouk apokidarôsete*, ‘do not take the turban off your head’. Both men and women wore a turban which, when unwound, uncovered the head. In none of these or related texts is there any direct mention of hair, despite current English, French, and German versions, which all speak of hair being loosed, disordered. Though inaccurate as strict translations, these versions render the sense, as Ezek 24:17 demonstrates; the MT reads ‘your turban bind upon you’, which the LXX renders as *ouk estai to trichôma sou sympeplegmenon epi se*, ‘let not your locks be entangled upon you’. A head-covering was what kept the hair in order; in this perspective, then, an uncovered head was the equivalent of disordered hair.³⁰

[489] That Paul was, in fact, thinking of ‘uncovered’ in the sense of ‘unbound’ is clearly indicated by what he says of the woman in v. 15b: *hê komê anti peribolaïou dedotai autê*. *Peribolaion* is usually translated ‘covering’, which conveys very little except in the context of the unjustified assumption that Paul is talking about veils. In fact, it is a particular type of covering, i.e. a ‘wrapper’, something that is ‘thrown around’ an object, a person, or part of the human body.³¹ A glance

²⁷ ‘1 Cor 11:2–16’, 233.

²⁸ An appeal to the LXX to bring out the overtones of Paul’s terminology is legitimized by the fact that most of the community at Corinth must have been formed by the synagogue in which the LXX would have been used.

²⁹ Paul’s precise formula *akatakaluptô tê kephalê* appears in Philo’s treatment of Num 5:18 (*Spec. Leg.* 3.60) and is explained, *ho de hierus... toupkranon aphelôn, hin’ epikerinêtai gegymnômenê tê kephalê*, ‘the priest... taking away what is on her head in order that she might be judged bare-headed’ (*Spec. Leg.* 3.56).

³⁰ Billerbeck’s analysis of the rabbinic material yields exactly the same correlation, ‘Hiernach bedeutet bei der Frau “den Kopf entblößen”... sachlich genau so viel wie “die Haarfrisur zerstören oder auflösen”... Umgekehrt galt der Kopf als bedeckt *mkush* solange die Haarfrisur in Ordnung war’ (Str-B 3.429, 433).

³¹ LSJ 1369.

at illustrations of feminine hair arrangements of the period immediately reveals why Paul uses *peribolaion* here; long hair is frequently wrapped around the head in plaits.³² If nature ‘gave her long hair as a wrapper’ (v. 15b),³³ the woman was intended to wrap her hair around her head, and so it was not ‘fitting’ for her to appear in public with her head ‘unbound’, or, in Paul’s language, ‘uncovered’ (v. 13).

Once the connotation of ‘disordered hair’ is recognized, *akatakalyptô tē kephalē* (v. 5) stands in perfect antithesis to the elaborate hair-do of the man, and the whole question of the extent to which Greek women wore veils in public becomes irrelevant. By refusing to do her hair in the manner proper to a woman, she ‘shames her head’, i.e. herself, because her hair should do her honour (*doxa autē estin*, v. 15a).

I have found no evidence to suggest that untended hair on a woman carried the connotation of deviant sexuality that is implied in *kata kephalēs echôn* (v. 4). This was ‘unmasculine’ in a highly specific sense, whereas the woman is presented as ‘unfeminine’ in a very generic sense. The association of the two moved Paul’s thought into another dimension in v. 6 where he indulges in precisely the same type of heavy irony employed by Epictetus (see above). If a woman is prepared to be ‘unfeminine’ to the extent of not dressing her hair properly, then she might as well go the whole way and appear ‘mannish’. On certain occasions at least, Greek men appeared with shaven heads. Describing the Isis festival at Corinth, Apuleius says, ‘The women had their hair anointed, and their heads covered with bright linen, but the men had [490] their crowns shaven and shining bright’ (*Metamorphoses* 11:10). As we have seen, short hair was normal for a man, and thus a woman who wanted to disguise herself as a man cut her hair short (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 7.6). Equally, short hair could mark a woman as a lesbian, as two texts of Lucian of Samosata show: ‘A woman with her hair closely clipped in the Spartan manner, boyish-looking and wholly masculine’ (*Fugitive* 27); ‘[Megilla’s head] shaved close, just like the manliest of athletes’ (*Dialogi meretrici* 5.3). In the light of these texts, *ei de aischron gynaikei to keirasthai ē xyrasthai* (v. 6) means exactly the same as *anēr men ean koma, atimia autō estin* (v. 15). In both cases the ‘disgrace/dishonor’ arises from an appearance suggestive of the opposite sex; men were ‘unmasculine’ and women ‘unfeminine’.

³² Contemporary Greek styles are illustrated in Pottier-Albert-Saglio, ‘Coma’, 1361, and described in *PW* 7.2125–35. Since Roman influence was strong in Corinth, the styles favoured by the women of Rome cannot be left out of account; these are illustrated in Pottier-Albert-Saglio, ‘Coma’, 1368–70; M. Wagner, ‘Datierung römischer Haartrachten’ *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1938, 276–325; *PWSup* 6.90–102. Braided hair is mentioned in 1 Tim 2:9 and 1 Pet 3:3. As J. B. Hurley (‘Did Paul Require Veils?’, 199–200) correctly points out, the condemnation in these two texts is not directed against braids as such, but against the overly elaborate and highly expensive hair arrangements mentioned by the contemporary authors cited in Spicq, *Épîtres pastorales*, 377.

³³ To take *anti* as meaning ‘in place of’ (as do Allo and Héring) makes nonsense of the argument. Weiss, Robertson-Plummer, Barrett and Conzelmann rightly prefer ‘as, for’; see LSJ 153.

What was going on at Corinth? Many of the problems in the community arose from an over-realized eschatology.³⁴ A certain number of the believers considered themselves to be possessed of a 'wisdom' (1 Cor 2:6) which transformed them into *pneumatikoi* (2:15), *teleioi* (2:6) and *sophoi* (3:18). They belonged entirely to the new age (4:8) and considered the standards and values of the unredeemed world as irrelevant. Only this assumption explains the pride the community took in the fact that one member was living in incest; it was a graphic illustration, an existential statement, of their freedom from outmoded conventions.³⁵ Gal 3:28, when filtered through the same infantile (1 Cor 3:1) mentality, provides a perfect explanation of the situation Paul had to face here. If there was no longer any male or female, the Corinthians felt free to blur the distinction between the sexes. Unmasculine and unfeminine hair-dos flew in the face of accepted conventions in precisely the same way as their approval of incest. Scandal was the symbol of their new spiritual freedom; the more people they shocked, the more right they felt themselves to be.

This hypothesis provides convincing justification for the tone of Paul's reaction in which unease and irritation predominate. The consistent infantilism of the Corinthians rubbed him on the raw, and the hair-dos raised the disquieting question of homosexuality within the community. He had no evidence of homosexual practices, otherwise he would certainly have reacted in the same direct fashion as in the case of incest (5:1–13). Nonetheless the possibility worried him. The lack of precise information forced him to be a little ambiguous. A false accusation could destroy his credibility. He had to phrase things in such a way that his readers could take his words as the situation warranted.

[491] If this assessment is correct, I think it unlikely that the point was specifically mentioned in the letter from Corinth.³⁶ The information must have come from the same oral source(s) that told him about the problems treated in 1 Cor 1–6, and about the influence that social divisions were having on the celebration of the eucharist (1 Cor 11:18). I suspect that the letter from Corinth concluded the section concerning the dispute over the legitimacy of eating idol-meats with words to this effect, 'Despite this difference in opinion, we nonetheless remember you in everything and maintain the traditions which you delivered to us. In particular, we all come together to pray, prophesy, and

³⁴ For a systematic investigation of the whole correspondence in this perspective, and a convincing rebuttal of the objections that have been raised, see. A. C. Thiselton, 'Realized Eschatology', 510–26.

³⁵ See A. C. Thiselton, 'The Meaning of *Sarx* in 1 Corinthians 5:5: A Fresh Approach in the Light of Logical and Semantic Factors' *SJT* 26 (1973) 204–27, and my '1 Corinthians 5:3–5' *RB* 84 (1977) 239–45 = Chapter 2.

³⁶ With Hurd (*Origins*, 90–1 and 182–6) and the authors he mentions, I believe that 1 Cor 11:2 is best understood as a reference to the letter from Corinth. Efforts to reconstruct the Corinthian statement, however, have been vitiated by the assumption that the point at issue was the veiling of women.

celebrate the eucharist.' Paul no doubt appreciated the effort to reassure him, but he knew more than they thought; hence the rather ironical graciousness of v. 2.

Paul's Response

In response Paul develops three lines of argument, the first based on the order of creation (vv. 3, 7–12), the second on the teaching of nature (vv. 13–15), and the third on the custom of other churches (v. 16). In view of the nature of the problem as defined above, the relevance of the second and third arguments is evident. Paul could confidently assert that all churches were agreed that men should appear as men and women as women, because all his contemporaries had inherited the same social conventions that the Stoics dignified as the teaching of nature. All the problems arise in the first argument, which is commanded by the programmatic statement in v. 3.

This verse is critical to a correct grasp of what Paul is trying to say. The key points are: (1) the meaning of *kephalê*; (2) the function of the two phrases *pantos andros hê kephalê ho Christos estin* (v. 3a) and *kephalê de tou Christou ho theos* (v. 3c).

The majority of commentators understand *kephalê* to carry the connotation of 'supremacy' or 'authority',³⁷ even though this meaning is not attested for *kephalê* in profane Greek.³⁸ This option, which colours their whole interpretation, [492] is justified by an appeal to the LXX where *kephalê* appears 281 times as the translation of *rosh*, which is, in fact, used in the sense of 'chief, ruler'.³⁹ Implicitly we are invited to assume that one of the metaphorical meanings of the Hebrew term became firmly attached to its Greek correspondent, the impression being given that *kephalê* regularly translates *rosh* when used in the sense of 'ruler'.

The first to attempt to control this hypothesis was R. Scroggs, who found that *rosh* appears 20 times in Numbers; when used literally it is always translated by *kephalê*, but when used of an authority figure (7 times) *kephalê* is never the translation; instead we have *archôn* or *archêgos*.⁴⁰ I have run the same sort of check on a number of other books with precisely the same result. Even though *rosh* appears 25 times in Exodus and is rendered by *kephalê* when used in the literal sense, *kephalê* appears in none of the three texts where *rosh* means a 'ruler'. Similarly in 1 Samuel, *rosh* appears 22 times and is translated by *kephalê* in 13 instances where the literal sense is intended, but in the one case where *rosh*

³⁷ In addition to the commentaries of Weiss, Robertson-Plummer, Wendland, Allo, Héring, Lietzmann-Kümmel, and Grosheide, see A. Jaubert, 'Le voile des femmes (1 Cor 11:2–16)' *NTS* 18 (1971–2) 419; J. D. M. Derrett, 'Religious Hair' in his *Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1: *Glimpses of the Legal and Social Presuppositions of the Authors* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 172.

³⁸ So rightly Weiss, *1 Korintherbrief*, 269; Schlier, *TDNT* 3.674; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 183 n. 21.

³⁹ So explicitly, S. Bedale, 'The Meaning of *kephalê* in the Pauline Epistles' *JTS* 5 (1954) 213; Jaubert, 'Le voile des femmes', 419.

⁴⁰ 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited' *JAAR* 42 (1974) 534 n. 8.

designates a ‘ruler’ the LXX has *hégoumenos*. The case of Judges is a little more complicated, but equally instructive. The A-text of the LXX translates the four instances of *rosh* = ‘ruler’ (10:18; 11:8, 9, 11) by *kephalê*, but in the first three the B-text has *archôn* despite the possibility of confusion that this occasions,⁴¹ and *kephalê* only in 11:11 where its meaning is clarified by *archêgos*.

Though incomplete, this survey is sufficiently based to show that the translators of the LXX were well aware that the metaphorical meanings of *rosh* and *kephalê* did not overlap completely, and that *kephalê* was inappropriate to render *rosh* when this term connoted ‘authority’.⁴² *Kephalê* does appear for *rosh* = ‘ruler’ in 2 Sam 22:44, but this single exception (even Homer nods!) does not change the picture. There is simply no basis for the assumption that a Hellenized Jew would instinctively give *kephalê* the meaning ‘one having authority over someone’.

The one clue to the meaning of *kephalê* provided by the context is the obvious correlation of *kephalê de gynaikos ho anêr* (v. 3b) and *gynê ex andros* (v. 8), and this obliges us to give it the meaning ‘source’. Not only is this sense [493] well attested in classical Greek,⁴³ but Col 2:19 shows that Paul was aware of it. Its appropriateness here has been well argued by Barrett⁴⁴ and Scroggs.⁴⁵ The man is the ‘head’ of the woman because he is the source of her being; Paul is thinking in terms of the first creation.

In what sense is ‘God the head of Christ’ (v. 3c): The meaning ‘source’ necessarily directs our attention to the Father–Son relationship,⁴⁶ which for Paul implied generative activity (1 Cor 4:15). God is the ‘head’ of Christ because he brought him into being. Cyril of Alexandria interpreted this in terms of the divinity of Christ: ‘Likewise the head of Christ is God because he is from him according to nature.’⁴⁷ However, there is no evidence that Paul thought of the nature of Christ, particularly in such terms; there can be no question of reading Paul through Johannine spectacles. Nor does the doctrine of the virginal conception provide a satisfactory solution, because H. Schürmann is surely correct in saying that Paul would have formulated Rom 1:3 otherwise

⁴¹ The MT uses *rosh* to designate the leader sought by the *sry gl'd* (10:18). The B-text translates both terms by *archôn*, thus obscuring the special position offered to the courageous candidate. A desire for greater clarity might have moved the A-text to render *rosh* literally.

⁴² Given his extremely materialistic principle of translation, no conclusion can be drawn from the fact that Aquila consistently renders *rosh* by *kephalê*—even when it means ‘poison’ (Deut 29:17; 32:33); cf. Bertram, *TDNT* 3.675 n. 2.

⁴³ LSJ 945. ⁴⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 248–9.

⁴⁵ ‘Paul and the Eschatological Woman’, 298–9. The meaning ‘source of being’ also appears in Bedale, ‘*Kephalê* in Paul’, 214; Schlier, *TDNT* 3.679; Lietzmann, *An did Korinther I–II*, 183. But all these authors needlessly persist in combining it with the notion of superiority drawn from a false understanding of *kephalê*.

⁴⁶ God as Father: 1 Cor 1:3; 8:6; 15:23–4. Christ as Son: 1 Cor 1:9; 15:28.

⁴⁷ *De recta fide ad Arcadium et Marinam* 5.6c. Similarly Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 249; Héring, *1 Corinthians*, 91.

had he known of this doctrine.⁴⁸ It would appear, therefore, that Paul was not thinking of Christ's existence in itself. Hence, instead of thinking in terms of being as such, we must consider being as function. For Paul, the Son is essentially one who is sent (Gal 4:4–5; Rom 8:3) in view of a saving mission (1 Thess 1:10; Gal 2:20; Rom 8:29, 32); it is his being as Saviour that Paul wishes to evoke here.

This being the case, it is clear that *kephalê de gynaikos ho anêr* and *kephalê de tou Christou ho theos* are not strictly parallel, a difference which justifies the use of *de* rather than *kai*. The type of being communicated is not the same in each case. Woman owes her physical being to man (v. 8), but Christ does not owe his physical being directly to God. In other words, while v. 3b evokes the first creation, v. 3c alludes to the new creation.

The interpretation of the first clause, *pantos andros hê kephalê ho Christos estin* (v. 3a), is the most difficult. The few commentators who offer a detailed discussion all invoke 1 Cor 8:6.⁴⁹ However, the understanding of this verse which presents Christ as the instrumental cause of the first creation relies [494] on Stoic and Philonic texts that are not really parallel.⁵⁰ If we are to rely on solid arguments, it is preferable to evoke the causal activity of Christ in the new creation (2 Cor 5:17) of which we have a very clear statement in this epistle, *ex autou de hymeis este in Christô Iêsou* (1:30); Christ is responsible for the new being of the believers.⁵¹

While this interpretation explains the predication of *kephalê*, it just intensifies the problem of *pas anêr*. What is the meaning of *anêr*, and within what framework does Paul use the contextual term *pas*? *Anêr* normally means 'man' as opposed to woman, whereas *anthrôpos* means 'man' as opposed to a beast. However, *anêr* can also be used of 'man' as opposed to non-human beings, gods and monsters, and the plural is employed regularly to designate the inhabitants or population of an area. Thus, in classical Greek *anêr* could be used and, in fact, was used to mean 'the human species', and this usage is attested in the NT.⁵² Only this generic sense is compatible with the meaning 'source' assigned to *kephalê*, because the causality of Christ reaches all believers equally (1:30) without any distinctions based on

⁴⁸ *Das Lukasevangelium* (HTKNT 3/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 1.61. See R. E. Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress/New York: Paulist, 1978), 33–49.

⁴⁹ Héring, Barrett, Conzelmann in their commentaries, and Scroggs, 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman', 300.

⁵⁰ My criticism ('1 Cor 8:6—Cosmology or Soteriology?' *RB* 85 (1978) 253–67 = Chapter 6) of the so-called Stoic parallels has been independently reinforced by R. A. Horsley ('The Background of the Confessional Formula in 1 Cor 8:6' *ZNW* 69 (1978) 130–5) but the texts from Philo that he adduces are no more conclusive. They contain no parallel to the distinctive, repeated *heis* of 1 Cor 8:6; whereas Philo consistently refers to 'the universe' or 'the world', Paul speaks of 'all things'. These formal differences make dependence of Philonic formulae highly questionable. Moreover, the sense deduced from such 'parallels' makes nonsense of Paul's argumentation; see my 'Freedom of the Ghetto (1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:23–11:1)' *RB* 85 (1978) 543–74 = Chapter 8.

⁵¹ The point is best argued in the commentaries of Robertson-Plummer and Barrett, but their conclusion is shared by Allo, Wendland, Héring and the BdeJ. The objections of Weiss and Lietzmann fail to carry conviction.

⁵² For details, see A. Oepke, *TDNT* 1.360–2.

sex or marital status. Is there an allusion to the whole of humanity? There may be, but, on the basis of Rom 10:9, the causality of Christ relative to non-believers is only potential; they are in fact ‘dead’, whereas the effect of Christ’s action is ‘life’ (Col 2:13). Hence, I prefer to limit the extension of *pas anêr* to believers.

In the light of the above analysis the man–woman relationship based on the first creation (v. 3b) is bracketed by two allusions to the new creation, one highlighting the source of Christ’s power (v. 3c) and the other its relevance for believers (v. 3c). This suggests that the argument of the Apostle is going to move on two levels, that of the new creation as well as that of the first creation, and this in turn gives rise to the suspicion that something accepted on the basis of the first creation may need to be modified in the light of the new creation. In this case, it becomes clear why ‘the head of Christ is God’ was introduced. God is ultimately responsible for both creations; and, since he cannot contradict [495] himself, what flows from the new creation should be seen, not as a contradiction of the first creation, but as the revelation of its true meaning.⁵³

Having spelled out the principle (v. 3) and articulated the problem (vv. 4–6), Paul passes to his first argument, which yields two antithetical conclusions expressed as obligations resting on the man (*ouk opheilei*, v. 7a) and on the woman (*opheilei*, v. 10). The basis for this conclusion is enunciated in terms of ‘glory’; the man is *doxa theou* (v. 7b), whereas the woman is *doxa andros* (v. 7c).

Paul was forced to introduce the word *doxa* beside *eikôn* in order to signal unambiguously that he was no longer speaking of *anêr*, as he actually is (v. 4), but of *anêr* as he was intended to be by God. *Eikôn theou* alone would not have been sufficient because it was applied by Jews to a humanity that Paul regarded as ‘fallen’ (Sir 17:1–13; *Apoc. Mos.* 10:3; 12:2). The addition of *doxa theou* directed attention to the state of humanity before the Fall. By their sin both Adam and Eve lost ‘the glory of God’ (*Apoc. Mos.* 20:1–2; 21:6); it would be restored only in the eschaton (*Apoc. Mos.* 39:2).⁵⁴ Paul then had to find a term which would underline the difference between male and female that the situation at Corinth obliged him to stress. He could not call the woman either

⁵³ The current interpretation of *pantes andros hê kephalê ho Christos estin* (v. 3a) and *kephalê de tou Christou ho theos* (v. 3c) make them completely irrelevant to the subsequent discussion. For v. 3a see Senft, *1 Corinthians*, 141, and for v. 3c, see Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum*, 23–4. Having failed to grasp Paul’s principle, they then inevitably have problems with his logic. Grosheide (*1 Corinthians*, 250) is the only commentator to see that both vv. 3a and 3c refer to the new creation, but he errs in claiming that v. 3b means that ‘in the realm of recreation the man rule the woman’.

⁵⁴ Conzelmann is misleading (to put it mildly) when he claims that ‘the synonymous character of *eikôn* and *doxa* is prefigured in Judaism’ (*1 Corinthians*, 188). He quotes J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1:26f. in Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (FRLANT 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 100–4; but in these pages Jervell is dealing with rabbinic texts of widely different dates which, moreover, refer only to Adam before the Fall. The rabbis believed that the *doxa* lost by Adam’s sin was restored on Sinai (Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 113–19). If this doctrine existed in the 1st cent. AD, Paul certainly did not accept it (Rom 3:23), nor did many of his contemporaries. Only in the eschaton (which for Christians was already present, 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Thess 2:14) would the just again possess *doxa*; see CD 3.20; 1 QS 4.23; 4 Ezra 8.51; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 15.8; 51; 54.15, 21; 1 *Enoch* 39.9; 50.1; 58.2; 103.2.

eikôn theou or *eikôn andros*, because he had already used the former of the male, and the latter was applicable only to a son (Gen 5:3). *Doxa theou* suffered from the same disadvantage as *eikôn theou*. His choice was thus limited to *doxa andros*, which, moreover, could be justified by an appeal to another segment of the creation narrative (Gen 2:18–22). The meaning of *doxa*⁵⁵ is not relevant to Paul's argument, which relies on the contrast between [496] male and female that emerges from the creation account.

The thrust of the argument in vv. 8–9 is widely understood to prove the inferiority of women,⁵⁶ but the only basis on which this interpretation could be justified is positively excluded by v. 12. Those who adopt the subordinist view have been misled by a false understanding of the meaning of *kephalê* in v. 3. Paul is, in fact, doing the opposite of Philo in *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* §27, where he appeals to the actual condition of woman to justify the difference in the mode of her creation.⁵⁷ Paul, on the contrary, uses the variation in the mode of creation to prove simply that God intended men and women to be different. In view of the situation he had to deal with he argues in effect: If God had intended no difference between the sexes, he would have created male and female in the same way. Since he did not, there must be an important distinction which should be manifested. In consequence, a man should not appear in public 'covered' (v. 7a) because this is the way a woman should present herself (v. 6b). We should expect an antithetical conclusion in v. 10, and this is verified to the extent that the woman should have something 'on her head', but *exousia* comes as a complete surprise, and a second causal clause (*dià tous angelous*) complicates the thought.

It is precisely at this point that Paul shifts into the second level for which we were prepared by v. 3; the new creation is introduced to bring out the true meaning of the first creation. The clue is in the much controverted mention of 'angels'.⁵⁸ Paul attributes two functions to angels; they served as mediators in the

⁵⁵ The meaning 'reflection' maintained by many commentators (e.g. Weiss, Lietzmann, Allo, Kuss, Conzelmann, and Senft) is entirely without foundation; it is attested nowhere. The only meaning possible here is 'giving honour'; see A. Feuillet, 'L'homme "gloire de Dieu" et la femme "gloire de l'homme" (1 Cor 11:7b)' *RB* 81 (1974) 161–82.

⁵⁶ So Weiss, Lietzmann, Héring, Senft; Derrett, 'Religious Hair', 172; Meier, 'On the Veiling of Hermeneutics', 220.

⁵⁷ 'Why was not woman, like the other animals and man, also formed from earth, instead of the side of man? First, because woman is not equal in honour [*doxa*?] with man. Second, because she is not equal in age but younger. Wherefore those who take wives who have passed their prime are to be criticized for destroying the laws of nature. Third, he wishes that man should take care of woman as a very necessary part of him; but woman, in return, should serve him as a whole. Fourth, he counsels man figuratively to take care of woman as of a daughter, and woman to honour man as a father . . . one (i.e. the woman) who has made a change should give to him who had taken her the honour she showed to those who begot her' (trans. R. Marcus, *Philo, Supplement I: Questions and Answers on Genesis* (LCL; London: Heinemann/Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 16).

⁵⁸ The various solutions that have been proposed have been convincingly criticized by J. A. Fitzmyer, 'A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor 11:10' in *Paul and Qumran* (ed. J. Murphy-O'Connor; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 31–7. His own solution, viz. 'the unveiled head of a woman is like a bodily defect which should be excluded from the assembly

giving of the Law (Gal 3:19) and they observe what is going on in the world (1 Cor 4:9). Philo links these two functions by presenting angels as ‘the eyes [497] and ears of the Great King, they watch and hear all’ (*Som.* 1.140). They report to God infringements of the Law: ‘We announce when we come before the Lord our God all the sin which is committed in heaven and on earth, and in light and in darkness and everywhere’ (*Jub.* 4:6; cf. *1 Enoch* 99:3). By praying and prophesying in public, women at Corinth were doing things incompatible with the understanding of the position of women based on Gen 2:18–22.⁵⁹ They were exercising a leadership function which vividly contrasts with Josephus’ conception of their role: ‘The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority (*to kratos*) has been given by God to the man’ (*Ag. Ap.* 2.24 §201). In Paul’s view women had full authority (*exousian echein*) to act as they were doing, but they needed to convey their new status to the angels who watched for breaches of Law. The guardians of an outmoded tradition had to be shown that things had changed.⁶⁰

The extent of the change is spelled out in v. 11; *plen* introduces a corrective to the traditional understanding of Gen 2:18–22 (v. 9). ‘Neither is woman otherwise than man, nor man otherwise than woman in the Lord.’⁶¹ In other words, there is no difference in the social status of man and woman in [498] Christ; *en kyriō*⁶² takes up *pantos andros hē kephalē ho Christos* (v. 3a). If in the first creation woman was made from man, man thereafter comes into existence through woman (v. 12). The fact that man is born of woman is just as much an

“because holy angels are present in their congregation” (p. 43) embodies three destructive flaws: (1) it relies on Kittle’s speculative, and to me implausible, hypothesis of an Aramaic background to transform *exousia* into ‘veil’; (2) it does not explain *exousia*; (3) it supposes that Paul could think of physical defects as excluding from the Christian community.

⁵⁹ Philo, whose views on women have already been cited in n. 57, also wrote, ‘Public places, official buildings, tribunals, clubs, assemblies of moving crowds... are appropriate to men...; women, on the other hand, are best suited to domestic life and to devotion to the household... She should aspire to a life of seclusion, not showing herself like a vagrant in the streets before the eyes of other men, except when she has to go to the temple. Even then she should not go out when the streets are crowded but should wait until most of the men have returned home’ (*Spec. Leg.* 3.169–71). See also J. B. Segal, ‘The Jewish Attitude towards Women’ *JJS* 30 (1979) 121–37.

⁶⁰ A somewhat similar view has been put forward by R. Scroggs (‘Paul and the Eschatological Woman’, 300 n. 46), who considers that ‘the angels would be hostile to the radical distinction between the old and the eschatological orders’. However, none of the rabbinic texts he cites are dated to the 1st cent. AD, and I cannot see that they contain his interpretation. That is why I have preferred to limit myself to ideas about angels that were certainly in circulation at the time of Paul. Nonetheless, Scroggs (p. 302) is certainly correct in concurring with M. Hooker (‘Authority on her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor 11:10’ *NTS* 10 (1963–4) 416) and Barrett (*1 Corinthians*, 255), who see in v. 10 a reference to a new authority given the woman to do something that she could not do before.

⁶¹ The meaning ‘differently from, otherwise than’ is well attested for *chōris* (LSJ 2016), and its appropriateness here is convincingly argued by J. Kürzinger, ‘Frau und Mann nach 1 Kor 11:11f.’ *BZ* 22 (1978) 270–5.

⁶² Only one of the 29 instances of *en kyriō* in the Pauline letters clearly refers to God, whereas 24 certainly refer to Christ. Hence the strong presumption that Paul intends Christ here.

effect of the divine intention as the different ways in which the two sexes were created (*ta de panta ek tou theou*), but the significance of this became apparent only in the light of the mission of Christ: *kephalê de tou Christou ho theos* (v. 3c).

What was the relevance of all this to the situation at Corinth? The answer becomes clear when it is recognized that Paul is, in fact, using *two* lines of argument. The first is the differentiation of sexes based on Gen 1:26–7 and 2:18–22 (vv. 7–9). The second is the fact that the recreated woman has an authority equal to that of the man (vv. 10–12). The two are related (*dia touto*, v. 10) inasmuch as the woman has this power precisely as a woman. New status is accorded to woman, not to an ambiguous being whose ‘unfeminine’ hair-do was an affront to generally accepted conventions. Hence, in so far as her way of doing her hair clearly defines her sex, it becomes a symbol of the authority she enjoys, *opheilei he gynê exousian echein epi tês kephalês* (v. 10).⁶³

In writing 1 Cor 11:2–16, Paul was under a strain which naturally influenced his style. He did not have as much information as he would have wished, and he was uneasy at being obliged to deal with the surface of what could be a serious problem. Nonetheless, his control was such that he presents a perfectly coherent multi-pronged argument against hair arrangements which tended to blur the distinction between the sexes. He offers a theological reason for this distinction (vv. 7–9), points out to the woman that her new power and equality are related to her being fully a woman (vv. 10–12), evokes popular Stoic philosophy which saw hair arrangements as something more than mere convention (vv. 13–15), and finally notes that all the churches agree that men should look like men and women like women (v. 16). He may have reacted emotionally to the disregard of a convention that had changed and would change again, as did many at least twice in this century, when women started to bob their hair and men to let theirs grow long,⁶⁴ but he did not crumple into [499] incoherence or lose

⁶³ *Exousia* used by metonymy for a symbol or sign of authority; compare the prescription of Num 6:7 LXX forbidding a Nazirite to cut his hair as a sign of mourning ‘because the prayer (consecration) of his God is on him, on his head (*hoti euchê theou autou ep’ autô, epi kephalês autou*)’.

⁶⁴ In a beautiful example of a culturally conditioned statement which enables one to pinpoint the writer’s nationality, social class and educational background, R. Scroggs claims that ‘Paul’s voice sounds more strident than his rabbinic peers. Thus his hostility to homosexuality may come more out of his own psychic nature than his Jewish upbringing’ (‘Paul and the Eschatological Woman’, 297 n. 38). The entirely gratuitous character of this assessment is evident if we compare Paul’s nuanced language with the highly coloured invective of Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.37–42, part of which has been quoted above apropos of v. 4.

The same type of cultural conditioning is unfortunately operative in the assertion of the CBA Task Force on the Role of Women in Early Christianity that ‘the presuppositions of Paul’s patriarchal culture have influenced his interpretation of Genesis’ (‘Women and Priestly Ministry: The New Testament Evidence’ *CBQ* 41 (1979) 612). Even though the authors accept the meaning ‘source’ for *kephalê*, they yet manage to read subordinationism into Paul because of their uncritical acceptance of three unjustifiable assumptions: (1) that 1 Cor 11:7–9 is saying the same thing as 1 Tim 2:13–15; (2) that *anêr-gynê* means ‘husband-wife’; and (3) that *doxa* in 1 Cor 11:7 means ‘reflection’. Paul, in fact, rejects the patriarchalist interpretation of Genesis, and the thrust of the whole passage is that women enjoy ministerial power *precisely as women*.

his penetrating persuasiveness, as the following paraphrase, which embodies my conclusions, shows:

³Christ is the source of every (believing) person's being, but man was the source of woman's being, and God is the source of Christ's being as Saviour.

⁴Every man praying or prophesying with an unmasculine hair-do shames himself.

⁵Equally, every woman praying or prophesying with an unfeminine hair-do shames herself—it is the same as if she were shaven. ⁶For if a woman will not do her hair properly, she might as well cut it off. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven as men are, she should do her hair in a womanly fashion. ⁷A man, on the contrary, should not adopt a feminine hair-do.

Man and woman are different because they were created in different ways. In the Genesis narrative man is the glory of God, but woman is the glory of man, ⁸because man was not made from woman, but woman from man, ⁹and man was not created for woman but woman for man.

¹⁰This difference must be respected in the new creation where woman has a power that she did not enjoy under the Law, but to convince the angels who watch for breaches of the Law she must appear as a woman by the way she dresses her hair.

In Christ man and woman enjoy the same power; ¹²for as originally woman was made from man, so thereafter man came into being through woman, and this was also God's doing.

¹³Judge for yourselves. Is it seemly for a woman to pray to God with an unfeminine hair-do? ¹⁴Does not nature itself teach you that long hair dishonours a man, ¹⁵whereas it is a woman's glory? For long hair is given her so that she may wind it around her head. [500] ¹⁶If anyone is disposed to contest this, let me just say that we have no custom permitting men to appear womanish or women mannish. All the churches agree that men should appear to be men and women appear to be women.

POSTSCRIPT

I have devoted two articles to this topic. The second, which follows immediately, was inspired by the need to defend and explain myself in response to a brilliant article by Joël Delobel. His arguments led me to some new insights and to clarify some imprecisions. Thus I shall defer a detailed Postscript until the end of that article, and will here note only the points where Delobel stimulated improvements.

I found that my rather tortuous discussion of *katakalyptô* 'to cover' and *akatakalyptos* 'uncovered' was rendered unnecessary by the recognition that the form of covering was identified in 11:15 as the woman's hair, which was a *peribolaion* 'wrapper'. Thus the only 'covering' that Paul had in mind was feminine hair well-dressed in the conventional manner. Many statues show plaited hair wrapped around the head to create what I can only call a hair cap.

I had known that my treatment of 11:10 was very inadequate, but did not have the ingenuity to handle the problem. Delobel pointed me in the right direction by insisting that attention should be paid, not to the word *exousia*, but to the whole expression *exousian echein epi*, which when followed by the genitive means 'to have authority over, to exercise control over'. Thus the verse should be translated 'the woman should exercise control over her head'. What this means is another matter.

I had interpreted 'on account of the angels' in 11:10 as a reference to the well known Jewish category of heavenly angels who reported on breaches of the Law. On reflection I found this a rather implausible argument for Paul to use, and so opted for the alternative well-attested meaning of 'human messenger'. Paul was warning the woman not to upset envoys from other churches (cf. 1 Cor 10:32 and 14:23). Elsewhere I have expressed my conviction that what Paul knew of the situation dealt with in 11:3–16 came from the report of Chloe's people, who had in fact been scandalized at what happened in Corinthian liturgies.

Finally, I sharpened my understanding of 11:7–10 by separating the conclusions (v. 7a and v. 10) from the premise (vv. 7b–9), and by underlining that it is the conclusions which indicate how Paul understood the premise based on Gen 2:18–23. If the conclusions are that men and women should have different hairdos, then what he saw in the creation account was that men and women were created differently. The difference of the sexes, in consequence, was important. The function of 11:11–12 is to ensure that no one at Corinth drew more from his premise than he intended.

11

1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again

During the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense XXXIV (August 27–29, 1984),¹ Prof. Joel Delobel did me the honour of subjecting my exegesis of 1 Cor 11:2–16 to a searching examination.² This lecture has now been published,³ and it is clear that he has raised a number of issues that demand further consideration. While I disagree with much that he says, his objections and positive contributions have forced me to clarify a number of important points that were less than adequately treated in my article. Specifically, the discussion has enabled me to furnish a clearer and simpler explanation of the most difficult section (vv. 7–12) of a text whose significance in the current debate concerning the place of women in the church cannot be overestimated.

Basically, there are two problems: (1) What was the situation at Corinth? and (2) How did Paul deal with it?

The Situation at Corinth

I argued that the problem involved both men and women and that the issue was how they dressed their hair. Some men wore their hair long, a [266] characteristic of homosexuals, while some women neglected their hair to the extent that they were so unfeminine that Paul ironically suggested that they should cut it off and be overtly lesbian.

Delobel, on the contrary, asserts: 'It is our impression that the pericope does not want to deal with behaviour of man and woman equally, but that Paul is exclusively concerned with the behaviour of Corinthian women' (p. 379). To what did Paul object? 'In Christian worship women publically pray and prophesy without wearing the usual head-covering. This may have been a symptom of an attempt of (some) Corinthian women to overcome their traditional secondary place by behaving like men' (p. 387).

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 50 (1988) 265–74, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² 'Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16' *CBQ* 42 (1980) 482–500, Chapter 10.

³ J. Delobel, '1 Cor 11:2–16: Towards a Coherent Explanation' in *L'apôtre Paul. Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (BETL 73; ed. A. Vanhoye; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1986), 369–89. To avoid multiplying footnotes, I shall refer to this study with page numbers in the body of the article.

Delobel accurately characterizes his opinion that Paul has only women in view as an ‘impression’, because his sole argument (p. 380) is that v. 13 has no parallel reference to men. This is not sufficient to counter the weight of the number of references to men in the rest of the pericope, which Delobel loyally lists (p. 380) and which are numerically identical to the allusions to women. Paul was interested only in getting his point across as clearly as possible, not in pure symmetry. His response to the situation is articulated in the paired phrases *anêr men gar ouk opheilei katakalypsesthai tèn kephalên*, ‘a man ought not to “cover” his head’ (v. 7), and *opheilei hê gynê exousian echein epi tês kephalês*, ‘a woman ought to have authority over her head’ (v. 10). This latter injunction is not precisely in the form that one would expect, and it is not at all surprising that Paul should make his meaning unambiguous in v. 13 by asking *preponestin gynaika akatakalypton tô theô proseuchesthai*, ‘is it proper for a woman to pray to God “uncovered?”’⁴

The references to men have to be taken seriously and cannot be dismissed as ‘a background in contrast with which woman’s situation and obligation can be more sharply described’ (p. 380). Not only does the wording of the pericope militate against this view, but given Paul’s awareness of the propensity of the Corinthians to misunderstand him (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–13; 2 Cor 1:13–14), it is highly unlikely that he would have complicated things by inventing a nonexistent male custom. What, then, was amiss with the men?

Paul makes two statements that have to be taken into account. Delobel translates the first as ‘a man who prays or prophesies with something on his head shames his literal/metaphorical head’ (v. 4). The second is: ‘Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him?’ (v. 14). Is Paul here describing two different situations, or is he merely using different words to describe the same situation? Delobel cannot make up his [267] mind, and this significantly weakens his case. In one place he adopts a unified explanation that implies the second option: ‘According to Paul, men have “naturally” short hair, and they should behave in that line as far as their head is concerned. That may mean that they should keep the head uncovered like nature leaves the head uncovered’ (p. 373). Comment on this ‘explanation’ would be superfluous. Elsewhere, however, the natural law explanation is limited to v. 14, and a justification for v. 4 is found in v. 7: ‘Man as *eikôn* of God shall not hide his head’ (p. 374).

Obviously, this inconsistency is rooted in Delobel’s translation of *kata kephalês echôn* (v. 4) as ‘having something on the head’. The oft-cited phrase of Plutarch, *ebadize kata kephalês echôn to himation* (‘he was walking with his toga covering his head’),⁵ shows this rendering to be perfectly possible. Possibility, however, is not enough. A translation must make sense in the social context of the period. Greeks

⁴ This verse underlines the danger of pressing symmetry too hard. Are we to assume in the light of v. 5 that the absence of any mention of ‘prophesying’ means that a woman could undertake this activity in the condition that Paul criticizes? Obviously not.

⁵ *Moralia* 200F.

and Romans differed in their attitude toward attire at prayer, as may be inferred from Plutarch's question, 'Why is it that when they [the Romans] worship the gods, they cover their heads?'⁶ The question would be meaningless unless the Greeks prayed bareheaded, and this is confirmed by Apuleius' description of the Isis ceremony at Cenchreae: 'The women had their hair anointed and their heads covered with light linen, but the men had their crowns shaven and shining bright.'⁷ The Roman custom of covering the head at prayer is well-documented in an unpublished lecture entitled 'Cultural Background to 1 Corinthians 11:4', given by Richard Oster at the SNTS Meeting in Atlanta in August 1986. It is impossible to be sure which practice was followed at Corinth. Though on Greek soil, the city was a Roman colony whose official language at the time of Paul was Latin and whose government structure was modelled on that of Rome.⁸ It may be that some upper-class members of the community (cf. 1 Cor 1:26) adopted the Roman custom, while others followed the Greek tradition. What is certain is that Paul would have been more at home with the Romans, who covered their heads at prayer, than with the Greeks, who did not, because the legislation of the Mishna embodies a tradition going back to Exod 28:4, 37–8 and Ezek 44:18: 'The high priest ministers in eight pieces of raiment, and a common priest in four—in tunic, drawers, *turban*, [268] and girdle' (*m. Yoma* 7:5). In consequence, no Jew of the period would have entertained the notion that to pray with covered head was to obscure the image of God, or that it was in any way shameful.

This is why 'having something on the head' is an unacceptable translation of *kata kephalês echôn* and why we are forced to adopt the only grammatical alternative, 'having something hanging down from the head'. If this cannot mean a headdress, it can only refer to long hair, which is precisely what is mentioned in v. 14. The place of this latter verse in the discussion is now clear. Paul is introducing a second argument to reinforce that elaborated apropos of v. 4. He is concerned with one problem—long hair on men—not with two.

Why should Paul consider long hair on men to be shameful or degrading? Delobel says that it was simply because it flew in the face of contemporary convention. This it certainly did, because what Plutarch says — 'In Greece . . . it is usual for men to have their hair cut short and for women to let it grow'⁹—was also true for Romans, as innumerable busts prove, and for Jews.¹⁰ But this is hardly sufficient to justify Paul's vehemence, which Delobel rightly feels he has to explain: 'Precisely a deliberate change of traditional patterns of behaviour—both social and private—because one is a Christian, would deviate from salvation' (p. 389). Such identification of social customs with salvation is, to put it mildly,

⁶ *Moralia* 266C. ⁷ *Metamorphoses/The Golden Ass* 11.10.

⁸ J. H. Kent, *Corinth VIII/3: The Inscriptions 1926–1950* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 18–23.

⁹ *Moralia* 267B.

¹⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, 'Sex and Logic in 1 Cor 11:2–16', 486 = Chapter 10, p. 145.

totally without foundation. Would Paul have attached greater significance to pagan customs than to the Jewish customs which he had abandoned and which for him had also a religious value?

Why does Delobel reject my well-documented hypothesis that long hair on men was associated with homosexuality? Simply because I invoke 'contemporary non-biblical texts' whose 'interpretation and relevance for the Corinthian situation are highly hypothetical' (p. 372). I leave it to others to determine whether I have forced the interpretation of the texts I cite,¹¹ but it is certainly legitimate to draw attention to contemporary mores to explain Paul's visceral reaction to long hair on men. Does Delobel imagine that the early Christian communities were totally divorced from their environment? The texts I cited show that it would have been natural for any contemporary of Paul to associate long hair with homosexuality; and when this is coupled with the Apostle's repudiation of homosexuality (Rom 1:26–7; 1 Cor 6:9), his reaction in 1 Cor 11:2–16 becomes intelligible.

Now we come to the woman. For Delobel she was praying bareheaded, and Paul's point is that she should wear a veil. He explicitly rests his case on 'the usual meaning of *akatakalyptos* "uncovered" in v. 5 and of *katakalyptesthai* [269] "to cover, hide" in vv. 6, 7, 13' (p. 376). On such meanings there is no dispute. The real issue is: How did Paul conceive the woman's head-covering? Delobel has failed to notice that the text gives an explicit and unambiguous answer, *hê komê anti peribolaïou dedotai autê* 'long hair has been given to her as a wrapper' (v. 15). As I showed, Paul's use of *peribolaïon* is perfectly justified in terms of what is known of feminine hairstyles of the period; long hair was braided and wrapped around the head.¹² It is obvious that a 'wrapper' can be considered a 'covering', and it is this simple fact that explains Paul's use of *katakalyptô* and *akatakalyptô* elsewhere in the pericope.¹³ His use of these verbs may have confused the Corinthians at first, but he eventually made his meaning unambiguous (v. 15). The only 'covering' he had in mind was feminine hair well-dressed in the conventional manner. A woman who failed to give such attention to her hair would be 'uncovered'.

The problem at Corinth, therefore, is that some men were unmasculine in a highly specific sense, whereas some women were unfeminine in a most generic sense. In both cases the perception was based on hair, and not on the presence or absence of headdress. Paul's argument, in consequence, must address the issue of the differentiation of the sexes, and not, as Delobel claims, 'an attempt of (some) Corinthian women to overcome their traditional secondary place by behaving like men' (p. 387).

¹¹ 'Sex and Logic', 485–7 = Chapter 10, pp. 145–6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 489.

¹³ It is thus unnecessary to give these verbs a sense derived from the Hebrew *pr* 'to unbind' as I attempted to do in 'Sex and Logic', 488. Delobel's criticism of this point (pp. 374–5) is valid.

Paul's Response

According to Delobel, the force of Paul's response is to confirm the idea of 'women's proper secondary place, which does not necessarily involve her inferiority' (p. 378). By this he apparently means that woman is of equal worth (p. 381 n. 45), even though her place in the order of the cosmos is below that of man (p. 378). The confusion evident in this explanation mirrors that of the arguments used to support it.

The key is Delobel's analysis of v. 3. To his credit, he flatly refuses to give *kephalê* there the sense of 'chief' and unambiguously opts for the meaning 'source' or 'origin' (pp. 377–8).¹⁴ He also brings forward strong arguments [270] against the hypothesis of some commentators that we are in the presence of an *eikô*-series rooted in Hellenistic-Jewish cosmological speculation (p. 377). Yet he persists in talking of v. 3 as a *series*, whose purpose is to indicate priority, thus: God–Christ–man–woman. He makes much of the fact that woman 'is not a *kephale* herself: she is not prior to anybody else in the series' (p. 379). He conveniently ignores *ho anêr dia tês gynaïkos* ('man is born of woman', v. 12), which is surely relevant if *kephalê* means 'source' or 'origin'.

More seriously, v. 3 is *not* a series. When Paul wanted to construct a series, he was perfectly capable of doing so (e.g. 1 Cor 12:28). The lack of logic (p. 377) or disorder (p. 379) that Delobel discerns is a false problem. Paul has structured v. 3 carefully. The central member, *kephalê de gynaïkos ho anêr* ('the source of the woman was the man', v. 3b), is manifestly drawn from Gen 2:21–2, as *gynê ex andros* ('woman came from man', v. 8) demonstrates. It is bracketed by two statements that mention Christ and that are so formulated that the name of Christ forms, as it were, an inner bracket: *anêr–Christos* ('believer–Christ', v. 3a)¹⁵ and *Christos–theos* ('Christ–God', v. 3c). Such care betrays intention, and Delobel has given me no reason to change my view that the structure of v. 3 was intended by Paul to hint that a vision of the man–woman relationship based on the first creation had been modified in the new creation inaugurated by Christ.

This hint is elaborated in vv. 7–12. Delobel takes vv. 7–9 at face value as proving 'the priority of man and the secondary place of woman' (p. 381). Naturally, then, he experiences a certain embarrassment when he comes to deal with vv. 11–12, which he interprets as meaning that men and women need each other

¹⁴ In addition to the partial tests run by R. Scroggs ('Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited' *JAR* 42 (1974) 534 n. 8) and myself on LXX usage ('Sex and Logic', 492), Delobel draws on a complete analysis in a 1985 unpublished Leuven STL dissertation by C. Vander Stichele, *1 Kor 11:3: een sleutel tot die interpretatie van 1 Kor 11:2–16*, 145–62.

¹⁵ Delobel disputes (p. 378 n. 38) my rendering of *anêr* here by 'humanity' and my restriction of its meaning to 'believer' on the basis of Paul's general theological stance. He argues that *anêr* would then have two different senses in the same verse and that, in consequence, it must mean 'man' in the sense of male. First, it is far from usual for Paul to use the same term with different meanings in the same verse (e.g. 2 Cor 2:16). Second, Delobel contradicts himself by asserting that v. 3a portrays 'Christ's role in creation in line with 1 Cor 8:6' (p. 378) because this would seem to imply that Christ participated only in the creation of the male sex!

for procreation (p. 382). The purpose of this, he says, is ‘to prove the basic equality of man and woman’ (p. 384). He resolves the contradiction by claiming that only vv. 7–10 are directly relevant to the problem in the liturgical assemblies, whereas vv. 11–12 are designed to inhibit ‘certain negative conclusions concerning the place of women’ in other areas of the life of the Corinthian church and to bring Paul’s teaching here into line with the egalitarianism of 1 Corinthians 7 and Gal 3:28 (pp. 384–5).

[271] The fundamental objection to this exegesis is that, when understood in this way, vv. 7–12 have no relevance to the problem confronting Paul, who is constrained to argue that the difference between the sexes must be manifested in the way men and women dress their hair. Nonetheless, Delobel has made an extremely important contribution in suggesting that vv. 11–12 were intended to be a corrective to vv. 7–10, which I shall exploit in what follows.

Both *hyparchôn* (‘being’, v. 7) and *dia touto* (‘therefore’, v. 10) indicate that in vv. 7–10 we have to do with a premise and conclusions. The premise is the factual state described in Gen 2:18–23, and the meaning that Paul saw in it must be derived from the conclusions he draws. The first conclusion, ‘a man should not “cover” his head’ (v. 7a) has been dealt with above; his hair-do should not be feminine. The second conclusion (v. 10) is notoriously difficult, but on this point Delobel has made a significant breakthrough by asking, ‘Should one not pay more attention to the expression as a whole: *exousian echein epi* with genitive, which normally means “have authority over”, “exercise control over”?’ (p. 387). Unfortunately, he persists in interpreting this as wearing a veil on the basis of his exegesis of v. 5, against which I have argued above. It fits equally well, if not better, with my interpretation of v. 5 in the light of v. 15. A woman who did not do her hair properly was failing to control it. Hence, it is perfectly in place for Paul to insist that ‘a woman should exercise control over her head because of the angels’ (v. 10).¹⁶

Delobel contributes nothing new on the difficult last phrase, ‘because of the angels’. On this point, however, A. Padgett makes a significant contribution by reviving J. Lightfoot’s hypothesis¹⁷ that the reference here is to human messengers.¹⁸ This is well-attested in the NT (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24; 9:52; Jas 2:25) and in Josephus,¹⁹ and it suits the context here.²⁰ In line with [272] 1 Cor

¹⁶ This translation of v. 10 is also supported by A. Padgett, ‘Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16’ *JST* 20 (1984) 71–2. He interprets it, however, as Paul’s authorization of women to wear any hairstyle they wish. In my view, this possible meaning is excluded by the context.

¹⁷ J. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* (4 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859), 4.238.

¹⁸ Padgett, ‘Paul on Women’, 81.

¹⁹ *Life* 17 (87); cf. *Ant.* 14.451.

²⁰ One cannot exclude this hypothesis, as J. A. Fitzmyer attempts to do, by simply stating that *aggelos* ‘is never used thus by Paul’ (‘A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor 11:10’, in *Paul and Qumran* (ed. J. Murphy-O’Connor; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 38). Meaning is determined by context and, if the assumption that the reference is to heavenly beings has yielded no satisfactory interpretation (and in this I include my own suggestion in ‘Sex and Logic’,

10:32 and 14:23, Paul would be concerned that practices at Corinth should not shock envoys from other churches. That a new twist should suddenly appear in an argument should surprise no one who knows Paul's style, and here it can be seen as an anticipation of v. 16. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the problems that Paul is dealing with in 1 Corinthians 11 were not raised in the Corinthian letter (1 Cor 7:1), but were reported to him by Chloe's people, who were scandalized by what they saw going on in the Corinthian liturgical assemblies.

If the conclusion in v. 7a and v. 10 manifests Paul's opinion that men and women should have different hair-dos, all that can be inferred concerning his understanding of the premise based on Gen 2:18–23 is that it presents men and woman as *different*.²¹ Only in this perspective does it become possible to explain why he presents the woman as 'the glory of man' (v. 7c), and man *alone*, against all Jewish tradition, as 'the image and glory of God' (v. 7b).

Jews, of course, had used the same passage of Genesis to demonstrate the inferiority and subordination of women,²² and so Paul had to ensure that no one at Corinth could draw more from his premise than he intended. The reality of the danger, highlighted by many ancient and modern interpretations, is well exemplified in Delobel's treatment of vv. 7–10. It is to avoid such misunderstanding that Paul inserts the parenthetical qualification (vv. 11–12) introduced by *plên* ('nevertheless').

At first sight, Delobel's 'literal' translation of v. 11, 'there is no woman without man and no man without woman in the Lord' (p. 382), would appear to support his contention that vv. 11–12 are concerned exclusively with procreation (p. 382). It is not surprising that 'in the Lord' should then prove an embarrassing problem for Delobel, because all human beings, and not just Christians, are subject to the normal laws of biology. The best he can do is to say that Paul is here speaking of the order of creation from a Christian perspective, which is a non-answer based on a false interpretation of 1 Cor 8:6.²³ The decisive objection, however, is that Delobel interprets *he gynê ek tou andros* ('the woman from the man', v. 12) as meaning that male seed is necessary for the procreation of a female (p. 382). It has been obvious to all commentators that the phrase must be given the same meaning as in vv. 3 and 8; it is again a reference to Gen 2:21–2. It is repeated here only to [273] be contradicted by *ho anêr dia tês gynaikos* ('the man [comes into being] through the agency of the woman', v. 12). The use of

496–7), then the only possible alternative meaning has a strong claim. Moreover, in the one instance of Paul's use of *aggelos* where the meaning might be ambiguous, he introduces a qualification 'if a messenger *from heaven* should evangelize you' (Gal 1:8). At the very least this indicates that Paul was fully aware that *aggelos* could mean a human messenger.

²¹ Here I correct what I said in 'Sex and Logic', 496. Verses 7b–9 are not in themselves an argument, but the premise from which conclusions are drawn.

²² Murphy-O'Connor, 'Sex and Logic', 496–7.

²³ See my '1 Cor 8:8—Cosmology or Soteriology?' *RB* 85 (1978) 253–67 = Chapter 6.

the articles heightens the force of the argument, which lies in the concluding words *ta de panta ek tou theou* ('all things [are] from God', v. 12). The same God who created woman from the side of man is also responsible for the fact that man comes from a woman's womb. The traditional Jewish argument, based on the chronological priority of man in the creation narrative, is countered by the simple fact that the chronological priority of woman in the birth of a male is just as much part of God's plan for the order of his creation.

This elementary *ad hominem* argument is used to sustain (*gar*, 'for') the principle enunciated in v. 11. The phrase 'in the Lord', which Delobel correctly interprets as a reference to Christ (p. 383), receives the full value that its emphatic position at the end of the sentence demands, only if it is understood as implying a contrast between Christians and others.²⁴ It is a question of something that, for Paul, was true only within the church. This excludes not only Delobel's translation but also others that imply mere complementarity (e.g. RSV, NAB). In this perspective, only J. Kürzinger's rendering of *chôris* yields an acceptable meaning: 'As Christians, woman is not otherwise than man, and man is not otherwise than woman' (v. 11).²⁵ Only in the church are men and women completely equal, a view that is entirely consistent with Gal 3:28, which also contains an allusion to Genesis.²⁶ The function of the causal particle (*gar*) introducing v. 12 is to be explained not in the order of efficient causality but in the order of knowledge. Priority in childbirth does not *make* woman the equal of man. Rather, it is only Christians who *perceive* childbirth as manifesting the divine intention regarding the equality of the man–woman relationship.²⁷ Verses 11–12, in other words, make explicit the Christian modification of the traditional interpretation of Genesis 2, which is hinted at in the structure of v. 3.

While this article has often been critical of Delobel's treatment of 1 Cor 11:2–16, it should be obvious that without the dialogue that he initiated [274] it would not have been possible for me to improve my understanding of the coherent logic of this passage. My exegesis, I hope, has been given a more solid foundation; the line of Paul's thought has certainly been made simpler and clearer, as the following outline shows:

²⁴ R. Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 1.329) has correctly pointed out that 'in the Lord' in contexts such as this merely fills 'the place of an adjective or adverb which the linguistic process had not yet developed: "Christian" or "as a Christian," or "in a Christian manner."'

²⁵ 'Frau und Mann nach 1 Kor 11:11f.' *BZ* 22 (1978) 270–5.

²⁶ The shift in the formulation of the last member of Gal 3:28 *ouk eni arsen kai thêly* ('there cannot be male *and* female') is intended to evoke Gen 1:27 in the LXX.

²⁷ The rabbinical text often cited as a parallel to v. 11, 'neither man without woman, nor woman without man' (*Gen. Rab.* 8.9; 22.2), confirms the originality of Paul's interpretation. Both R. Akiba (d. 135) and R. Simlai (c.250) invoke the fact that two persons are necessary for creation in order to justify the plurals 'in our image, after our likeness' (Gen 1:26); see Str-B 3.440. Paul is the first to point out the theological significance of the fact that man is born of woman.

- v. 3 Programmatic statement
- vv. 4–6 Description and condemnation of Corinthian practices
- vv. 7–10 First argument against the Corinthians based on the difference between man and woman in Gen 2:21–2
- vv. 11–12 Parenthesis excluding a misinterpretation of Gen 2:21–2
- vv. 13–15 Second argument against the Corinthians based on natural law
- v. 16 Third argument against the Corinthians based on the practice of other churches

Given the current climate, the ramifications of this debate about exegetical details go beyond the point at issue. Delobel's interpretation of Paul will certainly give aid and support to those opposed to the ordination of women, which is the touchstone of full equality in the church. Hence, it is perhaps necessary to stress that, as I understand 1 Cor 11:2–16, it cannot be used as an argument to maintain the ecclesiastical subordination of women; that would be an abuse of the literal sense.

POSTSCRIPT

I defined 11:3 as a programmatic opening in which *kephalê* meant 'source', and in which a statement about the first creation (v. 3b) was bracketed by two Christological statements evoking the new creation.²⁸ The implication, I suggested, was that a position hitherto based on the first creation, namely the subordination of women, would have to be modified in the light of the new creation, and found evidence of that change in 11:11–12, which asserted the full equality of woman.

The Programmatic Statement (v. 3)

Subsequent lexicographical studies showed that my categorical statement that *kephalê* at the time of Paul could only mean 'source' was inaccurate. I was corrected by J. A. Fitzmyer, who drew attention to a series of texts in which *kephalê* is attested in the sense of 'ruler, leader, person in authority' in precisely the linguistic sphere with which Paul must have been familiar, namely, the language of the LXX, Philo, and Josephus.²⁹ Thus, interpreters of 11:3 had to make a choice between 'source' and 'ruler'. This was disputed by A. C. Perriman, who argued that in reality neither of these meanings was as well established lexicologically as Fitzmyer and others claimed. 'I would suggest, therefore, that the common metaphorical application of *kephalê* embraces a coherent range of meanings that can be mapped as follows, and that it is within this compass that we should

²⁸ Lang calls v. 3 the 'theologische Grundsatz' (*Briefe an die Korinther*, 138).

²⁹ 'Another Look at *Kephalê* in 1 Corinthians 11:3' *NTS* 35 (1989) 503–11, and '*Kephalê* in 1 Corinthians 11:3' *Interpretation* 47 (1993) 52–9.

expect to find the proper background to Paul's use of the word: i) the physical top or extremity of an object, such as a mountain or a river; ii) more abstractly, that which is first, extreme (temporarily or spatially); iii) that which is prominent or outstanding; and iv) that which is determinative or representative by virtue of its prominence'.³⁰

Thus having disposed of 'source' and 'ruler' to his satisfaction, Perriman claims that what is at issue in 11:3–16 is 'whether the woman's behaviour in worship brings glory or dishonour on the man. The point seems to be, therefore, that the behaviour of the woman reflects upon the man who as her head is representative of her, the prominent partner in the relationship.'³¹ This makes sense only on the assumption that Perriman believes that Paul is talking about husband and wife.³² Why should the behaviour of just any woman reflect on just any man? There can be no doubt, however, that Schrage is correct in insisting that 11:3–16 does not deal with a marriage problem but with a community problem.³³ It is a question of man and woman as such, as the majority of commentators have recognized.

Perriman's thesis has been adopted most wholeheartedly by Thiselton, who thus translates v. 3, 'Christ is preeminent for man, man is foremost in relation to woman, and God is preeminent in relation to Christ.'³⁴ In offering a translation Thiselton makes explicit what Perriman left implicit, but he hews close to Perriman in prudently abstaining from offering any explanation as to what this rendering could possibly mean. And this is precisely what condemns Perriman's thesis. It just makes v. 3 even more obscure, and contributes nothing to a better understanding of the general argument in 11:3–16.

It is appropriate, therefore, to examine Perriman's criticism of the meaning 'source' in certain texts. When one looks at it closely, it becomes clear that his technique is to create a sense of uncertainty by developing a verbal smokescreen. Apropos of Herodotus, *History* 4.91, he claims that *kephalai* 'denotes only the highest or furthest point of the river, the "head waters"', and wanders on to talk of secondary connotations that are contextually bound.³⁵ Later he claims that 'It is surely significant, as a general point, that no instances have been brought forward in which *kephalê* has displaced or has been displaced by *pêgê*, the more obvious word for "source".'³⁶ I venture to suggest that this did not happen because the meaning 'source' was firmly attached to *kephalê*. This is perfectly

³⁰ 'The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of *Kephalê* in 1 Cor 11:3' *JTS* 45 (1994) 618.

³¹ 'The Head of a Woman', 621. This is quoted by Garland as expressing his opinion (*1 Corinthians*, 516).

³² Perriman obviously has been influenced by 'a woman dishonours her head' (v. 5a), which he understands as implying that the 'woman' and the 'head' are different. This is not the case; see on this verse below.

³³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.501 n. 69. Also Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 235. Against Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 90–1.

³⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 800.

³⁵ 'The Head of a Woman', 613.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 617 n. 40.

clear in Herodotus where *kephalai* is an unambiguous reference to *pégai* ‘springs’ in the previous line (4.90). They are used as synonyms.

Perriman is no more satisfactory in his disparagement of texts drawn from Philo. The first is *De congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratis* 61, where *kephalê* stands in apposition to *genarchês* ‘progenitor’. Without further development (which I find impossible to conceive) it is gratuitous to say that ‘through the apposition, “head” is predicated of “progenitor” and therefore should be understood as saying something that is not already inherent in the term’.³⁷ The second is *De praemiis et poenis* 125, which is so obvious that Perriman is reduced to saying, ‘the most that can be said is that the “head” is the source of its vitality, but then even this is to be understood in a motivational sense with the emphasis on the active influence of the “head”’.³⁸ A ‘source’ is a source, no matter how or what it produces!

How desperate Perriman is not to find the meaning ‘source’ anywhere is graphically illustrated by his treatment of *Orphic Fragment* 21a, where he claims that *kephalê* ‘is probably better understood to mean “beginning” or “creator” than “source”’.³⁹ If Zeus is the creator, then he is certainly the ‘source’ of the being of all things. Perriman further comments, ‘the one who is the cause of everything is the beginning of everything, but “beginning” does not mean “cause”’.⁴⁰ This is just playing with words. A ‘cause’ that is a ‘beginning’ is a ‘source’ from which something comes.

Perriman also comments on the Greek translations of two Jewish pseudepigraphs in which *kephalê* appears in the sense of the ‘source’ of subsequent sins, namely, *Life of Adam and Eve* 19.3 and *Testament of Reuben* 2.2. Of the first he says, ‘The context makes nothing of the idea that every sin *derives from* desire. Only the temporal aspect is required: desire is the poison sprinkled on the fruit from which Eve ate, as is thus the beginning of every sin.’⁴¹ Why would Satan so sprinkle the fruit unless he intended it to produce consequences? The context is irrelevant, unless it contradicts the obvious meaning that desire is the ‘source’ from which all other sins flow. The same idea appears in Rom 7:7, where for Paul the original commandment was ‘You shall not covet’, and disobedience to that precept spawned all other sins. Perriman’s treatment of the second is no more convincing. Any unbiased reader would understand ‘the seven spirits of deceit’ as the cause, i.e. ‘source’ of the sins of youth.

Rather pretentiously Perriman concludes that, no matter what an independent-minded scholar might think, ‘it would be a mistake to assign “source” to *kephalê* as a standard and transferable metaphorical sense’.⁴² In other words, he seems to be saying that *kephalê* does not carry the connotation of ‘source’ unless it is suggested by the context. That is a truism. Inevitably ‘head’

³⁷ Ibid., 612.

³⁸ Ibid., 612.

³⁹ Ibid., 614–15.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 615.

⁴¹ Ibid., 616.

⁴² Ibid., 616.

will be understood literally, unless there is reason to think that a metaphorical meaning is intended.

That has always been my point. In 11:3 the meaning 'source' is suggested by the context.⁴³ At this point it is perhaps apposite to underline my methodological principle. 11:3–16 is a literary unity in which Paul deals with a unique problem from a number of different aspects.⁴⁴ Therefore, elements from one part of the text can be drawn upon to clarify another.⁴⁵ The alternative is to interpret each element as if it stood alone, without any context. In my view, this fundamental methodological error is the cause of the bewildering number of diverse interpretations.

Thus I have no doubt that 'man is the source of woman' (v. 3b) is explained by 'woman [came] from man' (v. 8b), which all have recognized is an allusion to the creation account in Gen 2:22–3.⁴⁶ Thus it is *apriori* more probable that *kephalê* has the meaning 'source' in the other two parts of v. 3. In other words, this meaning must be assumed, unless there are strong reasons to prefer any other meaning of *kephalê*. Several authors have picked up on my observation that the reference to man and woman in v. 3b is deliberately bracketed by two Christological statements, but hesitate to make the obvious inference.⁴⁷ The situation is only made more confused by Wolff's assertion that if vv. 7–9 are used to interpret v. 3b, then 'Christ is the head of every man' (v. 3a) should be understood as referring to the pre-existent Christ, who is presented as the instrument of the first creation in 1 Cor 8:6.⁴⁸ In that verse, however, the first creation is evoked only to illustrate the magnitude of the salvific power that has brought about a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).⁴⁹ Paul like Deutero-Isaiah makes only a notional distinction between creation and redemption. It is not only the same power, but the same creative redemptive act. This obliges us to stress the soteriological dimension of 'Christ is the head of every man'.⁵⁰

The concluding part of v. 3, 'God is the head of Christ', has given rise to much curious speculation because the majority of exegetes continue to approach it with the assumption that Paul believed in the divinity of Christ. Inevitably they are forced to try to explain away the subordination that is clearly implied

⁴³ This is recognized by Hays, who nonetheless mistakenly finds 'a hierarchical chain of being in verse 3' because 'in view of the whole shape of the argument, the patriarchal implications of verse 3 are undeniable' (*1 Corinthians*, 184).

⁴⁴ I have justified this approach in Chapter 9.

⁴⁵ According to Kramer, this principle is refused by the majority of exegetes (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 227). What follows will show that this is not in fact the case.

⁴⁶ So rightly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 504; Lang, *Briefe an die Korinther*, 139.

⁴⁷ For example, Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.503; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 513; Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 249.

⁴⁸ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 248. Similarly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.501.

⁴⁹ See my treatment in the Postscript in ch. 6 above.

⁵⁰ So rightly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 504. For Lang the new creation fulfils the old creation (*Briefe an die Korinther*, 139).

in the relationship.⁵¹ I have argued in the Postscript in Chapter 6 above that Paul never thought of Christ in such terms. He was simply the New Adam. Verse 3c makes perfect sense when understood soteriologically, exactly as v. 3a.⁵² The saving mission of Christ was initiated by the Father and is sustained by his grace.

The Problem at Corinth (vv. 4–6)

In vv. 4–6 Paul both lays out the issues and unambiguously indicates his judgement on the options taken by both men and women. It has been traditional to assume that the sole focus of his criticism is the behaviour of women, and that the references to men are purely hypothetical. Fee is an admirable spokesman for this point of view, ‘Paul begins his argument with the men. Although they may also have been involved in “dress” that was breaking down the distinctions between the sexes, that seems unlikely since the argument in each case, and especially in this one, is directed towards the women (vv. 5–6). Rather, Paul seems to be setting up his argument with the women by means of a *hypothetical situation for the man* that would be equally shameful to his relationship to his “head” as what the women are doing to theirs’.⁵³

This is probably still the opinion of the majority of commentators,⁵⁴ but convincing voices have been raised against this presupposition, of whom the most important is Thiselton, who does me the honour of singling me out as the *chef de fil*.⁵⁵ It only takes an unbiased reading of 11:3–16 to realize that the critical language which Paul uses of women is identical with that which he uses of men. He gives not the slightest hint that one is real and the other unreal.

My article ensured that the phrase *kata kephalês echôn* (v. 4b) finally got the attention it deserved. In order to draw attention to the spurious clarity of the standard translation a number of commentators insist on the literal translation ‘having down the head’ before discussing its possible meanings.⁵⁶

The pure grammarians differ. In my article ‘Sex and Logic’ I quoted Abel, which I translate here, ‘[kata] with the genitive, origin, departure point to which the preposition adds the direction of top to bottom, opposed to *aná*’.⁵⁷ I contrasted such clarity with the ambiguity of BDF, which proposes for *kata kephalês echôn* ‘hanging down from the head, on the head (contrast *akatakalyptô*

⁵¹ Schrage simply says blandly that ‘subordination’ is not interchangeable with ‘inferior’ (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.504). Garland’s reason for rejecting ‘source’ as the meaning here of *kephalê* is that it opens the door to a subordinationist Christology (*1 Corinthians*, 516).

⁵² So rightly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 505; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 406.

⁵³ *1 Corinthians*, 505, my emphasis.

⁵⁴ So explicitly Lang, *Briefe an die Korinther*, 139; Harrisville, *1 Corinthians*, 182; Strobel, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 165; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 517.

⁵⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 800, cf. 825, where he strongly articulates his support for this position.

⁵⁶ e.g. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 505; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 517.

⁵⁷ *Grammaire du grec biblique suivie d’un choix de papyrus* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 221.

tê kephalê [v. 5])' (§225). This is an extraordinary departure from the usual precision of BDF. The two phrases do not mean at all the same thing. Moreover, one must suppose that 'on the head' was inspired, not by strict grammar, but by the assumption that the woman's head was 'uncovered'. This is to prejudge the issue, and an argument drawn from BDF cannot be accorded the weight that Thiselton, for example, gives it, 'We are forced to conclude that although Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's case is strong we cannot regard it as conclusive, while *lexicography* and the Roman background cited by Oster, among others, suggests that "with his head covered" remains in the end more probable, but not decisively so.'⁵⁸

No such hesitation can be detected in Schrage's robust assertion, 'Dass Paulus hier das Tragen einer Toga oder eines jüdischen Tallit zurückweisen wolle, ist andere als sicher oder auch nur wahrscheinlich. Es heisst eben nicht *kata tês kephalês echôn to himation* wie bei Scipio, der unerkannt durch Alexandrien gehen will. Was vom Kopf herabhängt, ist sachlich viel eher von V 14 her durch *tên komên* als durch das nirgens erwähnte *kalymma* oder *himation* zu ergänzen. Was nicht herabhängen soll, ist langes Haar, weil langes Haar unschicklich ist.'⁵⁹

Thiselton's explicit reference to Oster is implicit in Schrage's formulation. Oster has brought forward archaeological and literary evidence to show that Roman men prayed and sacrificed *capite velato* 'with the head covered'.⁶⁰ Why would Paul be upset by a believer praying and prophesying *capite velato*? Oster answers, 'in his judgement the semantic significance of men covering their heads during worship was antithetical to the male "headship" affirmed in 11.3'.⁶¹ This, of course, is nonsense. If any Roman thought for a minute that wearing a veil to worship diminished in the slightest his authority over his wife and family, he would have abandoned the veil without scruple. Garland sharpens the point of the data provided by Oster in two respects, 'pulling the toga over the physical head in Christian worship would shame the spiritual head of the man, Christ'.⁶² This argument might possibly carry some weight (a) if there was a reference to Christ (see below), and (b) if Romans covered their heads *exclusively* when engaged in religious activity. Then the head covering might carry a specific connotation. Common sense, however, indicates that Romans covered their heads in all sorts of circumstances, e.g. to protect it from the rain or the sun, to pass undetected, to keep a draught from the back of one's neck, to pretend to hide from young children; the possibilities are endless. Thus, there is no reason to think that the head covering of a Corinthian male believer would automatically

⁵⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 825, my italics.

⁵⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.505–6. So also Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 78b; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 406.

⁶⁰ 'When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11:4' *NTS* 34 (1988) 481–505. See also D. Gill, 'The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16' *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990) 245–60.

⁶¹ 'When Men Wore Veils to Worship', 504.

⁶² *1 Corinthians*, 517.

and necessarily have produced the reaction, ‘It is disgraceful. He must think that he is participating in a pagan religious ceremony!’

The most damning criticism of the approach to 11:4 adopted by Oster, Thiselton, and Garland is that it does not satisfy either the demands of grammar (as we have seen above)⁶³ or the context. Given the literary unity of 11:3–16, the emphasis on the length of hair in vv. 14–15 must be read back into vv. 4–6.⁶⁴ There what is said of the woman is the antithesis of what is said of the man. The rhetorical quality of the balance is not in doubt, and must be respected in any interpretation. But unless Paul is thinking of long hair on the man, there is no reason why he should evoke the idea of the woman being shorn or shaven (vv. 5–6).⁶⁵ The link between the two elements becomes perfectly clear when the first-century connotations of long hair on men and short hair on women is kept in mind. As I showed in my two articles, they signalled what Paul considered deviant sexuality.⁶⁶ Thus the man appeared ‘womanish’, and so Paul tells the woman that if she will not be feminine in her hair-do, she may as well go all the way and appear ‘mannish’.

In vv. 4–6 we are told that long hair on a man ‘dishonours his head’ and that untended hair on a woman ‘dishonours her head’. According to vv. 14–15, long hair on a man is ‘a dishonour to him’, whereas long hair on a woman is ‘a glory to her’. Clearly ‘head’ and the personal pronouns are synonyms, and this is entirely justified by usage. *Kephalê* is frequently attested as meaning ‘the whole person’.⁶⁷ There is no reference to Christ here.⁶⁸ By deviating from established custom men and women disgrace themselves.⁶⁹

⁶³ Schrage convincingly demolishes the linguistic evidence brought forward by Oster (among others) to justify the translation ‘on the head’ (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.505 n. 102).

⁶⁴ It is disingenuous of Witherington to claim that ‘Paul’s discussion of hair (vv. 14f.) is brought in towards the end as a supporting argument, as one example of a kind of head covering’ (*Conflict and Community*, 232).

⁶⁵ Fee’s problem regarding the relationship of v. 4 and v. 6, if the former refers to head covering, is highly relevant to a correct understanding of Paul’s argument (*1 Corinthians*, 509).

⁶⁶ This point is disputed by Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.506 n. 105, but the only evidence he quotes is Judg 13:5 (Samson) and 2 Sam 14:26 (Absalom). These, however, are irrelevant because of their date. Equally in fifth-century BC Greece long hair on a man carried no connotation of homosexuality (see Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.522 n. 212). The evidence I quote pertains to attitudes in the first century AD. Juvenal uses long hair on a man to evoke remote antiquity, ‘The wine that Virro, your host, is drinking has lain in its bottle since the consuls wore long hair’ (*Satires* 5.30).

⁶⁷ So already in H. Schlier, TDNT 3.674, and now J. A. Fitzmyer, ‘*Kephalê* in 1 Corinthians 11:3’ *Interpretation* 47 (1993) 53, but his reference to Plutarch, *Moralia* 629D–E is incorrect.

⁶⁸ So rightly Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 407, and Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 185, against Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 506 n. 56, see 508 n. 68; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 517. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 827, attempts to have the best of both worlds.

⁶⁹ All modern commentators recognize that ‘nature teaches’ (v. 14) does not refer to natural law in any technical sense but to what Paul’s generation accepted as conventional. A man’s hair will grow as long as a woman’s if left uncut. Fee’s comment is very much to the point, ‘After all, what “nature teaches” comes about by “unnatural” means—a haircut’ (*1 Corinthians*, 527 n. 15). Such common sense also puts paid to T. W. Martin’s bizarre interpretation, ‘A man with long hair retains much or all of his semen, and his long hollow hair draws the semen toward his head area but away

The only problematic element in vv. 4–6 is not the way Paul speaks about long hair on men,⁷⁰ but why he uses *akatakalyptos* to mean ‘loose’ or ‘undone’ hair on the woman.⁷¹ Collins is one of the few to have picked up my explanation, ‘His choice of language may reflect the idiom of the LXX where similar wording (*hê kephalê autou akatalyptos*, Lev 13:45; cf. Num 5:18) is used to render a Hebrew expression (*wero’so yihyeh parua’*) describing someone with disheveled hair.’⁷² Fee is prepared to admit that ‘it seems altogether possible that “loosed hair” is the “uncovering” that causes shame’, but does not accept it because v. 6 ‘does not easily lend itself to the connotation of putting her hair up’.⁷³ In context, however, *katakalyptetai* is intended to be the antithesis of *akatakalyptos*, and so derives its contextual meaning from it.

It cannot be excluded that by opting for a certain obscurity in the way he spoke of men and women in vv. 4–6 Paul was deliberately tantalizing the Corinthians, who flattered themselves on their sophistication.⁷⁴ Before leaving the topic he would make his sentiments perfectly clear (vv. 14–15). An intention to mystify is the only explanation for his choice of *kephalê* in v. 3, which can mean ‘ruler’ or ‘source’. Possible confusion is compounded by the addition of a third meaning ‘the self, the person’ in the next verse. Paul is vaunting his intelligence to a community that tended to underestimate his ability on the basis of his chosen pastoral strategy (1 Cor 2:1–5).⁷⁵

To sum up: I have seen no reason to change my opinion that the problem with which Paul is dealing in 11:3–16 concerns the blurring of the distinction between the sexes, and it has won authoritative support. In opposition to the

from his genital area, where it should be ejected. Therefore 1 Cor 11:14 correctly states that it is a shame for a man to have long hair since the male nature (*physis*) is to eject rather than retain semen’ (‘Paul’s Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13–15: A Testicle instead of a Head Covering’ *JBL* 123 (2004) 78). For this physiological approach to 11:3–16 see further below.

⁷⁰ Against Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 506. The point is that Paul’s language can carry that meaning, and that it is recommended by the context.

⁷¹ This is the meaning accepted by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 227; Collins, ‘unkempt hair’ (*1 Corinthians*, 407), and by Schrage, ‘Gleichwohl wird *akatakalyptos* hier als Oppositum von V 4, wenn die obige Interpretation zutrifft, eher die *komê* im aufgebundenen Zustand sein’ (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.507).

⁷² *1 Corinthians*, 409.

⁷³ *1 Corinthians*, 509–10.

⁷⁴ For the rhetorical technique of making an audience think hard before giving them the answer, I think of Cicero, ‘From this class of expression comes a development not consisting in the metaphorical use of a single word but in a chain of words linked together, so that something other than what is said has to be understood. . . . This is a valuable stylistic ornament; but care must be taken to avoid obscurity—and in fact it is usually the way in which what are called riddles (*aenigmata*) are constructed; but this mode does not turn on a single word but consists in the general style, that is, a series of words’ (*De Oratore* 3.41.165–6; trans. H. Rackham; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For Cicero’s pleasure in working out a riddle see the end of *Atticus* 7.13 and the beginning of 7.13a.

⁷⁵ Collins is entirely correct in writing that ‘Paul seems to have deliberately used words that are polyvalent, notably “head” (*kephalê*), “authority” (*exousia*), and “glory” (*doxa*)’ (*1 Corinthians*, 396).

headings rightly criticized by Thiselton,⁷⁶ we now have, ‘Let Men Be Men and Women Be Women’,⁷⁷ ‘Das Problem der richtigen Haartracht’,⁷⁸ and ‘Different though Equal in the Lord’.⁷⁹ For Schrage, ‘Die Andersheit von Mann und Frau steht im Vordergrund, nicht die Subordination der Frau oder die Autorität des Mannes.’⁸⁰

First Argument against the Corinthians (vv. 7–10)

The renderings of 11:7 are determined by the conclusions reached by commentators in their analysis of 11:3–6. Thus, in keeping with my view that what Paul criticizes on the part of the man is his long hair, I translate, ‘A man should not adopt a feminine hair-do.’

All interpreters continue to stress the difficulty of v. 10, *dia touto opheilei hē gynē exousian echei epi tēs kephalēs dia tous angelous*. Nonetheless one can talk of a certain consensus. Schrage is certainly correct in writing, ‘Die meisten fassen *exousia* metonymisch als Machtzeichen bzw. Symbol der Herrschaft des Mannes und der Unterordnung der Frau, was dann konkret auf einen Schleier oder eine Kopfbedeckung gedeutet wird.’⁸¹ He immediately goes on to disagree with the underlying assumption on which this majority view depends, namely, that *exousia* here should be understood in a passive sense. He is not without support. Fee⁸² and Garland⁸³ both approvingly quote W. M. Ramsay’s mordant remark, ‘[That her authority] is the authority to which she is subject [is] a preposterous idea which a Greek scholar would laugh at anywhere except in the New Testament, where (as they seem to think) Greek words may mean anything that commentators choose.’⁸⁴ I quote this again because it is a perfect illustration of the extent to which interpreters have imposed alien meanings on 11:3–16 because of prior convictions regarding the man–woman relationship.

When approached without prejudice there is no doubt that grammatically *exousian echei epi tēs kephalēs* can only mean that the authority in question is exercised by the woman and that the sphere of its exercise concerns her head.⁸⁵

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians, 825. ⁷⁷ Collins, 1 Corinthians, 393, cf. 399.

⁷⁸ Klauck, 1 Korintherbrief, 77. ⁷⁹ Talbert, Reading Corinthians, 66.

⁸⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.525. This does not altogether square with the title he gives this section, ‘Über die rechte Haartracht für Frauen im Gottesdienst’ (2.487). For Paul men are equally at fault. So correctly B. G. Hort, ‘Gender Hierarchy or Religious Androgyny? Male–Female Interaction in the Corinthian Community: A Reading of 1 Cor 11:2–16’ *Studia Theologica* 55 (2001) 58–80.

⁸¹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.513–14. ⁸² 1 Corinthians, 519 n. 24.

⁸³ 1 Corinthians, 524.

⁸⁴ *The Cities of Saint Paul: Their Influence on His Life and Thought* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907; Reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960), 203.

⁸⁵ On the entirely mistaken assumption that 1 Cor 11:3–16 is concerned with husband–wife relationships, v. 10 is translated ‘Let the wife have authority over her husband’ by C. Keener, ‘“Let the Wife have Authority over her Husband” (1 Corinthians 11:10)’ *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 2 (2001–5) 146–52. As to what this might mean, he becomes even more

It is a question of a feminine prerogative, and no transferred sense of *exousia* is possible. With his usual acuity Thiselton carries the thought further by pointing out that ‘*epi* with the genitive . . . does not always have the force of power *over*; it often denotes control *of* something’.⁸⁶ This brings out an important nuance of ‘to have power over’; there is no contradiction.⁸⁷

Those who have accepted my view that the woman’s exercise of authority in v. 10 has to do with her hair interpret it in different ways. Wolff says, ‘Die Frau soll beim ekstatischen Beten und Prophezeien “Gewalt über ihren Kopf haben”, d. h. die Kopfbedeckung nicht herabfallen lassen.’⁸⁸ One has the impression that Wolff is thinking of frenzied gyrations which might bring down the woman’s hair-do. Such dancing was typical of orgiastic cult worship, but there is not the slightest evidence of such practices in the Christian liturgy at Corinth.⁸⁹ The need for control, which is stressed in 1 Cor 14:26–33, has to do with other matters. A variation is provided by Thiselton, ‘If a woman exercises the control that exemplifies respectability in Roman society, and retains the semiotic code of gender differentiation in public, “with the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect”’.⁹⁰ Headgear is certainly a possible mode of control, but the consequence attributed to it is completely theoretical and betrays a view of human nature so naive that I cannot accept it. Moreover, ‘head covering’ comes into the picture only because Thiselton had made that option in his treatment of vv. 4–6 and felt the need to be consistent.

Those who with me considered hair alone to be the problem in vv. 4–6 say of v. 10, ‘Die “Macht auf dem Haupte” dürfte nichts anderes sein als das geordnete Haar’ (Klauck);⁹¹ ‘She presumably exercises [proper] control over head when she wears her hair appropriately, that is, as is fitting in the context of worship’ (Collins);⁹² ‘Die *exousia* der korinthischen Frauen über den Kopf soll sich darin erweisen, dass sie die Haare in anständiger, dem *prepon* (V 13) gemässer Weise tragen’ (Schrage);⁹³ ‘the woman should take charge of her hair and keep it under control, that is, bound up rather than loose’ (Hays).⁹⁴ Not only is this solution the simplest, but it does full justice to the data.⁹⁵

A plethora of opinions concerning *dia tous angelous* continues to circulate. The exiguity of the evidence tends to attract the most elaborate hypotheses. The background to such speculation is uniformly what is said about angels in the

absurd. Either the wife has sexual authority over her husband or she has the power to protect her husband sexually!

⁸⁶ 1 Corinthians, 839 (his emphasis) with reference to BAGD 331–5, which must be an error for BAGD 286 (*epi* 1b á).

⁸⁷ See BDF §234. ⁸⁸ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 252.

⁸⁹ See in particular C. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (WUNT 2.75; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians, 839. So also Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 521; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 525.

⁹¹ *1 Korintherbrief*, 79b.

⁹² *1 Corinthians*, 411.

⁹³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.514.

⁹⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 187–8.

⁹⁵ Dunn still clings to the idea of authority as head-covering (*Theology of Paul*, 590).

Jewish intertestamental literature. One must wonder, however, how much of this information was available to the community at Corinth, which was composed for the most part of converts from paganism. I do not believe that they would have picked up any of the rich variety of resonances that commentators find attached to ‘angels’.⁹⁶ Thus, I opted for ‘human envoys’, thinking particularly of visitors from other churches such as Chloe’s people, who no doubt were the ones who reported to Paul on what they found scandalous in the Corinthian liturgies (1 Cor 1:11).

This hypothesis has been ‘widely rejected’.⁹⁷ While no one disputes that the term can have this meaning, it is objected that it is never found in Paul, even though he refers to ‘angels’ on a number of occasions.⁹⁸ This carries little weight, because no attention is paid to my observation that in one case where the meaning of ‘angel’ might be ambiguous, because ‘to evangelize’ is a human occupation, Paul feels constrained to introduce a qualification, ‘if an angel *from heaven* should preach a gospel’ (Gal 1:8). To this I would now add Gal 4:14, ‘[when] I preached the gospel to you . . . you received me as an angel *of God*, as Jesus Christ’. Had Paul merely said ‘angel’ he knew that it would have been understood as a human messenger. These two texts confirm the obvious; like all Greek speakers Paul was fully aware that *angelos* meant a human messenger. Hence that meaning cannot be a priori excluded in 11:10. One might even think that it is recommended by 11:16, where Paul appeals to the practice of other churches.

‘Human messengers’ cannot be cavalierly dismissed as ‘extremely unlikely’ by J. D. BeDuhn.⁹⁹ It was necessary, however, for him to sweep it aside to make way for his extremely novel interpretation. ‘Because of the angels’, he maintains, is linked to the argument in vv. 7–9 because ‘Paul is attributing the separate formation of woman from man to a creative act of angels, not of God. . . . [Therefore] she has an inferior ontological status that forces her to cover up’.¹⁰⁰ To make this even remotely plausible BeDuhn has to demonstrate that such was a common Jewish belief at the time of Paul. Of the four texts he cites,¹⁰¹ only two from Philo (*Op.* 72–5; *Conf.* 178–9) meet this criterion. In both cases Philo is trying to explain what for a monotheist was inexplicable, ‘Let *us* make man’ (Gen 1:26). In both instances the justification is the same. Since humanity can sin, ‘God attributed the creation of this being, man, to his lieutenants . . . those about him’ (*Conf.* 179). One might infer that the reference is to angels, but they are not mentioned in either text. This, however, is much

⁹⁶ So rightly Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 527.

⁹⁷ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 841 n. 235.

⁹⁸ So Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 521 n. 34; Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 253; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.515 n. 169.

⁹⁹ “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11’ *JBL* 118 (1999) 304 n. 40.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Because of the Angels’, 308.

¹⁰¹ ‘Because of the Angels’, 310 n. 61. The relegation of the crucial argument to a footnote betrays a certain lack of discrimination.

less important than the fact that what Philo says concerns *humanity as such*. He does not make the distinction between male and female that BeDuhn attempts to attribute to him, and neither do the later parallels.

Witherington is prepared to accept my translation as ‘possible in the abstract, but this understanding makes little sense of the *dia touto* that apparently connects v. 10 to what precedes’.¹⁰² His hesitation is entirely justified because here, as often in Paul, *dia touto* looks both backward and forward; ‘on account of the angels’ is an argument that supplements the one drawn from Gen 2 in vv. 7b–9.¹⁰³ For Schrage *dia touto* is exclusively forward looking.¹⁰⁴

Parenthesis Excluding a Misinterpretation of Gen 2:21–2 (vv. 11–12)

Thiselton offers the most elaborate translation of v. 11, ‘Nevertheless, as those in the Lord, although woman is nothing apart from man, man is nothing apart from woman.’¹⁰⁵ ‘Apart from’, of course, is one of the dictionary meanings of *chôris*,¹⁰⁶ as is ‘without’, which is the preference of other commentators.¹⁰⁷ In the instances given there, however, the connotation of ‘separation’ is easily detectable, e.g. *chôris emou* ‘separated from me’ (John 15:5).¹⁰⁸ If we insert this element into the translation, we get ‘woman is nothing when separated from man, and man is nothing when separated from woman’. The impression is given that one would not exist without the other. This is in fact the meaning detected by Garland, woman came into being through man in 11:8, whereas man comes into being through woman in v. 12.¹⁰⁹ What possible relevance does this reference to mere existence have to the context? I can only think that it suits the patriarchal bias that has always seen in this verse no more than mutuality and reciprocity. This permits commentators to maintain the hints of the subordination of women, which they have detected in previous verses. In essence: women are subordinate but nonetheless necessary.¹¹⁰

In order to get around this difficulty I opted for another well attested meaning of *chôris* ‘differently from, otherwise than’, which had been suggested for 11:11 by J. Kürzinger,¹¹¹ and which was subsequently taken up by E. Schüssler Fiorenza.¹¹² When this meaning is incorporated, v. 11 becomes a formal statement of the full equality of men and women. This possibility is mentioned by Fee only to be passed over in silence.¹¹³ According to Collins, ‘Using Gen 26:1 as a major argument, Josef Kürzinger has shown that the word [*chôris*] is

¹⁰² *Conflict and Community*, 236 n. 22. He goes on to claim that my interpretation has been criticized by J. Winandy, ‘Un curieux *casus pendens*: 1 Corinthiens 11.10 et son interprétation’ *NTS* 38 (1992) 621–9, notably 628. The opposite is in fact the case.

¹⁰³ So rightly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 518. ¹⁰⁴ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.513.

¹⁰⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 800. ¹⁰⁶ BAGD 890b. ¹⁰⁷ e.g. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 523.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Separately’ is in fact the first meaning given by LSJ 2016a. ¹⁰⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 529.

¹¹⁰ So explicitly Harrisville, *1 Corinthians*, 185.

¹¹¹ ‘Frau und Mann nach 1 Kor 1, 11f’ *BZ* 22 (1978) 270–5.

¹¹² *In Memory of Her*, 229.

¹¹³ *1 Corinthians*, 523 n. 42.

better translated “different from”.¹¹⁴ His formulation implies agreement, but it has no influence on his interpretation.¹¹⁴ Schrage comments, ‘Wäre *chôris* dagegen mit “nicht anders als” zu übersetzen, wäre Paul seiner gesamten Beweisführung zuwiderlaufend auf die Gleichheit von Mann und Frau aus, was zwar nicht völlig auszuschließen, aber doch angesichts des Argumentationsziels ihrer Andersartigkeit weniger wahrscheinlich ist.’¹¹⁵

Schrage’s problem is that he has failed to take on board fully the implications of my thesis that what Paul is fighting here is the blurring of the differentiation of the sexes precisely on the basis of their sexuality.¹¹⁶ In vv. 7–9 Paul invoked Gen 2 to demonstrate that the difference between male and female was intended by God. He was perfectly aware, however, that Jews went beyond this interpretation to assert a further qualitative difference, namely, the ontological inferiority of women.¹¹⁷ This, however, flatly contradicted Paul’s understanding of the full equality of women in the church (Gen 3:28), and it was to manifest his disagreement with this secondary meaning that he inserted vv. 11–12. The brevity of his retort is matched by its effectiveness, and both betray the quality of his rhetorical training. ‘If you Jews lay such weight on chronological priority in your interpretation of Gen 2, look at God’s creation where a woman is now prior to every man—and this is just as much God’s will.’¹¹⁸ There is absolutely no contradiction in his ‘On the one hand difference, on the other hand equality’ because the perspectives are not the same.¹¹⁹ In vv. 11–12, therefore, Paul makes explicit the correction at which he only hinted in v. 3.

Second Argument against the Corinthians (vv. 13–15)

Those who have not permitted these verses to influence their interpretation of vv. 4–6 have no explanation as to why Paul at this point deals with length of hair; long hair is wrong for a man and right for a woman. They cannot see how it relates to what they think he has been saying.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 412.

¹¹⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.518. Similarly Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 254 n. 67.

¹¹⁶ Remember that above he has accepted my view that v. 4 concerns long hair on the man, but refuses the hypothesis that it has anything to do with homosexuality (note 38).

¹¹⁷ To this effect I quoted Josephus, ‘The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man’ (*Against Apion* 2.201).

¹¹⁸ I do not understand how Klauck can say, ‘Implizit hängt die Höherbewertung der Frau allerdings mit ihrem Mutterstatus zusammen’ (*1 Korintherbrief*, 79b). Modern science strengthens Paul’s argument in so far as it shows that the mother contributes much more genetically to her children than Adam ever did to Eve; see W. J. Webb, ‘Balancing Paul’s Original-Creation and Pro-Creation Arguments: 1 Corinthians 11:11–12 in the Light of Modern Embryology’ *WJT* 66 (2004) 275–89.

¹¹⁹ Hays puts the matter precisely, ‘Paul supports a *functional* equality of men and women in the church . . . so long as they maintain the external markers of gender difference’ but diverges from Paul’s intention by adding ‘particularly with regard to head coverings’ (*1 Corinthians*, 189).

¹²⁰ So for example Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 525, 528–9.

On the contrary, those who have seen the close relationship between vv. 14–15 and vv. 4–6 have no problem. These verses make explicit what they have intuited in what has been said earlier.¹²¹ According to Klauck, ‘Gerade diese beiden Verse verstärken den Eindruck, dass die Sachfrage sich um zu langes Haar beim Mann und offen getragenes Haar bei der Frau dreht.’¹²² With unusual force Schrage writes, ‘Ob *anti* nun “als” heisst oder “anstatt, anstelle”, jedenfalls sind alle Auslegungen, nach denen es hier um ein anderes *peribolaion* für die Frauen im gottesdienst gehen soll, ins Reich der Phantasie zu verweisen. Irgendeine Andeutung darauf, dass das lange Haar zu einer *zusätzlichen* Kopfbedeckung führen soll, is nicht zu entdecken. Das lange Haar als solches *ist* ein *peribolaion*. Dass dieses lange Haar nicht aufgelöst getragen werden darf, ist darin mitgegeben.’¹²³

A dreadful warning of what can happen when the interpretation of 11:3–16 is made to turn on a single word is provided by T. W. Martin.¹²⁴ He argues that *peribolaion* (v. 15b) means testicle, whose place in a woman is taken by her hair, which obviously then should be covered because it is part of the female genitalia. Martin quotes only two texts to support his interpretation of *peribolaion*, namely, Euripides, *Hercules Furens*, 1269, and Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.15.2. Neither is unambiguous, and they are separated by seven hundred years. Not only does Martin not provide evidence for a well-known first-century AD meaning, but ‘testicle’ is not documented in LSJ. As regards the physiological relationship of hair to the sex act, Martin draws on texts ranging from the fifth century BC to the second century AD, thereby creating an entirely artificial synthesis that never existed in the mind of any single ancient. Moreover, he furnishes no reason to think that anyone at Corinth thought that way.

While adopting my general thesis, Schrage agrees with Fee that *peribolaion* cannot evoke a particular type of hair-do, namely, the style in which long plaited hair is wrapped around the head.¹²⁵ It may not have been the technical term in use among women of the period, which would explain why it is not attested elsewhere,¹²⁶ but it certainly is an accurate description of the hair-do on a great number of Roman statues. And Paul could very well have seen it because it was not covered up. D. Gill has drawn attention to the fact that ‘Public marble portraits of women at Corinth . . . are most frequently shown bare-headed. This would suggest that it was socially acceptable in a Roman colony for women to

¹²¹ So Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 413–14. ¹²² *1 Korintherbrief*, 80a.

¹²³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.522–3 (his emphasis).

¹²⁴ ‘Paul’s Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13–15: A Testicle instead of a Head Covering’ *JBL* 123 (2004) 75–84.

¹²⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.523 n. 219. Collins remains on the fence (*1 Corinthians*, 414).

¹²⁶ It does not disturb me to find that Paul was unacquainted with the technicalities of feminine hairdressing.

be seen bare-headed in public.’¹²⁷ This is confirmed by C. L. Thomson, who in addition provides illustrations.¹²⁸ Unfortunately neither pursues this important point, being focused on portraits of women whose heads are covered because of their uncritical acceptance of the consensus that 1 Cor 11:3–16 is concerned with the veiling of women.

¹²⁷ ‘The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16’ *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990) 251, with reference to F. P. Johnson, *Sculpture 1896–1923* (Corinth 9; Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies at Athens/Harvard University Press, 1931), 86–7, nos. 160–3.

¹²⁸ ‘Hairstyles, Head-Coverings and Saint Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth’ *BA* 51/2 (1989) 110 and 112.

12

House Churches and the Eucharist

A Wealthy Home at Corinth

Private houses were the first centres of church life.¹ Christianity in the first century AD, and for long afterwards, did not have the status of a recognized religion, so there was no question of a public meeting-place, such as the Jewish synagogue. Hence, use had to be made of the only facilities available, namely, the dwellings of families that had become Christian.

Four houses of the Roman period have been brought to light at Corinth. Of these only one can be attributed to the time of Paul, the villa at Anaploga. The magnificent mosaic floor of the triclinium (dining room) is dated to the late first century AD, and broken pottery in the fill laid to provide a level bed comes from the period AD 50–75, but the building was already in existence when the mosaic was created.

[34] Given the social conditions of the time, it can be assumed that any gathering which involved more than very intimate friends of the family would be limited to the public part of the house, and our concern here is to try and determine how much space was available. In the villa at Anaploga the triclinium measures 5.5×7.5 metres, giving a floor area of 41.25 sq. metres. This volume, however, would have been diminished by the couches around the walls; there would have been space for nine to recline. The atrium located just outside measures 5×6 metres, but the floor area of 30 sq. metres must be reduced also because at least one-ninth of the floor was taken up by the impluvium (from the Latin word *pluo*, to rain). This was a pool to collect the water that came through a hole of corresponding size in the roof; this was called the *compluvium* and was designed to light the atrium.

House Measurements and Number of Guests

These dimensions were very typical, as can be seen from a number of comparisons. 'Another sumptuous villa of the second century has been excavated in the vicinity of the old Sicyonian Gate.'² The adjective used should be noted,

¹ This article was originally published in *The Bible Today* 22/1 (1984) 32–8, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² J. Wisemann, 'Corinth and Rome 1: 228 BC–AD 267' in *ANRW* 7/1.528.

together with the formulation which indicates that it also applies to the villa at Anaploga. The five magnificent mosaic floors were published by Shear.³ No plan is given, but the dimensions of the rooms are provided: atrium, $7.15 \times 7.15 = 51.12$ sq. meters with a square impluvium in the centre; triclinium off the atrium, $7.05 \times 7.05 = 49.7$ sq. metres. The excavator considers it probable that the mosaic floors were made before 146 BC and were simply incorporated when the villa was rebuilt in the second century AD. The equally well-to-do House of the Vetii at Pompeii, destroyed by the eruption of AD 79, was of similar size; the atrium was $7 \times 6 = 42$ sq. metres, and the triclinium $4 \times 6.3 = 25.2$ sq. metres. The consistency of such figures for upper-class houses can be seen from the dimensions of the fourth-century BC Villa of Good Fortune at Olynthus (south-east of Thessalonica on the coast); the triclinium was $5.8 \times 5 = 29$ sq. metres, and the atrium with its impluvium $10 \times 10 = 100$ sq. metres.

If we average out the floor areas for the four houses, the average size of the atrium is 55 sq. metres and that of the triclinium 36 sq. metres. Not all this area, however, was usable. The effective space in the triclinium was limited by the couches around the walls; the rooms surveyed would not have accommodated more than nine, and this is the usual number. The impluvium in the centre of the atrium would not only have diminished the space by one-ninth, but would also have restricted movement; circulation was possible only around the outside of the square. Thus, the maximum number that [36] the atrium could hold was fifty, but this assumes that there were no decorative urns, etc. to take up space, and that everyone stayed in one place; the true figure would probably be between thirty and forty.

The Christian Home of Gaius

Let us for a moment assume that this was the house of Gaius, a wealthy member of the Christian community at Corinth (Rom 16:23), and try to imagine the situation when he hosted 'the whole church' (1 Cor 14:23). From Paul's letters we know the names of fourteen male members of the Corinthian community. We must suppose that, like Aquila, all were married. This brings us to twenty-eight persons, which is obviously the minimum figure. Neither Luke nor Paul intend to give a complete list; mentions of particular names were occasioned by specific circumstances. Moreover, we are told that the households of two members of the community, Crispus (Acts 18:8) and Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15–16), were baptized with them. Thus, we have to add an indeterminate number of children, servants/slaves, and perhaps relations. It would be more realistic, therefore, to think in terms of around fifty persons as a base figure.

This number could barely be accommodated in our average house of Gaius, but it would have meant extremely uncomfortable overcrowding in the villa at

³ 'Excavations at Corinth in 1925' *AJA* 29 (1925) 391–7.

Anaploga. It would appear, therefore, that a meeting of 'the whole church' (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 14:23) was exceptional; it would simply have been too awkward. Moreover, as Robert Banks has pointed out, the adjective 'whole' is unnecessary if Corinthian Christians met only as a single group, and so must be understood to imply that other groups existed. This observation suggests that the formulae 'the whole church' and 'the church in the home of X' (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philem 2) should not be equated, but contrasted.⁴

'The church in the home of X', then, would be a subgroup of the larger community. If Aquila and Priscilla/Prisca acted as the centre of such a subgroup in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and Rome (Rom 16:5), it is very probable that they did likewise in Corinth. Such subgroups would have been made up of the family, servants, and a few friends who lived in the vicinity. While such subgroups would have tended to foster an intimate family-type atmosphere, they would also have tended to promote divisions within the wider city community. It seems likely that the various groups mentioned by Paul (1 Cor 1:12—"I belong to Paul . . . to Apollos . . . [to] Cephas . . . to Christ") would regularly have met separately. Such relative isolation would have meant that each group had a chance to develop its own theology, and virtually ensured that it took good root before being confronted by other opinions.

[37] The difficulty of getting the whole church together regularly in one place goes a long way towards explaining the theological divisions within the Corinthian community, but the difficulties of the physical environment also generated other problems when all the believers assembled as a church.

Class Distinctions of Wealthy and Poor

The mere fact that all could not be accommodated in the triclinium meant that there had to be an overflow into the atrium. It became imperative for the host to divide his guests into two categories; the first-class believers were invited into the triclinium while the rest stayed outside. Even a slight knowledge of human nature indicates the criterion used. The host must have been a wealthy member of the community, and so he invited into the triclinium his closest friends among the believers, who would have been of the same social class. The rest could take their places in the atrium, where conditions were greatly inferior. Those in the triclinium would have *reclined*, as was the custom (see 1 Cor 8:10) and as Jesus always did with his disciples, whereas those in the atrium were forced to *sit* (1 Cor 14:30).

The space available made such discrimination unavoidable, but this would not diminish the resentment of those provided with second-class facilities. Here we see one possible source of the tensions that appear in Paul's account of the

⁴ R. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), 38.

eucharistic liturgy at Corinth (1 Cor 11:17–34). However, his statement that ‘one is hungry while another is drunk’ (v. 21) suggests that such tensions were probably exacerbated by another factor, namely, the type of food offered.

Since the Corinth that Paul knew had been refounded as a Roman colony in 44 BC, and since Latin was the official language up to the end of the first century AD, it is legitimate to assume that Roman customs enjoyed a certain vogue. One such custom was to serve different types of food to different categories of guests. Pliny the Younger recounts the following experience:

I happened to be dining with a man, though no particular friend of his, whose elegant economy, as he called it, seemed to me a sort of stingy extravagance. The best dishes were set in front of himself and a select few, and cheap scraps of food before the rest of the company. He had even put the wine into tiny little flasks, divided into three categories, not with the idea of giving his guests the opportunity of choosing, but to make it impossible for them to refuse what they were given. One lot was intended for himself and for us, another for his lesser friends (all his friends are graded), and the third for his and our freed-men. . . . (*Letters* 2:6)

The same custom naturally proved fair game for the Roman satirists of the first century AD. The entire Fifth Satire of Juvenal is a vicious dissection of [38] the sadism of the host who makes his inferior guests ‘prisoners of the great smells of his kitchen’ (line 162). With much greater brevity Martial makes the same point with equal effectiveness:

Since I am asked to dinner, no longer, as before a purchased guest, why is not the same dinner served to me as to you? You take oysters fattened in the Lucrine lake, I suck a mussel through a hole in the shell. You get mushrooms, I take hog funguses. You tackle turbot, but I brill. Golden with fat, a turtledove gorges you with its bloated rump, but there is set before me a magpie that has died in its cage. Why do I dine without you, Ponticus, though I dine with you? The dole has gone: let us have the benefit of that; let us eat the same fare. (*Epigrams* 3:60)

We drink from glass, you from murrine, Ponticus. Why? That a transparent cup may not betray your two wines. (*Epigrams* 4:85)

Only the wealthy are attracted by this method of saving, and it is entirely possible that a Corinthian believer, responsible for hosting the whole church, found it expedient to both demonstrate his sophistication and exercise financial prudence by serving different types of food to the two groups of believers—a distinction imposed on him by the physical arrangement of his house. Since the host’s friends were of the leisured class, they could arrive early and feast on larger portions of superior food while awaiting the arrival of lower-class believers who were not as free to dispose of their time. The condition of those reclining gorged in the triclinium could hardly be disguised from those who had to sit in the atrium.

Many Members, One Body—with Christ (1 Cor 12:12)

The reconstruction is hypothetical, but no scenario has been suggested which so well explains the details of 1 Cor 11:17–34. The admonition ‘wait for one another’ (v. 34) means that *prolambanô* in v. 21 necessarily has a temporal connotation; some began to eat before others. Since these possessed houses with plenty to eat and drink (vv. 22, 34), they came from the wealthy section of the community and might have made a contribution in kind to the community meal. This, they felt, gave them the right to think of it as ‘theirs’ (*to idion deiphon*). Reinforced by the Roman customs, they would then have considered it their due to appropriate the best portions for themselves. Such selfishness would necessarily include a tendency to take just a little more, so that it might happen that nothing was left for the ‘have-nots’ (v. 22), who in their hunger had to content themselves with the bread and wine provided for the eucharist. However, as Paul is at pains to point out, under such conditions no eucharist is possible (v. 20).

POSTSCRIPT

The article published in *The Bible Today* was abstracted from the first edition of my book *St Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (1983), and was edited for its new format. This meant simply the insertion of sub-headings and the omission of some parenthetical notes. A slightly revised version appeared in the third edition of *St Paul's Corinth* (2002). The only major change was the addition of two paragraphs concerning the Terrace Houses in Ephesus, which are further examples of the type of house represented by the villa at Anaploga. This updated version was included in the anthology *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by E. Adams and D. G. Horrell.⁵ This compliment is all the more flattering in that Horrell is the only one to have offered a thorough critique of my hypothesis. However, before we come to that I want to spell out in some detail what I have since learnt about housing in Ephesus, because this confirms the data drawn from excavations elsewhere.

The Terrace Houses at Ephesus⁶

These houses are located behind a series of shops midway along the south side of Curetes' Street (Embolos) and climb up the Bulbul Dagh ('Mountain of the Nightingales').⁷ The eastern *insula* ('city block') was once thought to be the

⁵ (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 129–38.

⁶ This material is taken from my *St Paul's Ephesus: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 192–7, with minor changes to adapt it to its new situation.

⁷ They appear as nn. 50 and 51 in P. Scherrer (ed.), *Ephesus: The New Guide* (Istanbul: Ege Yayinini, 2000); as n. 29 in the foldout plan given by W. Alzinger, 'Ephesos vom Beginn der

mansion of a wealthy single individual.⁸ Now it seems that in the first century BC it was a collection of six residential units built in pairs on three terraces on the lowest part of the Bulbul Dagh.⁹ These were radically modified at the beginning of the second century AD when half the *insula* was transformed into the clubhouse of an association, and served particularly for banquets.¹⁰ This *insula*, in consequence, is of much less interest than its companion on the west side of the 3-m wide stepped street running up the hill from Curetes' Street.

Throughout the centuries the western *insula* preserved its original plan of pairs of residential units on three terraces.¹¹ It was bordered on the south by a street conforming to the grid pattern, and which dropped some 26 m to reach Curetes' Street near the Memmius Monument. 'According to the examination of the foundations and evaluation of the finds, the entire site was first built upon during a short span of time at the close of the 1st century BC. In most cases it can be shown that the apartments were in use after numerous phases of rebuilding and renovation up to at least the end of the 4th century, and some until the beginning of the 7th century.'¹² Such longevity says much for the quality of the original construction. The first real damage was caused by the earthquake of AD 262. Thus this structure gives us an unrivalled opportunity to visualize the sort of household in which Paul and his community might have celebrated the eucharistic liturgy.

The pair of houses illustrated in fig. 7 of my *St Paul's Ephesus* are typical of those in the western *insula*.¹³ The division between House A at the top of the drawing and House B at the bottom is arbitrary. In reality no certitude is possible. Undoubtedly rooms where the houses met changed ownership over the years as one owner needed more space and the other more cash. It would have been easy to open or block a door. They were entered from the stepped streets climbing the Bulbul Dagh from Curetes' Street.

Internal staircases show that both houses had an upper floor, but this was out of bounds to visitors. Thus the plans show only the ground floors, which contained the public areas. Scherrer underlines the comfort of these houses by drawing attention to aspects that could not be included in the drawings. 'As a rule, all apartments had several heatable rooms. In some cases the upper storeys were also equipped with hypocaust heating systems. A public utility network provided internal running water and removed the waste of indoor latrines. In addition cisterns and wells dug into the rock ensured a supply of water to

römischen Heerschaft in Kleinasien bis zum Ende der Principatzeit: Archäologischer Teil' in *ANRW* (1980) II.7.2, 811–30.

⁸ Alzinger, 'Ephesos vom Beginn der römischen Herrschaft', 824.

⁹ See the plan in Scherrer, *New Guide*, 104–5. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹¹ The clearest plan of the whole complex is given in F. Heuber, *Ephesos Gebaute Geschichte* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1997), 55, fig. 65.

¹² Scherrer, *New Guide*, 108.

¹³ For plans and detailed descriptions, see S. Erdemgil, *The Terrace Houses in Ephesus* (Istanbul: Hitit Color, 1988), from which all measurements are scaled.

individual households. A system of city drains under the stairway alleys [limiting the *insula*] disposed of waste water.¹⁴

House A covered roughly 370 m². Just inside the entrance the stairs on the right led to the upper storey, whereas those on the left descended to a small vestibule. A door to the right gave access to a room whose suspended floor identified it as the hot room of a Roman bath. The nearby furnace was no doubt also connected to the kitchen. The light-filled peristyle courtyard (7.5 × 5 m) lay straight ahead with as its centre an almost square shallow pool (*impluvium*), which caught the rain that fell into the lightwell. The pillars surrounding the pool supported the gallery of the upper floor. If we go around the pool clockwise we first encounter the arched entrance to a large chamber (4.25 × 6.5 m) with colourful frescos on the walls, which gave access to two smaller rooms. Then comes the wide arched opening of a room (4 × 3.2 m), whose plain walls were probably covered with colourful hangings. Both of these no doubt would have been furnished with chairs or couches, which permitted guests to sit without blocking circulation in the courtyard. In the corner was another staircase to the upper floor. Directly opposite was the entrance to the main dining room (*triclinium*) (3 × 5.5 m) with another slightly smaller beside it.

At approximately 650 m² House B was appreciably larger. The entrance led into a colonnaded atrium. On the far side the kitchen lay just beyond a latrine. A door to the left gave access to the peristyle courtyard (13 × 14 m). If one followed the beautiful mosaic carpet running along the north side, one passed the main dining room (3 × 3.5 m). The T-shaped mosaic floor makes its function certain; there was no need to put mosaic underneath the dining couches along three of the walls. Just beyond was a long narrow room (3 × 12 m), whose mosaic floor suggests that it was part of the public area, probably a sitting room, as was the very small one (1.1 × 1.5 m) on the other side of the courtyard. Just beyond in the corner were steps to the upper floor.

In these brief descriptions I have not mentioned the frescos that covered many of the walls, because no date is assigned to them. It would be unreasonable to think that they were not renewed as they discoloured with age and/or as fashions changed. If we do not know what precise images adorned the walls at the time of Paul, we can be quite sure that they were colourful and cheerful.

Houses A and B contain all the architectural features of the classical Roman *domus* 'house'. Some idea of how privileged were the occupants and their immediate neighbours can be gauged from the fact that in a fourth-century AD official description of the city of Rome there were only 1,797 'houses' as against 46,602 apartment blocks.¹⁵ Yet these in Ephesus were not the palaces of great magnates. They were the houses of relatively affluent people who could afford space and comfort. Paul would have been very lucky to convert one of the owners;

¹⁴ *New Guide*, 110.

¹⁵ Jerome Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (London: Penguin, 1941), 34–5.

the percentages were certainly not in his favour. But he had done so at Corinth, where Gaius, the host 'to the whole church' (Rom 16:23) was one of his very first converts (1 Cor 1:14), and he trusted God to aid him here.

Nonetheless, if we look at the public space available in either of these houses from the perspective of Paul as a pastor, problems immediately surface. There is no way of computing the number of believers in Ephesus, but it would be extremely surprising if they were fewer than the converts that Paul made in Corinth. On the basis of the names given in Acts and Paul's letters we can estimate that the *minimum* numbers of Christians in Corinth was between 40 and 50.¹⁶

Only a fraction of these could be accommodated in either of the dining rooms (House A: 16.5 m²; House B: 21.5 m²), even if the guests sat side by side on the couches on which diners normally reclined. The rest of the community had to be accommodated in the sitting areas (House A: 40.4 m²; House B: 46 m²) located off the peristyle courtyard. We must assume, however, that couches, chairs and tables would have taken up at least half the available space. In consequence it would be surprising if House A could handle 20 sitting guests in comfort. House B had space for slightly more.¹⁷

Just these elementary calculations highlight how problematic it would be to get all the converts in Ephesus into one place even in these spacious houses.¹⁸ The traditional arrangement of space in the *domus* necessarily imposed a division within the community. Those in the heated dining room would be much more comfortable than those in the sitting rooms, which were exposed to the cold air in the lightwell. Believers were divided into those who got the best and those who received much less. It would be very surprising if the problem of space which plagued the church at Corinth did not also afflict the community at Ephesus, unless its numbers were far less than might have been expected from its successful missionary outreach.¹⁹

Reactions to my Proposal

My proposal that the divisions at the eucharistic liturgy at Corinth were rooted in the impossibility of getting all the members of the community into a *single* space has been virtually ignored by the German commentators. It is not even mentioned by Lang, Strobel, Schrage, and Kramer. Wolff does refer

¹⁶ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 277–8.

¹⁷ These houses are studied from the perspective of what they reveal of social relations by M. George, 'Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesos' *JSNT* 27 (2004) 15–23. Her conclusions are vague in the extreme.

¹⁸ In his article 'Rich Pompeian Houses, Shops for Rent, and the Huge Apartment Building in Herculaneum as Typical Spaces for Pauline House Churches' *JSNT* 27 (2004) 27–46, David Balch entirely ignores the problems posed by getting the 'whole' church into a *single* internal space. Naturally he gives no measurements of the rooms of which he speaks.

¹⁹ On this point see my *Paul: A Critical Life*, 172–5.

to it,²⁰ but like his Kollegen prefers to focus on customs concerning eating, which might have caused divisions in the community. Klauck does not mention room space but he comes very close to it by pointing out that the wealthier members, who were freer to dispose of their time, could arrive earlier, and thus acquire the most comfortable positions.²¹ Precisely this point is taken up by P. Lampe, who writes, 'Wenn die sozial niedriger Stehenden erst später zur korinthischen Versammlung eintrafen und dann nicht mehr im Triclinium, sondern nur noch in Atrium und Peristyl Platz finden, so spiegelt sich auch in diesem Zug ein vorbaptismaler Habitus: Sozial niedriger stehende Klienten wurden vom Patron im Atrium empfangen und abgefertigt.'²² Of course, when the church at Corinth assembled, the poor were admitted to the house, but their welcome would have been strictly limited. Collins astutely observes, 'The physical location of the late-comers attested to their social location within the community and underscored the social division that rent the community at Corinth.'²³

English-language scholars were rather more welcoming. According to Fee, 'First, since the church gathered for such meals in the homes of the rich, most likely the host was the patron of the meal. Second, archaeology has shown rather conclusively that the dining room (triclinium) in such homes would scarcely accommodate many guests; the majority would eat in the atrium.'²⁴ The same approach is adopted by Talbert,²⁵ Witherington,²⁶ Garland,²⁷ Hays,²⁸ Dunn,²⁹ and Keener.³⁰ Thiselton adopts my hypothesis in such detail that it is too long to quote.³¹

One discordant voice has disturbed the harmony of the commentators. David Horrell wrote, 'There are good reasons to doubt the plausibility of the imaginative reconstruction of the Corinthian Lord's Supper presented by Murphy-O'Connor; the extent to which this scenario has been presumed and reinforced in recent commentaries makes a critical reassessment all the more important.'³² What are these good reasons?

Horrell focuses principally on the villa at Anaploga, which I used as the typical house in which the Corinthian community assembled. His two points are: (1) the mosaic floor, which I used to argue that the villa belonged to a wealthy person, did not exist at the time of Paul; (2) there is no basis for the identification of one particular room as the triclinium.³³ I can only concur with both points. If experts now date the floor to the 2nd cent. or even the 3rd cent. AD, then it

²⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 261 n. 109. ²¹ *1 Korintherbrief*, 81b.

²² 'Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischer *Theologia Crucis* (1 Kor 11, 17–34)' *ZNW* 82 (1991) 201; cf. also 197 n. 43.

²³ *1 Corinthians*, 419. ²⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 533 with note 10.

²⁵ *Reading Corinthians*, 75. ²⁶ *Conflict and Community*, 249.

²⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 534. ²⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 196. ²⁹ *Theology of Paul*, 609.

³⁰ *1–2 Corinthians*, 96–7. ³¹ *1 Corinthians*, 860–1.

³² 'Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre' *NTS* 50 (2004) 369.

³³ 'Domestic Space', 354.

must be accepted that it is post-Pauline.³⁴ Equally, I agree that the only certain proof that a room was used for dining is the T-shape of the decorative mosaic floor; no artistic energy was wasted on the parts around the three walls covered by the couches on which the diners reclined. I cannot accept, however, that 'the villa at Anaploga may have lain outside the city walls in Roman times'.³⁵ Unless my map reading is in error, Anaploga is within the area of the Hippodamian grid established by the Roman colonists.³⁶ It is certainly inside the only wall that Corinth ever had, namely, that partially torn down by Mummius in 146 BC. Strabo reports, 'When I went up the mountain [Acrocorinth] the ruins of the encircling wall were plainly visible' (*Geography* 8.6.21).

Horrell goes on to assert that 'the houses considered from Pompeii, Olynthus, and Ephesus are all, on Murphy-O'Connor's own view, upper-class homes belonging to the wealthy. They are thus unlikely to be "typical", at least insofar as typical is taken to refer to the kind of dwellings in which the majority of the population might have lived.'³⁷ This is just playing with words. I never claimed that a sumptuous villa was the typical residence of the believers at Corinth; that would have been nonsense. What I suggested was that the villa at Anaploga must have been typical of *the sort of house required to host the whole church*. Even if I was wrong about Anaploga, it cannot be doubted that at the time of Paul Corinth contained houses of that type. Unfortunately, despite over a century of excavation, only a fraction of the vast area between the walls has been excavated, so no argument can be based on the absence of such houses from the archaeological record. The Terrace Houses at Ephesus are an incontrovertible illustration of the type of house I envisaged.

Horrell then goes a step further by claiming that no Corinthian Christian had the means to own such a home, 'Paul and the early Christians shared the absolute poverty which was the fate of the vast majority of the population of the Roman empire.'³⁸ This is clearly contradicted by 1 Cor 1:26, which asserts that *some* members of the community were well off by human standards. At any given moment Paul needed only *one* convert to host the whole church.

It is to Horrell's credit that he is not content with proving me wrong. He recognizes the obligation to propose an alternative. Inevitably he looks down-market because of his view of the social status of Corinthian believers, and settles on what the excavators call Buildings 1 and 3 on the east side of East Theatre

³⁴ Horrell cites G. Hellenkemper Salies, 'Römische Mosaiken im Griechenland' *Bonner Jahrbücher* 186 (1986) 278–9 and K. M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 210 n. 6.

³⁵ 'Domestic Space', 354.

³⁶ D. G. Romano, 'Post 146 BC Land Use in Corinth, and Planning of the Roman Colony of 44 BC' in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period* (JRSup 8; ed. T. E. Gregory; Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Studies, 1993), 9–30; idem and B. C. Schoenbrun, 'A Computerized Architectural and Topographical Survey of Ancient Corinth' *Journal of Field Archaeology* 20 (1993) 177–90.

³⁷ 'Domestic Space', 356.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 358.

Street.³⁹ They were built early in the 1st cent. AD. Originally two or even three storeys high, only the two-room ground floor of each survives. The remains indicate that they served as kitchens, preparing and selling cooked meats to theatregoers and residents.⁴⁰ In Horrell's alternative scenario Corinthian believers would have met in 'an upper-storey room in East Theatre Street'.⁴¹

An upper-storey room is not a problem (cf. Acts 20:8–9), but the amount of space available is. The rooms on the ground floor were each 5 × 5 m. In consequence, the space available on the upper floor would have been 50 m². Manifestly Horrell would prefer it to be all one room, because then there would be no spatial division, and my 'neat distinction' between insiders and outsiders would be obviated. According to Horrell, one should allow 'one half-square meter per person and an equal half-square meter for furniture'.⁴² Thus, the room could have accommodated the 40–50 people that I postulated as the minimum number of converts at Corinth. This entirely speculative reconstruction, however, forces my imagination to visualize 50 people sitting knee to knee with their food on their laps! To what extent that would have been socially acceptable in any Graeco-Roman city of the period is up to Horrell to explain.

The archaeologists, however, suggest 'one large room and at least one other room'. This strikes me as improbable. Normally a wall should rest on a wall. To have it rest on a ceiling, as this hypothesis demands, would be rather unusual, because ceilings were not made of reinforced concrete. Furthermore, the need for a large room on the part of a renter is far from clear. Thus, it is much more natural to postulate two rooms of the same dimensions as those on the ground floor. Anyway, once the hypothesis of two rooms is accepted, the division between insiders and outsiders remains intact, because one room would inevitably have been more prestigious than the other. The better-off, with their well-furnished picnic baskets,⁴³ would not have wished to sit beside envious inferiors, whose body-language at least would have been expressive. And those with more leisure could have arranged to arrive early enough to secure the positions they preferred. It would be natural for them to congregate in one room.

I must stress that this article deals only with the situation that arose when the *whole* church at Corinth came together.⁴⁴ How frequently this was cannot be estimated. I would presume that normally the eucharist was celebrated in

³⁹ C. K. Williams and O. H. Zervos, 'Corinth 1985: East of the Theatre' *Hesperia* 55 (1986) 129–75; idem, 'Corinth 1987: South of Temple E and East of the Theatre' *Hesperia* 57 (1988) 95–146.

⁴⁰ Were this solidly based, it would be relevant to the problem dealt with above apropos of 1 Cor 8–10; see J. Meggitt, 'Meat Consumption and Social Conflict in Corinth' *JTS* 45 (1994) 137–41.

⁴¹ 'Domestic Space', 368. ⁴² *Ibid.*, 368 n. 84.

⁴³ 'Come at once to dinner and bring your pitcher and your supper chest' (Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 1085); see also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 8.356ab; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.14.1.

⁴⁴ Collins comments astutely, 'Paul's double use of "come together" (*synerchomai*, vv. 17, 18, 20; cf. v. 33) suggests that the various house churches came together under one roof, as it were, on at least some occasions' (*1 Corinthians*, 418).

sub-groups, in the homes of believers such as Prisca and Aquila, be it in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) or in Rome (Rom 16:3–5).⁴⁵ In such cases the numbers would have been determined by the space available, whether it be in a workshop or in the sitting room of an apartment in an *insula*. As numbers increased such sub-units multiplied.

⁴⁵ That we should translate ‘home’ instead of ‘house’ in the formula *kat’ oikon ekklesià* has been well argued by M. B. Button and F. J. van Rensburg, ‘The “House Churches” in Corinth’ *Neotestamentica* 37 (2003) 1–28.

13

Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians

Paul's allusions to the eucharist are concentrated in chapters 10–11 of First Corinthians.¹ His silence regarding this central sacrament in other letters is due to the 'occasional' character of his communications with the churches for which he was responsible. He was not a speculative theologian principally concerned with the interrelationship of concepts within an ideal structure, but a pastor whose attention was focused by the real problems of Christian living in a concrete situation. In the oral preaching which led to the foundation of communities, Paul presumably followed a pattern which ordered the basic themes in such a way as to demonstrate their relative importance, and the eucharist certainly had a significant place in this type of exposition (11:23). In his letters, on the contrary, the attention given to particular doctrines is related to the degree of misunderstanding or confusion that Paul perceived among the recipients. The fact that he devotes so much space to the eucharist in the Corinthian correspondence is a clear indication that there was something radically wrong with the Corinthians' approach to this sacrament. The fact that he does not touch on the topic in other letters signifies only that the same problem did not arise in other communities.

In order to determine what so disturbed Paul in the Corinthian attitude towards the eucharist, we must begin by establishing the links between the various paragraphs that make up 1 Cor 10–11.

Paul opens with a reference to the Exodus (10:1–13) in which we find an allusion to eating and drinking (vv. 3–4). Its function, however, is not to establish a relationship between the paschal meal and the eucharist, but to underline the fact that the privileges of the Israelites did not protect them from the consequences of their errors. They were punished for disobedience, and Paul holds up this experience as a lesson to the Corinthians (v. 11). If the Israelites had been privileged by gifts similar to baptism and the eucharist (vv. 2–4) and [371] had nonetheless been excluded from salvation, then the same fate could well befall the Corinthians unless they came to a correct understanding of what being a Christian involved. Paul was concerned to disabuse them of their belief that

¹ The first part of this article was originally published in *Worship* 50 (1976) 370–85, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

‘every sin which a man commits is outside the self’ (6:18b). The overwhelming experience of conversion has bred in them the conviction that no action could alter their status because every action of the ‘saved’ was self-authenticating.

One domain in which the overconfidence of the Corinthians manifested itself was the assiduity with which some maintained their association with the environment which they had left, namely, by continuing to take part in pagan ritual meals (10:14–22; cf. 8:10).

From the thought of pagan ritual it is but a short and natural step to the question of participation in private banquets offered by non-believers (10:23–30). The issue with which Paul deals, however, concerns the type of food that was likely to be offered on such occasions, namely, meat that had been offered to idols. His solution is that proposed in ch. 8. A believer may eat such meat provided that his so doing does not scandalize a brother Christian. Effective concern for the other, even if he be in error, must be the decisive factor in the moral judgement of a Christian.

This leads Paul into a brief digression in which he evokes the example of his own behaviour (10:31–11:1). In all that he does he seeks to be of service to others with a view to their salvation. He translates this into the injunction, ‘Be imitators of me, as I am an imitator of Christ’ (11:1), and the context makes it clear that it is a question of behaviour that will make it possible for Jews and Greeks to accept the gospel and for believers to maintain their commitment. This brief paragraph, which comes between his two evocations of the eucharist, is a highly condensed presentation of Paul’s vision of Christian life. It is a digression only in terms of the specific topics under discussion. On a deeper level it reveals the consistent principle that governs his approach to the issues.

Having dealt with social occasions involving pagans, Paul next turns his attention to the social occasion of the Christian community, its liturgical celebration. His treatment falls into two parts. The first (11:2–16) is an extremely complicated text which has given rise to much discussion. Claims that the section is a post-Pauline interpolation are demonstrably untrue. The point at issue is not the subordination of women to men. It is taken entirely for granted that both [372] sexes can take a leading role in both prayer and prophecy. Paul’s concern is that the difference between men and women should be proclaimed by their modes of dress. His motive for asserting this obvious point is never brought to light, but there is some justification for the hypothesis that his secret fear was an outbreak of homosexuality and/or lesbianism. He considered relationships of this type to be destructive (1 Cor 6:9–10) because they rejected the pattern established by the Creator (cf. Rom 1:24–7). They embodied what Paul saw as the fundamental attitude of the ‘world’, an egocentric drive towards self-gratification.

In the second part (11:17–34) Paul takes up a different manifestation of selfishness, the refusal of some Corinthians to share their food when they assemble for the Lord’s Supper.

From this brief survey of the contents of 1 Cor 10–11 it is evident that there was a deep-seated malaise in the Corinthian community which manifested itself in different facets of its existence. The problem did not lie on the level of theoretical understanding. The Corinthians had assimilated the words that had been proclaimed to them, but they faltered in the process of translating those words into a pattern of practical living. Paul's insistence on the primacy of love and his absolute refusal to condone any form of selfishness point unambiguously to the root of the problem. The Corinthians had not succeeded in achieving an adequate grasp of the basic postulate in Paul's theology, the true nature of Christian community. Hence, in order to appreciate fully what Paul says about the eucharist it is imperative to have a clear understanding of his vision of authentic community.

Christian Community

All the basic components of Paul's understanding of Christian community appear in 1 Corinthians and these will constitute the armature of the presentation. Some elements, however, are expressed more fully or more clearly in other epistles and where it is appropriate these texts will be introduced in order to fill out the picture.

The Community Is One

Despite centuries of hostile division sincere Christians still retain a sense of the oneness of the church. They pray that the barriers of mistrust may be torn down so that those who belong to Christ may live in harmonious peace. Very often this goal is conceived in terms of fellowship, as is only natural, given the [373] fact that believers have been long conditioned by the individualism of the Renaissance. Almost inevitably we tend to give Paul's concept of the church as the body of Christ the status of a metaphor or image. Starting with the conception of the church as a society we see the multiplicity of its members, and frequently that aspect dominates to the point where we give merely notional assent to their unity. We permit the vision of faith to be distorted by our perception of reality, where fragile hope has received so many brutal shocks, and we drag the ideal down to our estimate of what is possible. In the last analysis we equate unity with union. Paul's perspective is so radically different that we need to make a very conscious effort to assimilate it.

When we reflect on the church as the body of Christ we do so in the light of the parallel provided by the human body, as Paul himself did (12:12). But where we are tempted to see the point of the parallel in terms of coordination and cooperation, for Paul it was a question of *coexistence* in the strict sense of that much abused term. The limbs of the human body all share a common existence, since they are infused by the same life. Their very reality as limbs is conditioned

by their being part of the body. An amputated limb may look like an arm, but in fact it is something radically different because the mode of existence proper to an arm demands vital participation in the life of the body. In its very essence an arm is not a whole but a part. When given the status of a whole, as by amputation, it is no longer what it was destined to be. The animation of life has given place to the stillness of death.

In precisely the same perspective Paul conceived the body of Christ as an *organic* unity. This is implicit in his consistent emphasis that believers 'belong' to Christ (3:23; 15:23) or are 'members' of Christ (6:15; 12:27), and it comes to formal expression in his exhortation to the Colossians to hold fast to the head 'from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God' (Col 2:19). Only this concept of a shared life derived from a single vital principle can explain the apostle's understanding of the Christian community as 'the new man' (Col 3:10–11), an idea that goes back to the period of the great epistles, for we read in Galatians, 'In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are [374] all *one man* in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:26–8). Terms indicative of metaphor are completely lacking in this statement, and it is wrong to interpret Paul as if a living organism were merely a rather far-fetched parallel to the Christian community. He is making a fundamental assertion concerning Christian being. The statement is one that no philosopher could make, and it stands over all philosophical insights. The unity of Christians is that of a living person. No one possesses, but each one participates in a shared life.

Only if we keep this in mind is it possible to appreciate the full force of such statements as, 'You are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (1 Cor 12:27). The individuality of Christians is not that of independent agents. It derives from the diversity appropriate to a living organism. 'If all were one member, where would be the body?' (12:19). As parts within the whole, believers are individuated, not by the assertion of autonomy, but by the uniqueness of their contribution to the common life which sustains all. 'Let all things be done with a view to building up [the community]' (14:26). The idea of an autonomous Christian is a contradiction in terms. Believers are what they are because they belong to something greater than themselves. They are renewed because they *belong* to the 'new man'. They are Christians because they *belong* to the body of Christ. The vitality of this relationship is constitutive of their new mode of being. We think of individuals as coming together to create community. For Paul it is precisely the reverse. The community is a radically new reality (1:28) which makes the believer a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). We consider unity as something to be created, whereas Paul saw this unity as primary and envisaged individuals as being changed by absorption into that unity.

The Community Is Christ

This might seem to be at best a meaningless paradox and at worst an unwarranted denigration of the role of Christ. Does it not attribute to the community a function that properly belongs to Christ? Paul would answer in the negative because, for him, the community is Christ. Thus, for example, he begins his exposition of the need for diversity within the community with the words, 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so *also Christ*' (1 Cor 12:12). In order to express the same idea we should say: Just as the diversity of the physical body is unified by sharing a common life, so also the body of Christ. Paul is not speaking of the [375] individual Jesus but of the community of believers. In speaking of 'Christ' rather than the 'body of Christ', it cannot be claimed that he made an accidental slip, because precisely the same idea appears in the question, 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?' (6:15). The question form of this verse is highly significant because it is generally understood to connote a doctrine with which Paul felt his converts should be familiar. The application of the name 'Christ' to the community must, in consequence, be considered to have formed part of Paul's habitual vocabulary.

It would be absurd to imagine that he intended to identify the community with the individual body of flesh of the historical person, Jesus Christ. In a later epistle he makes explicit the distinction between the 'head' and the 'body' (Col 1:18) which is implicit in the earlier letters. If an explanation in 'static' terms is thereby excluded, we are forced to consider an explanation in terms of 'function'. In this perspective the name 'Christ' could be predicated of the community, if it is possible to conceive Christ and the community as functionally identical, that is, as performing the same identical function. Once the problem has been posed in this way it is easy to see how Paul's mind worked.

The community mediates the salvation won by Christ. The word that he spoke is not heard in the contemporary world unless it is proclaimed by the community. The power that flowed forth from him in order to enable response is no longer effective unless it is manifested by the community. This conviction is clearly attested in Paul's very first letter, 'You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has *the word of the Lord* sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but *your faith in God* has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything' (1 Thess 1:6–8; cf. Phil 2:14–16; Rom 10:14–15). This passage underlines the importance, not only of verbal proclamation ('the word of God'), but also of the existential affirmation ('your faith in God') without which the other is powerless. Both, moreover, are presented as being in imitation of the Lord who is Christ. The community, therefore, is the incarnational prolongation of the mission of the saving Christ. What he did in and for the world of his

day through his physical presence, the community does in and for its world. In terms of the reality of salvation the community is the [376] physical presence of Christ. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the name 'Christ' is given to the community which he founds (1 Cor 3:11) and in which his power is effective.

Given the situation at Corinth it is highly appropriate that Paul should insist on this aspect. The position taken by his opponents is not without ambiguity, but it seems that there was a tendency to divorce the Christ of faith, the 'Lord of glory' (2:8), from the Jesus of history.² This approach was no more acceptable to Paul than it would be later in his career (cf. Col 2:6; Eph 4:21) because his understanding of the structures of human existence demanded that salvation come from within the human situation. Strictly speaking God cannot save humanity. In view of the decision-making capacity that is integral to human dignity, all that he can do is offer a genuine alternative to the inauthentic existence in which man is imprisoned and at the same time empower him to make that choice. Christ as the instrument of salvation must have been part of the human situation. Equally, in his risen state he must be effectively represented within the framework of real existence by a mode of being endowed with a power which makes its imitation possible. If this representation is to go beyond mere theory, there must be those who authentically live in imitation of Christ, who exist as other Christs, or in Paul's own words, who have 'put on Christ' (Gal 3:27). In order to maintain his extremely realistic concept of salvation Paul was virtually forced to designate the community as 'Christ'.

Once this dimension of Paul's thought has been grasped, a number of passages appear in a new light, and notably those in which we find the enigmatic expression 'in Christ'. This has been seen as the summit of Pauline mysticism, and elaborate theories have been built upon it. Evidence for Paul's mysticism, however, is slight and always ambiguous. In the light of the above observations it seems both easier and more natural to understand 'in Christ' as meaning 'in the community which is Christ'. Confirmation of this view is provided by the statement, 'you are all one man in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). By entering the community, 'Christ', through faith and baptism (Gal 3:26-7) believers are absorbed into the organic unity which is 'one man'.

Alive in Christ

[377] Paul draws a fundamental distinction between 'those who belong to Christ' (1 Cor 3:23; 15:23) and all others. 'The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1:18). The most authoritative commentary on this verse is provided by the apostle himself.

² See B. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973).

‘We [the preachers] are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to the latter a fragrance from death to death, to the former a fragrance from life to life’ (2 Cor 2:15–16).

The two states—being saved and perishing—are contrasted as ‘life’ and ‘death’. Both of these terms can be predicated of those who are ‘alive’ in the physical sense (‘You who were dead . . . God has made alive’, Col 2:13) and in consequence can only be interpreted as modes of being. The same individual can exist in a mode which Paul qualifies as ‘death’ or in another which he qualifies as ‘life’. The criterion Paul uses in making this judgement in particular cases is a relationship to Christ. Those who accept Christ are ‘alive’, whereas those who reject him are ‘dead’. Acceptance of Christ, however, has a very specific meaning for Paul. Over and above explicit confession (Rom 10:9–10), he demands a lived realization of the attitude manifested in the death of Christ. ‘He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves’ (2 Cor 5:15). It is a question of the total commitment to others that is realized in the unity of the body of Christ, as is manifest in the priority given to ‘building up’ the community (1 Cor 14:17, 26) and in the exhortation, ‘Let all you do be done in love’ (16:14).

Paul’s use of the categories ‘life’ and ‘death’ in this context might seem to be merely striking symbols. They appear in a different light if we take seriously his stress on the *organic* unity of the body of Christ. An arm is truly an arm only as part of the body. Only as part of an organic whole does it ‘live’. Detached from the body it may look the same but it is in fact ‘dead’. If the human creature is ‘alive’ only as a member of the body of Christ, then when separated from the body he/she can only be classified as ‘dead’. Here we touch the very kernel of Paul’s anthropology, because it implies a very precise vision of what God intended the human condition to be. His choice of categories can only be explained on the assumption that he believed God to have intended his human creatures to exist in the reciprocity of parts within a whole.

[378] This could be rephrased to say that they should live united in the bonds of love, but this formulation is open to a superficial interpretation which would fail to grasp Paul’s intention. Nonetheless, the formulation is exact if we give love the profound sense of ‘letting-be’ that John Macquarrie has proposed as the only adequate definition of this much abused term.

Love, in its ontological sense, is letting-be. Love usually gets defined in terms of union, or the drive towards union, but such a definition is too egocentric. Love does indeed lead to community, but to aim primarily at uniting the other person to oneself, or oneself to him, is not the secret of love, and may even be destructive of genuine community. Love is letting-be, not of course in the sense of standing off from someone or something, but in the positive and active sense of enabling-to-be. When we talk of ‘letting-be’ we are to understand both parts of this hyphenated expression in a strong sense—‘letting’ as empowering, and ‘be’ as the maximal range of being that is open to the particular being concerned. Most typically, ‘letting-be’ means helping a person into the full realization

of his potentialities for being; and the greatest love will be costly, since it will be accomplished by the spending of one's own being.³

To love in this sense involves accepting responsibility for the very being of the other. It is a creative function which brings the other within the sphere that constitutes the existence of the agent. Without the other, man cannot be himself. He needs to love and to be loved, to empower and to be empowered. In the divine intention this vital reciprocity is constitutive of his being. Consequently, man is as God intends him to be only when he forms part of an organic unity. Those who isolate themselves from others violate the will of the Creator. Viewed precisely from the perspective of the divine intention they are nonexistent, 'dead' in Paul's terminology.

Paul's insight into the divine intention is rooted in his understanding of the humanity of Christ 'who loved me, that is who gave himself for me' (Gal 2:20). He refused to derive his anthropology from the observation of fallen humanity. Contrary to many of our contemporaries, he recognized that that approach could only result in a distorted picture. As the embodiment of authentic humanity, Christ was what all human creatures were intended to be from the beginning. The divine plan for humanity having been distorted by sin, God had to intervene in order to restore 'life'. We are now in a position to see the wealth of meaning that Paul has compressed into the brief statement, 'From him [God] you are in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor 1:30). [379] The verb 'to be' has the pregnant sense of fully authentic existence which the believers enjoy because of a divine decision to bring into existence 'the things which were not' (1:28). This decision was executed through Jesus Christ, and the power which he disposed of remains effective in the community of faith. Hence, if the believers are as God intended them to be it is because they are 'in Christ Jesus'.

Sin

It now becomes easy to see why Paul considers the state of sinful humanity to be characterized by division. The 'world' is divided into blocks opposed by deep-rooted suspicion and hostility—Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). Within themselves, however, these blocks do not manifest the cohesiveness that one might expect. This can be deduced from the lists which enumerate the dominant attitudes of fallen humanity.⁴ The technique of the vice-list was well known to Paul's contemporaries, but while the apostle may have borrowed the literary form he nonetheless introduced a significant modification into the content. Whereas the lists of his contemporaries are heavily weighted with personal vices, the vast majority of the forty-four distinct vices recorded by Paul are antisocial. In other words, he deliberately broke with the current convention in order to highlight attitudes which made genuine communication

³ *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 310–11.

⁴ 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–1; Gal 5:19–21; Rom 1:29–31; Col 3:5–8.

impossible. He envisioned the ‘world’ as riven into a multitude of isolated units whose relationships were founded on self-interest.

Only in this perspective can we understand the rather curious phraseology of a passage addressed to the Corinthians (3:3–4), which I translate literally, ‘While there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, do you not walk according to man? For whenever anyone says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not men?’ ‘Walking’ is a common Semitic synonym for a pattern of behaviour, and in Paul’s lexicon ‘according to man’ (cf. 1 Cor 9:8; 15:32; Rom 3:5; Gal 3:5) means ‘according to the common estimation’. By accepting jealousy and strife as part of their habitual pattern of behaviour the Corinthians simply conformed to the common estimation of what was normal. Hostile divisions were taken for granted as an integral part of human existence. In consequence, the formation of opposed parties within the Corinthian [380] community was not considered a problem. That was the way men lived, and there was no justification for being either shocked or surprised. Paul’s reaction, however, was to classify this attitude as ‘fleshly’, that is, typical of the mode of being that believers had in theory abandoned in committing themselves to Christ. In his view, the Corinthians were using an outmoded standard in their judgement of what was ‘normal’. ‘Are you not men?’ is equivalent to, ‘Are you not like the vast majority of men?’ Their criterion was not derived from Christ, the model of authentic humanity, but from popular opinion.

This passage also provides us with the clue to a correct understanding of the reality that Paul terms ‘Sin’. ‘The sting of Death is Sin, and the power of Sin is the Law’ (1 Cor 15:56). The way that this verse is phrased clearly distinguishes Sin from the personal sins that each individual commits. It is personified in a way that appears much more clearly in Romans. Sin ‘came into the world’ (5:12) where it ‘reigns’ (5:21; 6:14), ‘enslaving’ humanity (6:6, 17, 20) or buying them into its service (7:14), and paying wages (6:23) to those who submit to its law (7:23). What reality stands behind this symbol? 1 Cor 3:3–4 shows us that we inherit our way of looking at ourselves. We are conditioned by the attitudes that we have received. By acting in conformity with that conditioning we reinforce those attitudes and pass them on to those who come after us. When we realize that this process has been going on for untold ages—since the Fall—we begin to appreciate the tremendous pressure of the orientation to which the individual is subject. The point has been made with great effectiveness by John Macquarrie in words which offer the best description of what Paul means by Sin.

When we think of sin as not merely a particular action, and not merely even the attitude of an individual, but a massive disorientation and perversion of human society as a whole, we begin to perceive the really terrifying character of sin. For the ‘world’ or *kosmos*, the collective mass of mankind in its solidarity, is answerable to no one, and has a hardness and irresponsibility that one rarely finds in individuals. These individuals

are, as it were, sucked into the world and carried along with it, being deprived of their own responsibility and swept along by forces beyond their control. . . . The individual, or again the small group, may be utterly helpless and impotent within this anonymous mass, and there can take place a kind of 'escalation' of evil as collective standards and patterns of behaviour [381] establish themselves and irresistibly carry everyone along. . . . The sense of helplessness in the face of some movements or situations for which no one seems directly responsible and which no one seems able to control has led to the thought of sin as somehow superhuman.⁵

It is very easy to reduce this description to concrete terms. In a society in which various forms of dishonesty are considered acceptable behaviour they become virtues which are inculcated as a matter of course. In a society which puts a premium on independence and self-sufficiency everything concurs to impress the individual with the desirability of these attitudes. In a society which measures success by the ability to acquire material goods everyone will desire such possessions. The individual who rejects the value system of his society is treated as an outsider and deprived of any real capacity to effect change. Virtually insurmountable obstacles are put in the way of his living out the values he cherishes. His existence is absorbed in struggle against an all-pervasive and relentless pressure. Only the very strong can even think of opposing any resistance, the majority quietly acquiesce and most frequently are not even conscious of how they are manipulated.

Freedom

Once these facts of experience are admitted it appears in no way exaggerated to speak of Sin, a false value system, as 'reigning' or 'enslaving'. It is a toxic pollution pervading all dimensions of society. No one is immune because it is absorbed below the level of consciousness from the very earliest age. The realism of this view of the 'world' is equalled by the apostle's realistic approach to the problem of freeing men from Sin. If Sin is the toxic pollution of a corrupt environment, the individual can be freed from the necessity of absorbing this pollution only by being transferred to a different environment into which toxic elements do not penetrate. A person with a respiratory condition which is aggravated by the high level of industrial pollution in his area can be given the chance to recover and to live a normal life only by going to live in another area where the air is clean and pure. Paul saw his task, therefore, as involving the creation of an alternative environment. If he recognized that 'bad company ruins good morals' (1 Cor 15:33), he was forced to envision an environment in which the individual would not only be [382] exempt from the destructive pressure of bad example but would be subject to the inspiration of good example, a group in which all could say, 'Imitate me as I imitate Christ' (1 Cor 11:1).

⁵ *Principles of Christian Theology*, 240–1.

At this point we begin to perceive another reason for Paul's inexorable emphasis on community as the basic Christian reality. Not only is it the mode of existence willed by the Creator, but it is the only practical and concrete means whereby an individual is rescued from the false orientation of a fallen world. Only in an authentically Christian community is the individual free to be as God intended. Protected from pressures hostile to authentic development, he is inspired and supported in his efforts to appropriate the mode of existence that Christ lived to the full.

Christian freedom is not an individual thing. It is not an internal power that operates within the believer under any and all circumstances. Those, and they are many, who profess this understanding of freedom, operate only on the level of value perception. Paul, more realistically, was concerned with the actualization of values over the span of a lifetime. Inevitably, therefore, he saw freedom as a quality of community which benefited individuals. Without a vital community totally committed to the living of Christian values there is no genuine freedom. The reality of freedom is founded exclusively on the effectiveness of the protection against the compulsion of Sin afforded the believer by the community.

This intrinsic relationship between freedom and community is given its most forceful expression in a context where the word freedom does not appear. It occurs when Paul is dealing with a question on marriage proposed by the Corinthians who felt that a believer married to a pagan should be forced to divorce. Paul disagreed. As long as the unbeliever consented to live with the convert, they should not be forced to separate, 'for the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy' (1 Cor 7:14).

Paul's concern here is to capitalize on the goodwill shown by the unbeliever. His hope is that it will lead to conversion (7:16; cf. 1 Pet 3:1-2). But he goes further by saying that the unbeliever is 'sanctified', because this is a term that he elsewhere reserves to describe the state of believers. This letter, for example, is addressed 'to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus' (1:2). The justification for his claim is provided by the practice [383] of the Corinthian Church of not baptizing their children. We have to assume that this was the case because otherwise there would be no parallel with the situation of the unbeliever. Despite the lack of baptism, that is, the sacrament of formal admission into the community, the Corinthians considered their children to be 'holy' and not 'unclean'. This is comprehensible only if they believed (and Paul finds no fault with their attitude) that their children had never been enslaved to Sin. They had never belonged to the 'world'. They were born free, because they were born into a Christian community which protected them from influences that would have made them unclean. Equally, Paul felt that even association with the community through marriage would provide a counterbalance to the

false orientation of the 'world', and one which he hoped would prove increasingly effective.

Selfishness

Given this realistic understanding of the nature of Christian freedom, Paul could not but be highly sensitive to the ways in which this freedom is endangered. Conversion had been an overwhelming experience for the Corinthians. It brought them to a state of exaltation which was intensified by the profusion of charismatic gifts. This they interpreted as a complete take-over by the Spirit. Because they now were different, they had to feel different. They were 'new', and 'old' values and customs were irrelevant. Hence the pride they took in the fact that a man was living with his stepmother, a form of incest 'that is not found even among pagans' (1 Cor 5:1). Paul's objection was immediate and violent, and he expressed himself in a metaphor derived from the Jewish Passover ritual. 'Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump [of dough]? Cleanse out the old leaven in order that you may be a new lump [of dough], as you should be, unleavened' (5:7).

Ideally, the community should be 'unleavened', completely free of Sin, and the rhetorical question indicates that Paul expected the Corinthians to have assimilated this point. It was part of Jewish tradition that the messianic community would be sinless. 'Then shall wisdom be bestowed on the elect, and they shall all live and never again Sin, either through ungodliness or through pride. . . . And they shall not again transgress, nor shall they sin all the days of their life' (1 *Henoch* 5:8–9). A sinner, therefore, makes the community a living lie. More seriously, the barrier erected against Sin is thereby penetrated and influences inimical to authentic development are [384] once again operative. The presence of Sin dilutes and obscures the inspiration of authenticity. All, in consequence, suffer loss through the failure of one. 'If anyone has caused pain [through sinning], he has caused it, not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to you all' (2 Cor 2:5).

The fundamental error of the Corinthians was to exaggerate their freedom. They had failed to recognize that freedom has two aspects which, though intimately associated, must be carefully distinguished. Basic to the notion of freedom is the lack of restraint or compulsion, and founded on this is a capacity to act. These two facets can be termed 'freedom *from*' and 'freedom *to*' respectively. 'Freedom *from*' is absolute. In Christ the believer is totally liberated from the compulsion of Sin. From this, however, the Corinthians drew the erroneous conclusion that their 'freedom *to*' was also absolute, and that they could do precisely what they wished. Hence their slogan, 'All things are lawful to me' (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23).

In Paul's view they should have seen that this could not possibly be a correct attitude for Christians. To adopt this slogan is to proclaim that in the ultimate

analysis others do not really matter. It betrays an attitude that is totally incompatible with genuine community, because those who profess it in effect isolate themselves from others. In destroying community they thereby remove their only protection against the compulsion of Sin, and negate the very basis of their 'freedom *from*'. The practical effect of the slogan, therefore, is to put them back into the condition of slavery from which they had been redeemed. Hence, to the slogan Paul opposes the injunction, 'Let no one seek his own good but the good of the other' (1 Cor 10:24).

The question of the propriety of Christians eating the superfluous meat from pagan sacrifices which was sold on the public market affords a striking illustration of how seriously Paul took this principle. Arguing that 'an idol has no real existence', that 'there is no God but one' (1 Cor 8:4), and that 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it' (10:26), some Corinthians reached the theoretically correct conclusion that there could be no objection to believers eating such meat. Paul approved this initiative in a delicate moral issue, and concurred in the solution (10:25). Yet at the same time he found fault with the Corinthians for acting on it. 'Not all possess this knowledge. Some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. . . . And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, [385] the brother for whom Christ died' (8:7-11). The reaction of the 'weak' was objectively wrong, but because it was a facet of a concrete situation it should have been taken into consideration. Genuine concern for others demanded that their needs should be given the first priority. 'If food scandalizes my brother I will never eat meat, lest I scandalize my brother' (8:13).

Paul was fully aware that speculative truth can cast a cloak of respectability over attitudes that are fundamentally selfish. Hence, his insistence that the decisive factor in the moral judgement of Christians must be the probable effect on others of the proposed line of action. It would have been surprising had he taught anything else, given what we have seen of his understanding of the organic unity of the Christian community. If believers do not exist save as members of the body, they cannot judge as if they were entirely independent. To make knowledge, however accurate, the exclusive basis of judgement is inappropriate to the believers' mode of being in Christ. Since without love they are nothing (13:2), the knowledge out of which they act must spring from love. Because 'knowledge puffs up whereas love builds up' (8:1), Paul prays that 'your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment so that you may choose the things that really matter' (Phil 1:9-10).

Conclusion

The Christian community is an organic unity in which the members are vitally related to each other through participation in a common life. By love they are bound together in a mode of existence which is the antithesis of the

individualistic mode of existence that constitutes the 'world'. Only in this mode do they exist as the Creator intended humanity to exist. They are protected from the compulsion of Sin conceived as the false value system of a disoriented society, and thus are free to become what God destined them to be. This community is 'Christ' in that it prolongs incarnationally the power of love that was the essence of his mission. It represents the saving force of Christ because in the world it demonstrates the reality of an alternative mode of existence in which humanity is not dominated by the egocentricity that provokes possessiveness, jealousy and strife. To enter this community is to abandon the individualism of self-affirmation. In a group which possesses 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16) the individual is distinguished only by different Spirit-given gifts of service (12:6).

Eucharist⁶

[56] Having surveyed Paul's understanding of the nature of Christian community, we are now in a position to investigate in greater depth his treatment of the central act of this community, the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The Words of Institution

In addition to Paul (1 Cor 11:24–5) the words used by Jesus to institute the eucharist are recorded by the three synoptics (Mt 26:26–9; Mk 14:22–5; Lk 22:15–20). It is now generally recognized that these four accounts are derived from liturgical versions. What Jesus actually said and did was preserved with minor variations in different churches, and when the Gospels were given their definitive form the words actually in use in the various eucharistic celebrations were inserted into the narrative of the Last Supper. Paul's version is most closely related to that of Luke, and it has been suggested that it records the usage of the church of Antioch. The plausibility of this hypothesis, which is impossible to prove or disprove, rests exclusively on the fact that Paul's closest association was with the church of that city (Acts 11:25–6), even though he also had contacts with the churches in Damascus (Acts 9:19) and Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–30). Antioch was the home to which he invariably returned after his journeys.

In 11:23 we find the technical terms 'to receive' and 'to pass on' which place Paul as an intermediary in a chain of tradition. The same verbs appear apropos of the kerygmatic creed in 15:3, but there is a significant variation in that here he explicitly designates the one from whom he received that which he transmitted, 'I received *from the Lord*' (11:23). The formula in question, however, betrays characteristic signs of liturgical usage in a Greek-speaking community. In what sense, then, can Paul say that he received it from the Lord? For some exegetes

⁶ The second part of this article originally appeared in *Worship* 51 (1977) 56–70, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

Paul simply intended to evoke Jesus as the origin of the tradition that he had actually received from other men. Others [57] understand the phrase as a claim that the words of institution were communicated to him in a vision of the risen Christ. Both of these views present obvious difficulties. If the first respects the characteristics of the institutional formula, it does violence to the words of Paul. The second, while doing justice to the apostle's statement, ignores the liturgical colouring of the formula. A much more satisfactory solution is suggested by a point noted in the first part of this article. Christ is not only the founder of the community of believers, but in a real sense *he is the community* (6:15; 12:12) because it is through the community that the saving reality of Christ is made effective in the world. What Paul has received from the community, therefore, he has received from the Lord. This interpretation is the only one to do full justice both to Paul's words and to the liturgical character of the formula of institution, and it underlines once again the radical realism of the apostle's understanding of salvation.

The formula of institution can be broken down into two parts, the statements concerning the bread and the cup, and the injunctions concerning repetition.

The Bread and the Cup

The meaning of the statements, 'This is my body' and 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood' (11:24–5), is not unambiguously settled by their structure, because the identity established by the verb 'to be' can be understood either symbolically (cf. Mt 13:37–8) or realistically. In order to determine which sense Paul intended we have to have recourse to another factor, namely, the Jewish comprehension of 'covenant'. There could be no covenant without a real relationship to the victim sacrificed to seal the covenant. Thus we read with reference to the Sinai covenant, 'And Moses took the blood, and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words"' (Exod 24:8). It would have been inconceivable to have used a substitute designed to symbolize the blood. The reality of the blood gave reality to the covenant.

Nothing emerges with greater clarity from the whole of the Pauline correspondence than the apostle's belief that the death of Christ inaugurated a new form of relationship between God and humanity, a relationship that is renewed for each individual through personal appropriation. This suggests that he understood the words, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood,' in a non-symbolic [58] sense. What the believers drink seals them into the new covenant. If the drinking is thought of in purely symbolic terms, then the new covenant must be conceived in the same way. It would have been impossible for an individual formed in the Jewish tradition as Paul was to have made a distinction between these two elements. A purely symbolic cause would not produce a real effect. Hence, from the reality of the effect (new covenant) we are led to infer the reality of the cause

(what is contained in the cup is the blood of Christ). This interpretation of the cup necessarily imposes a parallel understanding of the statement regarding the bread.

Even though 10:14–22 is encountered first in the perusal of the epistle, this passage in fact represents the consequence of Paul's understanding of the words of institution. In it he draws a parallel between Christian participation in the eucharist (10:16–17) and the participation of Jews (10:18) and pagans (10:19–20) in their ritual meals. It is often assumed that Paul is arguing from the implications of such rituals to the meaning of the eucharist, but the very structure of the text makes it much more probable that the reverse is true. The principal point that Paul is concerned to get across is, 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons' (10:21). To this end he argues that if a certain thing happens as a result of participation in the eucharist, then it must be assumed that both Jews and pagans assume something similar to be effected by their rituals. In consequence, a believer who participates both in the eucharist and in pagan rituals involves himself in contradictory commitments. Why this impossible situation should be avoided will be evident from what has been said above regarding Paul's vision of the nature of Christian community.

The premise on which Paul builds his argument is clearly stated. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not *koinônia* in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not *koinônia* in the body of Christ?' (10:16). The rhetorical interrogative form clearly indicates Paul's belief that this doctrine is nothing new to the Corinthians. He regularly uses this technique to introduce points to which his converts have given notional assent without fully grasping the implications (e.g. 3:16; 5:6; 6:16; 19; 9:24). The problem is to determine the precise meaning he gives to *koinônia*. The term appears frequently in both the Septuagint and profane Greek, but Paul uses it for the first time in this letter. Two instances precede its use in the present context. [59] 'God is faithful, by whom you were called into the *koinônia* of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord' (1:9); 'I do all things for the sake of the gospel in order that I may become a *syn-koinônos* of it' (9:23).

In 1:9 the term is normally translated 'fellowship', but in the light of the first part of this article it will be recognized that this rendering gives only a superficial glimpse of what Paul has in mind. When accepted, the saving call of God brings the believer into a new mode of existence whose dominant characteristic is the sharing of a common life in an organic unity. 'Fellowship' is only an expression of the communal participation that takes place on the level of being. Within the framework of Paul's thought, therefore, *koinônia* in 1:9 must be given its root meaning of 'common share or participation in'. This is confirmed by the use of the cognate term *koinônos* in 9:23 to which Paul has added his cherished particle *syn*. The basic idea of this verse is that Paul hopes to share in the blessings of the gospel with those whom he has saved. The communal element is again to

the fore, and the preceding discussion has underlined the extreme realism of this aspect of the apostle's thought. Hence, only the literal translation 'joint-partaker' or 'joint-sharer' is appropriate here. 'Full partner' would be a more elegant rendering, but it is susceptible of the same weak interpretation as 'fellowship' in 1:9.

If the apostle's understanding of the nature of Christian community demands that *koinōnia* in 1:9 and *koinōnos* in 9:23 be understood as connoting 'real participation' on the level of being, then there is a strong presumption that Paul intended the same connotation in 10:16. The eating of the bread (10:17) and the drinking of the cup (11:27–8) is a real participation in the body and blood of Christ. This is possible only if the bread and wine are in fact the body and blood of Christ. The concept of spiritual communion was unknown to the Jews, and a share in the sacrifice was possible only through physical consumption of the flesh of the victim.

Remembrance

The statements concerning the bread and the cup are both followed by the injunction, 'Do this in remembrance of me' (11:24–5). 'Do this' is a rubric which covers the taking of the bread/cup, the giving of thanks, and the pronouncement of the word of institution. The motive behind the desire of Jesus that these should be repeated in the community he founded is revealed by the second part, 'in remembrance of me'. Joachim Jeremias attempted to show that the meaning is 'that [60] God may remember me', but this interpretation has been shown to be without foundation.⁷ One of the reasons why Jeremias felt himself obliged to maintain this position was his conviction that it was inconceivable that the Lord should fear that his disciples would forget him. This, however, is to misunderstand the type of remembrance that is envisioned. To remember Jesus authentically is to become aware, not merely of his historical existence, but of the meaning of his life and in particular of his death. By this gesture Jesus offered an opportunity which the believer has grasped. Remembering, therefore, involves an element of gratitude, but more especially it incorporates an acceptance of the responsibility of prolonging the saving mission of Christ (11:26). Christian remembrance is concerned with the past only in so far as it is constitutive of the present and a summons to the future. In the active remembrance of total commitment to Christ the past is made real in the present and its power is released to shape the future.

Death the Proclamation of Life

The relationship between remembrance and mission is clearly indicated in the words, 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim

⁷ D. Jones, 'Anamnesis in the LXX and the Interpretation of 1 Cor 11:25' *JTS* 6 (1955) 183–91.

the death of the Lord until he comes' (11:26). In this commentary appended to the traditional formula Paul reveals his comprehension of what happens when the gestures of Christ are reproduced.

The view that Paul saw the broken loaf and the outpoured wine as a symbolic declaration of the death of Jesus is without foundation. A number of scholars insist, at first sight justifiably, that the verb 'to proclaim' necessarily involves a verbal element and, in consequence, claim that the verse must be understood as an allusion to the retelling of the passion, or at least that section concerning the Last Supper, during the celebration of the eucharist. Nothing seems more natural than that the passion should be evoked on such an occasion, but when viewed objectively this seems to be the only justification for the proposed interpretation. It is not a very strong argument, and it is countered by a number of considerations. The wording of the verse—in particular the present tense of the verb 'to proclaim' and the terminal phrase 'until he comes'—rather suggests that Paul is concerned with the implications of the sacramental act. This impression is strengthened by the commentary [61] found in 10:17 to which we shall return in a moment. Finally, we have already noted a number of passages (1 Thess 1:8; Phil 2:14–16; 1 Cor 4:16–17; 11:1) which disqualify any attempt to limit 'proclamation' to the purely verbal level. Paul was fully conscious of the importance of the existential affirmation that is manifested by quality of life, and this dimension would seem to fit the context here perfectly. The eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup are a statement, and what is 'said' is the death of Christ.

The death of Christ is, of course, a central Pauline theme which has given rise to a variety of interpretations. In great part this is due to the fact that death can be looked at from different perspectives. It can be viewed negatively as putting an end to any further possibility of achievement. From another point of view death can be seen as being in itself an achievement, e.g. when it is accepted for an end judged more valuable than survival. A third way of looking at death is to see it as focusing to exceptional clarity the dominant quality or characteristic of a life. Which perspective was that of Paul? His consistent emphasis that Christ died 'for others' (e.g. 1 Cor 8:11; 1 Thess 5:10) immediately directs our attention to the second possibility, but the third is not thereby to be excluded. For Paul the self-giving which animated the whole existence of Jesus came to its highest expression in his death (cf. Gal 2:20), and provided the most radical demonstration of the way God desired his creatures to live. 'He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves' (2 Cor 5:15).

Because he had thoroughly assimilated this lesson Paul was able to say of his own mode of existence, 'We are afflicted in every way . . . always carrying in the body the dying (*nekrosis*) of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh' (2 Cor 4:8–11). The paradoxical tone of this statement is due to the fact that 'life' is used in

two distinct senses. By 'while we live' Paul means his ordinary physical existence which is continually threatened by persecution. Yet that ordinary existence is capable of manifesting the 'life of Jesus'. Both terms in this phrase are charged with significance. 'Jesus' is Paul's way of formally underlining the historicity of him who is now the risen Lord, and 'life, as we have seen, is his shorthand designation for authentic existence. The authenticity of the humanity of Jesus is reproduced in the person of [62] Paul because he carries in his body the 'dying of Jesus.' The term *nekrosis* is not attested prior to Paul, and it seems likely that he invented it in order to bring out a specific dimension. 'Dying' evokes both life and death, or more specifically life as culminating in death. The way in which Jesus died was in perfect harmony with the way he had lived. His whole existence, therefore, was 'for others'. His death only brought to unambiguous expression what was always there during his lifetime. If Paul carries in his person the 'dying of Jesus', it can only be because his whole being is dedicated to the same mission, the salvation of others (10:33). The apostle's existential attitude is identical with that of Jesus and so 'manifests the life of Jesus'. In other words, the saving love of Jesus is made concrete and real in the loving of Paul.

Once the apostle's vision of the death of Christ as the decisive clue to the quality of his existence is clearly grasped, it becomes possible to understand the proclamation of the death of the Lord that takes place in the eucharist. The realism of Paul's approach needs to be kept clearly in mind. This forces us to go behind the sacramental gestures to the disposition of the participants. The attitude of those who eat and drink is essential to the proclamation because if their imitation of Christ (11:1) is defective, then, as Paul expressly insists, 'it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat' (11:20). Only if the participants have truly put on Christ (Gal 3:27), which is equivalent to putting on love (Col 3:14), is there an authentic eucharist. In remembering they acknowledge the demand implicit in the death which makes their new mode of being possible. By their comportment they keep that possibility alive for others. What they are is focused to brilliant clarity in the sacramental gestures, and Christ becomes a reality in the 'world'. They incarnate the saving love expressed in his death, and will continue to exercise this function until it is rendered unnecessary by his return, 'until he comes'. This evocation of the physical presence of Christ in the eschaton reinforces the above interpretation of the proclamation of his death in existential terms. Love gave substance to the words of institution, and only loving can continue to do so.

Bread and the Body

If 11:26 reveals one facet of Paul's understanding of the eucharist, another appears in 10:17. We have already discussed the previous verse which speaks of *koinônia* in the blood and body of Christ, but at this point it is important to underline that [63] 10:16 represents a traditional formulation recognized

and acknowledged by the Corinthians.⁸ They, however, had failed to grasp the practical implication of his *koinônia*, and so Paul inverts the traditional order (bread–cup) in order to facilitate the transition to his authoritative statement, ‘Because the bread is one, we who are many are one body because we all partake of the one bread’ (10:17).

The immediate impression given by this formulation is that the eucharist is constitutive of the body of Christ. It is through the eating of the bread that the body comes into being. An immediate objection to this interpretation is provided by what Paul himself says of the relationship of baptism to the body, ‘By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body’ (12:13). In other words, the body exists prior to the incorporation of the believers, as Käsemann has perceptively noted:

If we put on the Body of Christ or are baptized into it, this Body is therefore already there before our faith and baptism, just as Christ is present prior to our faith. Nor is the unity of this Body based on baptism. According to 1 Cor 12:13 we are baptized into the unity of the Body. Unity therefore is not the result of our coming together, but the sign manual of Christ. Hence, unity does not grow out of the members of the Body, as if it could be thought of quantitatively as the sum of them, but it is qualitatively the identity of Christ with himself in all his members.⁹

Käsemann, of course, has in mind the gnostic myth of the Archetypal Man which, for him, constitutes the pre-existent unity. This is neither obvious nor necessary. After his conversion Paul came into an already existing community, and it was natural for him to consider his converts as doing the same. As we saw in the first part of this article Paul conceived the community as the effective channel of saving grace which transformed the individual by absorbing him into its organic unity. It is within this perspective, therefore, that we must try to understand the formative force of the eucharist relative to the body of Christ. The limitation thus imposed necessarily directs our attention to the category of ‘growth’.

The Pauline letters are replete with indications that the new mode of existence that the believers enjoy in Christ is not a static state. The participle, ‘those being saved’ (1:18), unambiguously suggests a [64] process which 3:7 qualifies as ‘growth’ (cf. Col 2:19). The primary emphasis is not on the quantitative extension of the church but on the qualitative improvement of those who are already members. There is always room for ever greater perfection. Nowhere perhaps was this more evident than at Corinth, and particularly in the attitude of the Corinthians towards the eucharist. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find Paul insisting on the contribution of the eucharist to the intensification of the unity of the body.

⁸ For details see. E. Käsemann, ‘The Pauline Doctrine of the Last Supper’ in his *Essays on New Testament Themes* (SBT 41; London: SCM Press, 1964), 109.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 111.

As a true pedagogue he begins with the simple and obvious fact that one loaf is used in the liturgical celebration. As such it is a symbol of unity. But it is more than a symbol because this bread is the body of Christ (10:16). Yet for the power of Christ to become active, human involvement is necessary. Unity, or more precisely a greater unity, is achieved only when 'we all partake'. For all to eat a common loaf is already a sharing, but because of the particular nature of this loaf Christ is directly involved. The participants share with each other but they also 'participate' (*koinônia*) in Christ. Just as bread sustains physical existence, they draw from the source of their common life (cf. Col 2:19). In the action of partaking they commit themselves anew in faith and love not only to Christ but to each other. They again recall (11:24–5) the root of their new being and the obligation of genuine concern that Christ's example imposes. The already existing unity (12:13) is thereby deepened, and the body acquires a new and more profound reality. The Christ who is present under the sacramental species becomes more effectively present in the body which incarnates more intensely the creative love which animates his being. That love which alone empowers authentic transformation is released into a divided world in a lived demonstration which 'holds forth the word of life' (Phil 2:16).

Christ Divided

Thus far we have been discussing what might be termed Paul's theoretical approach to the eucharist. The underlying assumption was that the eucharist was celebrated in an ideal community. The real situation that Paul had to deal with was in fact very different. The Corinthians were far from perfect, not merely in the sense that they had not yet attained the ideal, but in the sense that their overconfidence had led them to misunderstand the way in which the eucharist achieves its effect. They imagined themselves to be in a definitive state of salvation whereas in reality they were only part of a process which could be aborted. This is why Paul begins [65] chapter 10 by drawing a parallel between their situation and that of the Israelites in the desert. The relevance of his reaction to our contemporary situation where many so-called communities have no organic life can hardly be overemphasized.

The situation at Corinth is described in explicit detail. 'In the first place, when you assemble for a church meeting, I hear that there are divisions among you' (11:18). There is no 'secondly' in the continuation of the text, and it seems likely that Paul has in mind other unsatisfactory features of the Corinthian assemblies (cf. 11:34), perhaps with particular emphasis on their attitude towards charismatic gifts. Hence, the divisions are not the parties mentioned in 1:12 and 3:4 but the subgroups created by the selfishness of the participants. 'For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate the have-nots?' (11:21–2).

From this attitude Paul draws the conclusion, 'When, therefore, you assemble together it is not to eat the Lord's Supper' (11:20). In this literal translation the verse gives the impression that Paul is referring to the intention of the Corinthians. They come together, not with a view to eating the Lord's Supper, but with some other purpose in mind. It is obvious, however, that the Corinthians assembled with the intention of celebrating the Lord's Supper, because what Paul criticizes is the way they go about it. Hence, the apostle must be referring to the consequences of their attitude. The only viable interpretation is that found in the paraphrase of the Revised Standard Version, 'When you meet together it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat.' No matter what the Corinthians think they are doing, they are not in fact eating the Lord's Supper, because their attitude precludes it. The shared being that is the new mode of existence in Christ should come to expression in the practical concern which sees that no one is in want. The selfishness of the Corinthians is the antithesis of what should be, and so makes the celebration of the Lord's Supper impossible. Although the perspective is slightly different, H. Conzelmann's paraphrase is equally accurate, 'When you assemble for a meeting, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper.'¹⁰

Since the Lord's Supper involves the transformation of bread and [66] wine into the body and blood of Christ, it would seem that for Paul the attitude of the Corinthians robbed the words of institution of validity. This is entirely congruent with the apostle's existential identification of the community of believers with Christ. In theory the community is Christ, but Paul was not concerned with this speculative aspect. His function as pastor was to ensure that the community was in fact Christ, i.e. truly animated by his life, fully penetrated by his spirit. As such the community could act with the power of Christ, and could speak with the authority of Christ. In an inauthentic community, such as that of Corinth, Christ is not present. The words of institution may be his but the voice which speaks them is not. The transforming authority is lacking and in consequence nothing happens. The words of institution do not effect what they signify.

It is impossible to prove apodictically that this was Paul's view, but it must be noted that nothing he says contradicts this interpretation. As translated by the RSV, 11:27 appears to do so. 'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.' The implication of this rendering is that the unworthy participant in the eucharist commits a sacrilege by consuming the body and blood of Christ which are there under the sacramental species in virtue of the words alone and without reference to the attitude of the community. This interpretation, however, depends on the participle 'profaning,' which does not appear in the Greek text, which says simply, 'will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' These words suggest a quite different explanation because 'to be guilty of the blood of someone' is most naturally understood as meaning, 'to be

¹⁰ *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 192.

responsible for the death of that person' (cf. Deut 19:10). In consequence, the import of this verse is to range the unworthy participant among those responsible for the killing of Jesus (cf. Heb 6:6; 10:29). In this perspective the relationship to the preceding verse becomes perfectly clear. Ideally, participation in the eucharist should be 'a proclamation of the death of the Lord' (11:26), but because of the participant's attitude it can become an act which places him among those responsible for his death. The antithesis could hardly have been formulated with more graphic force. Failure to proclaim the death of the Lord authentically is equivalent to persecution. Far from being an allusion to the real presence, this verse rather underlines the crucial importance for Paul [67] of the existential attitude of Christians. As always, his concern is with reality not with theory.

Hence, in the next verse it is natural to find the exhortation, 'Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup' (11:28). Respect for the eucharist demands that participation be preceded by self-examination. Such testing, however, presupposes a standard against which believers must measure themselves. This gives rise to the crucial question: what standard or criterion does Paul have in mind? On general principles we could immediately answer, Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:15). A more specific answer is provided by the next verse, 'Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself' (1 Cor 11:29).

The difficulty of determining the precise meaning of this verse is attested by the variants in the manuscript tradition, and which highlight the attempts to come to grips with it. In the Western Text the verse is given as, 'Anyone who eats and drinks *unworthily*, without discerning the body *of the Lord*, eats and drinks judgement upon himself.' The italicized words are universally recognized to be scribal additions designed to bring out the generally accepted meaning, which is that Paul condemns a failure to distinguish the eucharist from common food. The secondary character of the interpolations, however, does not necessarily mean that the interpretation is to be rejected. Among modern commentators it is maintained by E. B. Allo,¹¹ C. K. Barrett,¹² and H. Conzelmann.¹³ Such arguments as they offer are far from convincing. Conzelmann sees the verse as a variation of v. 27, and Barrett speaks of the parallelism between v. 27 and 29. Given the interpretation of v. 27 adopted above, these suggestions can only appear as forced in the extreme. They derived from a preoccupation with the problem of the real presence which is not Paul's concern in the present context.

It seems worthwhile, therefore, to explore the alternative possibility, namely, that 'the body' is an allusion to the community as the body of Christ. In a eucharistic context Paul has already stated that 'we who are many are one body' (10:17), so the terminology poses no difficulty. It is not as if the apostle were introducing the [68] concept for the first time. The community interpretation

¹¹ *1 Corinthians*, 282–3.

¹² *1 Corinthians*, 174–5.

¹³ *1 Corinthians*, 202.

is also recommended by the structure of 11:17–32. It has often been remarked that in this epistle Paul frequently organizes his material in a three-part structure in which the first and third parts correspond (e.g. 1:18–2:5; 3:5–4:5; 12–14). There can be no doubt about the threefold structure here. In 11:17–22 Paul deals with the actual situation at Corinth where divisions mean that the Lord's Supper is not in fact celebrated. In the centre section (11:23–6) he is concerned with the eucharist in itself as the proclamation of the death of the Lord. In the third and final part (11:27–32) the admonitory character of his discourse coupled with his use of the second person clearly indicates that he has the concrete situation at Corinth again in view. The first and third parts are in fact related as problem and solution. The Corinthians' acceptance of divisions is a sign that the 'body' character of the community has not been understood. The organic unity that should bind the believers together has been neither recognized nor affirmed. Hence, anyone who dares to participate in the eucharist without adverting to the Body is guilty of perpetuating the divisions which make the Lord's Supper impossible (11:20), and in consequence eats and drinks to his own condemnation. The community interpretation of 11:29, therefore, accentuates both the unity of Paul's thought and its relevance to the Corinthian situation.

Barrett, however, objects that this interpretation strains the meaning of the verb *diakrinein*. This would be difficult, for the verb has a wide spectrum of meaning, 'to quarrel, to doubt, to arrange, to separate, to differentiate, to judge'. In fact, the usage here is very close to that in 4:7, 'Who discerns you?' i.e. who singles you out? The Corinthians had given notional assent to the concept of the community as the body of Christ, but their behaviour revealed all too clearly that they had no real grasp of the implications of what they had accepted. They accepted jealousy and strife as part of the normal pattern of existence even for those in Christ (3:1–4). It seems entirely natural that Paul should insist on the communal dimension of the eucharist. Only the profound conviction that all believers shared the common life of the body could restrain and eventually destroy the centrifugal tendencies that were the residue of their previous self-centred mode of existence. It is on this precise point that believers must examine themselves (11:28) and discern themselves (11:31) before they participate in the eucharist. Since the [69] authentic community is Christ (6:15; 12:12), we thus rejoin Paul's basic criterion, the historical Jesus (2 Cor 5:15).

Conclusion

The dominant characteristic of Paul's treatment of the eucharist is its extreme realism. There is no exalted poetry, no flights into mysticism. It is firmly rooted in his concept of the community of faith as the basic reality of the New Age introduced by the death of Christ. Christ remains incarnationally present in and to the world through the community that is his body. The organic unity which is integral to this body is reinforced and intensified by the eucharist. Not by the

eucharist in itself, because Paul would energetically repudiate any mechanical approach to the sacrament. The person of Christ is really present under the sacramental species only when the words of institution are spoken by 'Christ', an authentic community animated by the creative saving love which alone enables humanity to 'live'. The power of Christ is released and becomes effective only when the participants demonstrate a lived realization of the demand implicit in the organic unity of which they are members. The reality of the body is presupposed if the sacramental elements are to become the body and blood of Christ, but in the lived remembering of the supreme act of love the body develops with a growth that is from God.

POSTSCRIPT

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The Necessity of Divisions (v. 19)

One of the aspects of 1 Cor 11:17–34 to which I did not pay sufficient attention was the extraordinary statement in v. 19, 'there must be divisions among you in order that those who are genuine may be recognized among you'. The first part of my article had stressed as strongly as I could the importance of the unity of the church for Paul. It is what differentiated it from the world or society, which for him was characterized above all by divisions. It was entirely natural, therefore, that the divisions within the church at Corinth reported by Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11–12), should have been the first topic dealt with (and at length) in this letter (chs. 1–4). Paul's message there is clear and unambiguous: there is no place for factions within the church.

Here, on the contrary, he says, not that divisions are inevitable,¹⁴ which is but elementary common sense, but that they are *necessary*. An element of compulsion is integral to all uses of *dei*.¹⁵ Thus some commentators speak of a 'divine necessity',¹⁶ but not in any way that makes real sense. According to Fee, God is working out his own ultimate purposes by having the 'approved' manifest themselves even now.¹⁷ For Collins, as harbinger of the eschaton divisions proclaimed the imminence of the divine judgement.¹⁸ Schrage claims that it is a question of 'eine Erprobung und Klärung dienende eschatologische Notwendigkeit. Das impliziert keine dann im Unterschied zu Kap. 1–4 problematische positive Charakterisierung der Spaltungen, sondern signalisiert

¹⁴ Against Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 611. ¹⁵ BAGD 172a.

¹⁶ So Talbert without any further explanation (*Reading Corinthians*, 73).

¹⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 539. ¹⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 419, 422.

eine radikale Gefardung'.¹⁹ The difficulty with interpretations such as these is that they interpret v. 19 as if it stood in splendid isolation. The real problem, however, is: Were this in fact the meaning, how does v. 19 relate to its context? What contribution does it make to Paul's line of argument?

Those who are conscious of the need to explain how v. 19 works in its context tend to think of it as irony. This is only a suggestion in Fee,²⁰ but Thiselton approvingly quotes Horsely's translation, 'For of course there must be "discrimination" among you so that it will become clear who among you are the "distinguished ones".'²¹ For his part Garland prefers Campbell's rendering, 'For there actually has to be discrimination in your meetings, so that, if you please, the elite may stand out from the rest.'²² Thiselton justifies his choice by rightly pointing to Paul's use of savage irony in 1 Cor 4:8–13. In addition he correctly notes that Paul comes down more heavily on the Corinthians on the basis of oral reports.²³ In opposition to the letter from Corinth (1 Cor 7:1), such reports indicated problems in the behaviour of the Corinthians of which they were unconscious, but which Paul believed they should have recognized.

There are two problems with this solution. First, the paraphrase takes considerable liberties with the Greek.²⁴ What we are given is what the commentators wished Paul had written. Second, any elite is so conscious of its worth, that it does not need contrast to found its self-identity. Whether the 'have-nots' were present or not, the better off members of the community were fully convinced that they had a right to more comfort and better food than those lower down the social ladder. The rich do not need the poor to feel superior.

The most original hypothesis is tossed out by Thiselton, 'May it not be that the educated and sophisticated "strong" at Corinth had already anticipated and addressed criticism about "divisiveness" by taking up the saying Not everyone who claimed to be a believer might be proved to be tried and true; hence all this talk of unconditional eucharistic oneness was debatable. They appealed to the eschatological maxim "dissensions are unavoidable".'²⁵ I used 'tossed out' advisably, because Thiselton does not develop his suggestion that part of v. 19 may reflect a Corinthian slogan. Since this verse expresses sentiments with which Paul could not possibly agree (the standard test for a Corinthian slogan), the possibility that it is a slogan is worth looking at more closely.

As presented by Thiselton, this hypothesis has little chance of winning support, because his wording differs so much from the text. This, however, does not have to be the case. The first and most obvious point is that, were v. 19

¹⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.21. ²⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 538.

²¹ *1 Corinthians*, 859. ²² *1 Corinthians*, 539.

²³ I had already made this point in 'Interpolations in 1 Corinthians' *CBQ* 48 (1986) 92.

²⁴ The most extreme example of such linguistic liberties is perhaps, 'For there must be cliques among you or your favourite leaders would not be so conspicuous' (J. B. Phillips, *Letters to Young Churches: A Translation of the New Testament Epistles* (London: Collins Fontana, 1955), 75).

²⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 858–9.

a Corinthian slogan, it would not have contained the repeated 'among you', as Thiselton implicitly recognized. The Corinthians would have articulated a general principle, and would have left it to Paul to deduce how it covered their particular situation.

After dropping these two phrases we are left with, 'there must be divisions in order that those who are genuine (*dokimoi*) may be recognized'. In trying to understand what this could have meant to the Corinthians the starting-point must be recognition of the fact that they believed divisions to be integral to human nature. While with them, Paul had certainly emphasized the importance of unity as the feature which differentiated the church from the world. Yet subsequently he was forced to write, 'While there is jealousy and strife among you are you not fleshly and walking according to man? (*ouxhi sarkikoi este kai kata anthrôpon peripateite*)' (1 Cor 3:3). In Paul's lexicon *kata anthrôpon* (Rom 3:5; 1 Cor 9:8; 15:32; Gal 1:11; 3:15) is the antithesis of *kata theon* (Rom 8:27; 2 Cor 7:9, 10, 11) or *kata kyrion* (2 Cor 11:17). If the two latter mean 'as God willed',²⁶ then *kata anthrôpon* can best be rendered 'according to the common estimation', naturally of those who are 'fleshly', i.e. those who belong to the world.²⁷ For Paul *zêlos kai eris* 'jealousy and strife', which occur together in Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20, were part of the fabric of fallen humanity. He was not thinking of domestic squabbles, but of the rivalries and discord that are the consequence of individuals seeking societal domination in one way or another.²⁸

No doubt Paul condemned such behaviour while at Corinth. Why did not the Corinthians listen? No matter where they looked, be it back into the past, or at all contemporary societies, factions were an obvious and consistent feature. It was natural, in consequence, to think of jealousy and strife as somehow endemic to human nature. It was simply the way human beings were. Nothing could be done about it. From their perspective, reality contradicted Paul's vision for the church, revealing it to be a utopian dream. He was asking them to do the impossible. Hence, they ignored him, as they did his injunction not to associate with immoral men (1 Cor 5:9–13). They had failed to appreciate the distinction between 'humanity as such' and 'fallen humanity', which he probably had not thought to spell out in detail. It was the sort of thing that Paul tended to take for granted. In consequence, they believed what was true of the latter to be true of the former.

²⁶ See J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1988), 480; V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 387.

²⁷ This is very close to 'according to your natural inclinations' (NJB, NRSV). Renderings such as 'mere humans' (Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 127), 'like ordinary men' (RSV, NAB), 'any merely human person' (Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 294) would seem to imply the existence of super-men, which is nonsense.

²⁸ See in particular M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 81–2.

The consequences of rivalries and discord are not pleasant, and it would be extraordinary if intellectually curious Greeks had not sought to understand why they should be so persistent. One simple answer is that winners are known only by the fact of losers. Virtue only becomes evident in the presence of vice. Winners and the virtuous are what they are as the result of having been tested. In a word, they are *dokimoi*. It is an easy step to formulate this insight in proverbial form: 'There must be dissensions in order that those who are tried and tested (*dokimoi*) may be recognized.' Its value was to show the positive side of what could be an unpleasant experience. 'Every cloud has a silver lining.' When v. 19 is read in this perspective, there is no need to think in terms of eschatology or apocalyptic or unknown dominical sayings. It is simply a proverbial summary of the way things are. Thus clearly it could have been used by at least some of the Corinthians to justify distinctions that they wanted to maintain. The 'perfect' did not want to be confused with the 'immature' (1 Cor 2:6; 3:1). The 'spirituals' (*pneumatikoi*) knew that they were superior to the 'soul-men' (*psychikoi*) (1 Cor 2:14–15).

Since Paul had not been informed of the problems at the eucharist by the Corinthians, they cannot have used the proverb to justify their attitude in that situation. As far as they were concerned, they had nothing to regret. This forces us to assume that Paul had heard the proverb at Corinth and that it had stuck in his mind, because it was the antithesis of what he believed. It returned to the surface of his thought in dealing with the eucharist because it was precisely the sort of defence that the Corinthians might have mounted. In order to deny them this line of argument Paul adopted the proverb and inserted 'among you' twice. Rhetorically this gave him a double advantage. It removed the proverb from the realm of general principles, and focused the attention of the Corinthians by the forceful, 'I am speaking about your behaviour which reflects the standards of the world you despise.'

The Reality of the Lord's Supper (v. 20)

In my article I argued apropos of this verse, that at Corinth the effort to celebrate the eucharist failed completely. The attitude of the Corinthians robbed the words of institution of all validity. They no longer effected what they signified. Bread did not become the body of Christ, and the wine did not become his blood.

In this I was consciously reacting against an alternative interpretation, which would appear to be legitimized by the literal translation of Paul's Greek, 'when you meet together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat'. When taken out of context this can be read, not as a judgement of fact, but as an expression of psychological intention, which is perfectly articulated by the paraphrase of the NRSV (1989), 'When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper'. This interpretation has a long history in the Latin tradition where *ouk éstin* was

read as *ouk exestin* 'it is not permitted' (*non licet*).²⁹ It is easy to detect its roots in a desire to preserve the eucharist inviolate whatever be the external circumstances of priest or congregation. It is entirely in keeping with an *ex opere operato* theology in which only minimal intention on the part of the priest coupled with the enunciation of the words of institution was sufficient for a valid eucharist.

I cannot see that today this interpretation is defended by anyone. All recognize that the divisions in question gain greater importance because they occur in the celebration of the eucharist. According to Fee, 'even though it is *intended* to be the Lord's Supper that they are eating "in assembly", their carrying over to his meal the distinctions that divided them sociologically also meant that it turned out to be "not the Lord's Supper that you eat".'³⁰ Collins writes, 'What was happening in Corinth was not in his judgment the Lord's supper.'³¹ As usual Schrage is most explicit and forceful, '*Ouk estin* enthält kein finales Moment im Sinne von "es geschieht nicht um" (natürlich wollen auch die Korinther ein Herrenmahl feiern!), sondern eine faktische Feststellung und eine Wertung im Sinne der objektiven Unmöglichkeit. Das Herrenmahl, wie es in Korinth gefeiert wird, verdient diesen Namen nicht, is nicht das, was es sein soll. . . . Es gibt aber keine wahre *communio* am Tisch des Herrn ohne *communio* mit dessen anderen Tischgenossen.'³²

Even though the Corinthians intended to celebrate the eucharist, and no doubt repeated accurately the words of institution, nonetheless Paul asserted that what they attempted to do was not the Lord's Supper. To the best of my knowledge no commentator has asked by what authority Paul made such a judgement; no more than I had when I wrote my article. No conditions are laid down in the institution of the eucharist. Believers were told simply, 'Do this in memory of me.'

I find the justification for Paul's action in a saying of Jesus, 'If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift' (Mt 5:23–4). In other words, a sacrifice is worthless if offered by one who has injured a brother, and who has not repaired the breach by seeking reconciliation; it achieves nothing.³³ Matthew felt

²⁹ See in particular E.-B. Allo, *Première épître aux Corinthiens* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1956), 273, e.g. Thomas Aquinas, *non licet vobis, dominicam coenam manducare, ad quam pransi acceditis* (*Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura* (ed. R. Cai; Taurini: Marietti, 1953), 1.353 n. 631).

³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 540.

³¹ *1 Corinthians*, 419, which he explains more fully later: 'Apparently the Christians of Corinth thought that their common meal, no matter the divisions that were manifest was the Lord's supper. For Paul, however, when Christians come together in an assembly marked by factions and divisions the meal they share is not the Lord's supper.'

³² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.22–3. Similarly Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 862–3.

³³ Bultmann thought this saying a more original form of the saying about prayer in Mk 11:25 (*The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 132). The possibility that it goes back to Jesus himself is accepted by Davies and Allison, *The Gospel according to St Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1.516.

that this saying established such an important principle regarding how to worship God that he drew on it for his commentary on the Our Father (Mt 6:14–15); that prayer can be said only in a reconciled community.³⁴ The situation at Corinth was exactly parallel. No one had even attempted to bring together the hostile factions. In consequence, the new sacrifice could not be offered. Here, then, we have a perfect example of a dominical saying being adapted to function in a situation which Jesus had not envisaged.

Institution and Meaning (vv. 23–6)

The two essential formulae in the words of institution—‘This is my body which is for you’ and ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood’—can be interpreted either literally (transubstantiation) or symbolically (transignification). The commentators without exception opt for the latter. Fee is an admirable spokesman, ‘The identification of the bread with the body is semitic imagery in its heightened form. As in all such identifications, he means, “this signifies/represents my body”. It is quite beyond Jesus’ intent and the framework within which he and the disciples lived that some actual change took place, or was intended to take place, in the bread itself. Such a view could only have arisen in the church at a much later stage when Greek modes of thinking had rather thoroughly replaced semitic ones.’³⁵

I find his last sentence extraordinary. It is highly improbable that any of Paul’s converts at Corinth had ever thought in semitic terms. Moreover, were any of Paul’s teachings to have been articulated in a semitic mode, his hearers would have transposed it automatically into a Greek mode. *Quod recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur.*

The essential historicity of the words of institution is now generally accepted,³⁶ as is the fundamental ambiguity of their meaning.³⁷ The vast majority of commentators, however, understand this as an invitation to opt for the symbolic possibility, which just happens to be the preference of their religious confession.³⁸ They see no reason why they should justify their choice. It is always poor methodology to take the easy way out.

In my article, while explicitly rejecting the force of any purely linguistic argument, I opted for the literal understanding of the words of institution. My line of argument was that for a Jew of Paul’s background a purely symbolic cause could not produce a real effect. If the sacrifice of Jesus brought into being the new covenant, the reality of the latter depended on the reality of the

³⁴ See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.616–17.

³⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 550.

³⁶ See in particular Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 427.

³⁷ This is true even of those committed to transubstantiation, e.g. J. Dupont, “Ceci est mon corps”, “Ceci est mon sang” *NRT* 80 (1958) 1037–8.

³⁸ Schrage explicitly claims that this is the majority opinion (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.35–6).

former.³⁹ Underlying my argument was the assumption that in order to benefit from a sacrifice one had to eat the flesh of the victim. Thus in order to participate in the new covenant believers had to eat the real flesh of Jesus; there was no such thing as spiritual communion.

I now think that this argument was perhaps a little simplistic. One could benefit from certain Jewish sacrifices without eating the flesh of the victim. This was certainly true of the sacrifices of expiation. The flesh was divided between God and the priests, and even the priests got nothing when the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the community or the sin of a high priest.⁴⁰ Fortunately Paul himself points us in a different direction. The fact that the bread is given 'for you' clearly indicates that Paul is thinking in terms of a cultic context. This is confirmed by the saying over the cup, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' It is a question of a covenant ritual where 'in' introduces a causal clause; the covenant is brought into being by the blood (cf. Exod 24:8).⁴¹ These two strands are drawn together and clarified by an earlier statement in this letter, 'Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed' (1 Cor 5:7b). For Paul, therefore, the Lord's Supper is the Passover sacrifice and should be interpreted in this perspective. This sacrifice, it will be recalled, produced tangible benefits, even for non-Jews who were permitted to participate. 'The whole community of Israel must keep it. Should a stranger residing with you wish to keep the Passover in honour of Yahweh, all the males of his household must be circumcised; he will be allowed to keep it and will count as a citizen of the country' (Exod 12:47–8). In addition to membership in the covenant *Jubilees* promises an added benefit, 'no plague shall come upon them to slay or to smite in that year in which they celebrate the Passover' (49:15).

The positive side of the Passover, however, is not the only one. If one missed the sacrificial meal for good reason, it could be made up a month later. 'But anyone who is clean, or who is not on a journey, but fails to keep the Passover, such a person will be outlawed from his people' (Num 9:9–13 = *Jubilees* 49:9). The only way to avoid such punishment was to eat the flesh of the paschal lamb. There was no symbolic or spiritual alternative. There was no way a man could say to members of his family, 'I was with you in spirit'. The only conclusion possible is that if Paul believed that something was brought into being by the Lord's Supper, he must have taken the words of Jesus realistically. Given his background, there was no other way to understand how the sacrifice of Christ the paschal lamb could have worked to create the new covenant.

³⁹ To the best of my knowledge this line of thought was first suggested by Dupont, 'dans la logique sacrificielle, il n'y pas d'alliance véritable sans une communion réelle à la victime elle-même' ('Ceci est mon corps', 1040).

⁴⁰ R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 2: *Institutions militaires. Institutions religieuses* (Paris: Cerf, 1960), 295–9.

⁴¹ See in particular Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 433.

Holladay has questioned whether v. 26 belonged to the liturgical tradition of the Lord's Supper, and answered that one cannot be certain.⁴² Such hesitation is rightly brushed aside by Schrage, 'Dass Paulus hier selbst spricht und nicht mehr der Tradition folgt, ergibt sich eindeutig aus *tou kyriou* statt *emon* und aus *elthê* statt *elthô*.'⁴³ Verse 26, as I argued, is Paul's commentary on the words of institution. In it he makes clear how the Lord's Supper was intended to work. This theoretical understanding is the basis on which his condemnation of Corinthian practice in v. 20 is based.

How is *katangellete* in v. 26 to be understood? Does it refer to a proclamation in act or a proclamation in word? To the best of my knowledge the latter possibility is defended only by Fee and Wolff. For the former, however, the only words spoken are the sayings over the bread and the cup.⁴⁴ This cannot have been what Paul intended. He would not have objected to what was going on at Corinth unless it had been presented as the Lord's Supper, whose constitutive feature was precisely the two sayings. Thus the two sayings can be taken for granted, yet for Paul at Corinth in reality there was no proclamation of the death of the Lord (v. 20). Wolff makes the same suggestion, but in addition mentions a possible eucharistic prayer. This latter is entirely speculative. His only real argument is '*katangellein* ist immer eine Sache des Wortes'.⁴⁵ In fact a metaphorical use of the verb is attested in LSJ, and this is the sense that the majority of commentators rightly prefer here. The sharing in the bread and the cup is the proclamation.⁴⁶ Only this assumption makes it possible to understand why and how Paul is so critical of the Corinthians' attitude towards the Lord's Supper.

While enslaved under the power of Sin (Rom 3:9; 6:20) humanity was not free to choose the good. By sending his Son God restored the possibility of choice because now the incarnation of evil in the false value system of society was confronted by the incarnation of authentic values in the person of Christ. Good was no longer theoretical but as real as evil. After the departure of Christ from this world, the burden of demonstrating the reality of good fell on the community. The continuing incarnation of good was imperative, if the possibility of choice was to be maintained. Purely verbal good news was not a genuine alternative to evil enshrined in a way of being. For salvation to remain a viable option individually and collectively believers had to be 'Christ' for the world. We have already had occasion to note that Paul calls the community 'Christ' in 1 Cor 6:15.

⁴² *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Living Word Commentary; Austin, TX: Sweet, 1979), 150.

⁴³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.44. Similarly Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 556 n. 58.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 557. ⁴⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 275.

⁴⁶ So Lang, *Briefe an die Korinther*, 154; Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief*, 83b; Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, 78; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 887; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.

‘Until he comes’ unambiguously indicates that this perspective on the nature of salvation underlies 11:26. The proclamation of the death of the Lord is made necessary by his absence, and will no longer be required when he once again is physically present among humanity. In the interval the community must accept the responsibility of being ‘Christ’ for the world, and specifically in the saving act of his death. This death for Paul was above all an act of self-sacrifice motivated by love; ‘he loved me, that is, he gave himself for me’ (Gal 2:20).⁴⁷ For the community to truly be Christ, and thus to be able to speak in the first person singular (‘this is *my* body’, ‘in *my* blood’), it must be animated by the love that inspired Christ. Sharing is integral to the ritual of the Lord’s Supper because it is the means whereby the unity of the community is made manifest to all. ‘We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf’ (1 Cor 10:16). It is in and through this ‘common union’ (*koinônia*) that the community existentially proclaims the death of the Lord.

Now it should be clear why Paul was so shocked by the division between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ in the liturgical assembly at Corinth. It made a mockery of the *koinônia* that made the Lord’s Supper possible. The community did not proclaim the death of Christ because the material exchange of bread and wine was not accompanied by the genuine sharing of love. It was an empty gesture; sound without content. Since the believers were not in any sense ‘Christ’, they could not authentically speak in the first person singular (‘this is *my* body’, ‘in *my* blood’). The words, in consequence, did not effect what they signified. There was no Lord’s Supper (11:20).

The Remedy (vv. 27–32)

The RSV translation of v. 27, which I criticized, can claim support from ‘without discerning the body of the Lord’ (v. 29), and from a grammatical point highlighted by Fee, ‘The adjective “guilty” [*enoxos*] is a technical legal term to express liability. In genitive constructions such as this one it can denote either the person sinned against or the crime itself. In this case, therefore, it can mean either “guilty of sinning against the Lord” in some way, or “to be held liable for his death”, which his body and blood represent. Most often this is understood as being a sin against the Lord in terms of his Table, as though they were “desecrating” (NEB) or “profaning” (Goodspeed. [RSV]) it by their actions.’⁴⁸ All commentators, however, recognize that the adjectival phrase ‘of the Lord’ in v. 29 is an interpolation from v. 27, and introduces a misinterpretation of Paul’s intended meaning.⁴⁹ Equally all agree that the RSV rendering should be refused because it places ‘far more emphasis on the sacred nature of the elements than

⁴⁷ On exegetical *kai*, see BDF §442(9).

⁴⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 560–1. See also Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.49.

⁴⁹ See in particular B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd edn.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 496.

Paul himself does'.⁵⁰ In fact, as I argue above, the attitude of the Corinthians made it impossible that anything should have been changed.

Having stressed that the current comportment of the Corinthians put them on a par with the executioners of Jesus (v. 27; cf. Heb 6:6), Paul indicates the solution to their problem. Each person must be 'tested' (v. 28) against the criterion of *diakrinôn to sôma* (v. 29). The meaning of this crucial phrase is still hotly debated.⁵¹ The patristic view that believers had to distinguish between ordinary bread and the bread over which the eucharistic words have been spoken is no longer maintained by any modern commentators. They rightly point out that what Paul has criticized is the attitude of the Corinthians to one another.

I with others argued that the 'body' in question was the body of Christ, i.e. the community.⁵² To participate worthily in the Lord's Supper believers must guarantee their authentic relationship to other members of the Body. Their coexistence in an organic unity must be manifest in genuine sharing with one another. The merit of this interpretation is that it offers a way of dealing with the problem Paul faced at Corinth. For Barrett, however, this 'would require a genitive with *body*, and strains the meaning of the verb (*diakrinein*)'.⁵³

Thus the most eminent of the modern commentators opt for a complex combination. According to Schrage,

Sôma wird dabei weder allein der am Kreuz dahingebene und im Mahl gegenwärtige Leib Christi sein—so sehr dieser Gedanke trotz des irritierenden Fehlens von *haima* von V 26 her (*thanatos*) einzuschliessen ist—noch aber allein die Gemeinde. Vielmehr scheint mit *sôma* die schon in 10,16f zu beobachtende Doppeldeutigkeit, bzw. Zusammengehörigkeit von sakramentalem und ekklesiologischem 'Leib Christi' vorzuliegen, wobei die Ausrichtung der Eucharistie auf die Gemeinde als den durch das Mahl konstituierten Leib Christi hier das Zentrale ist, what in Korinth verkannt wird. Zwar kommt *sôma* im Sinn von Gemeinde im näheren Kontext nicht ausdrücklich vor, aber das Verhalten der Mahlteilnehmer gegenüber der *ekklêsia tou theou* (V 22) ist deutlich genug im Blick. Das erklärt auch am ehesten, warum hier im Unterschied zu V 26–29a, wo jeweils beide eucharistischen Gaben genannt werden, nur noch vom Leib die Rede ist. Von daher ist der Interpretation zuzustimmen, dass *diakrinein to sôma* verstehen heisst, 'dass der für uns hingebene und im Sakrament empfangene Leib Christi die Empfangenden zum "Leib" der Gemeinde zusammenschliesst und sie in der Liebe füreinander verantwortlich macht'.⁵⁴

Similarly Thiselton, '“Right judgment” extends to what it means to be identified with, and involved in, the cross of Christ, in anticipation of the judgment. In this sense our verse states that they must **recognize what characterizes the body as**

⁵⁰ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 561.

⁵¹ The best survey is to be found in Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 891–4.

⁵² Subsequently, Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 564; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 439; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 252; Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 200.

⁵³ *1 Corinthians*, 275, which is taken up by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 552.

⁵⁴ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.51–2.

different, i.e., be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is *separated* from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace. The Lord's Supper, by underlining participation in, and identification with, the cruciform Christ, thereby generates the social transformation, which is Paul's *second* concern.⁵⁵

The subtle complexity of this interpretation is the result of an effort to integrate every possible nuance of meaning, and the observations on which it is based cannot be questioned. I wonder, however, if it is realistic to assume that Paul would have expected such intellectual refinement on the part of the Corinthians. That is why I continue to give *priority* to the aspect of 'belonging to the Body'. It is a simple and practical test. If the Corinthians understood what that involved in terms of shared existence, which necessarily demanded a certain element of sacrifice for others, then they would be well on the way to a proper appreciation of Christ's self-sacrifice for us.

I suspect that the reason why priority is not given to the ecclesiological dimension of 'body' is that many scholars believe that the theme appears for the first time only in 1 Cor 12, which is subsequent to Paul's treatment of the Lord's Supper in chs. 10 and 11.⁵⁶ In fact this crucial insight had been uppermost in Paul's mind since he wrote several years earlier, 'You (pl.) are all one man in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28),⁵⁷ and must have formed part of his oral preaching at Corinth. The organic unity of the community is the necessary presupposition of his identification of the community as 'Christ' in 1 Cor 6:15. This is introduced by the rhetorical question 'Do you not know?', which implies that this teaching about its nature should have been well known to the community.⁵⁸

By and large the treatments of v. 30 smack of eisegesis in that commentators take it far too seriously. The most extreme example no doubt is the suggestion that 'the ingestion of the Eucharist, Christ's body, might under certain circumstances have a toxic effect on the Christian's body. These Corinthians are being poisoned by what should heal them.'⁵⁹ This no doubt is due in great part to a failure to appreciate the distinction between the *polloi* who are sick and the *ikanoi* who have died. In a port city such as Corinth all sorts of illnesses were endemic among the lower classes. Thus there was nothing unusual in 'many' being ill. The purpose of *ikanoi* is to stress that an exceptional number have died.⁶⁰ This was unusual enough to constitute a 'lesson' (*paideuometha*) (v. 32). Thus translations such as 'some' (NRSV) or 'a number' (NIV) are inadequate. 'A good number'

⁵⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 893 (his emphasis both in bold and italic).

⁵⁶ So explicitly Senft, *1 Corinthians*, 153.

⁵⁷ See my 'The Origins of Paul's Christology: From Thessalonians to Galatians' in *Christian Origins: Worship, Belief and Society. The Milltown Institute and the Irish Biblical Association Millennium Conference* (JSOTSup 241; ed. K. O'Mahony; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 137.

⁵⁸ See Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 146.

⁵⁹ J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30–150* (ed. F. C. Grant; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1959), 2.648.

⁶⁰ This critical insight ('probablement anormale') by E.-B. Allo, *1 Corinthians*, 283 is taken up (apparently independently) only by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 553 ('quite enough').

(NJB) or 'so many' (NAB) are much better. One should think of a sporadic epidemic, which swept the poorer areas of the city, and in which Christians suffered proportionally. This fact had absolutely no relationship to the behaviour of the Corinthians at the Lord's Supper until Paul thought of interpreting it as an instance of divine punishment in order to shatter the complacency of the believers at Corinth. It is an *ad hominem* argument of purely rhetorical significance.

Tradition and Redaction in 1 Corinthians 15:3–7

In the literary analysis of 1 Cor 15:1–11 only two points command complete agreement: (1) Paul introduces a quotation in v. 3b, and (2) he is speaking personally from v. 8 on.¹ There is a wide consensus on a third point, viz., that the quotation introduced in v. 3b terminates in v. 5, both because the grammatical structure changes in v. 6 and because vv. 3b–5 contain a very high proportion of non-Pauline terms.² There are, however, a number of dissenters. J. Héring³ and P. Winter⁴ terminate the quotation at the end of v. 4, while E. Bammel⁵ and H. W. Bartsch⁶ extend it only as far as *ôphthê* in v. 5. Both of these hypotheses have deservedly failed to win support, the former because the intention manifested by *etaphê* evidently requires *ôphthê* as well, the latter because *ôphthê* in order to fulfil its purpose needs a personal complement.

Verses 3b–7, therefore, can be divided into two parts, vv. 3b–5 and vv. 6–7, both of which contain literary problems which must be solved as a preliminary to any further research.

The Unity of vv. 3b–5

[583] The unity of the creed cited by Paul was accepted without question until U. Wilckens pointed out that, while *pisteuein hoti* is well attested as the introduction to confessional statements, there is no known creed in which each member is introduced by *hoti*.⁷ The thrice-repeated *kai hoti*, therefore, indicates that vv. 3b–5 is an assemblage of four originally independent statements. This view has been accepted by R. H. Fuller,⁸ and in a rather ambiguous way by

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 43 (1981) 582–9, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 101–2.

³ *1 Corinthiens*, 134 ⁴ '1 Corinthians 15:3b–7' *NovT* 2 (1957–8) 147–8.

⁵ 'Herkunft und Funktion der Traditionselemente in 1 Kor 15:1–11' *TZ* 11 (1955) 402–3.

⁶ 'Die Argumentation des Paulus in 1 Kor 15:1–11' *ZNW* 55 (1964) 261–74.

⁷ *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte: Form und traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (WMANT 5; 2nd edn.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963), 76 n. 1.

⁸ *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives* (London: SPCK, 1972), 13–14.

F. Hahn.⁹ It was rejected by W. Kramer, who claimed that *hoti* was ‘an unserer Stelle ad hoc eingefügt, um die einzelnen Aussagen reiherartig zu betonen. Es hat etwa die selbe Funktion wie unser “erstens,” “zweitens” usw. Betrachten wir die Formel für sich, so haben wir demnach *hoti* zu streichen.’¹⁰ I have quoted Kramer in full because those who are sensitive to the point made by Wilckens but unwilling to accept its implications—J. Kremer,¹¹ K. Lehmann,¹² H. Schlier,¹³ K. Wengst,¹⁴ H. Conzelmann¹⁵—all cite Kramer as a decisive refutation. Of course, it is nothing of the sort. An unsupported affirmation is nothing more than a profession of faith. It is understandable why some should wish to believe, but Kramer’s statement does not command assent. It is perfectly *possible* that Paul did as Kramer suggests, but what evidence is there that he *in fact* did so? Kramer produces none, nor do any of his disciples.

Fortunately, because the text is so important, a decisive argument for Kramer’s position does appear in this same letter. There is such widespread [584] agreement that Paul in 1 Cor 8:4 inserts two quotations from the Corinthian letter (7:1) that they are placed in inverted commas by the RSV.¹⁶ The first, ‘an idol has no real existence’, is introduced by *hoti* and the second, ‘there is no God but one’, by *kai hoti*. The parallel with 15:3b–5 is exact. There can be no doubt that both quotations come from the same document, and it is highly probable that Paul found them together as the explication of the Corinthian statement, ‘all of us possess knowledge’ (8:1).¹⁷ When Paul decided to separate them, he did so by the insertion of *kai hoti*. His motive was emphasis, because he goes on to react to each statement in turn (8:5–6).¹⁸ No such concern can be detected in 15:3b–5; it would be rather improbable to find Paul in disagreement with a traditional creed. But if Paul could separate in order to clarify, he could also separate in order to

⁹ *Christologische Hoheitstitel: Ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum* (FRLANT 83; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 209–10.

¹⁰ *Christos Kyrios Gottessohn: Untersuchungen zu Gebrauch und Bedeutung der christologischen Bezeichnungen bei Paulus und den vorpaulinischen Gemeinden* (ATANT 44; Zürich and Stuttgart: Zwingli, 1963), 15 n. 9. The repeated *hoti* is also omitted by E. Bammel but without comment (‘Herkunft’, 402).

¹¹ *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi: Eine bibeltheologische Studie zur Aussage und Bedeutung von 1 Kor 15:1–11* (SBS 17; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966), 27 n. 52.

¹² *Auferweckt am dritten Tag nach der Schrift. Frühste Christologie, Bekenntnisbildung und Schriftauslegung im Lichte von 1 Kor 15:3–5* (QD 38; Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 75.

¹³ ‘Die Anfänge des christologischen Credo’ in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie: Ihre biblischen Anfänge und die Lehrformel von Nikaia* (QD 51; ed. B. Welte; Freiburg: Herder, 1970), 27 n. 36.

¹⁴ *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* (Studien zum Neuen Testament 7; 2nd edn.; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1973), 93.

¹⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 254 n. 56.

¹⁶ To the long list of authors supplied by J. C. Hurd (*The Origins of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 68) can not be added Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 191; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 142; Senft, *1 Corinthians*, 110.

¹⁷ See Hurd, *Origins*, 120.

¹⁸ Hurd, *Origins*, 122, and my ‘Freedom or the Ghetto (1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:23–11:1)’ *RB* 85 (1978) 545–7, 560–1, Chapter 8.

instil, and he certainly desired that the Corinthians should be fully conscious of each element of the creed to which they had committed themselves.¹⁹

In order to highlight each statement of the creed Paul resorted to the same technique that he had already employed in 8:4. He inserted *kai hoti*. We must conclude, therefore, that the unity of the creed in vv. 3b–5 remains the more probable hypothesis. This conclusion is strengthened by the presence of *etaphê*, as Wengst has already noted.²⁰ The embarrassed and highly speculative interpretation of Fuller²¹ only serves to emphasize the implausibility of a fixed independent tradition containing only one word!

Redactional Elements in vv. 6–7

Opinion on these verses is sharply divided. Prior to World War II there was virtual unanimity among exegetes that vv. 6–7 represented a fixed tradition cited by Paul. Today this view is maintained by very few.²² The majority [585] of contemporary commentators treat these verses as a free composition of Paul who supplements the quotation in vv. 3b–5 by information drawn from his own personal knowledge.²³ However, with the exception of Wegenast,²⁴ authors of particular studies on 1 Cor 15:1–11 consider v. 6bc as a Pauline insertion and vv. 6a and 7 as tradition. Apart from G. Klein,²⁵ who alone attempts to offer proof, these unfortunately content themselves with magisterial assertions.²⁶

To the best of my knowledge, U. Wilckens is the only one to suggest that all of v. 6 should be attributed to Paul. His argument is that *epanô* and *ephapax* overload the phrase by contrast with the other short sentences and that the meaning is less precise.²⁷ The second observation prejudices the issue, and the first is irrelevant since Wilckens accepts the break after v. 5. Nonetheless, I believe that he is correct and that this can be shown by a more thorough analysis of the vocabulary than that proposed by Klein.

¹⁹ Note *tini logô euêngelisamên hymin* (1 Cor 15:2), and the remarks by K. Wegenast, *Das Verständnis der Tradition bei Paulus und in den Deuteropaulinen* (WMANT 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962), 57 n. 5.

²⁰ *Christologische Formeln*, 93.

²¹ *Formation of the Resurrection Narratives*, 16.

²² So Bammel, 'Herkunft', 402–8; O. Glombitza, 'Gnade—Das entscheidende Wort. Erwägungen zu 1 Kor 15:1–11, eine exegetische Studie' *NovT* 2 (1957–8) 285.

²³ So Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, 191; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 342; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 257; Senft, *1 Corinthiens*, 188.

²⁴ *Verständnis der Tradition*, 55.

²⁵ *Die Zwölf Apostel: Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee* (FRLANT 77; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 39 n. 160.

²⁶ Winter, '1 Cor 15:3b–7', 146; Bartsch, 'Argumentation', 264; Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel*, 199; Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis*, 28; H.-J. van der Minde, *Schrift und Tradition bei Paulus: Ihre Bedeutung und Funktion im Römerbrief* (Paderborner theologische Studien 3; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1976), 174.

²⁷ *Missionsreden*, 74.

Epanô is the only Pauline *hapax legomenon*. Its use may have been dictated by euphony with *epeita*, which Paul employs seven times,²⁸ and *ephapax*, which appears in Rom 6:10.²⁹ *Adelphoi* is common in the epistles, as in the rest of the NT, but Paul is the only one to associate it with *hoi pleiones* (Phil 1:14). The latter term appears five times elsewhere in Paul and always with the same sense it has here.³⁰ Paul uses *menein* twelve times, but only Phil 1:25 furnishes a precise parallel to the meaning here.³¹ *Koimaomai* appears eight times in the Pauline letters, always as a euphemism for 'to die'.³² *Heôs arti* is found twice elsewhere in 1 Corinthians and, with the terms reversed, in 2 Thess 2:7.³³ Nothing in the vocabulary contradicts the [586] hypothesis of Pauline authorship of v. 6 which, on the contrary, is strongly confirmed by a number of elements. It is also noteworthy that nowhere in the NT do any of these terms occur in any fixed traditional formula.

What was Paul's purpose in inserting v. 6? According to H. W. Bartsch³⁴ and H. Conzelmann,³⁵ he intended to prove, against the spiritualists at Corinth, that all must die. Not only does this view rest on a false assumption,³⁶ but it completely fails to account for *ephapax*, 'at one time', i.e. 'at the same time'.³⁷ There appears to be a conspiracy of silence with regard to this adverb; it is ignored by all the commentaries and studies that I have been able to check. If Paul had merely written 'he appeared to 500 brethren', the most natural interpretation would have been to understand it as a reference to a mass vision. Why, then, did he need to emphasize this point? The most obvious explanation is that he intended to underline the objectivity of the experience. A small group of close acquaintances might be accused of self-deception, but this is a much less plausible hypothesis when it is a question of a very large crowd. In this perspective Paul's purpose was apologetic, and this interpretation is confirmed by *hoi pleiones menousin heôs arti*, for the point of this clause can only be that some of the witnesses are still available for questioning by those who might have doubts.³⁸ A slight note of regret can be detected in *tines de ekoimêthêsan*. In v. 6, therefore, Paul underlines the reality of the resurrection-experience and indicates that those

²⁸ Elsewhere in the NT: Luke once, John once, Hebrews twice, James twice.

²⁹ Elsewhere in the NT: Hebrews thrice.

³⁰ Elsewhere in the NT with the same meaning: Acts twice.

³¹ In the rest of the NT, only John 12:34; 21:22–3, and possibly Heb 7:24, use it in the same sense.

³² Elsewhere in the NT with the same meaning: Matthew once, John twice, Acts twice, 2 Peter once.

³³ Elsewhere in the NT: Matthew once, John thrice, 1 John once.

³⁴ 'Argumentation', 264–6. ³⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 257–8.

³⁶ See in particular Senft, *1 Corinthians*, 189.

³⁷ When *ephapax* means 'once' it always comes immediately after the verb (Rom 6:10; Heb 7:27; 9:12).

³⁸ So rightly W. G. Kümmel, *Kirchenbegriff und Geschichtsbewusstsein in der Urchristentum und bei Jesus* (Symbolae Biblicae Upsaliensis 1; Uppsala: Seminarium Neotestamenticum Upsaliense; Zurich: Niehans, 1943), 4, 8; Fuller, *Formation of the Resurrection Narratives*, 29; Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis*, 72; Robertson-Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 337.

who enjoyed this privilege are still accessible. His purpose in attaching this verse to vv. 3b–5 was to defend the creed; the critical element (for his purpose) could be verified.

Verse 7 poses a much more complicated problem. A wide range of authors³⁹ accept it as a traditional formulation exclusively on the basis of the exact parallelism with v. 5. As an argument this is unconvincing. The initial *epeita* is certainly Pauline. *Ophthê* is not a Pauline word; outside the immediate context here it is found only in the hymn cited in 1 Tim 3:16. If its use [587] in v. 6a was inspired by its appearance in v. 5 (the most natural explanation), why could it not be the same in v. 7? It could also be maintained that the use of *eita* was prompted by its presence in v. 5—the argument that would certainly be advanced to explain its use in v. 24 (the only other instance in Paul). Thus, v. 7 could well be a Pauline composition modelled on v. 5, as Wengst claims.⁴⁰

This line of argument, however, does not make the hypothesis anything more than a possibility. In order to transform it into a probability, one would have to show that Paul elsewhere indulged himself in such imitations. To the best of my knowledge, there is not the slightest trace of any such procedure elsewhere in his letters. Were v. 7 a Pauline composition, one would expect him to begin with *eita* after the *epeita* in v. 6, as he in fact does in vv. 23b–24. If he did not do so, it must be because *eita* already existed as the link between ‘James’ and ‘the apostles’. Thus, it seems more probable that *Iakôbô eita tois apostolois* came to Paul as a fixed formula. Of course, there must have been a verb, but there is no guarantee that it was *ôphthê*. This form is introduced by Paul in v. 6 and v. 8 in order to underline that the experience was exactly the same as that of Peter and the Twelve. Had it not been used with ‘James and the apostles’, it is probable that Paul would have inserted it for precisely the same reason.

The phrase *tois apostolois pasin* has given rise to considerable discussion, but there appears to be a consensus that the reference is to a group of missionaries more extensive than the Twelve.⁴¹ The basis of this consensus is difficult to determine, but convergent indications suggest that there are three fundamental lines of argument: (1) *hoi apostoloi* are associated with James who was not one of the Twelve; (2) *apostolos* appears in Paul in a very wide sense and is applied to missionaries who were not of the Twelve; (3) the presence of *pas* formally prohibits the identification of *hoi apostoloi* with the Twelve. The second argument is irrelevant without the other two. The association of *hoi apostoloi* with James proves nothing in itself; it could be a synonym for the Twelve among whom James had acquired a leadership role as a brother of the Lord. The third argument, therefore, is the decisive one, and so it is perhaps the moment to raise the question: Did *pasin* belong to the traditional formula or was it added by Paul?

³⁹ Listed in notes 25 and 26 above.

⁴⁰ *Christologische Formeln*, 94.

⁴¹ Kümmel, *Kirchenbegriff*, 7; Héring, *1 Corinthiens*, 136; Wilckens, *Missionsreden*, 75; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 343; W. Schmithals, *Das kirchliche Apostelamt: Eine historische Untersuchung* (FRLANT 79; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 69.

In order to answer this question an investigation of the Pauline usage of *pas* [588] with a substantive is imperative. In the list which follows the first number gives the instances in which *pas* precedes the noun, while the second number refers to the passages in which it follows the noun: Romans 36/2; 1 Corinthians 24/4; 2 Corinthians 18/3; Galatians 5/0; Philippians 4/1; Colossians 21/0; 1 Thessalonians 7/1; 2 Thessalonians 7/0; Philemon 2/0. As a general rule, therefore, Paul places *pas* before the substantive. Do the eleven exceptions reveal any pattern? Four are a stereotyped final salutation in which universality is emphasized (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 5:26). The same is true of *tois loipois pasin* (2 Cor 13:2; Phil 1:13), certainly for 2 Cor 13:2, which is a severe warning. The context shows that *pas* is certainly emphatic in 1 Cor 7:17; 10:1; Rom 12:4. In the light of 1 Cor 1:2, *pas* in 2 Cor 1:1 was probably intended as a reaction against the Corinthians' sense of their own uniqueness; hence, again emphatic. The only case in which no emphasis can be detected is 2 Cor 13:2, where the position of *pas* appears to have been dictated purely by stylistic considerations. Thus, we can say that Paul modifies his usual procedure when he intends to give special emphasis to the adjective.

The statistics just cited do not take into account the use of *pas* in material quoted by Paul. My justification for treating this material separately is the probability that Paul is quoting in his reference to 'James and all the apostles'. If other fixed formulae reveal a definite pattern we have a criterion for assessing this one. In each of the fourteen citations from the OT in which *pas* appears it invariably precedes the noun. Similarly, in the two hymns (Phil 2:6–11; Col 1:15–20) *pas* always comes before the substantive. I consider this an indication—slight but unambiguous—that the formality of fixed traditional material demanded *pas* before the noun. When viewed against the background of such consistency, the formula *tois apostolois pasin* is abnormal.

While being far from conclusive, these observations confer a minimum probability on the hypothesis that Paul added *pasin* to the traditional statement (*ôphthê*) *Iakôbô eita tois apostolois*. However, in order to increase the probability of this view it must be shown that Paul had a convincing motive for emphasizing the extension of the term *apostolos*.

Such a motive emerges if we confront the question of why v. 7 appears where it does. We have already noted that Paul's purpose in adding v. 6 to the creed was twofold, to exclude the likelihood of hallucination and to underline the availability of witnesses. Verse 7 contributes nothing to this purpose. Were Paul merely concerned to include a fragment of tradition in the interest of completeness it would have been more natural for him to have mentioned the appearances to James and the apostles immediately after those to Peter and the Twelve (v. 5) in order to culminate with the appearance to the 500 brethren which, given his apologetic purpose, was the critical [589] one. If he did not do so, it must have been because the tradition concerning James and the apostles was not important to him precisely as an appearance-account. Paul's attention, therefore, must have

been focused either on 'James' or on 'apostles'. Nothing recommends the former; but the latter is precisely the theme of vv. 8–11. Hence, I would maintain that Paul conserved the tradition because of the words *hoi apostoloi*.

In v. 9 Paul proclaims himself *ho elachistos tôn apostolôn*. It is inconceivable that he should here be using 'apostle' in the very wide meaning well-attested in his letters. There would be no sense, particularly in this context, in a claim to be less than people like Silas (1 Thess 2:6; Acts 17:4), Timothy (1 Cor 4:9), or Barnabas (1 Cor 9:5–6). Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Paul would have introduced the clear contrasts in vv. 10–11 (*perisoteron autôn pantôn ekopiassa* and *eite oun egô eite ekeinoi*) were he using 'apostle' in a sense that included his own closest collaborators. Hence, Paul must be claiming to be an 'apostle' in a special limited sense, and this forces us to think in terms of the equality with Peter, James, and the other apostles who were also called directly by Christ, which is vindicated by Paul in Gal 1–2.⁴²

He could not claim equality with the Twelve (v. 5) because that would imply membership in a group whose constitution antedated Paul's conversion. Hence, in order to move from the last member of the creed to his own status he needed a middle term to serve as transition. This is precisely what the traditional formula 'James and the apostles' provided. In this text 'the apostles' was probably intended as a synonym for 'the Twelve'; certainly Paul understood it in this way because otherwise we cannot explain why he inserted the formula. He recognized that 'apostles' was a more flexible term than the rigid 'the Twelve'; the former could be extended in a way that the latter could not. The addition of 'all' was Paul's way of indicating that 'the apostles' could and should be extended. He too had seen the Risen Lord and had been commissioned by him (vv. 8–9) for a mission whose importance equalled that of Peter (Gal 2:7).

To sum up: The creed in vv. 3–5 was received by Paul as a unity. He introduced *kai hoti* for emphasis. He also added v. 6 in order to show that the resurrection could be verified. The traditional phrase in v. 7 was appended, not as an extension of the list of appearances, but to serve as a transition (underlined by the addition of *pasin*) from the mention of the Twelve (v. 5) to Paul's presentation of himself as an 'apostle' of equal authority.

POSTSCRIPT

Through an oversight, which I now find impossible to explain, I omitted to take into account a most important study by John Kloppenborg, which had appeared a few years earlier in the very same periodical in which mine was

⁴² Precisely the same association of (1) birth-language, (2) grace, and (3) time of apostolic call that we find in 1 Cor 15:8–9 also appears in Gal 1:15–17.

published.⁴³ He formulates his conclusions very succinctly. ‘Vocabularic [*sic!*] analysis has shown that the bulk of vv. 3–5 is non-Pauline in character and certainly belongs to the tradition.⁴⁴ Vv. 6b and 8, as well as the connectives *eita . . . epeita . . . eita . . . eschaton* (vv. 5b–8), are to be attributed to Paul’s hand, while v. 6a (*ôphthê epanô pentakosiois adelphois ephapax*) and v. 7 (*ôphthê Iakôbô [kai?] tois apostolois pasin*) might be assigned to the tradition on the basis of the non-Pauline terms *ôphthê* (5 × in Paul), *epanô* (hapaxlegomonon) and *ephapax* (only in Rom 6:10). Whether vv. 6a, 7 belonged to vv. 3b–5 in the pre-Pauline stratum is, however, another matter and one which vocabularic analysis cannot illuminate.’⁴⁵

As regards the unity of vv. 3–5, Kloppenborg considers Wilckens’s suggestion that the presence of the repeated *hoti* indicates that the pre-Pauline tradition consisted of four independent formulae, but rejects it on the grounds that there is no real parallel with 1 Thess 4:14–16.⁴⁶ I came to the same conclusion, but rather because of Paul’s use of *hoti* to separate for emphasis the two Corinthian slogans in 1 Cor 8:4, a suggestion which is taken up approvingly by Fee,⁴⁷ Schrage,⁴⁸ and Thiselton.⁴⁹

Kloppenborg also rejects the view of those commentators, who are more impressed by form than substance, that the creed terminated without the final words *Kêpha eita tois dôdeka*, leaving *ôphthê* in perfect balance with *etaphê*.⁵⁰ Fee is rather sympathetic to this view, principally, it would appear, because *Kêphas* is the term that Paul consistently uses to refer to Peter.⁵¹ It is certainly possible in quoting the creed that Paul substituted his preferred name for Peter, as Fee suggests, but as I pointed out *ôphthê* demands a personal complement. Schrage is particularly insistent on this point, ‘Vor allem aber lässt der Gebrauch von *ôphthê* in der LXX sowie die sonst übliche Dativerweiterung bei den Auferstehungserrscheinungen auch hier eine Angabe von Personen in Dativ erwarten, denen eine Erscheinung widerfuhr.’⁵² Further Schrage agrees that it is most improbable that Paul would have added *eita tois dôdeka*. He never refers to ‘the Twelve’.

The consensus that vv. 6–7 did not originally belong to the creed in vv. 3b–5, goes back to von Harnack, who highlighted the difference in style between the *hoti–hoti–hoti* structure of the creed and the *epeita–epeita–eita* structure of

⁴³ ‘An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b–5 in Light of Some Recent Literature’ *CBQ* 40 (1978) 351–67.

⁴⁴ Garland is the only commentator I have found to disagree with this conclusion. Following J. Lambrecht (‘Line of Thought in 1 Cor 15,1–11’ *Gregorianum* 72 (1991) 661), he believes that vv. 3–7 were composed by Paul (1 *Corinthians*, 684).

⁴⁵ ‘Analysis’, 351–2.

⁴⁶ ‘Analysis’, 360. Thiselton mistakenly considers that Kloppenborg agrees with Wilckens (1 *Corinthians*, 1189).

⁴⁷ 1 *Corinthians*, 723 n. 51.

⁴⁸ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.19 n. 33.

⁴⁹ 1 *Corinthians*, 1189.

⁵⁰ ‘Analysis’, 358. This is the opinion of all recent commentators.

⁵¹ 1 *Corinthians*, 729. ‘Peter’ appears only in Gal 2:7–8, on which see my *Paul: A Critical Life*, 93–4.

⁵² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.20.

vv. 6–7, and who insisted on the division of the creed into two main clauses (vv. 3b and 4b), each followed by a probative clause (vv. 4a and 5), which produced the effect of a rounded whole.⁵³ This consensus has recently been attacked by D. M. Moffitt, who maintains that vv. 3b–7 came to Paul as a pre-formed unity, to which he added only v. 6b.⁵⁴

Moffitt makes a number of very shrewd observations. The first is designed to diminish the structural difference discerned by von Harnack. Moffitt points out that each instance of *hoti* introduces a new motif. The appearance of *eita* in v. 5b, on the contrary, introduces a repetition of a motif that has already been encountered. This suggests that v. 5b should be taken in conjunction with vv. 6–7. In this case a new pattern emerges: *eita tois* (v. 5b)—*epeita ôphthê* (v. 6a)—*epeita ôphthê* (v. 7a)—*eita tois* (v. 7b). All the elements simply repeat the motif introduced by the final *hoti* clause (v. 5a).

Moffitt's second observation concerns the style of v. 6b. It consists of a relative clause and the postpositive *de*. This is the style of Paul's introduction to the creed (vv. 1–3a) and his personal statement (v. 8), but it is not that of vv. 3b–7 itself where we find simple parataxis. Thus, Moffitt believes, v. 6b should be attributed to Paul, whose own comments run from v. 8 onwards.

Moffitt then goes on to disagree with von Harnack's understanding of the relationship of the four clauses in vv. 3b–5. The most that can be claimed with certitude, he insists, is that the *hoti* clauses present a chronological sequence of events, which is what is found in all subsequent creeds.

The force of these arguments wanes somewhat when they are analysed closely. To take the last one first. *Kai hoti etaphê* (v. 4a) and *kai hoti ôphthê* (v. 5a) are certainly in chronological order, but is it only that? Moffitt appeals to the creeds of the church as traditional lists of successive events. However, if these creeds are examined in detail a reference to the burial of Jesus is not at all as common as Moffitt would like us to believe, and not a single appearance is mentioned in any creed.⁵⁵ In consequence, it is not sufficient to say that these points were noted in vv. 3–5 just because they happened. If appearances are mentioned in v. 5a, it must be to confirm that Jesus rose from the dead. In consequence, a similar apologetic function should be attributed to 'he was buried'.⁵⁶ I can only concur with von Harnack that vv. 3b–5 project a sense of completeness.

I have no problem with Moffitt's second argument, which serves only to confirm the consensus regarding Paul's contribution to v. 6. His first argument, however, is another matter. Essentially it relies on the perfection of the pattern to carry its own conviction. The most basic observation on it is a warning rather

⁵³ *Die Verklärungsgeschichte Jesu, der Bericht des Paulus (1 Kor 15,3ff.) und die beiden Christusvisionen des Petrus* (SPÄWPH; Berlin, 1922), 63–5.

⁵⁴ 'Affirming the "Creed": The Extent of Paul's Citation of an Early Christian Formula in 1 Cor 15:3b–7' *ZNW* 99 (2008) 49–73. The page numbers in the text refer to this article.

⁵⁵ A critical edition of these creeds is available in *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (ed. C. Rahner; Freiburg: Herder, 1955), 1–18.

⁵⁶ So most explicitly Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 256.

than an argument. The *eita–epeita–epeita–eita* pattern in vv. 5b–7 is but one of six different combinations in the manuscript tradition. It may be the most probable based on internal evidence, as he claims, but the possibility of a circular argument hovers in the back of the mind. Then it must be pointed out that the so-called pattern is flawed. Even after the removal of v. 6b, there are two elements in this verse, namely, *epanô* and *ephapax*, that should not be there, were the pattern he discerns intended by the original author. It should have read simply *epeita ôphthê pentakosiois adelphois*. Moffitt could, of course, reply that Paul also inserted *epanô* and *ephapax*. Evidence for this, however, would be difficult to come by, particularly since the first is a Pauline hapaxlegomenon and the second appears only once in his lexicon.

The most important argument against the original association of vv. 6–7 with vv. 3b–5 has been put forward by Kloppenborg, ‘Such an extension of the witness component of the tradition [in vv. 6–7] would result in a form-critically awkward and cumbersome text. That is to say, to the extent that the element of witness is extended (and therefore emphasized) the stress shifts from the essentials of the kerygma, namely, the *expiatory death and resurrection* of Jesus, to the apologetic element of witness. But surely the nature of the pre-Pauline tradition is not apologetic but rather, as Paul himself acknowledges, *euaggelion* (vv. 1–2).’⁵⁷ Since Moffitt refers to Kloppenborg’s article, he must have noted this objection, but he makes no attempt to answer it, except in the generic sense that he refuses to allow any apologetic regarding the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Cor 15. This might seem a rather extraordinary position particularly in view of the Pauline addition in v. 6b. Moffitt, however, insists that ‘some have fallen asleep’ there was inserted in preparation for v. 18, ‘Thus in Paul’s view those to whom Christ appeared, but who have subsequently died, have suffered the ultimate loss if there is no resurrection from the dead. . . . v. 19 points primarily to those to whom Jesus appeared and who proclaim the gospel message. These are the ones most to be pitied’ (p. 70). The limitation of vv. 18–19 to the 500 of v. 6b is decidedly arbitrary, and rests on nothing but a very common synonym for death.

It should be clear from what has just been said that Moffitt believed that the Corinthians had no problem with the resurrection of Jesus. What they denied was only the general resurrection of the dead (p. 67). Thus for Moffitt the Corinthians accepted a contradiction. Given their childishness (3:1; 14:20), this is not impossible, but one would have been grateful for an explanation regarding why and how. Moreover, if they had ‘spiritualized’ Paul’s talk about the resurrection of Jesus into a way of talking about all forms of survival after death, which would make it acceptable to their Platonizing view, they could easily have done the same to the idea of the general resurrection. There was no need to deny it. Their denial, in consequence, showed that they had understood resurrection correctly, which for Paul necessarily meant that they had misunderstood what he

⁵⁷ ‘Analysis’, 359.

had said about Jesus, 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised' (v. 13).

Obviously in response Paul had to insist on the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. Contrary to what Moffitt says, the apologetic dimension of vv. 6–7 is essential to Paul's argument, and explains why he added these verses to the creed.⁵⁸ It is a principle of elementary common sense that 'What man can do is what man has done.' This is the only test of whether a possibility is real or merely theoretical. For Paul resurrection as the modality of life after death was not theory but fact, because one man had been raised from the dead. This simple fact also demonstrated the falsehood of the proposition 'There is no resurrection from the dead.'

I argued that nothing in the vocabulary of v. 6 contradicted the hypothesis of Pauline authorship. I did not thereby intend to imply that it was a Pauline creation. Paul must have been informed about the appearance to the 500, on which he then comments in such a way as to furnish a strong argument for the historicity of the apparition. Thus, as Kloppenborg and all subsequent commentators recognize, v. 6a is traditional in substance.⁵⁹ The rest of the verse, however, must be attributed to Paul, because it is so intimately related to his argument regarding the historical reality of the resurrection.⁶⁰

As regards v. 7, there is general agreement that it is also traditional material. This, however, might not be true of the formulation. Schrage points out that it is entirely possible that Paul may have modelled a reformulation of traditional material on v. 5.⁶¹ This possibility is entirely speculative and should be discounted. I pointed out in my article that, were v. 7 a Pauline composition, one would have expected him to begin with *eita* after *epeita* in v. 6, as he in fact does in vv. 23b–24. If he does not do so, it was because *eita* already existed as the link between 'James' and 'the apostles'.

The interpretation of v. 7 has been governed by an entirely correct assumption, which nonetheless is responsible for a crucial blind spot. Struck by the formal parallel with v. 5, everyone simply assumes that *ôphthê* has the same subject. It is a question of an appearance of Jesus to James and others. No doubt this is in fact the case, but Wolff is entirely correct in insisting, 'Isoliert kann aber V. 7 nicht existiert haben, da das Subjekt ("Christus") fehlt. Es wäre höchstens der Splitter einer Tradition zu vermuten.'⁶² No one else seems to have noticed this obvious point, which makes it all the more urgent to ask as I did: Why did Paul select just the mention of James and the apostles from a fuller formulation? In my response I suggested that he was interested less in James than in the 'apostles'.

⁵⁸ Moffitt represents my position inaccurately by listing me among those who opt exclusively for an apologetic motif in vv. 6–7 ('The Extent of Paul's Citation', 63 n. 45). In fact I also attribute a legitimizing function to v. 7.

⁵⁹ e.g. Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.20–1 and 53.

⁶⁰ So rightly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.57.

⁶¹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.22.

⁶² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 356–7.

In my article I argued that Paul added 'all' to 'apostles' (v. 7) to broaden the concept of 'apostle' in order to be able to include himself as 'the last of the apostles' in v. 9.⁶³ Thus v. 7 functions as a transition to the development that begins with v. 8. This alone explains its position; it would be more natural to find v. 7 between vv. 5 and 6, were Paul's purpose still apologetic. These simple points have proved difficult for subsequent commentators. Fee, for example, accepts the transitional character of v. 7,⁶⁴ but then claims that I understand it as another way of speaking about the Twelve, which is correct, 'and refers to a second, commissioning appearance to them',⁶⁵ which is completely foreign to my thought. This misunderstanding is taken over by Schrage,⁶⁶ who goes on to claim that my hypothesis regarding 'all' had been refuted by Klein and Schütz,⁶⁷ which is not in fact the case.

⁶³ Thiselton quotes N. Turner in Moulton and Howard's grammar to the effect that 'If *pas* is placed after a noun with the article special stress is laid upon the noun, e.g. 1 Cor 15:7' (*1 Corinthians*, 1208 n. 225).

⁶⁴ So does Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 537.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 732.

⁶⁶ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.59 n. 218.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.60 n. 219.

15

‘Baptized for the Dead’ (1 Cor 15:29): A Corinthian Slogan?

The most recent commentaries on 1 Cor 15:29 all agree¹ that this verse speaks of a custom at Corinth whereby members of the community had themselves baptized on behalf of dead friends and relatives who had not received the sacrament.² Such unanimity reflects a widespread consensus whose basis, it is claimed, is the plain wording of the text. We are told that an unbiased reading of the verse immediately and naturally suggests such a practice; other opinions would have been proposed only because scholars could not bring themselves (for dogmatic or other reasons) to admit the existence of such a bazaar custom.³

One may take leave to doubt that the meaning is as obvious as the consensus asserts. If we abstract from the implicit assumption that Paul uses *baptizein* exclusively in a sacramental sense, other meanings are perfectly possible, that is, they are contained within the semantic spectrum of the terms used. *Baptizein* may be used sacramentally, but it may also be used in a non-sacramental literal sense or even metaphorically. Equally, *nekros* may be used existentially or physically. The problem, therefore, is to determine the *probable* meaning.

If we accept that 1 Cor 15:29 refers to vicarious baptism, we are obliged to postulate a complete break between vv. 28 and 29, and another between vv. 29 and 30–4. In other words, while v. 29 reflects the general theme of the chapter, [533] it has no relation to its immediate context. This consequence has been lost sight of in the discussion of the welter of opinions, but it is a decisive objection to the vicarious baptism interpretation because, according to sound methodology, the probable meaning of a polyvalent phrase is that demanded by the immediate context. By this criterion vicarious baptism is the least likely of the various possibilities of meaning implicit in v. 29. We should rather look for a meaning that integrates the verse into its context.

¹ This article was originally published in *RB* 88 (1981) 532–43, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 275; Orr-Walter, *1 Corinthians*, 337; Senft, *1 Corinthians*, 201.

³ For the history of interpretation, see B. M. Foschini, ‘Those who are Baptized for the Dead’ *CBQ* 12 (1950) 260–76, 379–99; 13 (1951) 46–78, 172–98, 276–83; and M. Rissi, *Die Taufe für die Toten* (ATANT 42; Zurich: Zwingli, 1962).

The Context

If we examine the relation between v. 29 and what follows, the most evident structural feature is the shift from the third person plural (v. 29) via the first person plural (v. 30) to the first person singular (vv. 31–2). Verse 30 gives the impression of being a transition which suggests that there is, in Paul's mind, some intrinsic relationship between vv. 29 and 31–2. The first possibility to claim our attention should be the hypothesis that v. 29 is a general statement which is then illustrated by a particular example. Clarification of the general by the particular is one of the most common procedures in all types of pedagogic discussion. It was a feature of the diatribe whose style has strongly influenced this passage.⁴ One example must suffice, but it is particularly appropriate because it contains a series of expressions that appear in the same order in Paul. Epictetus first articulates the principle, 'We oppress ourselves and we straiten ourselves, that is, our judgements oppress and straiten us,' which he then explains, 'Otherwise (*epei ti*), what is it to be abused? Take a stone and abuse it! What effect will you produce (*ti poiêseis*)? If one listens as a stone what does it profit (*ti ophelos*) the abuser?'⁵

Since the particular example adduced by Paul (vv. 31–2) concerns the sufferings associated with his apostolic labours, one should assume that the meaning of the generic statement (v. 29) runs along the same lines. The value of this hypothesis is immediately apparent because it permits us to see a relationship between v. 29 and the antecedent context which explains why Paul inserted v. 29 at precisely this point in his argument.

Verse 28 is concerned with the relation of the Father and the Son and the context makes it clear that this relation is one of service; the Son has been entrusted with a specific mission (vv. 24–5) to whose exigencies he is subject until it is accomplished. The parallel with Paul's situation is obvious. He too had been chosen and sent to labour in God's service, and that commission had been mediated by the Son (1 Cor 15:8–10). The climax of the discussion in vv. 20–8 would have triggered in Paul's mind an association of ideas which induced him to present apostolic labours as the next argument in favour of the resurrection. Since this is certainly the point in vv. 30–2, it is only reasonable to suppose that v. 29 fits into this line of thought. The alternative is to assume a digression that is explicable only as a momentary aberration.

The Meaning

If the context indicates that v. 29 concerns apostolic labours rather than an activity of the Corinthians, we are forced to exclude the literal sense of *baptizein*, be it understood in a sacramental or non-sacramental sense, and to opt for the

⁴ A. J. Malherbe, 'The Beasts at Ephesus' *JBL* 87 (1968) 72–3.

⁵ *Diss.* 1.25.29. I owe this reference to my student Jacinto Gonzalez Nuñez.

metaphorical sense of the verb. This meaning ('to destroy, to perish') is so well attested that Oepke can claim that 'the idea of going under or perishing is nearer the general usage' in the Hellenistic period.⁶ It appears in the NT in Mark 8:38 and Luke 12:50.⁷ A number of scholars have opted (with varying nuances) for the metaphorical meaning of *baptizein*, but their opinions have met with little success because they failed to offer an adequate explanation of *hyper tôn nekron*.⁸ This phrase is really the crux of the problem.

If *hoi baptizomenoi* means 'those being destroyed' in and through their apostolic labours, it seems most natural to interpret *hoi nekroi* as a reference to those who were 'dead' in an existential [535] sense (cf. Col 2:13),⁹ because it was to these that Paul and others directed their preaching. However, this meaning would appear to be excluded by the second part of verse 29 where *nekros* certainly designates those who were literally and physically dead. Unless there are good reasons to the contrary (and such may be found in Paul, e.g. 2 Cor 4:10–11), it would be unwise to assume two different meanings for the same term in a single verse.

But if we take *hoi nekroi* literally, how is the preposition *hyper* to be understood? The meanings that might possibly be relevant can be grouped as follows:¹⁰

- A. In defence of, on behalf of, for the prosperity of.
- B. For, instead of, in the name of.
- C. For, because of, by reason of, on account of.

Meaning A can be excluded immediately because the meaning would be that apostolic sufferings would have a redemptive value as regards the dead, an idea that has no basis in the Pauline letters. Meaning B would make even less sense because the implication would have to be that the apostolic mission confided to Paul (among others), and which was the cause of his sufferings, had in fact been given to others now dead, and that he was merely acting in their stead. Thus, we are reduced to meaning C, but this would be compatible with the metaphorical sense of *baptizein* and the literal sense of *hoi nekroi* only if we assume an ellipse, *epei ti poiêsousin hoi baptizomenoi hyper (tês anastaseôs) ton nekron* 'what will they do who are being destroyed on account of (the resurrection of) the dead?' The resurrection of the dead, at least with regard to the resurrection of Christ, was a

⁶ TDNT 1.530, where detailed references are given.

⁷ See in particular A. Feuillet, 'La coupe et baptême de la Passion (Mc 10:45–50; cf. Mt 20:20–23; Lc 12:50)' *RB* 74 (1967) 356–91.

⁸ A good exposition and critique is provided by Foschini, 'Those who are Baptized for the Dead' (1950), 264–76. He fails to mention F. Godet, who interpreted *hoi baptizomenoi* as meaning the martyrs, and *hyper tôn nekron* as 'pour entrer dans celle [l'église] des morts' (*1 Corinthiens*, 2.368). This opinion is easily refuted because the meaning assigned to *hyper* is unjustifiable.

⁹ According to Foschini ('Those who are Baptized for the Dead' (1950), 264–76). This view was defended by Harduin and Lallement.

¹⁰ LSJ 1857.

central element in Paul's preaching which was the cause of all the sufferings he had to endure (2 Cor 4:7–15; 11:23–8).¹¹

A Corinthian Phrase

Thus understood, verse 29 fits perfectly into its context, but this interpretation is vulnerable to two very strong objections. First, Paul never uses *baptizein* in a metaphorical sense; in every other instance he intends a reference to the sacrament of baptism. Hence, it is most unlikely that he would suddenly use it here in a completely different sense. Second, as Robertson-Plummer have pointed out, 'If St Paul had wanted to abbreviate *hyper tês anastaseôs tôn nekron*, he would have left out *tôn nekron*, not *tês anastaseôs*.'¹² 'Dead' could be inferred from 'resurrection' but, as the plethora of opinions shows, not the other way round.

These observations are perfectly valid, and explain why the metaphorical interpretation of 1 Cor 15:29 has not been taken seriously for nearly a century. Nonetheless, they are not a decisive refutation. Rather, in the light of the clues provided by the context (which demands the metaphorical interpretation) they point to a hypothesis that has not yet been considered, namely, that *hoi baptizomenoi hyper tôn nekron* was a contemptuous gibe addressed to Paul and his co-workers by those at Corinth who denied the resurrection. If Paul did not formulate the phrase, the non-literal use of *baptizein* becomes much less of a problem, and the way is opened to an understanding of *nekroi* which differs from that intended by the Apostle.

In order to justify this hypothesis two questions have to be answered. Was it possible for the Corinthians to have spoken thus? If so, is it probable that they in fact did?

R. A. Horsley has shown most convincingly that the denial of the resurrection came from a group at Corinth who were deeply influenced by a type of philosophico-theological speculation on Wisdom which has been most thoroughly articulated by Philo.¹³ They thought of themselves as constituting a spiritual elite and looked down on others as belonging to an inferior religious class. They themselves embodied the characteristics of 'the heavenly man', whereas [537] others reflected only 'the earthly man'. Such an arrogant attitude goes a long way towards explaining the divisions within the community that Paul found so painful, and the language used by Philo to describe those whom he could not classify as authentically 'spiritual' reveals the mental framework in which the

¹¹ According to Foschini ('Those who are Baptized for the Dead' (1950), 268) Maldonatus understood the final phrase to mean 'to defend the resurrection of the dead'.

¹² *1 Corinthians*, 359.

¹³ 'Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians' *HTR* 69 (1976) 269–88; and his 'How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?' *Spiritual Elitism at Corinth* *NovT* 20 (1978) 203–31.

Corinthian elite would have thought and spoken of those who did not belong to their coterie.

This is not the place to offer a detailed analysis of Philo's concept of 'the earthly man' and all I intend to do is to highlight the aspects which are most relevant to the problem under discussion. Fundamentally, what separated the *pneumatikoi* from the *nephoi* or *psychikoi* was their attitude towards the body:

The body, as I have said, is evil by nature and treacherous to the soul. This, however, is not evident to all, but to God alone and to those whom God loves. . . . It is only when the mind occupies itself with higher things and is initiated into the mysteries of God that it judges the body evil and hostile. However, when it abandons the quest for higher things, it considers the body as its friend, kinsman, and brother, and then takes refuge in the things it loves. Wherefore the soul of an athlete differs from that of a philosopher. The athlete refers all to the well-being of the body, and would sacrifice the soul for its sake, because he is a body-lover. The philosopher, on the contrary, in love with the Beautiful which dwells within him, devotes himself entirely to the soul, taking no account of the body which to him is a dead thing. His one concern is that this evil and dead thing should do no harm to the soul. . . . When, O my soul, will you fully comprehend that you bear a dead thing? Will it not be when you have become perfect and are worthy of rewards and crowns? For then you will be a God-lover and not a body-lover. (*Leg. All.* 3.71–4)

For Philo, to give any real importance to the body was to exclude oneself from the elite group of the spiritual and wise; it introduced a contradiction which could only have disastrous consequences. Those who did so were typified by Joseph 'who does not despise the qualities of the soul, but he is thoughtful for the well-being of the body. . . . It is inevitable, therefore, that he should be drawn in different directions because he has assigned several goals to his life.' (*Somn.* 2.11). They must fail 'to dominate and rule over the earthly body and its senses' (*Quaest. Gen.* 2.56), thereby 'destroying (*baptizein*) the mind' (*Migr.* 204).¹⁴ They may make an effort to acquire virtue but it can only be short-lived (*Leg. All.* I. 55.888) and 'in itself the need to make an effort implies [538] an inferior and less perfect situation than that of him who has to make no effort. . . . equally he who learns in contrast to him who knows by himself' (*Leg. All.* 3.135).

Philo distinguishes two forms of death, 'one proper to man, the other to the soul. The death of man is the separation of the soul from the body. The death of the soul is the loss of virtue and the acquisition of vice' (*Leg. All.* 1.105; cf. *Quaest. Gen.* 1.16). Existential death is certainly predicated of those who show no interest in religion, 'The wicked are dead, even though they attain extreme old age, because they are deprived of the life of virtue' (*Fuga* 55); 'The godless are dead in soul' (*Spec. Leg.* 1.345). It is more difficult to say whether Philo would have said the same sort of thing of the *nepios* or *asketes* who occupy an intermediate position between the wise and the foolish. These may have some access to wisdom through instruction (*Leg. All.* 1.90–5), but a definitely

¹⁴ Philo uses *baptizein* when speaking of the passions, e.g. *Leg. All.* 3.18; *Deter.* 176.

pessimistic attitude towards those who need counsel is clear in the following passage, '[The "heavenly man" is] the worker and the guardian, i.e. he remembers what he has heard and practices it, whereas the molded [or "earthly"] man neither practises nor keeps the virtues; he is merely introduced to their precepts by the generosity of God, but will soon be exiled from virtue' (*Leg. All.* 1.54). This is perfectly in keeping with his view that Wisdom is given by Wisdom (*Quaest. Gen.* 4.101) and enables us to see how he can assert that, 'The living are those who take refuge in God and become his suppliants, all others are dead' (*Fuga* 56), because 'the truly alive have Wisdom for their mother' (*Her.* 53). It would appear, therefore, that Philo would tend to rank the intermediate group with those below rather than with those above. As long as they retained any preoccupation with earthly things they would be considered 'dead in respect of true life, the soul wandering about in the manner of the dead' (*Quaest. Gen.* 4.46), because, unlike the true philosopher, they did not really desire 'to die to life in the body' (*Gig.* 14).

We need not assume that those at Corinth who claimed exalted spiritual status for themselves were assiduous students of Philo. What they knew had probably been mediated by Apollos (Acts 18:24–19:1), and it would be wise to presume that they had grasped his teaching in the same infantile and muddle-headed way that they understood what Paul had told them. It is a question only of generic attitudes and a few key terms. The spiritual elite [539] in the community certainly considered the body to be completely irrelevant (1 Cor 6:18b),¹⁵ although not in the sense that Philo intended, since incest was praised (1 Cor 5:1–2), anger was permitted to find expression in law-suits (1 Cor 6:1–11), and lust could find release with a prostitute (1 Cor 6:12–20). In their arrogance, however, they would inevitably have considered as 'dead' to the higher spiritual truth, which was their pride, all those who accepted Paul's emphasis on the body as essential to the actualization of commitment and who took to heart his stress on loving behaviour as the critical factor regarding salvation (1 Cor 13:2).

Yet, it was to these latter that Paul dedicated himself and strove to add to their number. The 'dead', who for the spirituals were not worth bothering about, were for him the purpose of his existence. The elite could hardly have failed to observe the suffering that he was prepared to accept on account of the 'dead'. He was being ground down by a concern that they deemed pointless; he was being destroyed by a commitment that they considered futile. Worse than that, his very concern for the body and its activities demonstrated his lack of wisdom. It seems entirely possible, therefore, that the spiritual elite at Corinth should have dismissed Paul and his collaborators as *hoi baptisomenoi hyper tôn nekrôn*. The key terms were available to them in the precise meanings I postulate.

¹⁵ See my 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 391–6 = Chapter 3.

Possibility, however, is not probability. Having shown what the elitists *could* have done, we must now show that it is *likely* that they did do it. The classical test of the truth of an hypothesis is its ability to offer a new and better explanation of elements that were not considered in the formulation of the hypothesis. The application of this criterion to the hypothesis that ‘those being destroyed on account of the “dead”’ is a Corinthian statement reveals it to be genuinely probable because it clarifies not only verse 29b but also verse 58.

Ei holôs nekroi ouk egeirontai in verse 29b is paralleled by *eiper ara nekroi ouk egeirontai* (v. 15) and *ei gar nekroi ouk egeirontai* (v. 16) and to a lesser degree by *ei de anastasis nekron ouk estin* (v. 13). None of these have anything corresponding to *holôs*, whose presence in verse 29b, therefore, requires explanation. It is generally [540] translated as an adverb qualifying *egeirein*, but no explanation is ever offered as to why Paul should have felt it necessary to use an adverb here. The elite at Corinth denied the resurrection absolutely, so no qualification was required in Paul’s response. Hence, it is hardly surprising that some exegetes prefer much vaguer renderings, ‘si, en somme’¹⁶ ‘si de toute façon’.¹⁷ Their only merit, however, is that they respect the position of *holôs* in the phrase. This fact is not without its importance because in the other three NT texts in which the term occurs, it stands either immediately after (Mt 5:34) or before the word it qualifies (1 Cor 5:1; 6:7).¹⁸ Such usage militates against taking *holôs* here as modifying *ouk egeirontai*. On the contrary, the two other Pauline passages indicate that it qualifies *nekroi*, in which case the translation would be ‘if those actually (or: really; or: completely) dead are not raised’. In terms of Pauline usage this is certainly the more probable rendering because *holôs nekroi* is exactly paralleled by *holôs hêtêma* ‘total (or: complete) failure’ (1 Cor 6:7). But it makes sense only if we accept the hypothesis that ‘those being destroyed on account of the “dead”’ is a Corinthian gibe. Paul had to indicate that he was using *nekroi* in a sense other than that intended by the Corinthians. They used ‘dead’ in an existential sense but, in keeping with his concern in this chapter, Paul took up their term in the literal sense. This technique of giving a new twist to the language of his adversaries is well attested in 1 Cor 2:6ff.

1 Cor 15 concludes with the exhortation, ‘Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain’ (v. 58). Despite Paul’s relatively frequent use of *ergon* ‘work’ and *kopos/kopiaô* ‘labour/to labour’, the form of this monition is without parallel in his letters. From his use of *ergon tou kyriou* elsewhere (1 Cor 9:1; 16:10; Phil 2:20; cf. Rom 14:20) it is clear that the phrase was intended to evoke the establishment and conservation of the Christian community. It was to this

¹⁶ Allo, *1 Corinthiens*, 411.

¹⁷ Senfe, *1 Corinthiens*, 201.

¹⁸ Similarly in Josephus *holôs* is juxtaposed to the term it qualifies, see *BJ* 4.364; 5.219; *AJ* 2.344; 8.528; 9.80, 127; 10.35.

end that Paul laboured,¹⁹ [541] and he expected others to do likewise.²⁰ The exhortation is in fact a striking echo of what Paul had said about himself at the beginning of the chapter, 'His grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I laboured more abundantly than any of them' (v. 10). The repetition of the key terms in v. 58 can hardly be accidental.

Two points need to be explained, the unique tenor of the exhortation and the fact that Paul uses language that tends to assimilate him to those in danger of being led astray by those who denied the resurrection. The most plausible explanation is provided by the hypothesis that the spiritual elitists had sneered at the type of effort that Paul demanded of himself and others. Those who prided themselves on being 'wise' would have agreed with Philo that 'he who acquires virtue through effort is inferior to and less perfect than Moses who, easily and without labour, has received it from God' (*Leg. All.* 3.135); wisdom was a gift not a trophy. Only if such an attitude were prevalent at Corinth would Paul have found it necessary to reassure those members of the community who accepted his teaching that their labour was God's work, and that they should remain convinced that it would not be in vain.

The Force of the Argument

If we assume that v. 29 refers to vicarious baptism, it is impossible to see how it could have convinced Paul's opponents. From the apostle's point of view it would have been an extremely dangerous argument, because the premise could have been negated by the simple query: 'Do you believe in what they are doing?' Paul's whole theology of baptism shows unambiguously that he would have been forced to answer in the negative. It is unwarranted to assume that he would condone a superstitious practice simply because it appeared to provide an easy argument. It is equally unacceptable to suppose that his only concern was to trap his adversaries by revealing the contradiction between theory (denial of the resurrection) and practice (baptism for the dead) because the text contains not the slightest hint that those who [542] denied the resurrection had themselves been baptized for the dead. On the contrary, those who denied the resurrection did so because they believed that they were already immortal since they possessed Wisdom.²¹ Hence, those who practised baptism for the dead can only have been those who were looked down on as 'babes' and 'soul-men' and, as Godet long ago pointed out, 'Les adversaires qu'il prétendait convaincre par ce moyen lui auraient répondu sans doute qu'on ne prouve pas une absurdité par une absurdité

¹⁹ 1 Cor 4:12; 15:10; 16:16; 2 Cor 6:5; 9:23, 27; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 2:9; 3:5; 2 Thess 3:8.

²⁰ 20 Rom 16:6; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:12.

²¹ See in particular R. A. Horsley's comments in *NovT* 20 (1978) 203–31.

plus grande; car rejetant la résurrection des corps, ils auraient évidemment rejeté le baptême pour les morts ainsi compris.²²

A very different, and much more effective, argument becomes evident if it is accepted that Paul's starting point was a disparaging Corinthian reflection on his apostolic labours. Within the framework of this hypothesis, which has now been seen to enjoy real probability, v. 29a can be paraphrased thus: 'Supposing that there is no resurrection from the dead, will they continue to work, those who are being destroyed on account of an inferior class of believers who are dead to true Wisdom?' Paul accepts the label of his opponents, and in the second part of the verse goes on to radicalize the implied criticism, 'If those who are really dead are not raised, why indeed are they being destroyed on their account?' The spiritual elite thought it futile for Paul to expend himself for those who were existentially 'dead'. Paul reformulates the question in such a way as to underline that his (and others') efforts are directed, not merely to the 'dead' in the Corinthian sense, but to those who have died or will die (vv. 18 and 52b) in the literal physical sense. In effect, Paul is saying that, from the perspective of the elite, his sufferings are more futile than they imagine.

The polemic point is unstated but unmistakable. He would not persist in living at risk (vv. 30–1) unless he were absolutely convinced that the dead would be raised. The strength of this argument is that the premise has been conceded by the opponents of the resurrection; they admitted that Paul and his collaborators were working themselves to death. They assessed his activity differently, but Paul could hope that, by stressing the degree of [543] risk that he daily accepted, and the pride he took in the effectiveness of his labours,²³ they would be forced to admit the strength of his conviction regarding the importance of the body, thus opening the way to an understanding of the need for resurrection. To sum up. The hypothesis that *hoi baptizomenoi hyper tôn nekrôn* originated as a Corinthian gibe at Paul's apostolic suffering permits an interpretation which integrates v. 29 into its context, and reveals a realistic argument which reflects so much of Paul's style, notably his delight in turning opponents' assertions against them and his concern to find common ground.²⁴

²² 1 Corinthiens, 382.

²³ Zuntz (*Text of the Epistles*, 176) translates *hymeteran kauchêsîn* (1 Cor 15:31) as 'by the praise which you grant me'. However, the following *hên echô* makes this view somewhat less than probable, and, in contrast to *kauchêma*, Paul uses *kauchêsîs* exclusively in reference to himself. The majority of scholars, therefore, rightly take *hymetera* as the equivalent of an objective genitive, but the point of the strong assertion is not always correctly grasped. Paul's price is the existence of the Corinthian community which came into being through his 'dying' (*nekrôsis*; cf. 2 Cor 4:7–12), i.e. the mode of being which the spiritual elite despised.

²⁴ This article had already been accepted for publication when I came across J. C. O'Neill, '1 Cor 15:29' *Exp Tim* 91 (1980) 310–11. We both agree on the interpretation of *holôs*, and are united in our refusal to understand *hyper tôn nekrôn* and *hyper autôn* as referring to persons who are already dead in the physical sense. He, however, takes these two phrases as alluding to that part of the *baptizomenoi* which is 'dying and about to become a corpse' (p. 310), namely, the body. Texts cited in my article clearly document that Philo thought of the body as a 'corpse', passages that O'Neill could have used to strengthen his argument. He would not thereby have made it more convincing.

POSTSCRIPT

All interpreters comment on the difficulty of this verse, *Epei ti poiêsousin hoi baptizomenoi hyper tôn nekron; ei holôs nekroi ouk egeirontai ti kai baptizontai hyper autôn*. My translation—'What will they do who are being destroyed on account of the (spiritually) dead? If those who are really dead are not raised, why indeed are they being destroyed on their account?'—was sufficiently novel to attract attention but not apparently convincing enough to command assent. Thus it is regularly reported only to be criticized.

According to Fee, 'Besides the inherent difficulties of having *nekroi* change meaning in the two juxtaposed lines, especially without some kind of adversative, and the improbability of their using such a metaphor to describe apostolic hardships (*pace* Murphy-O'Connor the influence of Philonic Judaism is questionable at best), there seems to be no contextual preparation for this (again *pace* Murphy-O'Connor; how this flows logically from v. 28 remains a mystery). Nor is there any hint in the text either that (a) Paul is quoting (which of course they would have known it it were so), or more importantly (b) that the rest is a response, when there is no adversative of any kind.'²⁵

The use of *nekroi* in two different senses would not have been a problem for someone who can write 'to one a fragrance from death to death (*ek thanatou eis thanaton*), to the other a fragrance from life to life (*ek zôês eis zôên*)' (2 Cor 2:16). Here we have exactly the existential and physical senses of 'death' that I postulate for v. 29. Moreover, Paul signals the shift by introducing *holôs* as the qualification of the second *nekroi*. Fee refuses to give any weight to this argument. The only reason he gives, however, is, 'that is to place too much confidence in too little evidence'.²⁶ This reads well, but only betrays Fee's unwillingness to face the problem.²⁷ Others, as we shall see, find my reading of *holôs* the most natural in the context.

Contrary to what Fee believes, the influence of Philonic Judaism in Paul's community at Corinth is in fact well documented. His own bibliography gives pride of place to the series of articles in which R. A. Horsley made this indisputable,²⁸ and I have published a number of papers, which put the matter

As with so many other hypotheses, O'Neill produces a translation which is perfectly possible if v. 29 is taken in itself, but he fails to prove that his interpretation is the most probable because he ignores the context. While less bizarre than the current consensus, his opinion is vulnerable to the same fundamental objection that a reference to a Corinthian practice in v. 29 is alien to the context and interrupts the associative process inspired by v. 28. In addition, of course, such a reference would not constitute a valid argument, neither for Paul nor for his adversaries.

²⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 765 n. 22.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 763 n. 13.

²⁷ For the same dismissive approach, see C. M. Tuckett, 'The Corinthians who say "There is no resurrection from the dead"' in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Pecters, 1996), 270 n. 89; and *verbatim* Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.235 n. 1135.

²⁸ *1 Corinthians*, xxiv.

beyond question.²⁹ The channel, of course, was Apollos, who could hardly have escaped the influence of Philo when he was a student in Alexandria (Acts 18:24–8). At Corinth those who are likely to have refused the resurrection would certainly have been familiar with the meanings I postulate for the words of v. 29.

I find it rather unfair of Fee to accuse me of offering no logical link to v. 28, because he himself had earlier said that the connection was ‘natural, although not necessarily logical’.³⁰ Moreover, had he not examined v. 29 in complete isolation, he would have seen that a meaning of the sort that I propose is demanded by both the antecedent and subsequent context. As others have seen, my article makes this perfectly clear.

While it is true as a general rule that one of the clues to a Corinthian slogan is an adversative response on the part of Paul, this should not be given exaggerated importance. When dealing with 1 Cor 6:18 we saw that sometimes Paul’s response to a slogan was a qualification and not a flat rejection. Here, in my hypothesis, Paul *accepts* the Corinthian gibe that he was pointlessly working himself to death, and uses it as the basis of an argument against them, namely, ‘Would I be killing myself, unless I truly believed in the resurrection?’

Collins and Schrage both offer accurate summaries of my position, but ultimately reject it on grounds that I cannot consider to be serious arguments. For the first, it ‘requires that Paul’s words be understood in a way that is not at all usual’,³¹ whereas for the second, ‘Aber das ist Konstrucktion’,³² by which I understand him to mean that my position is an artificial reconstruction. Collins might have had a case had he demonstrated that the meanings I suggested are linguistically impossible and/or contextually improbable. Just to say that they are ‘unusual’ means nothing. Schrage should have realized that all meaning is a reconstruction, and that the only valid question concerns its value: is it the most illuminating reconstruction possible?

The most sympathetic review of my position came from Joel R. White.³³ He gives me credit for being the only one to have paid close attention to the integration of v. 29 into its context and this, as we shall see, becomes the key to his own solution. This alternative, of course, implies that he is unhappy with my hypothesis, and he formulates his objections very succinctly, ‘Murphy-O’Connor’s argument simply cannot bear up under the weight of three

²⁹ For example, “‘Being at home in the body we are in exile from the Lord’ (2 Cor 5:6b)’ *RB* 93 (1986) 214–21; ‘Pneumatikoi and Judaizers in 2 Cor 2:14–4:6’ *Australian Biblical Review* 34 (1986) 42–58; ‘A Ministry beyond the Letter (2 Cor 3:1–6)’ in *Paolo Ministro del Nuovo Testamento (2 Co 2,14–4,6)* (ed. L. De Lorenzi, Rome: Benedictina Editrice, 1987), 104–57; ‘Pneumatikoi in 2 Corinthians’ *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 11 (1988) 59–68; ‘Philo and 2 Cor 6:14–7:1’ *RB* 95 (1988) 55–69.

³⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 763. ³¹ *1 Corinthians*, 557.

³² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.238.

³³ “‘Baptized on account of the Dead’: The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 15:29 in its Context’ *JBL* 116 (1997) 487–99.

unfounded assumptions: (1) that Paul has elided *tês anastaseôs* after *hyper*, (2) that *baptizomenoi* is being used here in its classical sense, and (3) that the whole phrase is a derogatory slogan coined by the Corinthians to refer to Paul.³⁴

If White objects to the first point, it is because my treatment is so complicated as to lend itself to confusion. What I wrote was that, if we assume the physical sense of the first *nekroi*, then one has to postulate an ellipse. I then went on, however, to make it clear that this assumption did not produce any fruits. Verse 29a only made sense when the first *nekroi* is interpreted existentially. This means, of course, that no ellipse is required. The spiritual elite at Corinth dismissed Paul and his collaborators as *hoi baptizomenoi hyper tôn nekrôn* 'those being destroyed on account of the (spiritually) dead'.

White's objection to my giving *baptizomenoi* its original sense is no doubt based on the fact that *baptizesthai* 'hat bei Paulus nie metaphorischen Sinn, sondern meint den realen Taufakt'.³⁵ This objection has no force. The meaning I postulate for the verb is well attested in all dictionaries. Moreover, I do not attribute the non-Pauline meaning to Paul. I claim that it is the Corinthians who speak. This response also deals with an objection put forward by Wolff, 'Eine Apostelaussage passt zwar inhaltlich gut zu V. 30–32; jedoch zeigt das betonene *kai hêmeis* in V. 30, dass erst ab V. 30 vom apostolischen Ergehen die Rede ist und zuvor (V. 29) andere im Blick sind.'³⁶ Since it is the Corinthians who speak, it is entirely natural for them to refer to Paul and his collaborators in the third person plural.

The point of White's third objection escapes me, because slogans stemming from the Corinthians are a well-recognized feature of 1 Cor.³⁷ They are postulated by a variety of interpreters because they make the best sense of a text, and that is the only claim that I make here.

White's own proposal is to take *hoi baptizomenoi* in the sacramental sense, to give *hyper* a causal sense, and to understand the first *nekroi* as meaning the 'apostles'. Thus he translates, 'Otherwise what will those do who are being baptized on account of the dead (that is, the dead figuratively speaking; that is, the apostles). For if truly dead persons are not raised, why at all are people being baptized on account of them (that is, the apostles)'.³⁸ What does Paul have in mind? 'Certain groups in Corinth were brought to faith and baptized "on account of" some of the apostles, especially Paul and Apollos, to whom they subsequently and quite naturally felt an affinity, but their preferences resulted in the development of competitive allegiances to one or the other of the apostles. In our text Paul points out the inconsistency of this fact with their denial of the resurrection. If "truly dead" persons are not raised, what sense does it make for

³⁴ 'Baptized', 492.

³⁵ Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.238, who speaks for all commentators.

³⁶ *Erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 395. This point is taken up by Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1244.

³⁷ See above chapters 3, 6, and 8.

³⁸ 'Baptized', 494.

the Corinthians to be baptized on account of those who are “dying all the time,” namely the apostles?³⁹

The two elements in this somewhat elaborate reconstruction with which I am in complete agreement are (1) that v. 29a evokes apostolic labours, and (2) that the second *nekroi* is qualified by *holôs*.⁴⁰ I cannot follow White, however, when he claims that Paul would have thought of himself and his collaborators as *nekroi*, which is the novel element in his proposal. To justify this interpretation he maintains that ‘Death is used throughout the Corinthian correspondence as metonymy for suffering.’⁴¹

This is not in fact the case, as a glance at the texts he cites immediately shows. ‘I die every day (*kath’ hēmeran apothnēskō*)’ (15:31); ‘always putting us on display (*pantote triambeuonti hēmas*)’ (2 Cor 2:14); ‘always carrying in the body the dying of Jesus... we the living are always being given up to death (*pantote tēn nekrosin tou Iēsou en tō sōmati peripherontes... hēmeis hoi zōntes eis thanaton paradidometha*)’ (2 Cor 4:10–11); ‘as dying and behold we live (*hōs apothnēskontes kai idou zōmen*)’ (2 Cor 6:9). These texts consistently speak in the present tense. Clearly Paul did not conceive his apostolic existence as ‘death’, which White’s argument demands, but as ‘dying’, which is a completely different matter. Only the living (*hoi zōntes*), as Paul twice emphasizes, can be afflicted by the process of ‘dying’. Paul would never have thought of himself as ‘dead’ in the existential sense (he did not believe himself to be a sinner), and he was not in fact ‘dead’ in the physical sense, even though he may have felt himself to be ‘under sentence of death (*hōs epithanatiōs*)’ (1 Cor 4:9). Had Paul proclaimed himself as ‘dying’ in v. 29, White’s proposal might have had a claim on our assent. Needless to say these texts provide the background for the apostolic understanding of *hoi baptizomenoi* that I advocate.

The vast majority of commentators still cling to the vicarious baptism interpretation, and deal with the array of objections in a variety of unconvincing ways.⁴² Two recent major commentators, however, take a different line. Thiselton takes up a proposal first put forward by G. G. Findlay,⁴³ and then elaborated

³⁹ Ibid., 498. A variation of this approach is to be found in J. E. Patrick, ‘Living Rewards for Dead Apostles: ‘Baptized for the Dead’ in 1 Corinthians 15:29’ *NTS* 52 (2006) 71–85.

⁴⁰ Schrage’s magisterial statement, ‘*holôs* bezieht sich dort nicht auf *nekroi*... sondern auf *egeirontai*, denn *holôs* ist Adverb’ (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.235 n. 1135) cannot stand, because the use of adverbs as adjectives is a well attested phenomenon; see BDF 434. If 1 Cor 15:13, 15, 16 are adequate references to resurrection, there must be some added reason why Paul should use *holôs* in v. 29b. Both White and I suggest that it is to underline that *nekroi* is being used in two distinct senses.

⁴¹ ‘Baptized’, 496 n. 54.

⁴² The objections are well set out by White, ‘Baptized’, 488–90. The lack of any contemporary parallels is also noteworthy. D. Zeller answers with a resounding negative the question that is the title of his article, ‘Gibt es religionsgeschichtliche Parallelen zur Taufe für die Toten (1 Kor 15:29)?’ *ZNW* 98 (2007) 68–76.

⁴³ ‘St Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians’ in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (ed. W. R. Nicoll (1910); reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 931.

by Maria Raeder.⁴⁴ In this view “baptism for the sake of (*hyper*) the dead” refers to the decision of a person or persons to ask for, and to receive, baptism as a result of the desire to be united with their believing relatives who have died. . . . e.g. when a dying mother wins her son by the appeal “Meet me in heaven.”⁴⁵

The main problem with this proposal is articulated by Schrage, ‘Nun hat *hyper* + Genitiv bei Paulus zwar nicht nur stellvertretende Bedeutung (also “anstelle der Toten”), doch geschieht bei finaler Interpretation die Taufe dann eigentlich zugunsten der Lebenden und nicht der Toten, und eine Auferstehung erwarteten die Korinther gerade nicht.’⁴⁶ According to Garland, ‘This interpretation, however, places too great a burden on the meaning of the preposition. . . . Nothing in the context suggests such a touching scene as the backdrop.’⁴⁷ For me the sheer sentimentalism boggles the mind.

One might also point out that this proposal does nothing more than articulate why some Corinthians sought baptism. Their motive, we are told, was to give happiness to dying relatives or friends. This, however, was just one motive among many, and its worthiness is not the point at issue. Moreover, to single out one particular motive did not furnish Paul with an argument against those at Corinth who denied the resurrection. This simple observation acquires even greater force when it is recognized that the ‘dying mother’ interpretation is completely at odds with the context. It has no connection with either the ministry of Jesus in v. 28 or the ministry of Paul in v. 30.

Garland reaches even further back in the history of interpretation to the Greek Fathers, and identifies the first and second *nekroi* as those who accept baptism because they are ‘dead’. The proposed translation is, ‘Otherwise what do those hope to achieve who are baptized for their dying bodies? If the completely dead are not raised, why then are they baptized for themselves as corpses?’⁴⁸ In a sense this represents the Pauline view that baptism effects a transition from death to life (Rom 6:3–14; 8:10–11). Thus he is speaking about standard baptism under normal circumstances. Why then would he want to express himself in a manner so convoluted and vague as to appear designed to confuse? Why would he refer to the audience to whom he is writing in the third person? Even if there was unanimous approval of Garland’s meaning, v. 29 thus understood could not function as an argument supporting the thesis that Paul needs to prove in 1 Cor 15. The fact of baptism proves nothing about resurrection. Most importantly, as I pointed out in the last footnote in my article, a reference to a Corinthian practice

⁴⁴ ‘Vikariastaufe in 1 Kor 15:29?’ *ZNW* 46 (1955) 258–61.

⁴⁵ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1248.

⁴⁶ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.238.

⁴⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 718.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 718. The translation is that of J. C. O’Neill, ‘1 Corinthians 15:29’ *Expository Times* 91 (1980) 310.

in v. 29 is alien to the context and interrupts the associative process inspired by v. 28.⁴⁹

For the argument that 1 Cor 15:29–34 is a non-Pauline interpolation, see in the appropriate place in the final chapter ‘Interpolations in 1 Corinthians.’

⁴⁹ For other objections, see White, ‘Baptized’, 491; Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 766 n. 28; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.237.

16

Interpolations in 1 Corinthians

In contrast to 2 Corinthians, which is certainly a compilation of Pauline letters, challenges to the literary unity of 1 Corinthians have rightly met with little success.¹ However, anyone familiar with recent literature on 1 Corinthians will have noticed an increasing tendency to discern interpolations in this letter, some only a single verse, but others almost a complete chapter. The number of proposals is sufficient to constitute a definite trend that calls for evaluation. If the authors are right, our understanding of Paul will have to undergo significant modification. If they are not, the door should be closed on a specious argument in which accumulated references to supposed additions are used to increase the probability of other insertions.²

1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Of all the passages in 1 Corinthians the exegesis of 1 Cor 2:6–16 is perhaps the most complicated. The many different ways in which the polyvalent meanings of the key terms can be combined is only the first hurdle because, no matter what line of interpretation is adopted, there remains the difficulty of reconciling it with Paul's theology. Moreover, it has long been recognized that this section stands out from its context both in style and content.³ M. Widmann resolves all these problems with a single stroke: the passage was not written by Paul.⁴ In a way, the very complexity of the [82] passage cries out for the simplicity of such a radical solution. Indeed, it is surprising that no one thought of it earlier. Of course, this may mean that the hypothesis is not quite adequate, despite the series of arguments that Widmann presents.

He notes that, from a form-critical point of view, the consistent use of 'we' without any dialogical referent distinguishes 2:6–16 from its immediate context (2:1–5; 3:1–4) in which 'I' addresses 'you'. The validity of this observation is

¹ This article was originally published in *CBQ* 48 (1986) 81–94, whose pagination appears in the text in **bold**.

² H. Sahlén ('Emendationsvorschläge zum griechischen Text des Neuen Testaments, III' *NovT* 25 (1983) 79–80) finds interpolations in 1 Cor 1:21; 2:13; 3:4; 4:1; 5:11, but in each case the only argument advanced is his own subjective impression, which makes it pointless to include them in this survey.

³ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 57.

⁴ '1 Kor 2:6–16: Ein Einspruch gegen Paulus' *ZNW* 70 (1979) 44–53.

not in question, but in itself it proves nothing, because the same phenomenon is manifest in another block of material (1:18–25). Widmann might have a case if the switch from the singular to the plural and back again were unmotivated, but what we know of the situation at Corinth suggests a very natural explanation. In both 1:18–25 and 2:6–16 Paul is dealing with the nature of authentic Christian preaching and deliberately uses the plural in order to associate himself with Apollos, who had been set over against him by those who thought of themselves as a spiritual elite (*pneumatikoi*). On the contrary, he uses the singular when it is a question of his personal experience (2:1–5) and judgement (3:1–4), but he finally justifies the plural in 3:5–9. Paul's use of 'we' is not arbitrary but calculated.⁵

Two lines of argument are proposed by Widmann to confirm his form-critical conclusion: (1) a list of features unique to 2:6–16, and (2) a series of points on which this passage contradicts what Paul says elsewhere in 1 Corinthians.

The list of unique features does not constitute a valid argument. The evidence is compatible with Widmann's hypothesis, but that hypothesis is not the only one capable of explaining the data.⁶ In fact, it is precisely these elements which have given rise to the current hypothesis that Paul deliberately takes over the terminology and ideas of his adversaries. Widmann objects that the proponents of this view never specify the formulae and concepts supposed to come from these opponents. I agree that such is the case; but, with a number of corrections, the list that he himself furnishes fills this lacuna: (1) preaching described in terms drawn from the mystery religions (2:6–7); (2) crucifixion attributed to human agents (2:8); (3) 'rulers of this world' (2:6, 8); (4) 'Lord of glory' (2:8); (5) 'spirit' meaning the organ of knowledge and of God's self-understanding (2:10–15); (6) the contrast between 'spirit-men' and 'soul-men' (2:14–15); (7) a non-biblical citation (2:9); and (8) 'mind of Christ' used as a synonym for 'spirit' (2:16). I would question [83] the validity of numbers 2, 5, 7, and 8;⁷ as for the rest, it is far from impossible to propose a plausible reconstruction of the position that Paul is arguing against in 2:6–16.⁸

In consequence, Widmann's case rests on the contradictions he discerns between 2:6–16 and the rest of 1 Corinthians. In reality, this second line of argument is specious, because of the eight points he mentions only one is not a variant of those listed in his first argument. His claim that the anthropology and pneumatology of this section are at variance with those found elsewhere in the epistle is nothing but a repetition of numbers 5 and 6 above. Similarly, 'we speak wisdom among the perfect' and 'we impart a secret wisdom of God'

⁵ M. Carrez, 'Le "nous" en 2 Corinthiens' *NTS* 26 (1980) 474–86.

⁶ For this distinction between 'evidence which fits' and 'evidence which proves' see H. Palmer, *The Logic of Gospel Criticism* (London: Macmillan/New York: St Martin's Press, 1968), 152.

⁷ Paul was fully aware of the human factor in the death of Jesus, e.g. 1 Cor 11:23. He also associates spirit and knowledge, e.g. Rom 8:16. Obviously he was at liberty to quote whatever he considered appropriate, e.g. 1 Cor 15:33. 'Mind of Christ' certainly has an intellectual component, but it cannot be equated with 'spirit' (see Phil 2:5–7).

⁸ See my *1 Corinthians* (NT Message 10; Wilmington: Glazier, 1982), 19.

(number 1 above) appear as the basis of no less than four contradictions, viz., with regard to the value of wisdom, the attitude toward perfection, the content of proclamation, and the audience and method of preaching. If Paul, with tongue in cheek, is merely appropriating the formulae of his adversaries, there are no contradictions in substance. The idea that the *pneumatikos* ('spirit-man') is immune from criticism can also be attributed to Paul's opponents (cf. Philo, *Leg. All.* 1.94), and so does not necessarily conflict with the Apostle's practice elsewhere. Finally, there is no real contradiction between the cross as related to men in 2:8 and the cross as related to the will of God in 1:18–25. The same reality is simply viewed from different perspectives, neither of which denies the other. Widmann's second line of argument, therefore, fails to strengthen his position.

Nonetheless, I have acknowledged that Widmann's proposal is a *possible* explanation of the particularities of 2:6–16. Is it more or less *probable* than the alternative hypothesis that Paul has taken over the ideas and terms of his opponents? Against the probability conferred on this latter hypothesis by the presence of the same phenomenon in the discussion concerning meat offered to idols (chs. 8–10),⁹ we must set Widmann's explanation of how the interpolation came to be part of 1 Corinthians. If it should prove to be unsatisfactory, his hypothesis must be declared unacceptable.

For Widmann the interpolation is explicable only in terms of an elaborate reconstruction of Paul's correspondence with Corinth. Inspired by W. Schenk¹⁰ and W. Schmithals,¹¹ but not in complete agreement with either, he distributes [84] the material of 1–2 Corinthians between seven distinct letters, which reflect the four periods in Paul's relationship with the Corinthians:

Beginnings A	A1	I 11:2–34; 16:7–9, 15–20
	A2	II 6:14–7:1; I 9:24–10:22; 6:1–11; I 5; 6:12–20
	A3	I 15:1–44a, 49–58; 16:1–7a, 11–14
Aggravation B	B1	I 9:1–18; II 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4
	B2	I 1:1–2:5; 3:1–4:21; II 10–13
Clarification C	C	I 7:1–35; 8:1–13; 9:19–22; 10:23–11:1; I 12:1–31a; 14:1c–40; 12:31b–13:13; II 9
	D	II 1:1–2:13; 7:5–8:24

According to Widmann, in letter B2 Paul felt it necessary to define authentic wisdom as the word of the cross, which implied that the wisdom in vogue at Corinth was nothing but the wisdom of men (2:5). The *pneumatikoi* found this to be a distortion of their position and so appended their point of view (2:6–16) when this letter circulated in the community.

⁹ For details see my 'Freedom or the Ghetto (1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:23–11:1)' *RB* 85 (1978) 543–74 = Chapter 8.

¹⁰ 'Der 1 Korintherbrief als Briefsammlung' *ZNW* 60 (1969) 219–43.

¹¹ 'Die Korintherbriefe als Briefsammlung' *ZNW* 64 (1973) 263–88.

No convincing arguments have ever been put forward that would justify the dismemberment of 1 Corinthians.¹² Thus, Widmann's explanation of *how* the interpolation took place is utterly implausible. Moreover, he never faces the question of *why* the commentary of the *pneumatikoi* was retained when, in his hypothesis, the various letters were collected into what we now know as 1–2 Corinthians. Given the mutually critical attitude of the various factions at Corinth, it is highly improbable that the self-justifying interpretation of the *pneumatikoi* could ever have been considered Pauline.

1 Corinthians 4:6

The suggestion that *to mê hyper ha gegraptai* ('not above what is written') should be considered a gloss goes back exactly a century.¹³ According to J. M. S. Baljon, a scribe found in his copy the *mê* of *hina mê heis k.t.l.* written above the alpha in *hina* or above *heis* represented by *a*. He restored the interlinear *mê* to his text and appended a marginal note to the effect that 'the *mê* was written above *a*'.

Few commentators have accepted this hypothesis, and the reasons are not far to seek. Most obviously, removal of the gloss does not solve all [85] the difficulties; the second *hina*-clause remains problematic. Secondly, 'The wording of the supposed interpolation is inherently improbable for a gloss. If the glossator wrote *to mê* he would have written *hyper to a*, not *hyper a*.'¹⁴ Thus, the majority of commentators retain the phrase and content themselves with a literal translation and highly conjectural explanations.

Recently, the hypothesis of a gloss has been revived by J. Strugnell, who points out that the obvious meaning of *to mê hyper ha [ho] gegraptai* is: 'The *mê* is beyond what is written.' The scribal observation is to the effect that a negative has been added to a text which did not have one.¹⁵ The scribe read in his exemplar, 'I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn from us to be puffed up in favour of one against another.' This statement flatly contradicts what Paul has been trying to get across; it cries out for correction. The course adopted by the scribe—to insert a 'not'—was the simple and obvious one, but his respect for the sacred text would not permit him to modify radically the meaning of a sentence without drawing attention to what he had done. It is possible, as Strugnell suggests, that the scribe inserted the negative in the wrong place. On palaeographic grounds the negative is more likely to have been omitted from the first *hina*-clause, 'that you may *not* learn from us', rather than from the second, to which the scribe restored it.

¹² See Hurd, *Origin*, 43–7; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 4; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 12–17.

¹³ J. M. S. Baljon, *De Tekst der Brieven van Paulus aan de Romeinen, de Corinthiërs, en de Galatiërs als voorwerp van de conjecturaalkritiek beschouwd* (Utrecht: van Boekhoven, 1884), 49–51.

¹⁴ J. M. Ross, 'Not Above What is Written: A Note on 1 Cor 4:6' *ExpTim* 82 (1970–1) 216.

¹⁵ 'A Plea for Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament; with a Coda on 1 Cor 4:6' *CBQ* 36 (1974) 555–8.

Whatever one thinks of this latter observation, Strugnell's translation of *to mê hyper ha [ho] gegraptai* is undoubtedly correct. In consequence, his explanation of what went on is the only one possible. He has raised the hypothesis of a gloss to the level of certitude,¹⁶ thus liberating us from speculative interpretations, some with far reaching consequences regarding the authority of scripture, and from the pessimism inherent in J. M. Ross's claim that 'it does not matter what *me hyper ha gegraptai* originally meant'.¹⁷

1 Corinthians 6:14

Exegetes have long remarked on the shift from *sôma* ('body') to *hêmas* ('us') and back again to *sôma* in 1 Cor 6:13–15, but the principal effect has been the development of a holistic interpretation of *sôma* associated with [86] the names of J. Weiss, R. Bultmann, and J. A. T. Robinson. On linguistic grounds, R. H. Gundry has convincingly argued that such a meaning could not have been intended by Paul.¹⁸ A more radical critique is furnished by U. Schnelle, who claims that v. 14 is not from the hand of Paul.¹⁹ He offers three arguments in support of his hypothesis.

In his view the whole of 1 Corinthians 6 is structured by the repetition of *ê ouk oidate*, 'What! Do you not know?' (vv. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19). In each sentence thus introduced Paul takes up the key word of the previous sentence. This pattern is broken by v. 14, since only in v. 15 is the *sôma* of v. 13 taken up. Thus, v. 14 must be an interpolation.

Materially, the observation on which this argument is based is correct, but the three rhetorical questions certainly do not structure the development in 6:1–11. As regards 6:12–20, the three questions in fact structure the last three-quarters of the argument, but the critical area is the first quarter (vv. 12–14). Here, as I have shown elsewhere,²⁰ the shape of Paul's response is controlled by the Corinthian slogan, an assessment that has been accepted by B. Byrne.²¹ Verse 14, therefore, is essential to Paul's argument as the repudiation of *kai tauten kai tauta katargêsei* ('he will destroy both one and the other'), the last element of the Corinthian slogan (v. 13c).

This understanding of the role of v. 14 also refutes Schnelle's second argument that this verse interrupts the natural connection between the statement, 'the body

¹⁶ Strugnell's proposal appears to have escaped the notice of subsequent commentators. It has been accepted by D. R. MacDonald, 'A Conjectural Emendation of 1 Cor 15:31–32 or The Case of the Mislplaced Lion Fight' *HTR* 93 (1980) 266.

¹⁷ 'Not Above What is Written', 217.

¹⁸ *Sôma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

¹⁹ '1 Kor 6:14—eine nachpaulinische Glosse' *NovT* 25 (1983) 217–19.

²⁰ 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 394 = Chapter 3.

²¹ 'Sinning against One's Own Body: Paul's Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:18' *CBQ* 45 (1983) 612 n. 12.

is not meant for immorality but for the Lord' (v. 13d), and its justification in v. 15a. In all logic, Schnelle should also have excised 'the Lord is for the body' as part of the same interruption. That he does not do so weakens his case. In fact, it is this meaningless phrase that formally underlines Paul's intention to refute the Corinthian slogan point by point.

Schnelle's third argument for considering v. 14 a gloss is that it contradicts 1 Cor 15:51–2. In this latter passage Paul explicitly includes himself among those who will be alive at the parousia. The *kai-kai* ('and-and') formulation of v. 14, on the contrary, implies that prior to the resurrection all believers must die like the Lord; and by using *hêmas* ('us'), Paul assumes that he too will die.

This argument scarcely needs refutation, but it enables me to make a rather important point regarding the formulation of v. 14. H. Lietzmann claims that its meaning would have been clearer had Paul written *ta sômata hêmôn* ('our bodies') [87] instead of *hêmas*.²² In this case, to be consistent, Paul should also have written *to sôma tou kyriou* ('the body of the Lord'). Paul, however, never speaks of raising the body of Jesus. Thus, *ton kyrion êgeiren* ('he raised the Lord') in v. 14 is perfectly conformed to his style, and this dictated the use of the personal pronoun in the second part of the sentence, 'he will raise us'. Again, this is fully harmonious with other Pauline references; it is the dead who rise. In the one exception, 1 Cor 15:44, he is dealing, not with resurrection as such, but with the nature of the resurrection *body*. In v. 14, therefore, Paul's choice was between *hêmas* and *hymas* ('you'). He naturally rejected the latter because it would make it appear that he was an exception to a general rule valid for all believers.

Finally, Schnelle fails to provide adequate motivation for the interpolation. To say that a marginal gloss somehow found its way into the text is insufficient without telling us why the marginal note was necessary in the first place.

1 Corinthians 11:3–16

A. Loisy's hypothesis that this passage was of non-Pauline origin had no influence.²³ It surfaced again, apparently independently, in an article by W. O. Walker,²⁴ to which I offered a systematic rebuttal.²⁵ Lamar Cope took up cudgels in defence of Walker's thesis, which he modified to the extent of attributing v. 2 to Paul.²⁶ For the rest he merely showed that vv. 3–16 *could* be removed from their context, but without advancing any cogent reason why they should.

²² *An die Korinther I–II*, 28.

²³ *Remarques sur la littérature épistolaire du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Nourry, 1935), 60–2.

²⁴ '1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views regarding Women' *JBL* 94 (1975) 94–110.

²⁵ 'The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?' *JBL* 95 (1976) 615–21 = Chapter 9. My reaction is shared by J. P. Meier, 'On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2–16)' *CBQ* 40 (1978) 218 n. 12; A. C. Thiselton, 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth' *NTS* 24 (1977–8) 520–1.

²⁶ '1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further' *JBL* 97 (1978) 436.

G. W. Trompf's contribution to the debate is of a different calibre.²⁷ While parting company with Walker on the question of the literary unity of vv. 3–16, he offers a systematic development of an argument that Walker only sketched in broad outline, namely, that vv. 3–16 are intrusive in their present context.

According to Trompf, 1 Cor 10:1–11:2 plus 11:17–34 form a continuous argument, each of whose three sections elaborates a theological point taken [88] from Israel's wilderness experience as articulated in 10:7–10. Thus, the theme of idolatry introduced in 10:7 is developed in 10:14–22. Similarly, 'As the Israelites "played the harlot" with Moab's daughters, who invited them to sacrificial meals and so brought on a great plague (Num 25:1–2, 9; 1 Cor 10:8), so there is danger in unthinking libertarianism (10:23[–11:1])' (p. 199). Finally, testing God and grumbling (10:9–10) occurred apropos of God's food, the manna; so too, the Corinthians 'are now tempting God because they are more concerned with their own food than with what is provided at the Lord's table' (11:17–34). This 'dynamic, intense flow of [Paul's] reasoning about food and drink' (p. 202) is brutally interrupted by the discussion on head-covering (11:3–16), which must, in consequence, be an interpolation.

It may be that Trompf has discovered the key to the articulation of Paul's thought in chs. 10–11; but the argument, as he presents it, is vitiated by a subtle piece of eisegesis in the central section. When dealing with 10:8 in itself, Trompf clearly sees that the reference is to immorality ('they fornicated'), which is presented as the cause of the death of the twenty-three thousand. In his reading of chs. 10–11 there is no talk of immorality, but there is mention of meals in 10:23–11:1. So he goes to the *uncited* part of Num 25:1–2, which does allude to sacrificial meals, and, presto, the desired connection is made! Unfortunately, Paul's intention is thereby disregarded. Trompf focuses on an aspect of Num 25:1–2 that Paul excluded, and 10:23–11:1 is not concerned with sacrificial meals. It deals with meals in pagan houses when the meat might have been offered in sacrifice—a completely different matter.

Such tortuous reasoning and forced interpretation could have been avoided had Trompf understood the true import of 11:3–16. Even though he quotes R. Scroggs, he ignores the latter's demonstration that *kephalê* ('head') in v. 3 cannot have the connotation of hierarchical authority.²⁸ He finds the argument of vv. 7–12 to bear an extraordinarily close resemblance to that of 1 Tim 2:13–15, despite the fact that in v. 11 Paul formally asserts the equality of men and women²⁹ and in v. 12 repudiates the argument based on priority of origin, the key element in 1 Tim 2:13. Finally, he persists in talking about 'head-covering' without ever telling us precisely what he means. From his line of argument, however, head-covering must somehow function as a sign both of subjection and of repentance.

²⁷ 'On Attitudes toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Cor 11:3–16 and its Context' *CBQ* 42 (1980) 196–215. Page numbers in the body of the text refer to his article.

²⁸ 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited' *JAAR* 42 (1974) 534 n. 8.

²⁹ 29 J. Kürzinger, 'Frau und Mann nach 1 Kor 11:11f.' *BZ* 22 (1978) 270–5.

I have elsewhere argued that this traditional understanding of 11:3–16 is without foundation. The thrust of the passage is to insist on the differentiation of the sexes, because Paul was concerned about the possibility of homosexuality [89] in the community.³⁰ The point at issue, therefore, is sexual immorality. Let us now look at Trompf's suggestion regarding the principle of composition of chs. 10–11 in this light.

The sexual connotation of *eporneusen* in 10:8, which Trompf attempts to diminish, is clear in the allusion to Num 25:1 and is confirmed by the citation of Exod 32:6, which constitutes the last words of the previous verse, *ekathisen ho laos phagein kai pein kai anestesan paizein* (10:7). The verb *paizein* is translated in various ways, but the most appropriate rendering is that of the NAB: 'And they rose to take their pleasure.'³¹ The formula 'eat, drink, and X' is common in the Bible, and the explicit sexual connotation of the third element in 2 Sam 11:11 and Tob 7:10 suggests that the rather vague verbs used in 1 Kgs 4:20 (= Lk 12:19 [*euphrainô*, 'to rejoice']) and 1 Sam 30:16 (*heortazô*, 'to celebrate') may be deliberate euphemisms. In any case, this association of ideas was deeply embedded in Paul's mind. Otherwise it becomes impossible to explain why he makes 'Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a woman?'—which is irrelevant to his argument—the immediate sequel to 'Have we not the right to eat and drink?' in 1 Cor 9:4–5.³² The link between 10:7 and 8 is now clear, and the aspect that must have been uppermost in Paul's mind unambiguous. On Trompf's terms, therefore, one would expect to find a section devoted to sexual immorality in chs. 10–11, and that is precisely what 11:3–16 is. Thus, when properly understood, Trompf's argument for the excision of this passage in fact proves that it is integral to the epistle.

However, it would be a mistake to imagine that Paul's concern was to develop a midrash on the wilderness experience of Israel, as seems to be implied in Trompf's view that Paul constructed an 'extraordinarily intricate, tight-knit argumentation' (p. 201). The combination of 'types' in 10:7–10 does not derive from a source, nor was it determined by any abstract vision of the OT. The types were selected in view of the problems at Corinth and arranged in the order in which Paul intended to deal with them. Paul, however, was less concerned with the niceties of literary presentation than with the issues which demanded his intervention. Thus, when he finished dealing with the type of idolatry implicit in cooperation in the work of demons (10:14–22), he should have turned immediately to the problem of homosexuality, as his plan demanded. But his admonitions to the 'strong' regarding participation in temple meals (10:14–22; cf. 8:10) reminded him [90] that he had not dealt with the 'weak', who in their own way were also blameworthy.³³ Thus, he abandoned his plan in order to insert 10:23–11:1,

³⁰ 'Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16' *CBQ* 42 (1980) 482–500 = Chapter 10.

³¹ 'To play amorously', with reference to LXX Gen 26:8, is one of the meanings given by LSJ.

³² J. B. Bauer, 'Uxores circumducere (1 Kor 9:5)' *BZ* 3 (1959) 94–102.

³³ For details, see my 'Freedom or the Ghetto', 555–6, 568–71 = Chapter 8.

which does not fit under the rubric of idolatry in any sense. Paul was capable of conceiving neat arrangements, but he never became a slave to his proposal. It is most unwise, therefore, to use what the exegete would have said next were he Paul as an argument to determine the presence of intrusive material.³⁴

1 Corinthians 14:34–5

Especially since the publication of G. Fitzler's study,³⁵ the hypothesis that these verses are a post-Pauline interpolation has been accepted by many scholars. Not all, however, agree on the extent of the insertion.

For the majority it begins with the words 'as in all the churches of the saints' (v. 33b). In so doing they merely follow blindly the paragraphing of the critical editions and the major translations. This, however, produces an awkward and unnecessary repetition of *en tais ekklesiáis* 'in the churches'. One would have expected 'as in all the assemblies of the saints women should keep silent'. The problem can be avoided by attaching v. 33b to what precedes.³⁶ The reminder that other churches are peaceful is perfectly in place as the conclusion to what Paul has been saying regarding the necessity for order in the Corinthian assembly (vv. 26–33).

Some authors, e.g. Conzelmann,³⁷ include v. 36 as part of the interpolation, but this is impossible. Verses 34–5 speak *about* women in the third person. Verse 36 cannot be addressed *to* women, because the masculine form *monous* 'alone' means that 'from you' and 'to you' must be understood either generically or as referring to men alone. In its use of the second person plural v. 36 is related to vv. 26–33.

A number of recent studies reject the hypothesis that vv. 34–5 is a post-Pauline interpolation. E. Schüssler Fiorenza is a typical representative of a trend which maintains that vv. 34–5 were written by Paul.³⁸ She claims that there is no contradiction between these verses and 11:5, which takes it [91] for granted that women can pray and prophesy in public. The approval of 11:5, she insists, is limited to *single* women who, according to 1 Cor 7:34b, know how to be holy in body and spirit. The prohibition of 14:34–5 is directed to *married* women who, according to 1 Cor 7:32–5, are less capable of attending to the things of the Lord. This distinction is supplemented by a further distinction between the ecstatic utterances in 11:5 and the sober questions in 14:35.

It is an axiom of religious sociology that the spirit is given only to those who are socially acceptable as recipients, a fact of which Paul was not unaware

³⁴ The most extreme examples of this highly subjective approach are furnished by J. C. O'Neill's two books *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1972) and *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Pelican NT Commentaries; London: Pelican, 1975). See my reviews in *RB* 82 (1975) 143 and *RB* 84 (1977) 306.

³⁵ *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde* (Theologische Existenz heute 110; Munich: Kaiser, 1963).

³⁶ So rightly Barrett (*1 Corinthians*, 330), who begins a new paragraph in v. 34.

³⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 246. ³⁸ *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 230–3.

(14:1). Thus, community-acceptance of women in authority-roles is the essential prerequisite for their giftedness in prayer and prophecy (11:5); they would not seek such gifts unless they could be used in public. In the patriarchal system a daughter (and every single woman was somebody's daughter) was, if anything, more limited than a wife. No daughter could be accorded a freedom denied to her mother. In this sense, therefore, the distinction between single and married women is anachronistic. Thus, if single women were permitted to exercise authority in the Christian community, so were married women. Leadership roles were open to women as such. Equally, the law, which is invoked in 14:34, was concerned with women as such. Its applicability was certainly not restricted to married women. In a word, the distinctions invoked to harmonize 14:34–5 with 11:5 are meaningless.

Apart from the manifest contradictions, the principal reason for denying the Pauline authorship of 14:34–5 is the invocation of the authority of the Law to found a moral attitude. Paul never appeals to the Law in this manner. This point is respected by other scholars, who also maintain that vv. 34–5 are an integral part of the letter. They, however, avoid the difficulties of the position just discussed by postulating that vv. 34–5 are a Corinthian slogan, which is quoted by Paul only to be repudiated (v. 36). How do they validate this hypothesis?

N. Flanagan and E. Hunter Snyder merely point out that the presence of Corinthian slogans elsewhere in 1 Corinthians underlines the possibility that vv. 34–5 could have belonged to the letter from Corinth (7:1).³⁹ In terms of pure possibility one cannot but agree, but the point at issue is: Which of the two possibilities—Corinthian slogan or post-Pauline interpolation—is the more probable? D. W. Odell-Scott is no more satisfactory.⁴⁰ He demonstrates that v. 36 can only be understood as a categorical refutation of what precedes; the disjunctive particle *ê* gives a special negative force to interrogative sentences. However, he makes no effort to prove that it must refute vv. 34–5. [92] On the assumption that these verses are an interpolation, v. 36 would be perfectly in place as a passionate outburst condemning the situation that required the directives of vv. 26–33.

Two arguments, in my view, demonstrate that the hypothesis of a post-Pauline interpolation is more probable than the alternative espoused by Flanagan and Hunter Snyder, and by Odell-Scott. First, Paul never dismisses a Corinthian slogan with the brutal passion evident in v. 36. Even when he flatly contradicts a slogan it is always in the context of a calm, logical discussion of the issue.⁴¹ Passionate rhetorical questions, on the contrary, appear when Paul is confronted with a situation that he has heard about, but which, apparently, posed

³⁹ 'Did Paul Put Down Women in 1 Cor 14:34–36?' *BTB* 11 (1981) 10–11.

⁴⁰ 'Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b–36' *BTB* 13 (1983) 90–3.

⁴¹ In my opinion Corinthian slogans appear in 1 Cor 6:12a; 6:13a; 6:18b; 7:1b; 8:4b; 8:8; 10:23; 11:2 and 15:29.

no problems for the Corinthians: e.g. divisions within the community (1 Cor 1:13), incest (1 Cor 5:2), and, as Odell-Scott has pointed out, selfishness at the eucharistic assembly, where we find the same disjunctive particle (1 Cor 11:22). In the light of this pattern, it is more probable that the rhetorical questions of v. 36 have the situation of vv. 26–33 in view. Moreover, the angry tone carries over into v. 37, which certainly refers to vv. 26–33.

Secondly, vv. 34–5 are parallel to 1 Tim 2:11–15, not only in content but even in vocabulary.⁴² This latter passage is an integral part of 1 Timothy, and therefore later than 1 Corinthians. Moreover, it is definitely un-Pauline in its attitude toward Adam and Eve: ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor’ (v. 14). For Paul, on the contrary, Adam was the transgressor *par excellence* (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:21–2, 45–9); and Eve was the prototype of the entire Corinthian community and not merely of the feminine element (2 Cor 11:3). The theoretical possibility that 1 Tim 2:11–15 is a return to a position once repudiated by Paul is discounted by what has been said above concerning v. 36.

With this, however, I appear to have painted myself into a corner. Would a post-Pauline interpolator, whose whole concern was to deny the authority of women, have inserted vv. 34–5 immediately in front of a verse which negates his viewpoint (v. 36)? One could claim that vv. 34–5 originally came after v. 40 as they still do in the Western text, but it is equally possible that the Western text moved these verses precisely because it was recognized just how inappropriate they were between v. 33 and v. 36. It seems more probable that the interpolator was struck by the possibility that v. 33b would make a good introduction to a community rule and simply misinterpreted v. 36, as so many exegetes have done!

1 Corinthians 15:31–2

[93] The problem in this verse is that the same reality appears to belong to two different subjects. The most natural meaning of *nê tèn hymeteran kauchêsîn* is ‘by your boasting,’ the reference being to a claim made by the Corinthians. However, it is immediately followed by *hên echô en Christô Iêsou tô kyriô hêmô* (‘which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord’). The *hên* refers back to *kauchêsîn*, which now belongs to Paul. The double modification of a single substantive is definitely awkward and explains the origin of the weakly attested variant *hêmeteran* (‘our’).

Most commentators solve this problem by taking *hymeteran* objectively, i.e. ‘the boasting whose object you are’. Recently, however, D. R. MacDonald has objected that the use of *hymetera* as an objective adjective is rare, and that it would be better, in consequence, to take *hên echô en Christô Iêsou tô kyriô hêmô* as an interpolation.⁴³ Without this phrase, *hymetera* regains its usual meaning as

⁴² A convenient synoptic presentation is given by MacDonald, ‘Conjectural Emendation’, 267.

⁴³ ‘Conjectural Emendation’, 265–76.

a subjective adjective. In its original wording the meaning of vv. 31–2 was an *ad hominem* argument based on the Corinthians' acceptance of a fable that Paul had fought with beasts at Ephesus, a legend that Paul uses but does not claim. This silence caught the attention of an interpolator, who knew that the Apostle had spoken of his rescue from 'the lion's mouth' (2 Tim 4:17), and he harmonized 1 Cor 15:31–2 with the Pastorals.

The critical question here is whether *hymetera* can legitimately be understood as an objective adjective. The answer is that it can. Possessive adjectives, which classical Greek employed for the emphatic possessive genitive of the personal pronoun, embody the ambiguity of the genitive (BDF §285); and the decision whether they are to be understood objectively or subjectively depends on the context. The context here demands the objective interpretation. While it may not be Paul's habitual usage, he does employ it at least once. *Tô hymeterô eleei* in Rom 11:31 can only be translated 'with mercy towards you'. It might have been better, as MacDonald suggests, had Paul written *nê tèn kauchêsin mou hyper hymôn* ('by my boasting concerning you'); but what we find in the current text does not infringe the rules of grammar, and so I can see no basis for the proposed excision. Verse 31 as it stands makes perfect sense. Paul swears by his pride in the existence of the Corinthian community that came into being through his 'dying', i.e. the very mode of existence that his opponents in v. 29 so despised.⁴⁴

1 Corinthians 15:44b–48

As a corollary to his excision of 1 Cor 2:6–16, Widmann attributes 15:44b–48 to the same interpolator.⁴⁵ His reasoning, however, is no more convincing here than in ch. 2.

He correctly observes the break in the middle of v. 44. A new step in the argument is introduced in v. 44b, as the paragraphing of the NAB and the JB recognize. Two arguments incline Widmann to see this as the beginning of an interpolation. It is followed by an apocryphal citation, exactly as in 1 Cor 2:9; and v. 48, with its irreducible gnostic opposition between two classes of humanity, contradicts v. 49 in which the 'earthly man' becomes the 'heavenly man'.

The origin of the quotation in 1 Cor 2:9 is indeed problematic. But the quotation in 15:45 comes, not from an apocryphal source, but from LXX Gen 2:7, which is treated in the same way as the quotations in 1 Cor 15:25 and 27. The supposed contradiction between v. 48 and v. 49 derives exclusively from Widmann's forced exegesis of v. 48: '*choikoi* irdisch sind und bleiben, das heisst: vergehen, . . . die *epouranioi* himmlisch sind und bleiben, das heisst: erlost sind'.⁴⁶ In reality, v. 48 is a pair of simple factual statements referring to the

⁴⁴ For further details see my '“Baptized for the Dead” (1 Cor 15:29): A Corinthian Slogan?' *RB* 88 (1981) 532–43 = Chapter 15.

⁴⁵ '1 Kor 2:6–16', 47–8. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

present; nothing is said about the future, and so Widmann's 'bleiben' is entirely gratuitous.

Conclusion

Of the seven proposed interpolations examined here, only two were judged to be buttressed by convincing arguments, viz., the addition of the scrupulous scribe in 4:6 and the prohibition of the male chauvinist in 14:34–5. The other five suggestions represent genuine efforts to deal with the problems in difficult texts and, if the proposals did not win acceptance, they at least had the merit of obliging one to look at these passages in a new way. It is from such dialogue that true progress comes in shared understanding.

POSTSCRIPT

As regards interpolations William O. Walker, Jr is to Corinthians what John Cohrane O'Neill is to Romans.⁴⁷ Walker has argued for a considerable number of interpolations 1 Cor in a series of articles, which have been revised and collected into a book, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 213; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). A number of these studies have been theoretical in nature, and it is appropriate to look at his methodology before turning to specific texts.

Arguing about Interpolations

Walker begins by asserting that it is *apriori* probable that there are interpolations in the Pauline corpus because classical scholars have affirmed their presence in other ancient texts. This probability, he believes, is enhanced by the fact that the individual letters of Paul have been transmitted only as part of a collection. There are no MSS containing just one letter.

Both of these observations are correct, but two points must be made. First, general probability does not translate into particular probability. In general war is a probability, but that does not mean that it is likely to break out everywhere. Thus the probability of interpolations says nothing about individual texts. Second, on the basis of slanted quotations from modern secondary sources, Walker moves without adequate justification to the assertion that the Pauline letters were transmitted 'only as parts of an expanded, abbreviated and edited collection' (p. 43).⁴⁸ This, of course, is precisely what has to be proved. Moreover, one or two examples do not constitute proof of such a broad statement. Interpolations are *apriori* possible, but not in any given case probable.

⁴⁷ J. C. O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (London: Pelican, 1975), *passim*.

⁴⁸ The page numbers in the text refer to Walker's *Interpolations*.

Contrary to expectations Walker does not deduce from his principle that the burden of proof rests on those who would deny interpolations. In fact, he declares that the burden of proof falls on the one who asserts a thesis (*pro* or *contra*). And when he does identify an interpolation he offers a series of arguments to prove that this is in fact the case. Having accepted the burden of proof, however, he immediately tries to lighten the load by asserting that 'once the *apriori* probability of interpolations is granted, however, the authenticity of every passage in the Pauline letters is thereby called into question. . . . Everything is "up for grabs"' (p. 60). One of his followers, Lamar Cope, takes this a step further, 'Given the collected and redacted character of the material we call the Pauline corpus, *every passage* needs to be subjected to scrutiny with regard to its origins, not just letters as a whole.'⁴⁹

My objection to this can be inferred from the previous paragraph. Moreover, if everything is presumed to be quicksand, how can one even begin to look for solid ground? Who would venture out into the morass? It would make scholarship impossible. If we are to believe Walker and Cope, no exegete could ever cite a parallel from Strabo or Quintillian without doing an analysis of their works that would take a lifetime. The only sane approach to any ancient text, be it religious or secular, is a positive one, which has two aspects: unless there is evidence to the contrary, (a) the traditional attribution and (b) the literary unity of a document should be accepted.

Walker tries to strengthen his case by appealing to the *Federal Rules of Evidence*, which he understands to mean that 'evidence of a particular *pattern* of behaviour on the part of an individual or a group is relevant in determining whether the individual or group is likely to have committed a *specific* act of the type exhibited in the pattern' (p. 61). The force of the principle is beyond question. The problem is the use that Walker makes of it. He considers that there is a pattern in the fact that early Christians habitually introduced interpolations into the Pauline letters. This, he believes, makes it more likely that any specific suspected text is in fact an interpolation. Walker, however, forgets that, according to the rules of evidence, the pattern must be established without a shadow of doubt before it can be brought to bear on a particular act. Only when it is clear to everyone that George always gets drunk when he is accompanied by three particular friends can it be assumed as probable that he got drunk on a similar occasion. If George got drunk only once or twice, then there is no pattern. And this is the situation with regard to Pauline interpolations. One or two are generally accepted, but there is no pattern, and logic refuses the use of a principle to establish itself.

Finally, Walker considers the types of evidence that can be used to prove interpolation. First he deals with text critical evidence, by which he means, the

⁴⁹ 'First Corinthians 8–10: Continuity or Contradiction' *Anglican Theological Review Supplementary Series* 11 (1990) 118.

absence of a passage from a MS, its appearance in different locations in the MSS, or the inexplicable failure of an early Christian writer to cite a passage. The final criterion is too speculative, because it assumes knowledge of what an author should have done. The first carries great weight,⁵⁰ but the second needs to be assessed very carefully because of the interdependence of MSS.⁵¹

Then Walker takes up contextual evidence, which is the type most likely to be encountered in specific cases. By this he intends, 'passages that exhibit little or no apparent conceptual, stylistic and/or "tonal" relation to their immediate contexts' (p. 73). This I accept in principle, but questions will arise on the practical level as to how well the points are worked out. Walker also introduces the criterion 'the repetition of a significant word or phrase' (p. 75). Again, when properly understood such a *reprise* is very helpful, but the use that Walker makes of it leaves much to be desired; see below on 1 Cor 2:6–16.

Linguistic evidence is highly problematic, even when treated as carefully and systematically as Walker does. Normally the sample is too small to be statistically significant. More importantly, new subject-matter will inevitably bring with it words and phrases that Paul has not used before and may not use again. Even when dealing with the same subject, it cannot be excluded that Paul should attempt different ways of expressing himself, or consciously improve presentations with which he was dissatisfied. No critic can claim the special revelation that would enable him to determine what Paul could or should say.

The last remark also has relevance for Walker's criteria which might be classified as 'ideational'. A given passage should be considered an interpolation if 'certain of its ideas appear to be non-Pauline or even anti-Pauline; it is more closely akin to non-Pauline and particularly post-Pauline and/or pseudo-Pauline materials than the authentically Pauline writings; it appears to reflect a situation not otherwise known to have prevailed during the lifetime of Paul' (p. 88). The principle in itself is unexceptional. Everything depends on the quality of the exegesis and the care with which the comparison is carried out.

It is to Walker's credit that he recognizes that partisans of an interpolation need to provide plausible reasons why it was added, and why it was inserted at its present location. Anyone who takes a text apart must be capable of putting it back together in a convincing fashion.

Finally Walker lays great stress on the cumulative preponderance of the evidence. I agree that this has probative force, but only when understood in a much more specific way than he will allow. A series of arguments that are *each* highly probable produces a conclusion that can be considered certain, even though

⁵⁰ Among the texts discussed here, this criterion relates to only one; see P. B. Payne, 'MS. 88 as Evidence for a Text without 1 Cor 14:34–35' *NTS* 44 (1998) 152–8, and also his 'Fuldensis, Siglia for Variants in Vaticanus, and 1 Cor 14:34–35' *NTS* 41 (1995) 240–50.

⁵¹ This is perfectly illustrated by Thiselton's treatment of the MS evidence which has 1 Cor 14:34–5 in different places (*1 Corinthians*, 1148–50).

certitude is not attained at any given point. On the contrary, a series of arguments that are each weak or forced has no cumulative effect.

In dealing with proposed interpolations my article followed the order of 1 Cor. Here I do the same but with the addition, in their appropriate places, of interpolations that I accidentally omitted or which have been proposed subsequently.

1 Cor 2:6–16

Apart from Walker, as we shall see immediately, Widmann's proposal has met with no acceptance. Klauck is alone in treating it seriously as a possible solution, even though he does not commit himself to it.⁵² The majority reject it explicitly by referring to my critique.⁵³

The only one to challenge my criticism of Widmann has been William O. Walker, first in an article '1 Corinthians 2.6–16: A Non-Pauline Interpolation?' *JSNT* 47 (1992) 75–94, which was subsequently published in a revised form in his *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 213; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 127–46. It is to this latter version that the page numbers in the following text refer.

Walker first disagrees with my treatment of the shift from 'I' in the antecedent and subsequent context to 'we' in 2:6–16 (p. 133). I also found reason to correct what I said in my critique of Widmann, and published my revised interpretation in 'Co-authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence', which appeared in 1993 and is the first article in this collection. Unfortunately Walker did not take into account my change of opinion when he revised his 1992 article. Thus what he says in *Interpolations* does not reflect what I now think of 2:6–16.

Nothing that Walker says has persuaded me to change my opinion that many, if not all, of the unusual features in 2:6–16 are due to the fact that Paul takes over the ideas and terminology of his opponents in order to confute them by giving them different meanings. Walker retorts that the passage is not polemic, and continues, 'If Paul intended the passage to be polemical, one might expect the polemic to be much less subtle and more explicit and direct' (p. 135). Personally I would not dictate to Paul how he ought to proceed. Walker then goes on to claim that all we know from 1:10–11 is that there were divisions within the community. In consequence, there is no hint that *Paul* had 'opponents'. From my perspective all who participated in the divisions in the community were *ipso facto* opposed to Paul's teaching on the very nature of the church. Corinthian believers were his 'opponents' (there may be a better word), and the *whole* of chs. 1–4 is a polemic against their erroneous vision of the church.

Walker then introduces what he calls a repeated 'catchword' or 'phrase' as the criterion of an interpolation. It 'sometimes indicates the insertion of redactional

⁵² 1 Korintherbrief, 29a.

⁵³ So Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 100 n. 9; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 122; Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1.240 n. 93; Wolff, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 53 n. 166.

material, with the interpolation either beginning shortly after the first occurrence of the *Schlagwort* and running through the second or including the first occurrence and ending shortly before the second. Just such a phenomenon may occur in the repetitive *kagô elthôn pros hymas adelphoi* (2:1) . . . *kagô adelphoi* (3:1), occurring shortly before and immediately after 2:6–16' (p. 136).

Clearly Walker is thinking of what in other languages is called the *reprise* or *Wiederaufnahme*, but his definition is so loose and inaccurate as to make its application meaningless. When properly understood, however, the *reprise* is a perfectly valid criterion that I have often used in other contexts. It is natural that the final phrase of the original text before the interpolation (or something grammatically equivalent) should be repeated at the end of the interpolation in order to provide a smooth return to the original. There is a perfect example in Luke's account of the Transfiguration where the temporal clause in the source, *kai egeneto en tô diachôrizesthai autous ap' autou* 'and when they departed from him' (9:33a), is taken up by a similar temporal clause at the end of the insertion, *kai en tô genesthai tèn phônên* 'when the voice had spoken' (9:36a). In its pristine state the original read, 'And when they departed from him Jesus was found alone'. To any unbiased reader, however, the *kagô* in 2:1 and 3:1 clearly introduce new developments. They do not constitute a *reprise*. If they did, 2:1–5 would have to be considered part of the interpolation, and that is something that even Walker does not envisage.

As might have been expected from his treatment of 1 Cor 15:29–34 (see above). Walker gives great importance to vocabulary. 'Within the scope of only 11 verses—a total of barely over 200 words—the use of two words and at least nine phrases not found elsewhere in the authentic Pauline letters surely cannot be disregarded' (p. 139). Once again, however, the sample is far too small to make statistical sense, and the vast majority of the words in 2:6–16 are attested in the Pauline letters. Moreover, if Paul is dealing with a new problem in a novel way, as I believe, then one would expect changes in his normal vocabulary.

Walker merely repeats Widmann's eight 'ideational' reasons for thinking 2:6–16 to be non-Pauline, and claims that I have not understood them. In fact, the oppositions/contradictions that he sets up now seem even more forced and artificial than when I first read his article, and Walker has done nothing to make me change my mind.⁵⁴

Finally, Walker accuses me of proceeding 'in atomistic fashion in [my] critique of Widmann' and thereby failing 'to take into account the *cumulative* impact of the various lines of evidence supporting the interpolation hypothesis' (p. 146). Unless there is to be complete confusion arguments have to be examined individually. I have tried to show that none of those put forward by Widmann

⁵⁴ See also S. Grindheim, 'Wisdom for the Perfect: Paul's Challenge to the Corinthian Church' *JBL* 121 (2002) 689–709.

or Walker carry any weight. In consequence, there is no cumulative effect. The sum of a series of zeros is zero.

This negative judgement is also reflected in the commentaries of Thiselton⁵⁵ and Garland.⁵⁶

1 Cor 4:6

Strugnell's hypothesis of an interpolated emendation, which I accepted, has won no support.⁵⁷ It is dismissed by Fee on the grounds that it demands that a series of steps had taken place before a single copy without the gloss was produced.⁵⁸ In fact, only two steps are needed, and we know nothing about the first copies. According to Thiselton, 'We cannot simply sweep aside the hypothesis since many still seek to defend it. Nevertheless it is exceedingly improbable and has little to commend it over other explanations.'⁵⁹

The probability of other interpretations of 'Not above what is written' should be a matter of serious debate because their entirely speculative character is blatant. Fee prefers to recognize this fact by confessing himself unable to decide on a convincing solution.⁶⁰ At the other end of the scale, after a detailed survey of the seven basic types of interpretation, Thiselton opts for a combination of three originally independent proposals, namely, the phrase (a) refers to what Paul has quoted as scripture already in the epistle, and (b) at the same time to the OT in general, and (c) at the same time to a familiar and accepted maxim.⁶¹ He draws these disparate elements together in this fashion, 'Paul uses (1) *scripture*, especially those passages which address the situation; (2) *tradition*, in the form of accepted 'sayings' or maxims, and (3) *reason*, which demonstrates the respective entailments of human wisdom, infantile spirituality, and a trustful faith grounded in the cross; all to address the Corinthian situation'.⁶² I can only say that, if Paul believed that his readers at Corinth would see all this in the phrase 'Not above what is written', he was completely unrealistic in his expectations.

Strugnell's hypothesis retains the inestimable advantage of giving a precise meaning to the words that appear in the text.

⁵⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 240. ⁵⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 91 n. 4.

⁵⁷ Even though I focused exclusively on the phrase 'Not above what is written' Collins somehow got the impression that I believe that 'the entire verse is an interpolation into Paul's text' (*1 Corinthians*, 180). This is not in fact the case.

⁵⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 169 n. 15.

⁵⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 353. He would not have had access to P. Artz-Grabner, '1 Cor 4:6—A Scribal Gloss?' *BN* 130 (2006) 59–78, who answers his question in the affirmative.

⁶⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 169.

⁶¹ *1 Corinthians*, 355. Thiselton would not have had access to thorough arguments in favour of (a) by J. R. Wagner, '“Not beyond the Things which are Written”: A Call to Boast only in the Lord (1 Cor 4:6)' *NTS* 44 (1998) 279–87, and in favour of (c) by R. L. Tyler, 'First Corinthians 4:6 and Hellenistic Pedagogy' *CBQ* 60 (1998) 97–103. In neither is the evidence convincing.

⁶² *1 Corinthians*, 356.

1 Cor 6:14

My refutation of Schnelle is accepted by Fee,⁶³ Schrage,⁶⁴ and Wolff.⁶⁵ All other commentators reject his hypothesis for various other reasons.⁶⁶

1 Cor 7:29–31

I should have discussed these verses in my article, because J. C. O'Neill's study appeared in 1982, but for some reason it escaped my net.⁶⁷ His basic argument is that v. 29 flatly contradicts what Paul has said in 1 Cor 7:5. 'Verse 5 counsels an open and wholehearted relationship between people who take decisions from day to day, whereas verse 29 recommends a detachment from daily affairs in order to make oneself immune to change.'⁶⁸ Moreover, the style is heavily rhetorical and mannered, and in such a way as to be without parallel in the Pauline letters. Finally two of the verbs (*systellô* and *paragô*) are hapaxlegomena in Paul, and *schêma* occurs only in Phil 2:8. Verses 29–31 were inserted at this point in 1 Cor, O'Neill maintains, because of their reference to marriage.

Before we move on it is important to understand exactly what O'Neill describes as 'mannered'. When the verses are laid out properly, this is the pattern:

*Touto de phêmin adelphoi
ho kairos synestalmenos estin*

To loipon hina kai

*Hoi echontes gynaikas
hôs mê echontes ôsin*

*Kai hoi klaiontes
hôs mê klaiontes*

*Kai hoi chairontes
hôs mê chairontes*

*Kai hoi agorazontes
hôs mê katechontes*

*Kai hoi chrômenoi ton kosmon
hôs mê katachrômenoi*

*Paragei gar to schêma tou kosmoutoutou
toutou*

This I maintain, brothers:
The time has been shortened

Let those who have wives
be as though they had none

Let those who weep
be as though they did not weep

Let those who rejoice
be as though they did not rejoice

Let those who trade
be as though they were not owners

Let those who deal with the world
be as though they had no dealings

For the form of this world is passing away

The care expended on 'the five parallel expressions linked to one another by parallelism, polysyndeton (the multiplication of conjunctions) and anaphora (the

⁶³ *1 Corinthians*, 256 n. 35.

⁶⁴ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.9 n. 228.

⁶⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 128 n. 184.

⁶⁶ So Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 246; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 464; and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 231 n. 18.

⁶⁷ 'Glosses and Interpolations in the Letters of St Paul' in *Studia Evangelica VII* (TU 126; ed. E. A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 379–86.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 382.

repetition of the initial word)⁶⁹ needs no emphasis. Such balance and symmetry does not happen by accident. Moreover, the noun in the first line is taken up in the second in each case. The one exception is the fourth, to which I shall return below.

A much closer analysis of the ‘strangeness’ of these verses is offered by Schrage,

Vieles spricht dafür, dass Paulus in V 29–31 aus apokalyptischer Tradition schöpft und nicht einfach ad hoc formuliert, wie schon die nur relative Kontexteinpassung andeutet: Nur das erste Beispiel passt in den grösseren Kontext, *parthenoi* und *agamoí* dagegen erscheinen nicht, und die Eschatologie ist in den folgenden Versen nicht mehr Argumentationsbasis. Weiter taucht die feierliche Einleitung nur hier und in 15,50 auf, und auch dort hat Paulus apokalyptische Tradition übernommen. Ferner ist auf die ausgeprägte Stilisierung des Mittelteils und auf die apokalyptische Terminologie des Rahmens mit seinen unpaulinischen Wendungen (*synestalmenos*, *paragein*, *schéma*) zu verweisen (vgl. aber auch innerhalb der Mahnungen (*agorazein* und *chrēstai ton kosmon*), ebenso auf die Tatsache, dass Paulus anders als in anderen eschatologischen Stücken nur vom Ende des Alten spricht, ohne das Neue, den anbrechenden Tag oder den wiederkommenden Herrn, zu erwähnen. Endlich ist die verblüffend nahe Parallele in 4(6) Esr 16:36ff zu beachten, wo dasselbe, bei Paulus zudem singuläre *hōs mē = quasi non* auftaucht, aber auch eine Anzahl derselben Beispiele (*verdere*, *emere*, *mercari*, *nubere*). Insofern ist es durchaus angebracht, von einem apokalyptischen ‘Traditionsstück’ zu sprechen.⁷⁰

Since it may not be easily accessible, it is perhaps useful here to cite the text to which Schrage refers, ‘Here the word, O ye my people! Prepare yourselves for the struggle, and in the evils behave yourselves as strangers on earth. He that sells, let him be as one in flight; he that buys as he who is about to lose; he that deals as one who has no more profit; he that builds as he who will not inhabit; he that sows as he that will not reap; likewise he that prunes (his vines) as he that will not gather the harvest; they that marry as those who will not beget children; and they that marry not as those who are widowed’ (6 Ezra 16:41–5).⁷¹ Fee admits that the parallel is striking, but dismisses it as being much later than Paul.⁷² Schrage, however, counters very reasonably, ‘Der Einwand, der Text sei spät, besagt wenig, da 6 Esr nicht von Paulus abhängt und der zeitlichen Ansetzung angesichts der Stabilität apokalyptischer Tradition hier kaum entscheidendes Gewicht zukommt.’⁷³ Clearly the content of what we find in Paul and in 6 Ezra are not identical, but the similarity in intention, tone, and structure cannot be denied. They undoubtedly come from the same tradition.

The difference between O’Neill and Schrage is that the former believes vv. 29–31 to be a post-Pauline interpolation, whereas the latter is convinced

⁶⁹ Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 289.

⁷⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.168.

⁷¹ E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 2.701.

⁷² *1 Corinthians*, 340 n. 18.

⁷³ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.168 n. 670.

that we have to do with pre-Pauline material, which Paul quotes to reinforce his position.⁷⁴ The one argument that favours O'Neill's hypothesis is the claimed contradiction between v. 5 and v. 29. Were this in fact the case, it is unlikely that Paul would quote material with which he did not agree without correcting it. I am convinced, however, that O'Neill exaggerates. Paul believed that the end of the world was imminent (1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Cor 15:52) but nonetheless gave instructions about emergent leadership in his communities (1 Thess 5:12–13; 1 Cor 16:15–16), as if they were to continue indefinitely. This may not be logical, but it is very human and natural, and the tension should not be forced.⁷⁵

While accepting Schrage's arguments, my support for his position is motivated primarily by the fact that the carefully calculated formal structure of vv. 29–31 is paralleled only by that of the hymns, which Paul cites in Phil 2:6–11 and in Col 1:15–20.⁷⁶ Moreover, it is a feature of these two citations that Paul introduces changes which disturb the formal perfection of the original quotation.⁷⁷ Thus it is entirely possible that it was Paul who inserted the discordant *katachrômenoi* into the fourth of the parallel phrases. With his usual acute perception Thiselton has pointed out that it is the one element that 'provides a helpful clue to the practical meaning of *hôs mê*. Robertson and Plummer note the intensive compound form *katechô*: '*hôs mê katechontes* "as not entered upon full ownership" or "[as not] keeping fast hold upon" . . . Earthly goods are a trust, not a possession'.⁷⁸ *Katechô* is well attested in the Pauline letters.⁷⁹

Even though he does not consider vv. 29–31 to be a non-Pauline element, Collins offers some support to this hypothesis by identifying the verses immediately following (vv. 32–5) as an 'explanation'.⁸⁰ One reason for its necessity would be the non-Pauline origin of vv. 29–31. The structure of the explanation is also impressive, but it in no way approaches the rigour of vv. 29–31, and thereby once again highlights the 'strangeness' of these verses.

1 Cor 10:1–22

In the Postscript to my article on 1 Cor 8:1–13 and 10:23–11:1 I pointed out that it is a staple of partition theories of 1 Cor to attribute these two passages

⁷⁴ According to Thiselton (*1 Corinthians*, 582), V. L. Wimbush also identifies vv. 29–31 as pre-Pauline material (*Paul the Worldly Ascetic: Response to the World and Self-Understanding according to 1 Corinthians 7* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 47). Wimbush argues that *touto de phêmi* introduces a quotation (*Paul*, 35–47), but Thiselton is not convinced by the arguments (*1 Corinthians*, 579).

⁷⁵ The same point is made to good effect by Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 580.

⁷⁶ One might also think of 2 Cor 11:4, whose authenticity has never been disputed.

⁷⁷ For details of both hymns, see my 'Tradition and Redaction in Col 1:15–20' *RB* 102 (1995) 231–41.

⁷⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 583, quoting Robertson-Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 156.

⁷⁹ 1 Cor 11:2; 15:2; 2 Cor 6:10; 1 Thess 5:21; 2 Thess 2:6–7; Philem 13.

⁸⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 288.

to one letter, and 10:1–22 to a different letter also written by Paul. The basis for this hypothesis is the belief that the various passages show Paul holding contradictory positions, which are then explained by postulating an evolving situation at Corinth to which he had to respond. This solution has satisfied very few.⁸¹ Lamar Cope has given it a new lease of life by claiming that 10:1–22 is a post-Pauline interpolation designed to bring his teaching in the other two passages into line with the church practice of a later age.⁸²

After a theoretical statement which I have discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Cope articulates his arguments with laudable brevity, ‘concerning 10:1–22, one notices a vast difference. The vocabulary has shifted radically, the style of argument has become midrashic, and the advice is in sharp contrast to units A [= 8:1–13] and C [= 10:23–11:1]’ (p. 119). He has the grace to recognize, however, that ‘because the topic of 10:1–22 and its midrashic character are somewhat unique, the striking oddities of phrasing and vocabulary alone might not render 10:1–22 suspect as being non-Pauline’ (p. 120). Thus they do not need examination in detail. Everything, therefore, depends on the contradiction of content. Cope finds this much more irreconcilable than the vast majority of scholars who refuse the partition of 1 Cor. To make his case, therefore, he would have had to deal with all their considerations in detail. I have endeavoured in the Postscript to my article on 1 Cor 8–10 to explain the shift in emphasis between ch. 8 and 10:14–22. In particular I explained the shift from idols as non-entities and as fonts for demonic powers, which is Cope’s main argument in terms of content. In consequence, I do not perceive the tension to be anywhere near as severe as the interpolation theory demands.⁸³ Cope’s theory has not commanded the attention of most scholars, and to the best of my knowledge it is mentioned only by Collins, who dismisses it.⁸⁴

1 Cor 11:3–16

The arguments of Walker and Mount have already been dealt with in ch. 9 above. My ‘Interpolations’ article revealed the further arguments put forward by Trompf to be unconvincing. This assessment has been accepted explicitly by Fee,⁸⁵ Collins,⁸⁶ Schrage,⁸⁷ Thiselton,⁸⁸ and Garland.⁸⁹

⁸¹ See Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 36–41.

⁸² ‘1 Corinthians 8–10’. The page references in the text are to this article. It is summarized in somewhat extravagant detail by Walker in his *Interpolations*, 232–6.

⁸³ See pp. 117 and 123–6.

⁸⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 307.

⁸⁶ *1 Corinthians*, 394.

⁸⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 806.

⁸⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 492 n. 3

⁸⁷ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2.496–7.

⁸⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 505 n. 1.

1 Cor 13

My article should also have taken this chapter into account, because in 1959 E. L. Titus argued that it was a post-Pauline interpolation.⁹⁰ Even though this hypothesis was dismissed by Fee as ‘criticism run amok’,⁹¹ it is defended by William O. Walker, first in an article ‘Is First Corinthians 13 a Non-Pauline Interpolation?’ *CBQ* 60 (1998) 484–99, and then in a revised version in his *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 147–65, to which the page references in the text refer.

He begins, of course, with the observation that ch. 13 is a self-contained unit, which is perfectly intelligible on its own. It could have stood alone. He then claims that its position between chs. 12 and 14 is inappropriate because ‘it turns the latter chapter into an anti-climactic relapse into the controversy that has just been declared irrelevant’ (p. 152). Were this assessment correct, it would be a pointer to the fatal weakness of all Walker’s hypotheses. He can never provide a convincing reason for the placing of an interpolation. Why would an interpolator site his addition so awkwardly here? In fact, however, Walker is wrong in thinking that what is said about love made the spiritual gifts irrelevant (p. 152). For Paul these gifts were given by the Spirit, and so could not be irrelevant. They were essential to the functioning of the community (1 Cor 12:7). What Paul wanted to get across was how such talents should be assessed and used. Thus it was necessary for Paul to emphasize the importance of love before going into the details of prophecy and glossolalia in ch. 14. Witherington puts his finger on the precise point, ‘This chapter is, then, not about a gift of love as one gift among many, but about love as the *modus operandi* of all the gifts.’⁹²

Inevitably Walker drags in vocabulary and points to a series of Pauline hapaxlegomena (pp. 156–7). Once again, this cannot be accorded any weight, because the subject matter determines the words used. If Paul here offers a more detailed discussion of ‘love’ than anywhere else in his letters, one would expect to find new terms. What then proves that ch. 13 is not Pauline? Walker offers a series of arguments.

First, nowhere else in Paul ‘do we find anything approaching the sustained poetic quality of chapter 13’ (p. 156). This observation is correct and has been made by many who do not find it an obstacle to Pauline authenticity. Walker forgets that Paul was a very well trained rhetorician, but who deliberately refrained from using the techniques of oratory to win converts (1 Cor 2:1–5). Therefore, Paul had the skills to write ch. 13, and might have relaxed his usual rule here because of his irritation with the Corinthians, who could not see what to him was obvious. The Fool’s Speech (2 Cor 11:1–12:13) is a perfect parallel

⁹⁰ ‘Did Paul write 1 Corinthians 13?’ *Journal of Bible and Religion* 27 (1959) 299–302.

⁹¹ *1 Corinthians*, 626 n. 6.

⁹² *Conflict and Community*, 264 n. 4.

because Paul's rhetorical skills appear most clearly even though there they have been released by anger.

Second, it would be most unlike Paul to write a whole section without a single reference to Christ (p. 158).⁹³ This objection is valuable in that it offers me the opportunity to raise a question that to the best of my knowledge no commentator has asked: How did Paul know what made love 'genuine' (2 Cor 8:8), that is 'non-hypocritical' (2 Cor 6:6; Rom 12:9)? One thing is certain. It was not simple experience. Paul lived in a world that he considered to be 'under the power of Sin' (Rom 3:9), a profoundly flawed society in which the lives of individuals were distorted by false values, whose pressure they could not resist. Paul could not take for granted what his contemporaries called 'love'. After all, they put the self before all others. Their defining characteristic was covetousness (Rom 7:7). The odds were that what they considered love was nothing but a covert expression of selfishness. Given the general thrust of Paul's thought, one might suspect that he found the answer in Christ. This turns out to be true, as I have worked out elsewhere.⁹⁴ Anyone who knows the Pauline Christ can detect his lineaments in vv. 4–7. The Christology of ch. 13 is implicit, but nonetheless real.

Third, faith is the supreme Pauline virtue, but here it is subordinated to love, and defined as an ability to move mountains, which appears nowhere else in Paul (p. 158). This objection owes more to Walker's Protestant background than to his knowledge of Paul. Paul may have used 'faith alone', but this was just a form of shorthand whose inadequacy the incident at Antioch ruthlessly exposed (Gal 2:11–14). It opened the door to James' refusal of common meals involving Jewish and Gentile converts. What Paul really meant was *pistis di' agapês energoumenê* 'faith working through love' (Gal 5:6). The reference to moving mountains may have been an allusion to the saying of Jesus preserved in Mt 17:20, which would have been typical of Paul.⁹⁵ Alternatively it may have been a proverbial expression for the most improbable occurrence, which would have been well known.

Fourth, the allusion to martyrdom by fire must postdate the persecution of Nero, which is well subsequent to the writing of 1 Cor (p. 159). Walker is right that many commentators prefer the reading *kauthêsômai* 'that I should be burned', but a very good case can be made for *kauchêsômai* 'that I may glory'.⁹⁶ There can be no question of an argument until the question of the correct reading is settled definitively.

⁹³ Schrage, while considering this a strong argument, ultimately does not find it convincing because Christ is also not mentioned in ch. 14 (*Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.277 n. 9).

⁹⁴ 'Paul on Love' *Priests and People* 15/4 (April 2001) 129–33. See Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 269.

⁹⁵ See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 189–95, 650–1.

⁹⁶ See J. H. Petzer, 'Contextual Evidence in Favor of *kauchêsômai* in 1 Cor 13:3' *NTS* 35 (1989) 229–53, who is followed by Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1043, and Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.290.

Five, 'the place that is given to knowledge, especially the idea that knowledge will ultimately come to fulness and completion' (p. 160) is un-Pauline. The details are not spelt out, but one imagines that Walker must have been thinking of texts such as 1 Cor 8:1. It would have been more to the point to take into account 1 Cor 14:20, 'Do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil but in thinking be mature.' The whole point of the letter was that the Corinthians might outgrow their babyhood, and develop a mature quality of judgement (1 Cor 3:1). It should also be evident that the contrast in 13:8–13 is not between 'now' and the 'eschatological vision' of the afterlife, but between the childish present of the Corinthians and what they could become as adults in the proximate future, if they heeded Paul.⁹⁷

Finally, there is no reference to ch. 13 in any of the church fathers, who evoke other passages of 1 Cor, even in *1 Clement* 49.2–50.2. When one looks at Walker's treatment of this latter text, it is striking that he will only admit exact *verbatim* citations (p. 162). One would expect rather to find allusions, which do in fact exist, e.g. v. 4 has *ou pysioutai* 'it (love) is not arrogant' whereas *1 Clement* 49.5 has *ouden hyperêphanon* 'there is nothing haughty (in love)', while v. 7 has *stegei* and *1 Clement* 49.5 has *snechetai*, both meaning 'to bear' (p. 163 note 88).

Walker greatly exaggerates the alienation of ch. 13 from its context. With respect to chs. 12–14 commentators point out that ch. 13 is the B in the ABA' pattern which occurs frequently in 1 Cor.⁹⁸ This point, of which he must have been well aware, is simply ignored by Walker. Rhetorical analysis added a further dimension. B. Standaert was one of the first to classify ch. 13 as a rhetorical *digressio*.⁹⁹ This was refined by Witherington, who identified it as a showpiece of epideictic rhetoric inserted by Paul into the plainstyle deliberative rhetoric of chs. 12 and 14, according to the advice of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.8.15 and Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3.7.1–4.¹⁰⁰ Ch. 13, therefore, is not at all out of place. Moreover, it is intimately related, not only to its immediate context, but to the situation at Corinth as it is revealed in 1 Cor. This was pointed out by Robertson and Plummer,¹⁰¹ and has been strongly reinforced by Schrage,¹⁰² and Thiselton,¹⁰³ both of whom provide details. The significance of these contacts is simply dismissed magisterially by Walker (p. 153) as unworthy of consideration. It might have been more convincing had he demonstrated the inadequacy of each point in detail.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ See M. Miguens, '1 Cor 13:8–13 Reconsidered' *CBQ* 37 (1975) 76–97.

⁹⁸ So Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 626 n. 2; Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 461.

⁹⁹ 'Analyse rhétorique de chapitres 12 à 14 de 1 Cor' in *Charisma und Agape (1 Ko 12–14)* (ed. L. De Lorenzi; Rome: Abbey of St Paul, 1983) 29. Without any justification Walker prefers to classify ch. 13 as an 'interruption' (p. 155).

¹⁰⁰ *Conflict and Community*, 264.

¹⁰¹ *1 Corinthians*, 285–6

¹⁰² *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.276.

¹⁰³ *1 Corinthians*, 1028–9.

¹⁰⁴ Having finished this note I belatedly discovered that Walker's hypothesis had been systematically discussed and rejected by J. Corley, 'The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13' *CBQ* 66 (2004) 256–74.

1 Cor 14:34–5

In my article I accepted that these verses were a post-Pauline interpolation emanating from the same circles that produced 1 Tim 2:11–15. In the process I refuted the hypothesis of Schüssler Fiorenza that it was written by Paul but addressed to married women, whereas the contradictory 1 Cor 11:5 was addressed to single women.¹⁰⁵ I also argued against the view that vv. 34–5 were neither Pauline nor an interpolation but a Corinthian slogan to which Paul reacted.

My refusal to see vv. 34–5 as a Corinthian slogan was immediately disputed by D. Odell-Scott¹⁰⁶ and Talbert.¹⁰⁷ Both made the same point. Verse 36 is not the conclusion to vv. 23–33, as I claimed. Odell-Scott says that he relies on Talbert, but in fact the arguments are quite dissimilar. For Talbert, ‘v. 36 is addressed to “you all” (plural), whereas, if a response to vv. 26–33, it ought to be “you” (singular)’. In fact, Paul has been referring to individuals in vv. 26–33, e.g. ‘If anyone’, and Talbert is right to say that Paul is criticizing ‘unbridled individualism’. But then he goes on to say that Paul ‘is asking individuals to subordinate their personal expression of spiritual gifts to the corporate good’. In other words, Talbert slips into the plural, exactly as Paul did in v. 36, and for the same reason. The alternatives were the singular, which would assume erroneously that there was only one person to be reprimanded, or the generic plural, which the readers would have no difficulty in restricting to the disruptive element in the assembly.

For Odell-Scott, on the other hand, v. 33b is the conclusion of what precedes, because on two other occasions in this letter (4:17 and 11:16) Paul appeals to a general practice among the churches as a way of ending a discussion. In consequence, v. 36 would be superfluous as a conclusion (p. 101). Even though 4:17 is not an ending (the line of thought continues to 4:21), Odell-Scott’s point is nullified by the fact that v. 36 is in fact parallel to 11:16 in that it is a reminder to the Corinthians that they are not the only church in the world. It will be remembered that in the address of 1 Cor Paul felt obliged to associate the Corinthians ‘with all those who in *every place* call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours’ (1:2b; cf. 2 Cor 1:1b). They were but a tiny element in the fast-growing Jesus movement.

Odell-Scott also took issue with my assertion that Paul reacted with more passion to situations which the Corinthians refused to recognize as problematic than to those on which they asked his opinion. He cannot believe that they tolerated divisions in the church, and particularly at the Lord’s Supper. Alas, this was in fact the case, and Paul was furious because they should have known better.

¹⁰⁵ For a similar negative view, see W. Munro, ‘Women, Text and Canon: The Strange Case of 1 Corinthians 14:33–35’ *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 18 (1988) 26–31.

¹⁰⁶ ‘In Defense of an Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:34–36: A Reply to Murphy-O’Connor’s Critique’ *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987) 100–3.

¹⁰⁷ *Reading Corinthians*, 93.

I probably exaggerated in seeing v. 36 as expressive of 'brutal passion', but when it is compared to Paul's reaction to what are generally recognized as Corinthian slogans, I am sure that dispassionate observers will see the difference.

Be that as it may, the only major commentator to seriously consider the hypothesis that vv. 34–5 is a Corinthian slogan is Collins, who trots it out at the end of his discussion as a possible explanation of the difficulties of these verses, but refrains from committing himself to it.¹⁰⁸ The others reject it categorically. According to Fee, 'there is no precedent for such a long quotation that is also full of argumentation (two explanatory "fors"); it presupposes the unlikely scenario that some in the church were forbidding women to speak—and especially that the quotation would come from the same Corinthian letter that is otherwise quite pro-women.'¹⁰⁹

The debate concerning the authenticity or otherwise of vv. 34–5 continues unabated. These verses are considered a post-Pauline interpolation by Senft,¹¹⁰ Lang,¹¹¹ Fee,¹¹² Klauck,¹¹³ Schrage,¹¹⁴ Hays,¹¹⁵ and Walker.¹¹⁶ Others argue with equal conviction for their authenticity, namely, Collins,¹¹⁷ Witherington,¹¹⁸ Wolff,¹¹⁹ Kremer,¹²⁰ Thiselton,¹²¹ Garland,¹²² and Dunn.¹²³ These latter recognize that, when taken at face value, vv. 34–5 contradict the freedom accorded to women to speak in public in 1 Cor 11:5 and 14:41 ('you can *all* prophesy'). Thus, they claim, vv. 34–5 must mean something other than it says. Since it cannot exclude speech as such, still less inspired speech, it must be directed against a particular type of speech. In consequence, they settle for verbalization that is disruptive in one way or another. Some think of repeated questions that interrupt the flow of the liturgical assembly or prophecies that ramble on rather too long. Others are more concerned for the dignity of male members of the community, and think in terms of criticism of the lifestyles of certain prophets, or of wives sitting in judgement on the gifts of their husbands.¹²⁴ The most all-embracing description is given by Thiselton, 'The women would in this case (i) be acting as judges over their husbands in public; (ii) risk turning worship into an extended discussion session with private interests; (iii) militate

¹⁰⁸ *1 Corinthians*, 517.

¹⁰⁹ *1 Corinthians*, 705. So also Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.487, and in particular note 738; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1152; and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 667.

¹¹⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 182–3. ¹¹¹ *Briefe an die Korinther*, 199.

¹¹² *1 Corinthians*, 700–2. ¹¹³ *1 Korintherbrief*, 105b.

¹¹⁴ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3.481–4. In particular Schrage demolishes the view of Ellis that vv. 34–5 is essentially no different from the instructions in vv. 29–32 (483).

¹¹⁵ *1 Corinthians*, 246–7. ¹¹⁶ *Interpolations*, 66. ¹¹⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 516.

¹¹⁸ *Conflict and Community*, 288. ¹¹⁹ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 344.

¹²⁰ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 312. ¹²¹ *1 Corinthians*, 1150.

¹²² *1 Corinthians*, 666, 673. ¹²³ *Theology of Paul*, 589.

¹²⁴ Dunn makes an important point in reminding us that at Corinth it was a question of 'public gatherings in *private* space' (*Theology of Paul*, 592). The church met in homes, where the woman of the house might feel less inhibited in speaking out than were she in a council hall or a law court; see Philo, *Special Laws* 3.169.

against the ethics of controlled and restrained speech in the context of which the congregation should be silently listening to God rather than eager to address one another; and (iv) disrupt the sense of respect for the orderliness of God's agency in creation and in the world as against the confusion which preexisted the creative activity of God's Spirit.¹²⁵

The obvious response to this elaborate hypothesis is the simple question: If this is what Paul meant, why did he not say so? He was perfectly capable of finding the appropriate words. Moreover, are we to assume that *all* women, and only women, were disruptive? Even though he adopts this scenario, Garland at least has the good sense to recognize that 'men can be just as guilty of idle chatter', and quotes a text from Plutarch, which is critical of men 'who lead the speaker to digress to other topics and interject questions, and raise new difficulties' (*Moralia* 42F). Men can be just as much a threat to good order, and none of the problems envisaged by Thiselton are specific to women, except the first, which brings us to an even more cogent objection based on the Apostle's understanding of the male–female relationship.

Supporters of the disruptive speech hypothesis consider the most severe form of disruption to be that of the conventional order of the male–female relationship. It is easy to find spokesmen, 'The probability, then, is that women prophets were taking part in the process of evaluation of individual prophecies (14.29), which would presumably include their passing judgment on prophecies uttered by husbands or senior male relatives.'¹²⁶ 'Paul disallows speech in the assembly that would suggest that a wife is being insubordinate towards her husband.'¹²⁷ Paul's concern, in their view, was to preserve the traditional order in which women were subordinate to men. If this is in fact the meaning of vv. 34–5, then it flatly contradicts Paul's explicit statement in 11:11–12 regarding the complete equality of men and women 'in the Lord'.¹²⁸ There could hardly be more compelling confirmation of the interpolation hypothesis.

It should not be forgotten that the 'established order' also put masters above slaves. The logic of the disruptive speech hypothesis demands that slaves should be prohibited from evaluating the prophecies of their masters or mistresses. In other words, we are invited to rewrite 14:29, 'Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others, *who must be of superior or equal social rank*, weigh what is said.' This, however, is completely opposed to Paul's vision of the Christian community where 'there is neither slave nor free, nor male and female' (Gal 3:28).

1 Cor 15:21–2

O'Neill dismisses these verses as an interpolation without any argumentation, simply as a corollary of his belief that Rom 5:12–21 is un-Pauline.¹²⁹ I would be

¹²⁵ *I Corinthians*, 1158. ¹²⁶ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 592.

¹²⁷ Garland, *I Corinthians*, 671. ¹²⁸ See p. 178 above.

¹²⁹ 'Glosses and Interpolations', 385.

surprised if any of the commentators on Romans had taken his proposal seriously. If he is not correct there, then there is no argument against vv. 21–2.

1 Cor 15:29–34

Given the difficulty of understanding ‘Baptism for the Dead’ (1 Cor 15:29), it is not really surprising that someone should propose the simplest solution of the problem of vv. 29–34 by declaring it to be a non-Pauline interpolation. It is more difficult to understand why it took so long. Finally, as might have been expected, William O. Walker took up the challenge, and provided a comprehensive series of arguments to this effect. ‘1 Corinthians 15:29–34 appears to interrupt its context, both substantively and stylistically; certain features of the vocabulary of 1 Cor 15:29–34 appear to be distinctively different from those normally associated with Paul; some of the content of 1 Cor 15:29–34 appears to be un-Pauline; 1 Cor 15:29–34 makes use of a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures in a way not found elsewhere in the Pauline letters; unlike other parts of the authentically Pauline corpus, 1 Cor 15:29–34 contains a quotation from a classical author; 1 Cor 15:29–34 appears to be a self-contained unit that could stand alone apart from the present context.’¹³⁰ The verses, he believes, originated in Marcionite circles, and were inserted into 1 Cor sometime in the second century AD to provide apostolic warrant for the practice of baptism for the dead.¹³¹

This apparently solid array of arguments begins to crumble as soon as it is even looked at closely. It is fundamental to Walker’s thesis that v. 29 refers to vicarious baptism. White and I have shown that this is unacceptable, which refutes two of Walker’s key assertions, namely, that vv. 29–34 interrupt the context, and that it is un-Pauline in its treatment of baptism. Even though our articles were easily available to Walker, he followed his usual pattern of ignoring any data that does not suit him. His point regarding the quotation from Isa 22:13b (‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’) is that the author disagrees with it, whereas Paul always agrees with the OT when he quotes it. It takes little intelligence, however, to recognize that Isaiah uses this quotation only to disagree with it. Thus here Paul is in full agreement with the intention of the OT passage. This tendency to fabricate evidence is also manifest in his treatment of ‘I fought with beasts at Ephesus’ (v. 32). Despite all the evidence to the contrary, he insists on taking it literally, and thus finds that it contradicts what Paul says elsewhere about his tribulations in Asia. In fact, of course, *kata anthrôpon* formally signifies that the phrase should be understood figuratively. Apropos of the quotation from Menander, ‘Bad company ruins good morals’ (v. 33), Walker is entirely correct in noting that Paul never quotes from a pagan author elsewhere. But this proves nothing. Paul had an excellent pagan education, as his skill in rhetoric

¹³⁰ ‘1 Corinthians 15:29–34 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation’ *CBQ* 69 (2007) 84–103, here 102.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

amply demonstrates, and what might be surprising is that he did not draw more frequently on the authors he had read. Not to do so, however, was a strategic decision regarding the method of his ministry (cf. 1 Cor 2:1–5).

In an effort to give an appearance of objectivity, Walker makes great play of the vocabulary. Verses 29–34 contain 81 words, of which, he claims, only 26 can be considered diagnostic. Of these words 38.46% occur nowhere or very rarely elsewhere in Paul. In addition four phrases (*pasan hôran, kath' hêmèran, mê amartanete, tên hymeteran kauchêsîn*) do not appear in the authentic letters, and *adelphoi* is not found as here in the middle of a sentence.¹³² At one stage in the history of research this type of argument was accorded great weight.¹³³ Today anyone with even a limited acquaintance of statistics knows that the sample is so small as to be worthless. There are probably a number of other passages in Paul, whose authenticity is not in dispute, where the same type of analysis would reveal similar so-called abnormalities. It should also be pointed out, of course, that 61.50% of the vocabulary of vv. 29–34 is used by Paul, and that phrases like *kata anthrôpon* (v. 32), *mê planasthe* (v. 33) and *pros entropên hymîn lalô* (v. 34) occur only in the Pauline letters. Walker's effort to explain away these phrases is a model of wishful thinking. *Kata anthrôpon* in fact has the sense that Paul always gives it ('in the common estimation'), and apropos of the two other phrases Walker is reduced to suggesting entirely gratuitously that the interpolator borrowed them from 1 Cor 6:5 and 9!

1 Cor 15:31–2

The problem is too minor to have attracted the attention of most commentators, but my critique of MacDonald is accepted by Fee,¹³⁴ Schrage,¹³⁵ and Wolff.¹³⁶

1 Cor 15:44b–48

Again a problem too minor to have demanded comment, but my arguments against an interpolation at this point have been accepted by Fee,¹³⁷ and Schrage.¹³⁸

1 Cor 15:56

In the past many suggested that this verse was an interpolation.¹³⁹ The reasons are succinctly articulated by Findlay, as quoted by Thiselton, 'this verse throws

¹³² Ibid., 88–92.

¹³³ One wonders if any book did as much damage as R. Morgenthaler's *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* (Zurich/Frankfurt am M.: Gotthelf, 1958).

¹³⁴ *1 Corinthians*, 770 n. 49.

¹³⁵ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.242 n. 1173.

¹³⁶ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 398 n. 275.

¹³⁷ *1 Corinthians*, 787 n. 6.

¹³⁸ *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.301 n. 1478.

¹³⁹ For this aspect of the history of interpretation, see F. W. Horn, '1 Korinther 15,56—ein exegetischer Stachel' *ZNW* 82 (1991) 88–105.

into an epigram the doctrine of Rom iv–vii and Gal iii respecting the interrelations of Sin, Law and Death'.¹⁴⁰ In other words, v. 56 embodies the characteristic features of unredeemed humanity, a theological vision that is worked out in full only in Romans. 'Sin' is the false value system of fallen humanity. One of the false values was the absolute authority that Jews gave to the 'Law'. 'Death' is the inauthentic mode of existence that humanity brought upon itself through its sins.¹⁴¹ Nothing like this, we are told, appears in 1 Cor or in any letter written earlier. Hence the supposition that an interpolator who knew Romans inserted the associated ideas of 'Sin' and 'Law' here because of the mention of 'Death' in v. 55.¹⁴²

It is entirely possible, however, that v. 56 is an embryonic articulation of an insight that Paul developed fully only several years later.¹⁴³ Certainly all three elements were known to Paul prior to the writing of 1 Cor. His combination of Isa 25:8 with Hos 13:14 in vv. 54–5 betrays his awareness of the personification of 'Death' in the OT (cf. 1 Cor 15:26 and Ps 143:3). Death is the 'Hungry One' (Ps 33:19), whose greed will let no one escape (Hab 2:5). Thus he is the 'King of Terrors' (Job 18:14), and all those whom he will ultimately devour (Ps 49:14) are existentially 'dead'.

Hamartia in the mythological sense typical of Romans appears in Gal 3:22, *synekleisen hê graphê ta panta hypo hamartian* 'the Scripture shut up all things under Sin'. Clearly it cannot be a question of personal sins. Martyn paraphrases, 'in actuality the scripture locked up everything in the prison ruled over by Sin'.¹⁴⁴ The scripture in question is identified in the previous verse as the 'Law' (3:21). Here we have in embryo what will be more clearly expressed in a later letter, 'all are under (the power of) Sin' (Rom 3:9) and 'God locked up all people into the state of disobedience' (Rom 11:22). Against this background v. 56 appears perfectly in place in this stage of Paul's theological development. 'Sin' exercises its power through 'Law'. By their inherited attitude of blind obedience to 'Law' the Jews bought into the network of false values that Paul summarizes as 'Sin'. Infected by its nefarious power they existed in a state of 'Death'.

¹⁴⁰ *1 Corinthians*, 1301.

¹⁴¹ See my *Paul: A Critical Life*, 335–9.

¹⁴² I took this position in my *1 Corinthians* (People's Bible Commentary; Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1999), 189.

¹⁴³ So rightly Schrage, *Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4.365–6. An interpolation is denied by Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 582. Others do not even mention the possibility.

¹⁴⁴ *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 372.

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