

# 1 Corinthians: A Church Divided

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Toward the end of his third missionary period, Paul had extensive contact with the Corinthian church. One would never guess this from the account in Acts. Acts mentions only a final visit of Paul to Corinth after completion of his long Ephesian ministry and before his departure to Jerusalem with a collection for the saints (Acts 20:1–3). It is apparent from Paul's letters, however, that the apostle was quite involved with the Corinthians during the course of his third mission. Before the final visit mentioned in Acts 20:1–3, he wrote at least four letters to the Corinthians and made at least one additional visit to the city, which is not mentioned in Acts. It was a time of considerable stress for the Corinthians and for Paul. The church was divided, and some even challenged Paul's apostolic authority.

Of the four letters to Corinth, two were written from Ephesus—1 Corinthians and an earlier letter that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9–13. This "previous letter" is evidently lost. This chapter will deal with this period of Paul's Corinthian correspondence. It represents the early stages of the conflict between Paul and the Corinthians. After the writing of 1 Corinthians the relationship between the Corinthians and their apostle worsened, necessitating a brief visit of Paul to Corinth from Ephesus, during which he seems to have been personally assaulted by at least one person.

Leaving in haste and frustration, he wrote an angry letter to the Corinthians, which is either lost or partially preserved in 2 Corinthians. In any event, 2 Corinthians records the events of this period of strained relationships. It will be the subject of the next chapter.

## The Occasion and Purpose of 1 Corinthians

Paul's third missionary period centered primarily in Ephesus, where he ministered for two-and-one-half to three years (Acts 19:1–20:1, 31). It was likely toward the end of this time, perhaps in the spring of A.D. 56, that Paul received news from Corinth which prompted his writing 1 Corinthians. He had written them a letter some time previously which had prompted some questions from the Corinthians. One of his reasons for writing 1 Corinthians was to clarify these matters.

### The Previous Letter (1 Cor 5:9–13)

In the earlier letter Paul had told the Corinthians "not to associate with sexually immoral people" (5:9). In 1 Corinthians he proceeded to clarify himself. He did not mean that they were not to associate with the immoral *outside* the congregation. If that were the case, they would have to withdraw from the world altogether. Instead, he meant that they were not to associate with those who *claimed to be Christians* who had flagrantly immoral lifestyles. He had just recommended that they expel one such person from the congregation, a man living in an incestuous relationship (1 Cor 5:1).

The "previous letter" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9 is in all probability now lost. It has sometimes been argued that 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 is a portion of the previous letter. The passage deals with the issue of Christians associating with immoral people, and it breaks the context in which it appears. (2 Cor 6:13 and 7:2 fit together; 6:14–7:1 interrupts the flow of

thought.) There are two main problems, however, with seeing 6:14–7:1 as a fragment of the letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9. The first is that the two references do not deal with the same sort of people. Second Corinthians 6:14–7:1 deals with *unbelievers*, while 1 Corinthians 5:9–13 treats immoral *Christians*. A second problem is accounting textually for the interpolation of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 into its present place. There is no manuscript evidence that the passage was ever missing from the text of 2 Corinthians, and it would be hard to explain what would prompt a scribe to place a fragment in such an awkward place. It is more easily accounted for if one views 6:14–7:1 as a Pauline digression. Perhaps Paul took a break from writing the letter at 6:13. When resuming, the issue of Christian holiness was at the front of his mind, and he penned (or dictated) 6:14–7:1. Then he resumed his previous thought at 7:2 by repeating the concluding words of 6:13.<sup>1</sup>

Others would see the previous letter as imbedded in our present 1 Corinthians. These scholars view 1 Corinthians as a composite of two original letters, one of which would be the previous letter. Several scholars, such as J. Weiss, J. Héring, and W. Schmithals, have maintained this two-letter hypothesis. There is, however, little agreement between their individual reconstructions of the supposed letters. The basis of the two-letter hypothesis is the feeling that 1 Corinthians contains certain irreconcilable inconsistencies that could not possibly have been in the same letter. For instance, it is argued that Paul's travel plans are inconsistent in 1 Corinthians. First Corinthians 4:19 presupposes a quick coming to Corinth, while 16:5–9 seems to allow for a longer delay. The treatment of idol meat in chapters 8 and 10 is also seen

to be inconsistent. In chapter 8 and in 10:23–11:1, Paul took a "tolerant" position toward meat that had been sacrificed to idols. The "strong" Christians with a clear conscience must abstain from it only when in the presence of a "weaker" Christian whom it might offend. In 10:1–22 he took a harder line: one should not participate at all in cultic meals (the "table of demons"). A final example is the argument that Paul's mention of women praying and prophesying in worship (1 Cor 11:5) is contradicted by the command that they be silent in 14:34.

The solution offered for these alleged contradictions is to place the conflicting passages into different letters. The reconstruction of Schmithals will serve as an example. According to him, letter A (the "previous letter") consisted of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 1 Corinthians 6:12–20; 9:24–10:22; 11:2–34; 15; 16:13–24. Letter B (the response to the Corinthian letter to Paul) consisted of 1 Corinthians 1:1–6:11; 7:1–9:23; 10:23–11:1; 12:1–14:40; 16:1–12.<sup>2</sup> It can be readily seen that for every supposed inconsistency cited above, Schmithals resolves the problem by assigning the conflicting passages to different epistles.

The resolution of a few seeming inconsistencies by such partitioning raises more problems than it solves. The reconstructions differ radically from scholar to scholar. The inconsistencies are overblown. Paul could well have changed his travel plans between the writing of chapters 4 and 16. He probably composed the long letter over a number of days. The idol meat passages are not inconsistent but deal with different contexts, as do the passages which treat the activity of women in worship. Finally, the problems of compilation are enormous. There is really no evidence for scribes combining two letters in such a fashion, deleting introductions and end-

ings, radically dividing up individual epistles. One can understand why few scholars have been attracted to compilation theories involving 1 Corinthians. Most assume the integrity of the epistle.

### *The News from Corinth*

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, primarily to address questions and problems within the congregation which had come to his attention. He had three sources of information. One was the servants of a certain Chloe who informed Paul of serious divisions within the congregation (1:11–12). The Corinthians were treating their Christian leaders like the popular Greek sophists, pitting their favorite “wisdom teacher” against the others. Paul addressed the problem of the Corinthian wisdom speculation in chapters 1–4. Chloe’s servants may also have informed Paul of the disunity and abuse of the Lord’s Supper (11:17–22). We know nothing of Chloe. She may or may not have been a Christian. Some of her servants *were*, and they were Paul’s informants. We do not know where they resided, whether they were Corinthians who had traveled to Ephesus or Ephesians who had visited Corinth. They probably represented the lower social strata of the congregation and felt particularly victimized by the disunity.

Paul’s second source of information was a letter which the Corinthian congregation had composed and delivered to Paul, requesting clarification on a number of subjects relating to personal and congregational life. Paul referred explicitly to this letter in 1 Corinthians 7:1. Thereafter, when picking up on the questions raised in their letter he used a sort of shorthand, the phrase “now concerning” (Gk., *peri de*). The phrase occurs at the following points, where it likely designated their questions.

These involved Christian celibacy (7:1), whether single Christians should marry (7:25), the consumption of meat that had been sacrificed to idols (8:1), spiritual gifts (12:1), Paul’s collection for the saints (16:1), and when Apollos would visit them (16:12).

Paul’s third source of information was an official delegation of three men who had come from Corinth to deliver the Corinthians’ letter to Paul. They are mentioned in 16:17–18—Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Stephanas. Along with Chloe’s people, they offered Paul verbal reports about the congregation. It was probably from these personal reports that Paul learned of the sexual problems treated in chapters 5 and 6, of the lawsuits among members (6:1–11), of the lack of decorum in worship (11:2–16), and of those who were denying the resurrection of believers (ch. 15).

The Corinthian problems were manifold, but in 1 Corinthians most of them involved conflict among the Corinthians themselves. Some seem to have advocated an ascetic ethic; others were more libertine. Some had no problem with consuming meat that had been sacrificed to idols; for others it was a real offense. Some boasted of their special spiritual gifts; others felt left out. Some “pigged out” at the Lord’s Supper; others had barely enough to eat. Some sued their fellow Christians in the secular law courts. Some considered Paul their leader, others Apollos, still others Peter. Their conflict undoubtedly had its theological and philosophical dimensions, but it was social as well, human and petty, high on pride and low on love.

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he was either unaware of the extent to which the conflict involved himself, or it had not yet turned on him. Probably the latter was the case. By the time of 2 Corinthians, Paul was

painfully aware of the opposition in Corinth to his own leadership. But even in 1 Corinthians he seems to have been conscious of those who were questioning his leadership. How could it have been otherwise with those who were partial to Apollos or Peter rather than himself? His emphasis on his own humility in passages like 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 and 4:8–13 may imply his awareness that for some he did not cut a very impressive figure as an apostle. He referred explicitly to those who sat in judgment on him in 9:3 and rejected their assessment flatly in 4:3.

Finally, some specifically accused him of being fickle in his plans to visit them (1 Cor 4:18–21). Paul’s reference to this was expressed in anger and with a threat. It thus seems to have been a substantive accusation. Originally Paul had planned to visit them twice (2 Cor 1:16). He had perhaps expressed this in his previous letter. But he had *not* come yet and was sending Timothy in his place (1 Cor 4:17). At the writing of 1 Corinthians, he was delaying his visit even longer, as becomes clear in the final chapter (1 Cor 16:5–9). Perhaps some of those who preferred other leaders were using Paul’s delays against him, claiming that he really didn’t love them, that he considered them a low priority, that he really shouldn’t be considered their apostle. Clearly by the time of 2 Corinthians such things were being said about him (cp. 2 Cor 11:7–12). Still, the criticism of Paul seems to have been somewhat muted at the writing of 1 Corinthians. The situation changed drastically by the time of 2 Corinthians.

### ***Paul’s Corinthian Opponents***

The most debated issue in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians is the identification of Paul’s “opponents,” or the nature of the aberration he was addressing. Often the

two Corinthian epistles are taken together in considering this question. That is a mistake. The problems differ in the two letters. In 1 Corinthians they are primarily within the congregation, consisting of its own problems of disunity. In 2 Corinthians, the conflict involved Paul much more directly. Even his congregational leadership was questioned. In 1 Corinthians, the problems in the congregation seem to have derived primarily from the Greco-Roman culture of the city. In 2 Corinthians the opposition to Paul has a decidedly Jewish stamp to it. It is thus best to take the two epistles separately when considering the Corinthian problems.

Most considerations of Paul’s opponents in 1 Corinthians begin with 1 Corinthians 1:10–12, where Paul spoke of the various factions that had developed around himself, Apollos, and Cephas (Peter). Paul also spoke of a “Christ” faction. It is possible that he was being sarcastic, asking if in their zeal for human leaders any one claimed Christ. The grammatical structure of the phrase “I follow Christ” is identical to the others; so it is likely that there was an actual “Christ party” in the church along with the others. But what viewpoints would these factions have represented?<sup>3</sup>

The first to develop a comprehensive theory about the Corinthian factions seems to have been F. C. Baur, who in 1831 wrote an influential essay arguing that Paul’s opponents in Corinth were Judaizers.<sup>4</sup> He maintained that there were two factions in Corinth. One was a Gentile Christian faction, advocating a Torah-free gospel, represented by Paul and Apollos. Opposed to them was the law-centered Judaizing gospel advocated by Peter. This “Cephas party” also went by the name “Christ party.” Eventually Baur extended his

theory to include the entire New Testament and to explain the whole history of first-century Christianity. He saw the period as being marked by a life-and-death conflict between Jewish Christianity (led by Peter) and Gentile Christianity (Paul). He placed the books of the New Testament in either the Judaizing camp or the Pauline, law-free camp. If a book did not reflect this conflict, as is true of Acts, he placed it in the second century. If a Pauline epistle did not reflect a bitter Judaizing conflict, he argued that it could not have been written by Paul.

Baur's ambitious historical reconstruction was eventually discredited, not least because of the late date for his sources that were supposed to reflect the first-century conflict between Peter and Paul. He was surely wrong in his assessment of 1 Corinthians. There is really no evidence for Judaizing in the epistle. Even the question of idol meat seems to have been largely a Gentile problem in Corinth.<sup>5</sup> A Jewish dimension *is* present in the opposition to Paul reflected in 2 Corinthians, but that seems to have been a later development.

More recently, a Gnostic theory has been advanced as the "key" to unlocking Paul's opposition. The most consistent advocate of this position has been W. Schmithals. He argues that the Gnostics were the "Christ party," for they claimed to be embodiments of the spirit of Christ. He sees the references to *gnosis* and *sophia* in the letter as evidence of a Gnostic opposition to Paul. According to Schmithals, they were Jewish Christian Gnostics, and Paul combatted them in both Corinthian epistles. They were libertine, held a docetic Christology, claimed to be spiritual, emphasized freedom, denied the resurrection and claimed to be apostles.<sup>6</sup> Very few have followed Schmithals in his hypothesis of a developed Gnosticism at Corinth. Most would agree with Wilson

that full-blown Gnosticism with its redeemer myth and Gnostic Christology did not appear until the Christian heresies of the second century, although the roots are to be found in the first.<sup>7</sup> They prefer to speak of *gnōsis* rather than Gnosticism, of an "incipient" gnosticism, or pregnosticism, or protognosticism, or some such term. Usually they spell the word with a lower-case *g* to distinguish it from the second-century groups. The view is still quite popular that Paul contended with an early form of the kind of speculation that led to full-blown Gnosticism in the second century.<sup>8</sup> A growing trend is to avoid the term *Gnostic* altogether and to speak in terms of wisdom or realized eschatology, or hyper-spiritualism, or something similar.

Some of the scholars who see one of the Corinthian factions as "hyper-spiritualists" argue that they derived their views from Apollos, who brought to Corinth the sort of hellenistic Jewish wisdom speculation associated with Philo of Alexandria.<sup>9</sup> This view has the advantage of holding to a single opposition in the Corinthian letters, 1 Corinthians reflecting their wisdom speculation and 2 Corinthians their Jewish background.<sup>10</sup> A large number of scholars agree that some of the Corinthians had an overemphasis on the Spirit but are less specific in identifying the roots of the Corinthian speculation. They possessed an "overrealized eschatology,"<sup>11</sup> which led them to such things as a denial of the resurrection and libertine behavior.

In an effort to bury forever the Judaizing emphasis advocated by those who still were influenced by "Baur's ghost," Johannes Munck argued that there were *no factions* in Corinth, just typical human bickering and preferences. He maintained that the Corinthians were overly influenced by their hellenistic milieu, adopting



its views and customs, misunderstanding the gospel and Paul's teaching and overestimating their own capacity for wisdom and knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Munck probably overstated his case. The differences in Corinth went deeper than mere human bickerings. Part of the disunity was due to social diversity within the congregation, which influenced both ideas and ethics.<sup>13</sup>

Part was due to the cosmopolitan nature of Corinth itself with all the alternative cultures and viewpoints that were "in the air" in the port city. Some of the Corinthians may have derived their ideas about superior wisdom and knowledge from the popular sophists who displayed their skills in the streets. They may have been influenced by the dualism of body and spirit maintained by the popular neoplatonic philosophy of the day. There was probably no one source nor one faction in the confusion of the Corinthians. Neither was there likely only one viewpoint in opposition to Paul in 1 Corinthians.<sup>14</sup>

### A Study Outline of 1 Corinthians

The following outline is in keeping with the time-honored procedure of dividing the epistle into two parts. The first part (chaps. 1–6) corresponds to the issues brought to Paul's attention through word of mouth by Chloe's servants and the three Corinthian delegates. The second major division (7:1–16:4) addresses the questions raised in the Corinthian letter. It should be noted at the outset that some of the matters discussed in this latter section may not have been raised in the Corinthian letter to Paul, such as the problems within the Christian assembly discussed in chapter 11. One could follow other equally suitable divisions according to the main content issues within the letter, such as matters relating

to wisdom and unity in chapters 1–4, to sex in chapters 5–7, to idolatry in chapters 8–10, to worship in chapters 11–14, and to the resurrection in chapter 15.<sup>15</sup>

#### I. Introduction (1:1–9)

A. Address (1:1–3)

B. Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:4–9)

#### II. Bad News from Corinth (1:10–6:20)

A. Worldly Wisdom and Divisions in the Community (1:10–4:21)

1. The groups in the church (1:10–17)

2. The gospel and worldly wisdom (1:18–3:23)

(a) God's wisdom as foolishness (1:18–2:5)

(b) The hiddenness of wisdom (2:6–16)

(c) The true role of the minister (3:1–23)

3. The Corinthians and their apostles (4:1–13)

4. The Corinthians and their apostle: Paul's plans (4:14–21)

B. An Incidence of Fornication (5:1–13)

C. The Church and the World (6:1–20)

1. The Christian and the law courts (6:1–11)

2. The Christian and sexual freedom (6:12–20)

#### III. Answers to the Corinthians' Letter (7:1–16:4)

A. Marriage and Related Questions (7:1–40)

1. Sexual expression in marriage (7:1–7)

2. Specific advice regarding marriage (7:8–16)

3. The general rule of calling (7:17–24)

4. Advice to virgins (7:25–38)

5. A final word about widows (7:39–40)

B. Freedom and Food Offered to Idols (8:1–11:1)

1. The criteria of decision (8:1–13)

2. True freedom is the freedom to limit oneself (9:1–27)

3. The danger of idolatry (10:1–22)

4. Idol meat and Christian freedom (10:23–11:1)

C. The Christian Assembly (11:2–34)

1. The covering of one's head in worship (11:2–16)

2. Misuse of the Lord's Supper

- (11:17–34)
- D. Spiritual Gifts (12:1–14:40)
1. The basic test: “Jesus is Lord” (12:1–3)
  2. Unity and diversity of gifts (12:4–31)
  3. The most excellent way (13:1–13)
  4. The proper expression of tongues and prophecy (14:1–40)
- E. The Resurrection (15:1–58)
1. The tradition (15:1–11)
  2. The implications of the resurrection of Jesus (15:12–19)
  3. The events of the end (15:20–28)
  4. Arguments from a human viewpoint (15:29–34)
  5. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–50)
  6. The moment of victory (15:51–58)
- F. The Collection (16:1–4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5–24)**
- A. Personal Plans (16:5–9)
  - B. Visits of Others (16:10–12)
  - C. Concluding Exhortation to Love (16:13–14)
  - D. Commendation of the Corinthian Leaders (16:15–18)
  - E. Greetings and Concluding Benedictions (16:19–24)

## Highlights of 1 Corinthians

### Introduction (1:1–9)

In verse 1 Paul emphasized his divine call to apostleship. In his conflict with the Corinthians, Paul’s apostolic status was challenged, as is particularly evident in 2 Corinthians. The Sosthenes mentioned in the first verse is quite possibly the Corinthian synagogue ruler of Acts 18:17, converted and now serving as Paul’s coworker in Ephesus. Some scholars see the reference in verse 2 to “all those everywhere” as a later interpolation designed to make the letter applicable to all congregations. There is no textual evidence for deleting the phrase, and it fits in with Paul’s view of the local church as a microcosm of the full body of Christ throughout the world.

Paul’s formal prayer of thanksgiving (1:4–9) includes some of the main concerns of the epistle. Verse 5 speaks of the Corinthians having been “enriched” in all speech

(*logos*) and knowledge (*gnōsis*). The “speech” may well be an allusion to the problem of tongues (chs. 12–14), and “knowledge” to their pursuit of human wisdom (chs. 1–4). Paul may have parodied their pride in being “enriched” in 4:8–13. Verse 7 clearly anticipates Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts (*charismata*) in chapters 12–14. Verse 8 is probably Paul’s first attempt to counter the Corinthian “realized eschatology,” by which some claimed to be fully perfected in the Spirit, completely “arrived.” Paul reminded them of the “day of the Lord.” There *is* a future for Christians. The Corinthians had *not* “already arrived,” as some thought. Resurrection and judgment were yet to come.

### *Worldly Wisdom and Rift in the Community (1:10–4:21)*

Paul learned of the party spirit within the congregation from the servants of Chloe (1:11–12). The basic problem of the Corinthian “wisdom” was the disunity it created; every Corinthian had his or her own “favorite preacher.” Paul responded to the problem in the first four chapters of his letter. He began by expressing his relief that he had baptized so few in Corinth himself. In the mysteries, the Greeks especially valued those who sponsored them in their initiations. Some of the Corinthians may have been extending this to Christian baptism. Paul reminded them that what counts is not the baptizer but baptism into the body of Christ, not the rite but the gospel that leads to the baptismal waters.

Paul considered the Corinthian espousal of their favorite teachers as the pursuit of human wisdom. He dealt with the problem in 1:18–3:23.<sup>16</sup> First, he argued the incompatibility of divine and human wisdom. By human standards God’s wisdom is foolishness (1:18–2:5). The cross is the

ultimate demonstration of this (1:18–25). By all standards of human wisdom, the cross is foolishness—folly to the Greek way of wisdom as well as to the Jewish way of divine manifestation by sign. But God’s way of salvation is through the cross. The cross is thus the negation of all human attempts to know God. One can only know God by first being known by God and called by God in the wisdom and power of Christ and his atoning death (v. 24).

In 1:26–2:5 Paul appealed to the experience of the Corinthians as corroboration that God’s power and wisdom are the denial of all human standards of wisdom and power. He first cited the Corinthians’ conversion experience (1:26–31). Most of them were not wise or powerful or well-born by human standards, but God called *them* into the body of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Next, he reminded them of his own preaching when he first came to Corinth, the message to which they responded (2:1–5). He came in weakness and fear. He was not eloquent. He preached no “wisdom” other than the cross of Christ. He was unskilled in “persuasive words,” but the Spirit was present, and their faith thus rested in God’s power and not in Paul’s ability or wisdom.<sup>18</sup>

In 2:6–16 Paul seemed to reverse himself, arguing that there *is* a wisdom for the mature. The passage is best taken as Paul’s polemic against the human-centered wisdom pursued by the Corinthians. Mature wisdom is revealed wisdom. It does not come by human discovery but by revelation from God and through the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Only “spiritual people” like Paul, inspired by God’s Spirit, can speak this wisdom, and only to those who are spiritually mature themselves.<sup>19</sup> Paul did not go into the content of this “hidden wisdom,” and it is perhaps fruitless to speculate on it. His main purpose becomes

clear in 3:1–4. He accused the Corinthians of being immature and still incapable of understanding the deeper spiritual truths. Their party spirit was itself evidence of their immaturity and lack of God’s Spirit. What a put-down of the arrogant Corinthians who were claiming to have been perfected in the Spirit!<sup>20</sup>

In 3:5–23 Paul directly returned to the question begun at 1:10–12—the proper relationship of the Corinthians to their leaders. He used himself and Apollos as examples, since both had ministered in Corinth. He used two metaphors to illustrate how their ministries were complementary. Like a garden, Paul planted and Apollos watered. Like a building, Paul laid the foundation and others built on it. The essential thing is not the ministers, however, but the divine basis of their ministry. *God* gives the growth to the garden. *Christ* is the only true foundation for the church. A polemical tone is apparent in 3:11–15. Paul directed himself against other would-be teachers whom he considered to have performed an inferior ministry. Any attempt to identify them specifically is probably fruitless. More significant is what Paul meant by speaking of a minister’s works being tested by fire. He was clearly referring to judgment day and seemed to imply that inferior works would be consumed by the fires of judgment. One’s reward would be lost. The individual would be saved, however, since salvation is a matter of grace and not of works. Such a minister could probably not expect his Lord’s commendation, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Verses 16–17 deal with a different situation, one where a false ministry actually undermines the church, “the temple of God.” Such a minister will not escape, not even with singed tail feathers. That one



will be destroyed. Verses 18–23 complete Paul’s treatment of the Corinthian parties, which began at 1:10. In verses 18–20 he returned to the theme of the foolishness of human wisdom when measured by God’s standards (cp. 1:18–25). Verses 21–23 form an inclusion with 1:10–12 in their references to the Corinthian parties. Paul turned the matter around. The Corinthians did not belong to Paul or Apollos or Cephas; on the contrary, *all* the workers belonged *to them* as Christ’s servants. The only “belonging” that counts is to belong to Christ, for only through him can one belong to God (v. 23).

In 4:1–13, Paul continues his attack against the human-centered Corinthian “wisdom.” Paul did so under two main aspects. First came the judgments of the Corinthians, their human standards that sought to exalt one minister over another. Paul viewed their judgments as completely worthless. Only God’s judgment is ultimately determinative for the value and validity of one’s ministry (vv. 1–5). Second, Paul introduced an ironic argument. He pointed to the apostles like himself who were the spiritual leaders of the congregations. In striking contrast to the Corinthians, they had not yet “arrived,” were hardly rich and reigning. On the contrary, they were weak and abused, cursed and persecuted, a sight for sore eyes, the scum of the earth (vv. 6–13). Here Paul began a theme which pervades 2 Corinthians: the mark of a true apostle is weakness and suffering. In the second Corinthian epistle he employed several similar lists of apostolic hardships (2 Cor 4:7–12; 6:3–10; 11:23–29).

The phrase “Do not go beyond what is written” (1 Cor 4:6) is something of an interpretive crux. It does not fit the context very well. Paul had made no particular appeal to any Scripture, unless he meant

the texts from the prophets that he had quoted in chapters 1–3. Some have thus suggested that the text has been corrupted by a scribal error in which a marginal comment became incorporated into the main text.<sup>21</sup> By omitting the obscure phrase, the original text would then have read “that you may learn from us not [to] take pride in one man over against another.” This makes ample sense in the context. If Paul *did* include the reference to Scripture, he may have been reacting to a slogan of the Corinthians. In their self-proclaimed “freedom” they may have claimed that they had risen “above and beyond the Scriptures.” Paul responded that they had reached no such heights and had better *not* reach beyond what stood written. This, of course, is to read rather much between the lines and is almost as conjectural as the scribal gloss idea.<sup>22</sup>

Paul concluded this section of the epistle with a reference to his own travel plans (4:14–21). In all the epistle Paul is most on the defensive in this portion. As we have already noted, he seems to have been accused by some of not loving the Corinthians as evidenced by his failure to visit them. Paul reminded them that no matter how many leaders they might have, he alone was their “founding father” in Christ. He promised to send Timothy as his representative and to come himself as soon as possible. He warned them rather pointedly that his visit might not be altogether pleasant if some of them failed to overcome their arrogance and opposition.

### ***An Incidence of Fornication (5:1-5:13)***

Chapters 5 and 6 are closely related around the theme of sexual immorality. Chapter 5 begins with a reference to sexual immorality (*porneia*, 5:1), and chapter 6

ends with an appeal to flee from such behavior (*porneia*, 6:18). The only problem with seeing the two chapters as a complete unity is the reference to lawsuits in 6:1–11. Of course, Paul gave no hint of what the lawsuit involved. It may have concerned some sexual offense, which would explain its position between the two sections relating to sexuality.<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 5 as a whole deals with an incidence of incest within the Christian fellowship. A man was evidently cohabiting with his stepmother, behavior which was forbidden by both Jewish and Roman law. Paul was especially concerned that some of the Corinthians were all puffed up about it (“proud”). The best explanation of their pride would be that they shared a dualistic viewpoint which claimed a spiritual perfection that rendered all physical norms irrelevant. The man was seen as being “super-spiritual” for his flaunting of the body; he had truly risen above the flesh. This, of course, was the kind of thought that lay behind later libertine Gnosticism.

Paul had already made up his mind in the matter. He instructed the Corinthians to assemble together and formally ban the man from the fellowship (5:1–5). Paul saw the action as being redemptive for the man. His real concern, however, was with the church.<sup>24</sup> Such flagrant abuse was an evil influence on the community. Paul may have written Corinthians around Passover, recalling the image of leaven penetrating the whole batch of dough and rendering it useless (vv. 6–8). Paul reminded the Corinthians of his previous letter and clarified that in it he had urged them not to associate with those who claimed to be Christians but led immoral lifestyles (vv. 9–11). That was the case with this incestuous individual. He was to be put out of the congregation to preserve the sanctity of the church (v. 13).<sup>25</sup>

### *The Church and the World (6:1-20)*

Chapter 5 concludes by calling on the church to judge itself, leaving God to judge the world (5:12–13). In 6:1–11 Paul continued his discussion of the Christian and judgment. If the Christian community had its own standard of holiness, it follows that worldly, secular judgment is not the domain for Christians. Paul’s treatment of the Christians and the law courts falls into two parts. Verses 1–6 state the general premise that Christians should avoid secular law courts in their disputes with one another. In the Jewish theocracy, there was no separation between sacred and secular courts, and Paul implied that the same should pertain in the Christian community. Apocalyptic tradition held that the saints would participate in the last judgment, and Paul used this in a “lesser to greater” argument: if Christians are to judge angels, how much more should they be able to judge themselves. The Roman courts were often anything but “just,” notorious for bribery, deferential toward the privileged classes. Christians would indeed be better off arbitrating their own disputes.<sup>26</sup> Verses 7–11 advance Paul’s second, more radical reason for urging the Corinthians to avoid lawsuits in the secular courts: the very fact of such disputes was an admission of failure in the fellowship. In an atmosphere of genuine Christian love and selflessness, there should be no occasion for one member to bring legal action against another. Christians have been *washed* in the waters of baptism, *justified* of their sins and set right with God, *sanctified* (“set apart”) by the Spirit of God (v. 11). There should thus be no place in their lives for the kind of sins listed in verses 9–10, no basis for wrongdoing toward one another. Ideally, Christians would completely forebear, having no disputes with one another and

turning the other cheek when wronged.

In 6:12–20 Paul returned to the question of Christian sexual morality. He began by uttering what was probably a slogan of those Corinthians who were arguing their freedom in ethical matters—“everything is permissible for me.” The Stoics would have agreed with the slogan. They would have agreed even more with Paul’s response that he would not be mastered (enslaved) by anything (v. 12). Paul knew that one could become a slave to one’s freedom. Whether it be sex or drugs or whatever, how often people become slaves to what they initially viewed as an exercise of their freedom! The Corinthians were probably also those who claimed that the stomach was made for food (v. 13)—hence, a license for gluttony. The corollary to their statement was that the genitals were made for sex. Paul would not buy into such a negative view of the body. In their dualistic world view the Corinthian superspiritualists considered the body an indifferent matter. It was destined to perish. They viewed only the spirit as eternal. Paul on the other hand held to a unity of body and spirit which would be raised at the last day (v. 14) and by implication would face the last judgment. He saw Christians as psychosomatic wholes who had become members of Christ’s body and in whom the Holy Spirit dwelled. It was unholy and unthinkable for a Christian to join this body with a prostitute. Paul, of course, was thinking in terms of biblical morality in which marriage is the only God-ordained sexual relationship. Other relationships are unholy, a defilement of the body, the temple of God’s Spirit (v. 19).

### *Marriage and Related Questions (7:1–40)*

With 7:1 Paul turned to the Corinthian letter. He dealt first with their questions

concerning marriage. He may have gone well beyond their questions in his lengthy discussion of marriage and singleness. Throughout chapter 7 his general advice was that a person should remain single whenever possible, but that marriage is also a holy state, and one should feel no guilt embracing it. In the course of the chapter it becomes clear that Paul’s conviction of the imminent end of the world colored his view of marriage.

*Sexual expression in marriage (7:1–7).* Evidently some of the Corinthians were uttering the slogan, “It is good for a man not to marry” (lit., “not to touch a woman”).<sup>27</sup> This ascetic strain in the church was in marked contrast to the men of chapter 6 who were going to prostitutes. In the first century, ascetic movements were widespread. For example, among the Jews, the Essenes, and the Therapeutae were ascetic. There was a temple of the Egyptian Isis cult in Corinth, a cult often associated with both male and female celibacy.<sup>28</sup> It is possible that asceticism was particularly appealing to the *women* of the Corinthian church as an expression of their freedom.<sup>29</sup> Married women were perhaps those who were withdrawing from sexual relations with their husbands in order to express their devotion (v. 5). The men going to prostitutes and the asceticism of 7:1–7 may be two sides of the same problem. Paul’s advice in this situation is surprisingly “contemporary.”

First, he urged marital partners to assume full responsibility for the sexual satisfaction of the other, wife for husband and husband for wife (v. 4). In the male-dominated first century this was remarkably egalitarian. Second, though Paul did not forbid sexual abstinence for devotional purposes, he urged that such practices be of limited duration and only by mutual

consent (v. 5). Paul concluded by holding up his own single state as a model but granted that it was a gift (*charisma*) from God, a gift not possessed by every person (v. 7).<sup>30</sup>

*Specific advice regarding marriage (7:8–16).* Paul's general principle for the unmarried was that they remain single unless they were unable to control their sex drive, in which case they should marry (vv. 8–9). Married persons should not divorce, in accordance with Jesus' teaching on the subject (vv. 10–11). Paul allowed an exception to the no-divorce rule. In the case of a non-Christian partner *who wished to separate*, divorce was allowable. Otherwise, Christians should remain with unbelieving partners in the hope that they might eventually be saved (vv. 12–16). Paul noted that he had no tradition from Jesus on this matter (v. 12).

*The general rule of calling (7:17–24).* Paul laid down the general principle that the Corinthians should not seek a major change in their state of life but should remain as they were when God called them to be Christians. Jews (circumcised) should remain Jews, Gentiles (uncircumcised) should remain Gentiles. Slaves were to remain slaves. But if they were set free, they were to embrace their freedom and remain faithful to their calling in their new state as freedmen.<sup>31</sup> The general principle remained the same: one should not make a change in one's life circumstances a priority. In view of the approaching end time, one should be content with one's lot and make devotion to Christ the top priority.

*Advice to virgins (7:25–38).* Paul seemed to address the same people in verses 25–28 and 36–38. Both passages mention "virgins" (*parthenoi*). Probably Paul had engaged couples in mind.<sup>32</sup> Verse 25 addressed the virgin and verse 38 her fian-

cee. To both, Paul gave the same advice. They were better off if they remained single, but they committed no sin in marrying should that become necessary. In verses 29–31 Paul made explicit what has been implicit throughout chapter 7: the time is short; the world is passing away (v. 31). Those with family responsibilities would only experience increased stress in view of the impending tribulations. Verses 32–35 express another reason for remaining single: single persons are able to give undivided devotion to the affairs of the Lord.

Verses 36–38 are exceedingly difficult. The Greek is ambiguous and can be translated in different ways. Three interpretations have been advocated, each of which is followed in one or more major English translations. A view which dates from the patristic period sees the section as referring to a father who has a daughter who is about to pass her prime. The question is whether he should arrange for her marriage or keep her single (ASV). The NEB reflects a view which sees the couple living together in a celibate "spiritual marriage." The question is whether they should consummate the marriage physically. The practice of spiritual marriages is known to have existed in the second century church but has not been documented for Paul's time. It was eventually condemned by early church councils. The third and most widely held view of verses 36–38 sees the passage to be referring to engaged couples. It is reflected in the RSV and NIV.

*A final word about widows (7:39–40).* In verse 8 Paul advised widows to remain single. He returned to widows in the final two verses of the chapter. There he allowed that they were free to marry but still considered them better off remaining single. It is interesting how time and circum-

stances can alter one's opinion. When Paul wrote 1 Timothy 5:11–15 a decade or so later, the young widows of Ephesus were becoming idle and busybodies. Paul *urged* them to marry. (By that time he was also not as certain about the imminence of the end.)

### ***Freedom and Food Offered to Idols (8:1–11:1)***

Chapters 8–10 constitute an extended treatment of the issue of meat that had been sacrificed to idols. The issue is explicit in chapter 8 and in 10:14–11:1. It is implicit in the discussion of idolatry in 10:1–13. On the other hand, chapter 9 seems to deal with another issue altogether—Paul's right as an apostle to the material support of his congregations. The issue is closely related to the idol-meat question, however. Just as Paul had been willing to forego his apostolic "rights" for the sake of the gospel, so should the "strong" among the Corinthians for the sake of the larger Christian community be willing to suspend their right to eat idol meat.

In a Roman colony like Corinth one was quite likely to encounter idol meat in various contexts. One context was a cultic meal in a pagan temple, where meat was sacrificed and the participants dined on a portion of the meat *as an act of worship*. The temples were also used for social events, such as the meetings of various clubs and associations, marriages, and civic meetings. Large dining rooms for such purposes have been discovered at Corinth in the temples of Asclepius and Demeter.<sup>33</sup> Not all sacrificial meat was consumed in the sacred meals. Some was reserved for the priests. Other meat was served at social gatherings in the temple. Still other found its way to the local meat market. The seeming contradictions between Paul's words about

the consumption of idol meat are best explained in light of these very different contexts.

Chapter 8 is best understood as relating to *social events held in the dining rooms of the temples*. Those of the upper classes would be those most likely to be invited to such events. Officials like Erastus could not have avoided attendance of civic meetings held in temples, which generally involved consumption of a meal. The more well-to-do Corinthians were probably the "strong," whom Paul addressed in chapter 8.<sup>34</sup> They had responded to Paul's monotheistic message and confessed the one true God. They had abandoned their former idolatry and polytheism. They now proceeded to use this "knowledge" (v. 1) to justify their continued consumption of sacrificial meat. If there is but one God, idols cannot be gods; they have no real existence (vv. 4–5). Paul agreed with their theology but modified it at two points. First, he introduced the principle of love. For the Christian, love is supreme; it governs all knowledge. To know God we must first be known by him. We know him through Christ. We know him through his love. He knew us before we knew him; he loved us first. So for Christians, love—not knowledge—is the governing principle.<sup>35</sup>

Second, Paul pointed out that though there is but one God there are still many "gods" and "lords" in the world. The gods of the pagan world dominated the imagination and lives of those who believed in them. For them they were existentially quite real. And for one who had once believed in them to be driven back into the old polytheism would be devastating indeed. Paul had these people in mind in verses 7–13. They were Gentiles—not Jews. They had once participated in the worship of idols and consumed the sacrificial meat,



believing it truly represented communion with the pagan god (vv. 7–8).<sup>36</sup> They did not yet possess the full “knowledge” of the Corinthian “strong.” Their consciences were still weak. For them a return to paganism was a real possibility. Should they see a fellow Christian eating in a pagan temple, they might be encouraged to do so themselves.<sup>37</sup> But for them it would not be an indifferent matter. They would see it as participation in an idol’s cultic meal (vv. 9–10). That is, they would slip back into the old polytheism; Christ would become for them merely another god among many. The weak Christian’s very status as a Christian would thus be at stake. Paul therefore urged the Corinthians of “strong” conviction not to consume idol meat in a context where a weaker Christian might observe them and be caused to stumble.<sup>38</sup>

In 10:23–11:1 Paul addressed a totally different context at the end of his discussion of meat offered to idols—that is, meat offered *outside the confines of the temples*. The Corinthian meat market probably did not distinguish between idol meat and meat from other sources.<sup>39</sup> Paul said that Christians with a clear conscience on the matter need not ask. They could eat whatever was presented in the market. The same pertained to an invitation to an unbeliever’s home. One need not question whether idol meat was being served or not, not unless someone raised this issue. Then it became a matter of witness. A pagan might interpret the Christian’s eating the meat as a condoning of idolatry.<sup>40</sup> In such a case Christians should abstain—for the sake of Christian witness. Paul was willing to forego his own rights for witness and the salvation of others. So should the Corinthians (10:32–11:1; cp. 9:12).<sup>41</sup>

In the first part of chapter 10 Paul

warned the Corinthians about the *danger of falling into idolatry*. In 10:1–13 he issued his warning by employing a typology from the wilderness period of Israel’s history. He argued that in a figurative sense Israel was “baptized” in the wilderness and provided with spiritual drink and food. Still, the Israelites slipped into idolatry, and many were destroyed. Paul was arguing that Israel’s experience in many ways paralleled that of the Corinthians. He warned them against a false sense of security.<sup>42</sup> They needed to be very careful when participating in the temples. There was a clear line which must be drawn, a line between the indifferent matter of sacrificial meat and the sin of idolatry. He discussed the line in 10:14–22. It consisted of *actual participation in a cultic meal*. It was one thing to dine in a temple club room at the wedding feast of a neighbor. It was quite another to attend a cultic meal which worshiped a pagan god. Paul took a hard line on idolatry. Christians should flee the worship of idols in every case (v. 14). He cited the tradition of the Lord’s Supper (vv. 15–17). It is a holy observance, an actual communion with Christ, a participation in his body—the body offered on the cross for our salvation *and* the body of believers who comprise his church. Paul still granted that idols were nothing, but the *worship* of idols acknowledges gods other than the Lord and so is a compromise on one’s exclusive devotion to Christ. Paul may have condoned the eating of idol meat under neutral circumstances. He strictly forbade its consumption in the setting of idolatrous worship.

Chapter 9 is something of a diversion but is integral to Paul’s argument. The Corinthians were claiming their freedom, their rights as Christians. Paul was probably the person who first taught them the basic principle of freedom in Christ. But in

the church there is a limit to individual freedom—the limits of love and mutual concern. Paul never denied the “strong” group’s right to partake of idol meat. He only urged them to forego those rights when exercise of them might cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble.<sup>43</sup> In chapter 9 Paul illustrated this principle by his own example. As an apostle, he had the “right” to be supported by the congregations he served (vv. 1–14). He had chosen not to claim this support, presumably because it might be a stumbling block for some in the congregation (vv. 15–18). Verses 19–24 express Paul’s primary missionary strategy. He made himself a “slave to everyone, to win as many as possible” (v. 19). That is, he consistently subordinated himself to others for the sake of winning them to Christ. Verse 22 is especially significant. Paul was willing to become “weak” to the weak in order to win them. This was not compromise, but empathy. In like manner, he was urging the “strong” Corinthians to be sensitive to the weak for the sake of the gospel and the integrity of the Christian fellowship.

In 9:24–27 Paul employed athletic imagery to emphasize the need for discipline in the Christian life. Paul was perhaps looking back to his treatment of “rights” and urging the strong Corinthians to practice self-discipline in their concern for others. He was also perhaps looking forward to his discussion in chapter 10 of the danger of idolatry, warning the “strong” Corinthians that they may not be as strong as they thought. In any event, the Isthmian games were held regularly just outside Corinth. They were second in fame only to the Olympics. Paul’s athletic example would surely have caught the attention of the Corinthians.<sup>44</sup>

### *The Christian Assembly (11:2–34)*

In chapter 11 Paul dealt with two matters pertaining to Christian worship: the covering or uncovering of one’s head (vv. 2–16), and the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper (vv. 17–34). Paul introduced neither of them with the phrase “now concerning,” which usually denotes questions from their letter to him. Probably both matters came to his attention by word of mouth, from Chloe’s servants or the three Corinthian delegates.

*The covering of one’s head in worship (11:2–16).* Perhaps no passage in 1 Corinthians is more obscure than this, as is evidenced by the vast diversity of interpretations in the scholarly literature. Paul’s basic concern was the proper decorum in worship. For him, this meant that women should have their heads covered, men their heads uncovered.<sup>45</sup> What exactly was going on in worship at Corinth? Were the men worshipping with their heads covered?<sup>46</sup> Were the women worshipping with uncovered heads? How is one’s head covering to be understood in the passage anyway—as a hood, a veil, one’s hair?<sup>47</sup> In the balance, Paul seems to have devoted most attention to the women.<sup>48</sup> Most likely, the appearance of a few women in the congregation without head coverings or with their hair short prompted Paul’s response in 1 Corinthians. One cannot be certain of the basis for their practice. Jewish women always wore veils in worship. A head covering was also normative for women in the Greek and Roman cults, but evidently some exceptions existed.<sup>49</sup>

Paul advanced four primary arguments for women covering their heads. One was the rabbinic argument based on Genesis 2 that women are the glory of their husbands. Paul concluded that the woman’s glory should be reserved for the husband by

being covered (vv. 3–9). Second, Paul argued that women should wear an “authority” on their head “because of the angels” (v. 10). The reference to “authority” is obscure but probably refers to the woman’s authority to participate in worship by having the proper head covering (and thus acknowledging her husband’s “authority”).<sup>50</sup> The allusion to the “angels” is even more obscure and has led to all sorts of suggestions—the ministers of the congregation, the “sons of God” of Genesis 6 who mated with the daughters of men, the guardian angels who are present in divine worship,<sup>51</sup> or the angels who maintain world order (as in Rom 13:1–7).<sup>52</sup> A third argument of Paul maintained that long hair was “natural” for women (vv. 13–15), and a final argument stated that this was the practice in all the churches (v. 16). This was likely the real basis of Paul’s treatment. The women’s behavior was against the social conventions of the day, was distressing to some and was disruptive of worship. There are strong hints in the passage of a more egalitarian stance on Paul’s part—in the reference to the women praying and prophesying in worship (v. 5) and in his comment in verses 11–12 that from the perspective of birth man is wholly dependent on woman.

*The misuse of the Lord’s Supper (11:17–34).* The second problem in corporate worship was more serious—the abuse of the Lord’s Supper. Paul had no praises to sing them in that regard (v. 17). The situation reflected in verses 17–22 goes back to a time when the Lord’s Supper was a part of a larger communal meal.<sup>53</sup> At Corinth some were stuffing themselves and getting drunk; others were not getting enough to eat and were being humiliated (v. 22). It was a division between rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots. The Corinthian congregation

was socially diverse, but the scandal for Paul was that the Lord’s Supper had become a stage for displaying this diversity. Instead of a time for expressing the unity of the body, it had become an occasion for dividing it.

One can see how this situation could have arisen in the house-church context of the Christian gatherings. The wealthier members, the patrons who furnished their homes for Christian gatherings, may also have provided the food for the community meal. It was a common practice in Roman culture for those who gave large banquets to invite their special friends early to a banquet and to serve them the choicest dishes in the *triclinium* (dining room). The *triclinium* was small, and most of the guests would dine on lesser fare in the larger *atrium* in the center of the home.<sup>54</sup> Something like this must have been happening at Corinth. Paul instructed those who were overindulging to do so at home before coming to the Christian gathering, where no such displays of social distinction were tolerable.<sup>55</sup>

In verses 23–26 Paul repeated the tradition of Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. It is the oldest account of the words of institution in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians antedating the earliest of the Gospels by at least a decade. Paul introduced the tradition to emphasize that the supper was a remembrance of Christ and his atoning death. In desecrating the supper, the Corinthians were blaspheming the body of Christ in a double sense—failing to observe the unity of the body that is the church, and dishonoring Christ’s own body, which was broken in his death on the cross. It was the latter sense that Paul stressed in his warning about judgment and the need for self-examination (vv. 27–32). Their abuse of the Lord’s Supper was in effect to blaspheme

Christ's death on their behalf. Paul saw the judgment as already working itself out in the sickness and death of some of the members. This is hard for us to comprehend today, but it reminds us of the very sacred character of the Lord's Supper and of the church which celebrates it. Neither is to be treated lightly.

### ***Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)***

The telltale phrase "now about" occurs in 12:1, indicating that the Corinthian letter had asked Paul about the subject. From Paul's discussion in chapters 12–14, it seems that the gifts of the Spirit had created two main problems in the church: disunity between those who claimed the Spirit's endowment and those who felt left out, and disruption in worship because of the uncontrolled display of spiritual manifestations in that context. Paul responded to these problems by stating three main principles: (1) the *unity* in giftedness and *diversity* of gifts within the congregation (ch. 12), (2) the ruling principle of *love* (ch. 13), and (3) the importance that the *whole church be edified* (ch. 14).

*The basic test: "Jesus is Lord" (12:1–3).* Paul began by noting that ecstatic experience was not unique to Christianity. The Gentile Corinthians had experienced such phenomena in the pagan cults before their conversion (v. 2). But there was a difference, not in ecstatic manifestation so much as in content. Manifestations of the *Holy Spirit* will always be consistent with the basic Christian confession that "Jesus is Lord." A person, for instance, would never say "Jesus be cursed" through the Holy Spirit.<sup>56</sup>

*Unity and diversity of gifts (12:4–31).* Paul quickly shifted the discussion from the emphasis on the "gifted" to the "giver" by changing the vocabulary from "spiritual gifts" (*pneumatika*, 12:1), to "gifts of grace"

(*charismata*, 12:4). *Pneuma* was the Corinthians's word; it emphasized *their receipt* of the Spirit. *Charisma* was Paul's word. It comes from the word "grace" (*charis*) and emphasizes *God's gift*.<sup>57</sup> In 1 Corinthians 12:4–31 Paul's main concern was to show that all Christians are gifted. There is no room for individualism and pride in a particular gift—all are from God and for the upbuilding of the whole church. Paul established this by three main approaches.

First, he emphasized the diversity of gifts (vv. 4–11). The Spirit gives gifts to all, but they differ. To illustrate this diversity, in verses 7–11 Paul provided a sample list of gifts, which moves from the more "rational" gifts of wisdom and knowledge to the more ecstatic gifts of tongues and their interpretation.

Second, Paul stressed the unity of these gifts within the body of Christ (vv. 12–26). In speaking of the church as a body, Paul used a common metaphor from the popular philosophy of his day, particularly Stoicism.<sup>58</sup> He applied the metaphor in various ways: the body is diverse, consisting not of one member but of many (vv. 14–18); the whole body cannot be equated with any one member (vv. 19–20); the members of the body are interdependent, each needing the others (v. 21); the weaker parts of the body are indispensable (vv. 22–25); and the body is a sympathetic whole (v. 26).

Third, Paul applied the body analogy to the church, providing a second sample list of the many and diverse gifts granted by God to the church (vv. 27–31). The breadth of the list indicates the comprehensive nature of the giftedness of the church members. The questions of verses 29–30 are constructed in a manner that expects a "no" answer. "Are all apostles?" No. "Do all work miracles?" No. All are not gifted alike, but all are gifted. And all the gifts

are *God's gifts*, gifts of his grace, nothing in which individual Christians might pride themselves over others.

Verse 31 is a transitional verse. Paul began by urging the Corinthians to pursue the “greater gifts.” What were they? Presumably the three that are enumerated at the beginning of the list in verse 28—apostles, prophets, teachers. All these are gifts of sharing the word. All Christians should aspire to be witnesses to the word. But there is another, still more perfect way, not a gift of the Spirit so much as a *fruit* of the Spirit (cp. Gal 5:22), which is the quality, power, and motivation for all that the body of Christ is or hopes to be—*love*.

*The most excellent way* (ch. 13). It has often been argued that 1 Corinthians 13 is a separate piece, a hymn or piece of exalted prose written by Paul on an earlier occasion or by someone else and incorporated by the apostle at this point in his letter. It is more likely that Paul composed the piece as an integral part of the epistle. It is written in *his* style and fits the context admirably, not only of chapters 12 and 14, but of the whole letter.<sup>59</sup> The Corinthians abounded in many gifts. What they lacked was love (cp. 8:1–3).

Paul's encomium on love falls into three main sections.<sup>60</sup> It begins by enunciating the superiority of love (13:1–3). All the spiritual gifts are worthless if they are not expressed in love. This applies to tongues, knowledge, prophecy, and wonder-working faith, the very gifts so prized by the “Spirit people” of the Corinthian congregation. Paul's final example in verse 3 spoke either of giving one's body “to be burned” or giving it up “that one might boast.” The variant translations are due to variant Greek texts with two words which sound very much alike in Greek: *kauthēsomai* (burn) and *kauchēsomai* (boast). Con-

sidering the context, perhaps “burn” is the more likely word. Even the ultimate sacrifice is worthless if unaccompanied by love.

Verses 4–7 speak of the work of love or qualities of love. Throughout the encomium Paul used the Greek word *agapē* in denoting love, that selfless sort of love exhibited by Christ in laying down his life for sinners. Most of the attributes ascribed to love in this section are negative, emphasizing the self-denying, self-emptying nature of *agapē*, which denies itself, does not envy, does not boast, is not self-seeking. These are the very traits that the Corinthians lacked. Their self-esteemed spiritual accomplishments made them proud and rude and disdainful of others. They lacked love.

Paul concluded by speaking of the endurance of love (13:8–13). The gifts the Corinthians so cherished would one day pass away, whether tongues, or knowledge, or prophecy. Paul was thinking eschatologically. The “perfect” (v. 10) is the life to come. When this life passes away and we enter that perfect realm where God is all in all (cp. 15:28), the gifts pertaining to this life will pass away also—prophecy, knowledge, tongues, and all the rest. Three things only will abide through eternity—*faith* made perfect, *hope* realized, and *love*. The last is the greatest, because it is the power by which heaven itself lives. It was ironic. With their realized eschatology, the superspiritualists of Corinth felt they had it all; the future held nothing more in store for them. The opposite was the case. Everything they *did* have would perish. The love they lacked would abide.

*The proper expression of tongues and prophecy* (14:1–40). At 14:1 Paul returned to the Corinthian term *spiritual gifts* (*pneumatika*) rather than his preferred “gifts of grace” (*charismata*).<sup>61</sup> The Corinthians had asked



Paul in their letter about the “spiritual gifts,” and the content of chapter 14 would indicate that they understood these largely in terms of “tongues” (*glossolalia*), an ecstatic, nonrational “Spirit language.”<sup>62</sup> In chapter 14 Paul’s immediate concern was for the Christian assembly, for which he demanded edification, instruction, and rational exhortation. One gets the impression that he viewed tongue speaking as a private, devotional matter, much like his own vision referred to in 2 Corinthians 12:1–6. He did not discourage the practice; he even admitted his own participation in tongues (14:18). He allowed it a place in Christian worship but only under strict regulation. Paul’s discussion of tongues covers 1 Corinthians 14:1–33. It can be outlined in five main divisions.

(1) *The superiority of prophecy to tongues (14:1–6)*. Paul pointed to the limitation of tongues in the setting of worship. Tongues edify primarily the speaker, not the congregation, since they are unintelligible. He argued the superiority of prophecy, since it is intelligible, offering instruction and guidance to the community.<sup>63</sup> Tongues can become edifying if an interpreter is present to express them in intelligible language.

(2) *Analogies which point to the need for rational content (14:7–12)*. Using the analogies of music, the bugle call, and foreign languages, Paul pointed out the need for oral communication to be ordered and intelligible to the hearer.

(3) *Paul’s insistence on the rational element (14:13–19)*. For Paul, in the gathered Christian community the *edification* of all present was essential (v. 17). He viewed ecstatic manifestations like tongues as basically spiritual but not mental. Paul did not eschew the individual spiritual experience; he just insisted that *in worship* the experience must be communicated in rational,

intelligible words that would benefit all present (v. 19).

(4) *Tongues and the outsider (14:20–25)*. Just as the other Christians in the assembly are not edified by uninterpreted tongues, so the outsider will not be convicted and led to faith. He will see the tongues as chaos and madness. To speak rationally under the Spirit’s inspiration as in prophecy will lead the visiting non-Christian to conviction of sin and confession of God. As in all the other arguments, Paul was concerned with the rational presentation of God’s word in worship.

(5) *Regulation of tongues and prophecy in worship (14:26–33)*. This section gives an insight into early Christian worship. It seems to have been a very “participatory” gathering with everyone contributing, often spontaneously. Obviously such an arrangement could get out of hand. Paul thus sought to regulate the more spontaneous contributions. First he appealed to the tongue speakers: they must be limited in number (three at most), must speak one at a time, and in the absence of an interpreter must keep quiet altogether (26–28). Even though Paul preferred prophecy, it too could become chaotic if all the prophets got inspired at the same time. So he insisted that they also should be limited to three at most and should speak one at a time. One should stop when the others received a revelation. Finally, they should be subject to the judgment of the other prophets (29–32). Paul saw the Spirit as God’s gift to the *whole church*. There is no place for “independent spirits.”

Paul dealt with an additional matter in verses 34–36, the silence of women in the church. The verses have provoked an extensive discussion. Paul acknowledged elsewhere in 1 Corinthians that women participated audibly in worship, both pray-

ing and prophesying (11:5). Many scholars have considered the conflict between the two passages to be so serious that they have argued verses 34–36 are a later interpolation into the text of 1 Corinthians. There is some weak textual basis for this, as these verses are found in another place (after v. 40) in a small group of manuscripts.<sup>64</sup> (No manuscript, however, lacks them.) Paul must have enjoined silence under special circumstances in 14:34–36.

Numerous suggestions have been made: the women were chattering in church because they were accustomed to being off to themselves in the Jewish synagogue;<sup>65</sup> the women were self-proclaimed charismatic teachers who were teaching men (as in 1 Tim 2:8–15);<sup>66</sup> Paul was forbidding the female prophets to participate in the judgment of the other prophets, since this would have placed them in an authoritative position over men.<sup>67</sup> These are but a sample of the many suggestions that have been made. All are guesswork. In the light of 11:5, it is clear that Paul was not issuing a blanket prohibition of women speaking in worship. He had to be addressing some special circumstance. Judging from its position in chapter 14, it must have related somehow to the expression of the spiritual gifts. It is in the middle of the tongues/prophesy discussion. Paul summarized and concluded the discussion in the verses that follow (14:37–40).

### ***The Resurrection (Ch. 15)***

The question about the resurrection of the dead does not seem to have been raised by the Corinthians' letter (no *peri de* formula). It came to Paul by other means. Some in the church were evidently denying the resurrection of believers. On what basis is not clear. Paul himself may not have fully known why at this point. Perhaps

they were the hyper-spiritualist group, those who claimed to be already reigning (cp. 4:8). Influenced by neoplatonic dualism, they considered themselves already complete, spiritually perfected, awaiting only the separation of their soul from their bodies at death.<sup>68</sup> Their salvation awaited no future; they were already "perfected." In their scheme there was no place for a bodily resurrection. Paul responded to the word about their denial of the resurrection with a very comprehensive treatment. He covered all the bases, so to speak, giving the most comprehensive treatment of the resurrection of believers to be found in the New Testament.

First Paul appealed to the tradition of Christ's resurrection (15:1–11). It consisted of two parts: (1) the basic confession that Christ died, was buried, and rose on the third day (vv. 3–4), and (2) the tradition of those to whom the risen Lord had appeared, who could verify his resurrection (vv. 5–11). Paul included himself as the last witness. The Corinthians do not seem to have questioned Jesus' resurrection, only their own. For Paul, the two went together. If Jesus rose, so do those who are "in him." The basis of the resurrection of believers starts with Christ's resurrection. Paul pointed out the implications of Jesus' resurrection for the believer's resurrection in verses 12–19. He employed a syllogism to argue the inseparability of Christ's resurrection from the believer's resurrection. If believers do not rise, then neither did Christ; the two are inseparable. Three things follow, however, if Christ did not rise: we are still in our sins, those who have already died have altogether perished, and we have hope only, the hope having no prospect of future realization.

In verses 20–28 Paul employed an apocalyptic schema which summarized the

events of the end. Verses 21–22 emphasize again the inseparability of Christ and the believer by introducing the theme of the two Adams. Through the influence of platonism, later Judaism speculated that there was a perfect, unfallen heavenly Adam who preceded the earthly Adam. Paul reversed the order of the two Adams in the light of Christ. Just as we die in our sins because of our solidarity with the earthly Adam, so we will live because of our belonging to Christ, the heavenly Adam.<sup>69</sup> Verses 23–28 give the order of the final events: Christ’s resurrection as the “firstfruits,” then the resurrection of believers, then the defeat by the Son of all powers opposing God, and then the Son’s handing of the kingdom to the Father.<sup>70</sup> There is a “functional subordination” of Son to Father which underlines a strict monotheism: in the end God’s reign will be uncontested.<sup>71</sup>

In verses 29–34 Paul used three “human” (*ad hominem*) arguments to advance the idea of the believer’s resurrection. First he appealed to a practice that some may have actually been doing at Corinth—baptism for the dead.<sup>72</sup> Endless discussion has raged over what this entailed, but it seems to have been some sort of vicarious baptism, which Paul himself probably did not endorse. Paul only cited the practice as evidence for the resurrection. If the dead do not rise, how could a proxy baptism profit them anyway? Paul’s second argument appealed to his own trials. Why undergo them if there is no future? Finally, he appealed to the Epicurean adage: if this life be all, why not live it in hedonistic abandon?

In verses 35–50 Paul discussed the nature of the resurrection body. Those at Corinth who were denying the resurrection probably held a Greek view of the

survival of the *soul*. Paul, on the other hand, thought of personhood in terms of a psychosomatic whole. The future existence will not be as a naked spirit, he told them, but as an individual, transformed, spiritual body. In verses 35–41 he used seeds and animals and heavenly bodies to argue the infinite variety of bodies that exist. Particularly significant is his reference to a seed having to die first in order to take on its new body (v. 36)—a clear comparison with the resurrection body. Our mortal bodies must first die before they can be clothed with immortality. In verses 42–44 Paul discussed the nature of the resurrection body: it will be a transformed, spiritual body, a new order of existence, in continuity with but distinct from the mortal body. Drawing from a rabbinic midrash on Genesis 2:7, which spoke of the heavenly Adam as a “life-giving spirit,” Paul once again employed the Adam speculation of Judaism to argue for the *spiritual* resurrection *body* of the believer (vv. 45–50).<sup>73</sup>

Verses 15:51–58 return to an apocalyptic schema of the events of the end that is reminiscent of 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18. When the last trumpet blows, the dead will rise and be clothed with immortality. The living, among whom Paul included himself (v. 52), will also be reclothed in their new spiritual bodies, and the last enemy, death, will die. The linkage of sin, law, and death in verse 56 is very Pauline; it will have to await our consideration of Romans 7. Verse 58 brings the whole discussion home. The real import of the resurrection hope is what we are doing *now*. All our labors in Christ are grounded in the resurrection hope, but until he comes what counts is *our labor*.

### **Conclusion (16:1-24)**

A final major question raised by the

Corinthians's letter was Paul's collection for the saints (1 Cor 16:1–4). We will examine all the collection texts in a subsequent chapter. Most of the remainder of chapter 16 has either already been treated or will be in future chapters. Paul's next visit to Corinth did not turn out exactly as he planned in 16:5–9, and we will consider this in the next chapter. Timothy probably did go to Corinth (vv. 10–11) but came back with bad news, and that will occupy us also in the next chapter. The Corinthian letter may have asked when Apollos would visit them again (16:12). Paul's response that Apollos was unwilling to do so for the moment is enigmatic. After 1 Corinthians, Apollos drops out of view.

We have already considered 16:15–18. Stephanas was likely one of the wealthier Corinthians who furnished his home for the congregation and served as one of its patrons. The delegation of three (v. 17) were the bearers of the Corinthians' letter, and Paul gave them due recognition. First Corinthians concludes with many of the epistolary conventions characteristic of Paul's letters—the exchange of greetings, the holy kiss, the reference to writing the concluding words in his own hand, the grace benediction, the *agapē* wish. Worthy of note is the prayer for the Lord's return, which Paul wrote in the original Aramaic of the earliest Christians, transliterated into Greek (*marana tha*, "Come, Lord"). Some of the Corinthians had little concern for the future; they "had it all" now. Throughout the letter Paul reminded them of the future awaiting them as Christians. With the traditional Aramaic prayer, he gave a final reminder.

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### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>J. B. Polhill, "Reconciliation at Corinth: 2 Corinthians 4–7," *Review and Expositor* 86 (1989) 354–356.

<sup>2</sup>W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 90–96. For a very different reconstruction of the two letters, see J. Héring, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth, 1962) xi–xv.

<sup>3</sup>For a comprehensive treatment of the various views regarding Paul's oppo-

nents, see J. J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>F. C. Baur, "Die Christuspartie in der korinthischen Gemeinde," *Tübingen Zeitschrift für Theologie* 5 (1831) 61–206.

<sup>5</sup>Among those who see a Jewish dimension to the problems in 1 Corinthians is C. K. Barrett. He sees the primary problem as an incipient Gnosticism but also sees Jewish perspectives among the "weak" with regard to idol meat and asceticism. See C. K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982) 28–59.

<sup>6</sup>W. Schmithals, 124–285.

<sup>7</sup>R. McL. Wilson, "How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?" *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972–73) 65–74; *idem.*, "Gnosis at Corinth," in *Paul and Paulinism, Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: S.P.C.K., 1982) 102–114.

<sup>8</sup>For examples, see M. L. Soards, *The Apostle Paul: An Introduction to His Writings and Teachings* (New York: Paulist, 1987) 74–75; J. W. Drane, *Paul, Libertine or Legalist: A Study of the Theology of the Major Pauline Epistles* (London: S.P.C.K., 1975). J. Painter contends that the Corinthians "gnosticised," being particularly influenced by the Greek mysteries: "Paul and the Pneumatikoi," in *Paul and Paulinism*, 237–250.

<sup>9</sup>This is the view of R. Horsley, "Gnosis in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8:1–6," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980–81) 32–51. See also J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul, a Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 280–282. N. Hyldahl maintains the unlikely view that Apollos was not baptized and not considered a Christian by Paul: "Paul and Hellenistic Judaism in Corinth," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. P. Borgen and S. Giversen (Peabody,



- Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997) 204–216.
- <sup>10</sup>B. Pearson also argues for a hellenistic background of the Corinthian spiritualists. In his view, they claimed to acquire the inbreathed Spirit by pursuing wisdom in accordance with their own distinctive exegesis of Genesis 2:7: B. A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*, SBL Dissertation Series 12 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1973).
- <sup>11</sup>C. H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987) xxii.
- <sup>12</sup>J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond: Knox, 1959) 135–167.
- <sup>13</sup>For social factors in the Corinthian problem, see G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). For the idea that the Corinthian disharmony was a sort of civil strife, see L. L. Welborn, “On the Discord at Corinth: 1 Cor. 1–4 and Ancient Politics,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987) 85–111.
- <sup>14</sup>W. Baird, *The Corinthian Church—A Biblical Approach to Urban Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964) 27.
- <sup>15</sup>This is roughly the division argued by K. Bailey, “The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul’s Theological Method with Special Reference to 4:17,” *Novum Testamentum* 25 (1983) 152–181.
- <sup>16</sup>Some scholars see Paul employing a homily in these chapters. For example, V. P. Branick traces a homily based on prophetic texts in 1:18–31; 2:6–16; 3:18–23: “Source and Redaction Analysis of 1 Corinthians 1–3,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982) 251–269.
- <sup>17</sup>G. R. O’Day suggests that most of the Corinthians were well-to-do and Paul was urging them to take their security in their calling, not in their human status: “Jeremiah 9:22–23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26–31: A Study in Intertextuality,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990) 259–267.
- <sup>18</sup>T. H. Lim, “Not in Persuasive Words of Wisdom, but in the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power,” *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987) 137–149. See also J. H. Schütz, *The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: University Press, 1975) 187–203.
- <sup>19</sup>E. E. Ellis, “‘Wisdom’ and ‘Knowledge’ in 1 Corinthians,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974) 82–98.
- <sup>20</sup>P. Lampe maintains that Paul used a rhetorical device that kept the application of the lesson of 1:18–2:16 hidden from the Corinthians until 3:1–4: “Theological Wisdom and the ‘Word About the Cross’: The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1–4,” *Interpretation* 44 (1990) 117–131.
- <sup>21</sup>First suggested by J. M. S. Baljon, it has been refined by J. Strugnell, “A Plea for Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament: With a Coda on 1 Cor. 4:6,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974) 555–558.
- <sup>22</sup>A recent suggestion is that “what is written” refers not to the Old Testament but to possible written bylaws which the Corinthian church had adopted: J. C. Hanges, “1 Corinthians 4:6 and the Possibility of Written Bylaws in the Corinthian Church,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998) 275–298.
- <sup>23</sup>W. Deming, “The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996) 289–312.
- <sup>24</sup>A. Y. Collins suggests that the man grounded his offensive behavior theologically, claiming it was “in Jesus’ name”: “The Function of ‘Excommunication’ in Paul,” *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980) 251–263.
- <sup>25</sup>Recent sociological treatments of this passage emphasize how closely the control of the individual body is related to the purity concerns of the larger social body. See J. H. Neyrey, “Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and His Opponents,” *Semeia* 35 (1986) 129–170; G. Harris, “The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5,” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991) 1–21.
- <sup>26</sup>B. W. Winter, “Civil Litigation in Secular Corinth and the Church: The Forensic Background to 1 Corinthians 6:1–8,” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991) 559–572.
- <sup>27</sup>J. C. Hurd Jr. *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965) 158–163.
- <sup>28</sup>R. E. 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),” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1992) 52–73.
- <sup>29</sup>M. Y. MacDonald, “Women Holy in Body and Spirit in the Social Setting of 1 Corinthians 7,” *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990) 161–181.
- <sup>30</sup>W. Deming argues that 1 Corinthians 7 reflects the debate between Stoics and Cynics over marriage:

- Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- <sup>31</sup>S. S. Bartchy, *MALLON CHRĒSAI: First Century Slavery and 1 Corinthians 7:21*, SBL Dissertation Series 11 (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1971).
- <sup>32</sup>J. K. Elliott, "Paul's Teaching on Marriage in 1 Corinthians: Some Problems Considered," *New Testament Studies* 19 (1973) 219–225.
- <sup>33</sup>Oster, "Use, Misuse and Neglect," 64–67.
- <sup>34</sup>Theissen, 121–143.
- <sup>35</sup>N. T. Wright calls this "Christological monotheism": *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 120–136.
- <sup>36</sup>J. Meggitt points out that there were cultic occasions when even the poor of the city would be provided with meat: "Meat Consumption and Social Conflict in Corinth," *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994) 137–141.
- <sup>37</sup>The context pictured in chapter 8 is clearly the temple. See G. D. Fee, "Eidōlothuta Once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8–10," *Biblica* 61 (1990) 172–197.
- <sup>38</sup>Paul seems to have been an exception in offering this "situational" view of idol meat. The early church as a whole seems to have consistently condemned its consumption, in keeping with the apostolic decrees. See J. C. Brunt, "Rejected, Ignored or Misunderstood? The Fate of Paul's Approach to the Problem of Food Offered to Idols in Early Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985) 113–124.
- <sup>39</sup>On the Corinthian meat market (*macellum*) see H. J. Cadbury, "The Macellum of Corinth," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 53 (1934) 134–141; J. D. Gill, "The Meat Market of Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:25)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 43 (1992) 389–393.
- <sup>40</sup>B. Witherington distinguishes between the two Greek words used in chapter 8 (*eidōlothuton*) and in 10:28 (*hierothuton*), arguing that the former is a technical term for full participation in idolatrous worship: "Not So Idle Thoughts about *Eidōlothuton*," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993) 237–254.
- <sup>41</sup>P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 83–107.
- <sup>42</sup>This section is best viewed not as an attack on sacramentalism but a warning against idolatry: K-G. Sandelin, "Does Paul Argue Against Sacramentalism and Over-Confidence in 1 Cor 10, 1–14?" in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, 165–182.
- <sup>43</sup>R. A. Horsley, "Consciousness and Freedom Among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8–10," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978) 574–589.
- <sup>44</sup>O. Broneer, "Paul and the Pagan Cults at Isthmia," *Harvard Theological Review* 64 (1971) 169–187.
- <sup>45</sup>A number of recent interpreters argue that both the men and the women were bucking custom, the men covering and the women uncovering their heads: cp. J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:12–16," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980) 482–485; Talbert, 68.
- <sup>46</sup>Among the Romans, priests and laymen alike often pulled their togas over their heads when praying or sacrificing: R. Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11:4," *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988) 481–505.
- <sup>47</sup>"Covering" could refer to hair. W. J. Martin argued that the Corinthian women were shaving their heads, as was done in some Greek cults: "1 Corinthians 11:2–16, an Interpretation," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. Gasque and Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 231–241.
- <sup>48</sup>A. Padgett suggests that the Corinthian men were responsible for the arguments of verses 4–7 while Paul advocated the more egalitarian stance of verses 10–16: "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20 (1984) 69–86.
- <sup>49</sup>The Isis cult, which had a temple in Corinth, granted women equal power with men and may have influenced the Christian women: J. E. Stambaugh and D. L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 159.
- <sup>50</sup>See M. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 11:10," *New Testament Studies* 10 (1964) 410–416.
- <sup>51</sup>In the Qumran writings reference is made to angels who presided over the community's worship: J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor. xi.10," *New Testament Studies* 4 (1957) 48–58.

- <sup>52</sup>G. B. Caird, "Paul and Women's Liberty," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 54 (1972) 268–281.
- <sup>53</sup>G. Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul," in *Early Christian Experience*, trans. P. L. Hammer (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) 122–160. See also A. D. Nock, *St. Paul* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937) 186–195.
- <sup>54</sup>J. Murphy-O'Connor, "House Churches and the Eucharist," *Bible Today* 22 (1984) 32–38.
- <sup>55</sup>Theissen, 145–174.
- <sup>56</sup>Those who argue a Gnostic background for the Corinthian opponents see "Jesus be cursed" as representing a Gnostic denial of the fleshly Jesus and a docetic Christology that affirmed only a spiritual Christ.
- <sup>57</sup>D. L. Baker, "The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12–14," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974) 224–234.
- <sup>58</sup>A. E. Hill suggests that the clay body parts associated with the temple of Asclepius may have influenced Paul to use the body analogy: "The Temple of Asclepius: An Alternate Source for Paul's Body Theology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980) 437–439.
- <sup>59</sup>G. Bornkamm, "The More Excellent Way," in *Early Christian Experience*, 180–193.
- <sup>60</sup>For a rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians 13 as an encomium, see J. G. Sigountas, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13," *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994) 246–260; J. Smit, "The Genre of 1 Corinthians 13 in the Light of Ancient Rhetoric," *Novum Testamentum* 33 (1991) 193–216.
- <sup>61</sup>E. E. Ellis, "'Spiritual' Gifts in the Pauline Community," *New Testament Studies* 20 (1974) 128–144. See also T. Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians," *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985) 125–140.
- <sup>62</sup>For a comprehensive exposition of Paul's discussion of the gifts, see K. S. Hemphill, *Spiritual Gifts: Empowering the New Testament Church* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988).
- <sup>63</sup>For a general treatment of prophecy in 1 Corinthians and its wider biblical context, see W. A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).
- <sup>64</sup>For example, G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 669–708.
- <sup>65</sup>J. S. Glen, *Pastoral Problems in First Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 133–134.
- <sup>66</sup>R. P. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12–15* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 87.
- <sup>67</sup>Grudem, 250–255.
- <sup>68</sup>A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians xv," *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981) 229–241.
- <sup>69</sup>R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 82–89.
- <sup>70</sup>For a full exegesis of verses 23–28, see J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia, An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997) 145–169.
- <sup>71</sup>W. Schmithals, "The Pre-Pauline Tradition in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 20 (1993) 357–380.
- <sup>72</sup>For the Corinthian emphasis on death and the underworld, see R. E. DeMaris, "Corinthian Religion and Baptism for the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:29): Insights from Archaeology and Anthropology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995) 661–682.
- <sup>73</sup>J. D. G. Dunn, "1 Corinthians 15:45—Last Adam, Life-Giving Spirit," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973) 127–143.