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PAUL AND THE SCHISMATA IN I CORINTHIANS.

ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to reconstruct the situation at Corinth, with particular emphasis upon the divisions, at the time of Paul's writing of I Corinthians (Introduction). An essential component of such a reconstruction, which is presupposed to be necessary for the interpretation of the epistle, is the sociological dimension of the community (Chapter I). Difficulties involved in the reconstruction of the divisions are discussed (largely from a review of proposed interpretations), and a methodology is adopted which lays the principal emphasis upon Chapters 1-4 as the source of information (Chapter II).

In the second part, statements of a basically factual nature in I Cor. 1-4 are examined, leading to the preliminary conclusion that a plurality of divisions, centred upon rival leaders, existed, but was possibly not taken seriously at Corinth (Chapter III). The overall development of argument (in 1-4) relates the divisions to the theme of human wisdom, opposed to God's power. Paul views divisions as proof of 'fleshly' dependence on human wisdom, expressed in 'puffed up' behaviour, denying dependence upon God (Chapter IV). Corroborative evidence of Paul's strategy of attacking false wisdom at the root of all divisiveness, rather than particular parties, is provided by stylistically prominent indications of purpose (e.g. imperatives, purpose clauses). Paul's claim to unique authority and responsibility is an attempt to transcend divisions (Chapter V).

In the third part (Chapter VI), the conclusions from I Cor. 1-4 are tested against relevant sections of I Cor. 5-16. The evidence confirms the overall conclusion of a diversity of tensions within the community, producing, within a vacuum of authority, divisions centred upon leaders. Paul appeals for a voluntary surrender of rights and freedom, in consideration for others, and for the building up of the community (Conclusion).

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PAUL AND THE SCHISMATA IN I CORINTHIANS

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INTRODUCTION:-

The student of St. Paul, particularly in relation to the Corinthian epistles, has perhaps little need to be apologetic about a practical and pastoral motivation in his studies, since that is a central concern of the apostle too. Part of the initial impetus for the present study comes from the experience of being part of Christian communities in very different parts of the world. Beyond its more immediate aims lies the practical, pastoral question, whether in what Paul has to say to the Corinthians about community and factions, there is something to be heard by the church today.

Problems of factiousness, division and diversity, with which Paul attempts to deal in I and II Corinthians, have shown throughout the ages, a remarkable resilience, and capacity for adaptation. It is no longer possible even to hold on to the popular myth of a 'Golden Age' of Christian unity in the first century, where such problems did not exist.<sup>1</sup> The romantic fiction of the early church as a completely harmonious community of like-minded people, united in a common aim (which the writer of Acts, not always consistently, sought to perpetuate) has long been replaced by an understanding of it as conforming to a more earthly, fallibly human, pattern of diversity and conflict.<sup>2</sup> However, the loss

of the belief that such an ideal community once existed is compensated for by the increased realism of the picture of the communities, and consequently the relevance to the present reality of its self-understanding, its community ethics and order, and the practical measures it adopted in response to a variety of real pressures and tensions, internal and external, (including the pursuit of a goal of ideal community). The understanding of the role of their apostle Paul has inevitably undergone a similar change of perspective, but one which likewise implies no necessary diminution of his stature.<sup>3</sup> The apostles are no longer seen as the bulwark of "orthodoxy", preserving the church from heresy (which did not dare to raise its head during their life time).<sup>4</sup> To see Paul instead as dealing with practical problems arising in the Pauline communities, working out, or at the least applying, his 'theology' in response to real situations, with his authority and reputation under threat not just from non-Christian opponents, but from within the very communities which he founded, does not detract from his stature, his importance, or the significance of what he has to say.<sup>5</sup> It does, however, make it necessary that the situations and communities for which Paul wrote be reconstructed as fully as possible, in order to hear clearly what he has to say.

The more immediate aim of this study, therefore, is to concentrate upon one particular part of this reconstruction, a specific situation in which Paul addresses the problem of divisiveness and disunity in a Christian community - the *σχίσματα* which threaten the life and unity of the church in Corinth. In addition to being one of the most obvious situations for Paul's teaching about factionalism, the *σχίσματα* are widely, though not universally, recognised as central to understanding the situation in Corinth which determines the direction and emphases of I Corinthians (as well as providing significant background for the whole Corinthian correspondence).

PART I: THE PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY  
OF THIS STUDY

CHAPTER I: THE PRESUPPOSITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES  
OF THIS INVESTIGATION

In pursuing the aim of reconstructing the divisions, there are two main presuppositions which provide the perspective for this investigation and are therefore discussed and elaborated here:

- (1) that identifying the  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  is a prerequisite for hearing what Paul has to say;
- (2) that the Christian community at Corinth is important in itself (not just for the key figures in it, nor even only as the recipients of Paul's teaching and exhortation), and that it should therefore be reconstructed in all its dimensions, especially the sociological.

- (1) Identifying the  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  as a prerequisite for hearing what Paul has to say.

It is generally accepted that the nature of Paul's theology is not 'systematic' but essentially practical, written for particular people in particular situations.<sup>6</sup> This point is made for example by Hooker ("Paul gives us only a piecemeal picture of his theological position.

Everything he wrote was occasional literature." <sup>7)</sup> and Munck ("His theology arises from his work as apostle and directly serves that work." <sup>8)</sup>). Beker also argues that the correlation between what he calls the 'contingency' and the 'coherence' of Paul's gospel, is the key to understanding Paul's thought. <sup>9</sup> The coherent theme or centre of Paul's thought (the first fundamental question) is the triumph of God. <sup>10</sup> Paul's experience of the Christ-event is brought into language in the symbolic structure of apocalyptic language. <sup>11</sup> The second fundamental question concerns the texture of Paul's hermeneutic, which Beker sees as translating the apocalyptic theme of the gospel into the contingent particularities of the human situation. <sup>12</sup> The interaction between the coherent centre of the gospel and its contingency is Paul's particular contribution to theology. <sup>13</sup> Of the letters, he writes: "They should be interpreted as gospel for particular situations, 'enfleshing' the gospel into human particularity." <sup>14</sup>

It follows from the nature of Paul's writing, that the particularity of the situations in which he wrote influenced both what he chose to say and how he said it. It is conceivable that even if a coherent core exists, as Beker believes, contradictions in the practical advice given may arise, dependent upon the differences in particular situations. <sup>15</sup>

(Paul himself in I Cor. 9: 19-23 appears to lay claim to a practice of "accomodation".<sup>16</sup>) It is therefore impossible to bypass the task of historical reconstruction, however difficult that may be, since understanding the situation of Paul, and of the community to which he was writing, is integral to our understanding of what exactly he is saying (including the examination of whether there is a 'centre' of his gospel).

With regard to I Corinthians, the historical background takes an even greater prominence, in view of the practical nature of its concerns, which is widely recognised by commentators. Barrett, for example, having first claimed that the church in our generation needs the Epistle to the Romans in order to rediscover the apostolic gospel, adds: "It needs also to rediscover the relation between the gospel and its order, discipline, worship and ethics; and for this it needs the First Epistle to the Corinthians."<sup>17</sup> He had earlier described the Corinthian Epistles as "the most complete and many-sided picture of how Paul believed that his theological convictions should be expressed in the life of a church."<sup>18</sup> Allo describes the aim of I Corinthians as practical and local ("On dirait qu'elle n'est faite que pour calmer des agitations locales ou résoudre des problèmes locaux."<sup>19</sup>) Robertson and Plummer characterise it similarly ("It deals with the practical questions

affecting the life of a church founded by the writer." <sup>20</sup>)  
 In the course of justifying his choice of Galatians and Romans, the more "doctrinal" letters, to explore Paul's contextual way of doing theology, Beker admits that the Corinthian letters, and especially I Corinthians, are more obvious places to study the contextual particularity or contingency of his thought. ("If-as I contend - Paul's theological method is a method of embodying the coherent center of the gospel into the particularity of a given situation, it would seem that the Corinthian correspondence should be our test case, and certainly not Romans. First Corinthians especially invites contextual interpretation because of Paul's question-and-answer method." <sup>21</sup>)

From the wide recognition of the practical and local concern of I Corinthians, exemplified above, it follows that the more that can be discovered of the situation at Corinth which led both to the questions which the community asked of Paul, and to the problems that were reported to him, the more sure can be the evaluation of Paul's practical advice and the identification of the general principles or theological convictions that lie behind it. <sup>22</sup>  
 The more necessary, in other words, becomes the task of reconstruction of the occasion and situation of the Epistle. Within this historical reconstruction, the threat of *σχίσματα* (1:10) and the existence of *ἐπίδες* (1:11) appears to occupy a central place from their position at

the beginning of the epistle (1:10-4:21), their connection with the fundamentals of Paul's gospel (1:17-2:5 in particular) and their possible relationship to other problems within the community (5-16).

(2) The importance of Christian community and the sociological dimension of it

It has been argued above that an understanding of the situation and the community at Corinth is necessary for a proper understanding of Paul (although it must be admitted that there is some pessimism even among those who engage in reconstruction about how full an understanding is now recoverable).<sup>23</sup> The second pre-supposition or basis of investigation is also widely recognised: the importance of Christian community in its broadest sense. This recognition encompasses many fields of study e.g. theology, history and exegesis

Of particular significance, however, is the growing interest in, and recognition of, the sociological dimension of the early Christian communities. The extent of this interest is indicated by the increasingly substantial lists of studies of the early church in surveys of literature with a sociological emphasis.<sup>24</sup> One important result of studies from this perspective has been to highlight the importance of community in the 'success' of early Christianity. Examples of this are found in the work of Gager<sup>25</sup> and Kee,<sup>26</sup> both of whom are

concerned with early Christianity as a whole (i.e. a generalised picture rather than individual communities).

Gager certainly does not see the early church as an ideal unity, and in fact criticises the neglect of the gospels as "invaluable sources for a wide variety of early Christian communities".<sup>27</sup> He sees early Christianity as "a social world in the making".<sup>28</sup> (This phrase and "the social world of early Christianity" have become common terms of some scholars.<sup>29</sup>) It is classified by him as a millenarian movement, a new religion creating its own social world, and therefore capable of being described as, and subject to the same forces as, other millenarian movements.<sup>30</sup> Gager is not unaware of the problems and dangers of the identification and use of sociological models from a different age and culture.<sup>31</sup> He finds support, however, for his classification in "the relative absence of specifically theological reflection on the one hand and the tremendous emphasis on community and ethics on the other".<sup>32</sup> Social distinctions (of property, sex and status) are abolished or minimised,<sup>33</sup> the well-being of the community being the main principle<sup>34</sup> (e.g. I Cor. 10:23). Status distinction is attacked as contradictory to the very nature of Christian community in I Cor. 10-13.<sup>35</sup> As Christianity forms its identity and retains its cohesiveness, "community" remains the vitally central focus.<sup>36</sup> Indeed Gager sees "the

radical sense of Christian community", rather than any 'religious' factor as "the decisive element in our final explanation of the success of Christianity".<sup>37</sup> As the Christian millenarian movement "mythologises its hopes in face of the failure of its millenarian expectations, the community becomes the prefiguring in the present of the future"<sup>38</sup> (which could be described as a sociological description of realised eschatology). Amid all the variety of religious options, the distinctive and decisive feature which Christianity had to offer to its adherents was the sense of community. ("In a world that offered an unlimited variety of religious options, there needed to be something further to retain the loyalty of converts through time. This something was the sense of community"<sup>39</sup>) The triumph of Christianity depended upon twofold factors: external circumstances beyond its control and "a single over-riding internal factor, the radical sense of Christian community - open to all, insistent on absolute and exclusive loyalty, and concerned for every aspect of the believer's life. From the very beginning, the one distinctive gift of Christianity was this sense of community".<sup>40</sup>

Kee sees the origin of Christian community in an alienated or marginal group which rallies to a charismatic leader or ethical prophet.<sup>41</sup> He too sees the context of all

of Christian life in community, so that even the essentially individual experience of conversion "regularly carries with it a commitment or adherence to a new community".<sup>42</sup>

Disputes which are perceived by the participants as primarily theological have, in part at least, a sociological nature, which he sees as a consequence of the degree of inclusiveness of the Christian community.<sup>43</sup> The challenge to Paul's credentials in Corinth, e.g. by ecstasies in I Cor. 12:27-30 (cf. 14:23 and 40), is at root "a fundamental difference in social conception of the church and its corporate life"<sup>44</sup> (Kee's understanding of this difference follows Theissen below).<sup>45</sup> The Christian community is "primarily the Christians' version of the Jewish concept of covenant people".<sup>46</sup> However, social and cultural distinctions emerged early even in the urban community,<sup>47</sup> as indicated for example in Ro. 16:23, where the impression is given that there are some people of substance and cosmopolitan culture;<sup>48</sup> and I Cor. 4:12 where, he thinks, Paul's detractors were condescending to him because he worked with his hands, unlike Apollos.<sup>49</sup> Indeed one of the first problems faced by the church was: "how to actualise the social unity of the church that very early spanned so wide a range of economic, social and cultural strata".<sup>50</sup>

One of the most substantial contributions in the whole field of sociological investigation is that made by Theissen.<sup>51</sup>

(His work on I Corinthians will mainly be referred to later.) He too sees the development of the community in response to tensions created by internal pressures (such as social and cultural diversity) and external ones ( e.g. economic and political).<sup>52</sup> The reason for the 'success' of Christianity was its response to socio-economic, socio-ecological, socio-political and socio-cultural forces.<sup>53</sup> It lay in the integrating nature of the movement - its readiness to modify its radical ethics to fit the settled city community where it flourished - and its positive response to the external pressures of its world.<sup>54</sup> This process of adaptation or integration is deduced from the New Testament, for radical and less radical attitudes, which reflect different stages of development or different situations (rural and urban mission), can be detected.<sup>55</sup> For example alongside the radical condemnation of riches and the rich, characteristic of the gospels, and appropriate for the wandering charismatics of the 'Jesus movement', there is less radical commendation of the generosity of the rich, Joseph of Arimathea, Zacchaeus and Barnabas, which is appropriate for a more settled urban community.<sup>56</sup>

Theissen (cf. Kee above) sees the conflict between Paul and others in Corinth as over the type of mission: "itinerant charismatics" or "community organisers".<sup>57</sup> ("Despite variations in situation, personnel, and theology, two types of missionaries meet in I and 2 Corinthians,

types which can be distinguished by reference to their position on this issue of the right of support.")<sup>58</sup>

There is, therefore, considerable agreement among those undertaking sociological investigation, firstly on the significance which they attach to community and secondly on seeing the sense of community or social unity as a process, or development and response to tensions.<sup>59</sup> Their perspective upon the community is mainly the broader, external one of economic, geographical, political and cultural forces (which produce internal tensions), and their reconstructions depend upon inferences from the New Testament texts. The sociological factors which these and other such studies bring to prominence are a formerly neglected dimension of the Christian communities.

Many of the studies themselves show an awareness of the dangers, difficulties and limitations of the methods, in particular the scanty nature of the evidence and the fact that it works from inferences behind the open intention of the texts, and that it is therefore liable to the risk of subjective judgments. (It is noticeable that though the volume of works with a sociological emphasis has grown, it is still generally deemed necessary to introduce such studies with apologetic for the method.) Gager, for example, claims to have no illusions about the choice he makes of a particular sociological model, believing it

open to subsequent revision.<sup>60</sup> The use of sociological models from the present, to fill the gaps in information in the past, is a particularly difficult and problematic area.<sup>61</sup>

Theissen identifies and discusses three different methodological approaches, in a perceptive essay on the methodological problems of the sociological interpretations of religious traditions.<sup>62</sup> These three approaches are (in outline):-

A. CONSTRUCTIVE METHODS <sup>63</sup>

1. Sociographic Statements (i.e. about groups).
2. Prosopographic Statements (i.e. about individuals).

(The latter are more numerous. Both present problems such as reliability, validity and representativeness.)

B. ANALYTIC METHODS <sup>64</sup>

1. Inferences from Events

(Sociology's interest is in the usual, while historiography preserves the unusual. But inferences can be made (a) from the unusual about the usual;  
 (b) from recurring events;  
 (c) from analysis of conflicts - particularly important:)

## 2. Inferences from Norms

- (a) Practical norms governing experiences and impressions (aphorisms etc.).
- (b) Ethical and juridical norms (laws, punishments etc.).
- (c) Norms (e.g. educational level) shown by language.
- (d) Literary forms expressing social relationships (hymns etc.).

## 3. Inferences from Symbols

- (a) Ecclesiological.
- (b) Poetic (e.g. Parables).
- (c) Mythical.

## C. COMPARATIVE PROCEDURES <sup>65</sup>

- (1) Common elements in religious groups rooted in the same historical and social situation (unproblematic).
- (2) Related religious movements in different historical situations (problematic).

Theissen shows an awareness of specific problems raised by each of these methods, and his general conclusion on the differing methodological approaches is cautious: "Only competing methods offer the possibility of reciprocal control and correction." <sup>66</sup>

A further conclusion concerning the relationship of

the sociological approach as a whole to other approaches, is equally cautious: "The sociological perspective itself is but one among many others." <sup>67</sup> The recognition of the sociological perspective as complementary, or one among others, is an important recognition of its value and limitations. The ignoring or neglecting of it, however, results in an equally unbalanced picture, as is pointed out by Meeks.

Meeks <sup>68</sup> presents a powerful argument to counter one of the main objections to the attempt to describe the social history of early Christianity: the charge of reductionism". <sup>69</sup> The criticism is that the social historian seeks to extract from the texts something different from their 'intention', denies distinctive character to religious phenomena, and sees them as projections of group consciousness. <sup>70</sup> The sociological interpreter thereby imposes upon the evidence his own belief system. Meeks admits that early attempts partly justify these reservations, but argues that it is no longer characteristic of those disciplines. <sup>71</sup> He then goes on to launch a counter-attack on the reductionism of a purely theological interpretation and its implicit claim that the whole content of the canonical writings is theological ideas. <sup>72</sup>

He warns: "Moreover, the theological remover of specks from the social historian's eye must beware the log in his own." <sup>73</sup> Meeks elaborates his charge of

'reductionism' in three specific objections:

(a) A purely theological interpretation fails to distinguish among contexts of meaning and uses of texts; (b) it conceals a model of what religion is, which ought to be brought out into the open;

(c) it reduces the meaning of language to its

"manifest intention". <sup>74</sup> Philologists, exegetes and historians are also suspicious of the way the sociological interpretation infers what must have happened,

and Meeks admits that it is right to be chary. ("We ought to keep as closely as possible to the observed facts." <sup>75</sup>) He argues, however, that without interpretation there are no facts, since every observation

(e.g. translation) involves a point of view and set of connections. <sup>76</sup> In spite of the somewhat polemical

form of argument, it is significant that Meeks claims that his work is not anti-theological, though it deliberately avoids theological categories as its interpretative framework, and that it may be useful to

theologians. <sup>77</sup> The most telling point of Meeks' argument is to establish that a purely theological

interpretation is as open to the charge of 'reduction' (lack of balance and incompleteness) as a sociological one. The implication once again is that the different perspectives are, as Theissen suggested,<sup>78</sup> complementary.

The main contribution of sociological investigation (e.g. the works previously mentioned) has been to the creating of a description of the social world of early Christianity and of the early church as "a social world in the making". Exegesis is used largely as a means to this end, although its use for this purpose has also repercussions for the exegesis of the New Testament, introducing an awareness of a new level of meaning. (This is particularly true of Theissen's work.)

J.H. Elliott, however, attempts a closer welding of sociology and exegesis, or new direction for it, in undertaking what he calls "a sociological exegesis of I Peter, Its situation and strategy".<sup>79</sup> In the introduction, where he outlines his method, Elliott stresses the need for "sociological imagination".<sup>80</sup> His own distinctive contribution is the attempt to weld together sociology and exegesis, in what he describes as "sociological exegesis".<sup>81</sup> in order to arrive at a new understanding of an individual New Testament text. He adds later that a more comprehensive designation of the method would be a

"literary-historical-sociological-theological analysis", which indicates that the method is inclusive rather than narrow.<sup>82</sup> His primary concern is with "the social dimension and interpretation of a specific biblical text, namely I Peter".<sup>83</sup> (Elliott sees the term *παροικος* as the key to the socio-political situation,<sup>84</sup> and its correlation with *ὄικος τοῦ Θεοῦ* as the key to the strategy of the letter - the concept of "a home for the homeless" is the cohesive centre and common identity.<sup>85</sup>) Elliott's study at the very least raises the possibility that a radically new insight into, or interpretation of, a text may be possible from a sociological perspective (although it is possible that the method may be more appropriate for I Peter than other epistles).<sup>86</sup>

Something much less ambitious, much less systematically 'sociological',<sup>87</sup> is attempted in the following sections. Indeed little more is offered than some tantalising hints of a dimension to the life of the Corinthian community, which not only ought to be taken into consideration in the interests of completeness, but which may also help to explain some of the more intractable problems of I Corinthians. The sociological perspective might, for example, facilitate an explanation of why a church, which in Chapters 1-4 appears to be threatened by divisions, is exhorted to a unity based

upon the proclamation of Christ crucified, and on a practical level recalled to the teaching and example of the apostle, ... then addressed as if it were one body, facing problems which appear to cut across the divisions. If Filson<sup>88</sup> is right in suggesting that house groups in which the rich play a prominent role are the social context of the divisions, a more fluid, volatile situation is suggested, which makes it easily conceivable that Paul does not identify theological or moral standpoints with particular groups. It is no longer necessary to assume either inadequate knowledge on Paul's part, or that there is really only one group of opponents who constitute the one real division.

One question with a very definite social dimension, to which considerable attention has been given, is that of the apostle's authority. The emphasis has often tended to be upon Paul's role and concept of authority, or the general understanding of apostolic authority.<sup>89</sup>

I Corinthians has been seen by several scholars<sup>90</sup> as an exercise of apostolic authority ( a view which this study will claim to be a slightly misplaced emphasis).

There is however a corollary of this, implied for example in Etzioni's definition of power as "an actor's ability to induce or influence another actor to carry out his directives or any other norms he supports".<sup>91</sup> Authority concerns not only the one exercising it but those over

whom it is exercised, so that the situation within the Corinthian community, which is the context within which Paul works out his role of authority, becomes an equally legitimate focus of attention. The shift of focus to the community incidentally makes it more likely that Paul's assertion of a unique, continuing relationship to the Corinthians as father and founder, his exhortation *μυμηταί μου γίνεσθε*, and his more authoritative pronouncements, are seen as a response to a situation of disorder, rather than a thinly-disguised power lust, brooking no rivals.<sup>92</sup> An area of study which might well prove fruitful for establishing a model for the conflicts in I Corinthians is that of group-dynamics. The phenomenon of the adoption of leadership roles in the absence of established authority (i.e. human authority) may be a highly significant factor in the conflicting leadership claims of the divisions. The limitation of time has made it impossible to explore this possibility more fully and scientifically in the present study, which remains more upon the level of the tentative conviction of Barrett: "It may have been to some extent a natural human desire that led to the formation of the groups that attached themselves to the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ."<sup>93</sup> Like Barrett it recognises that 'natural' forces generated in a group may have played a part.

The presupposition upon which this study is based, that community is important and that the sociological dimension of Christian community at Corinth is part of a complete description of it, seems therefore to be legitimate. The sociological approach brings into prominence a frequently neglected dimension of early Christian communities, but needs to be supplemented by, and evaluated against, the community's own self awareness - how it saw its own problems of unity and diversity, and endeavoured to solve them (mediated to us through Paul's views of them). There is no better place for studying how a community was affected by divisive tensions than the Corinthian letters. It is no great exaggeration to say that disunity and conflict dominate this correspondence, beginning as it does, in the canonical epistles, with the warning about  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  (I Cor. 1:10ff.) and ending in II Cor. 10-13 with the attack on false apostles, and the disruptive effect of the intrusion of super apostles on the community, which has forsaken its own apostle. There are, however, strong reasons (discussed later) for distinguishing between the conflicts in I Corinthians and II Corinthians, though it is arguable that the same tendency to faction may underlie both. I Corinthians 1-4 is at the very least where the rise of faction in Corinth is seen in its embryo state, and the threat it poses to 'community' identified. It is therefore the logical starting point for a reconstruction of the divisions at Corinth.

CHAPTER II: THE PROBLEM OF AN APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY

(1) THE DIFFICULTIES IN RECONSTRUCTING THE DIVISIONS

The difficulties which beset an attempt to reconstruct the situation at Corinth become evident from previous studies. The most important of these problems are discussed in the following section, as the first step towards deciding upon an appropriate methodology. (One of the principal criteria for choosing a particular methodology will be its ability to overcome, or at least take into account, such difficulties.)

(i) Lack of unambiguous factual information.

The first obvious difficulty in reconstructing the  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  is lack of evidence. Here, as often, Paul alludes to a situation presumably well known to his readers, and therefore unnecessary to elucidate. Dahl makes a commendably methodical attempt to distinguish fact from hypothesis,<sup>94</sup> but concludes that there are only two pieces of undisputed factual evidence.<sup>95</sup> The first is that there are  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  (later called  $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\iota\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ ) among the Corinthians (1:10-12), reported by Chloe's people of  $\chi\lambda\acute{o}\eta\varsigma$  ). The second (at 4:18) is that some (TIVES)<sup>96</sup> have become 'puffed up' ( $\acute{\epsilon}\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\acute{\omega}\theta\eta\sigma\acute{\alpha}\nu$ ) as if Paul was not coming. (Dahl rejects verses which, though they appear factual, are ambiguous or problematic

for interpretation, e.g. 1:12 where the *σχίσματα* are associated with different prominent figures or party slogans; and 4:17 the sending of Timothy.) Dahl claims that, taken together, his two unambiguous pieces of factual information are not inconsiderable.<sup>97</sup> It can, for example, be deduced that the factionalism has an anti-Pauline tendency (on the basis of 4:18).

There seems little likelihood that any significant facts have been overlooked concerning divisions (by Dahl and others), but the distinction between facts and interpretations is useful.

(ii) Information of an ambiguous nature

Alongside these facts are a number of more enigmatic hints - verses, for example, essentially factual but open to different interpretations, yet capable of being combined into plausible hypotheses. The crucial slogan verse (1:12) or the notorious crux of 4:6 are examples of this "circular" dilemma.<sup>98</sup> But there are also verses, unambiguous in themselves, which are given new significance in particular hypothetical reconstructions, for example where Paul cites his sources of information. Dahl himself, in spite of his recognition of the primacy of factual evidence, embarks upon hypothesis,<sup>99</sup> providing a good example of how essentially factual information can take on new significance in a hypothet-

ical reconstruction. His hypothesis, which he is honest enough to admit contains the element of "pure imagination",<sup>100</sup> is based upon the mention of Stephanas 1:16 (where a possible explanation of this curious afterthought is suggested by him: that Paul did not wish to involve Stephanas in the discussion of divisions at Corinth); and at 16: 15-18 (where his household is warmly commended as the first converts and for devoting themselves to the service of the saints). The double emphasis (at 16:16 and 18) on subjecting themselves, or giving recognition to "such people" may, he suggests, indicate opposition to Stephanas, as well as Paul. Dahl therefore goes on to suggest that Stephanas as leader of the delegation was probably the instigator of the writing of the letter by the Corinthians to Paul. This letter itself was the cause of division - some opposed to writing to Paul suggested instead writing to Apollos or Cephas. It is the use which Dahl makes of this conjectural explanation that is of most significance,<sup>101</sup> for he finds in it a plausible explanation of Paul's approach in 1:10 to 4:21, where he begins with caution with an exhortation to unity (the first παρακαλῶ following unusually quickly upon the short thanksgiving), and its relation to Chapters 5 to 16: "He had first of all to make it clear that he did not speak as the champion of one group but as the apostle of Christ, as the founder and

spiritual father of the whole congregation".<sup>102</sup> The hypothetical reconstruction of the background to the letter therefore supports Dahl's view of its content: that I Cor. 1-4 is an apologetic introduction.<sup>103</sup> This is a particularly clear example of how slight and unsubstantial facts, because of the ambiguity of their interpretation, can be used to elaborate major areas of content - in this case, the relationship of 1-4 to the remainder of I Cor., and therefore the whole purpose of the letter.

The interpretation of ambiguous information seems inevitable in reconstructing the background of the *σχίσματα* (in view of (i) above) but it is useful to recognise the hypothetical nature of such a reconstruction,<sup>104</sup> which must be tested within the broader context of the whole argument, and which should remain open to new insights (such as the sociological dimension of the divisions).

(iii) Information adduced from the rest of I Cor. and II Cor.

A further problem, related to the scanty nature of factual information and the 'ambiguous' nature of other facts, is how far information on the *σχίσματα* can be inferred from the rest of I Corinthians and II Corinthians.<sup>105</sup> Discussion of two of the most controversial issues in the Corinthian correspondence (a) the integrity of I Corinthians and (b) the relationship between I and II Corinthians, is therefore unavoidable.

(a) The integrity of I Corinthians

There is general acceptance that I Cor. 1-4 belong together as a unit, dealing with the divisions. The repeated explicit return to the *σχίσματα* theme (3:3ff; 3:21ff; 4:6) after the initial introduction of it in 1:10-12, makes this almost inescapable. It is particularly significant that this unit is kept intact in all the major source analyses which divide I Corinthians into more than one letter.<sup>106</sup> Thematic schemes of the epistle also generally treat this section as a unit, dealing with divisions.<sup>107</sup> Only 2:6-16 presents any problems of authenticity and Paul's proclamation of a wisdom for *οἱ τελεῖοι* there, is generally seen at the worst as a lapse into gnostic language, or language capable of a gnostic interpretation.<sup>108</sup>

Added support for treating 1-4 as a unity is given by the argument of Wuellner,<sup>109</sup> that I Cor. 1-4 embodies (in I Cor. 1:18 to 3:20) a haggadic homily genre, with its main theme at I Cor. 1:19, *ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν*, i.e. the divine sovereignty and judgment over all wisdom. The homily is brought into relationship with the situation at Corinth, outlined in 1:10-17 and 3:21b - 4:16, by the connecting verses 1:18 and 3:21. The framing *παρακαλῶ* forms at 1:10 and 4:16 act as a form of *inclusio*, and also

suggest the purpose of a homily at this point. (This point is noted by Dahl<sup>110</sup> and B. Sanders<sup>111</sup>).

There is therefore little ground for objection to treating 1-4 as a unit with the *σχισματα* as a major theme.

The question of how far material from the remaining chapters may be projected into the reconstruction of the *σχισματα* of 1-4 is clearly inextricably bound up with the question of the integrity of the epistle. If the integrity is upheld, it is likely that evidence from 5-16 can be adduced to explain the nature of the factions of 1-4. If it is rejected, at the very least the possibility must be taken into account of substantial differences in the situations and the information available to Paul. Conversely, if a close relationship between chapters 1-4 and chapters 5-16 is found, it lends strong support to the textual evidence for the integrity of the epistle.<sup>112</sup> (It should however be noted that it is easy to become involved in a 'circular' type of argument, as the assumption of the integrity of I Cor. makes the finding of thematic links more probable.)

The balance of scholarly opinion seems to be slightly in favour of the integrity of I Corinthians. Barrett, for example, remarks that while many students see 2 Corinthians as a

composite letter, "relatively few have adopted a similar hypothesis for I Corinthians".<sup>113</sup> Barrett,<sup>114</sup> Conzelmann,<sup>115</sup> Allo,<sup>116</sup> Hurd<sup>117</sup> all find it more probable to accept the integrity of the epistle. Hurd, who claims that almost all the theories of the partition of I Corinthians are based upon the recognition of the basic difference between Paul's treatment of the oral information unfavourable to Corinth (I Cor. 1: 11ff) and his reply to the Corinthians' letter (I Cor. 7: 1ff),<sup>118</sup> sees it as a straight choice between two improbabilities: the improbability of the partition theories ( a point made by other commentators) and the improbability of the households of Chloe and Stephanas meeting Paul in a period brief enough for one letter to deal with both sets of problems.<sup>119</sup>

Two of the many hypotheses of partition are discussed below to illustrate the types of issues that are raised and how they are inextricably linked with the *σχίσματα*.

Héring<sup>120</sup> finds three important arguments for disunity:

- (1) the contradiction between the imminent arrival proclaimed in Chapter 4 and the delay in Chapter 16;
- (2) the rigorist view of sacrifice in 10:1-22 contrasting with the principle of concern for the weak in 10:23 to 11:1 (and also Chapter 8);
- (3) the resumption "ex abrupto" of discussion of the apostolate in Chapter 9, after appearing to have settled the issue in 1-4.

All three points are valid observations, but Hering's division into two letters is not an inescapable conclusion.

The first contradiction (1) in Paul's travel plans is not completely irreconcilable. The emphasis at 4: 19 is upon *ταχέως*, in opposition to those (*TIVES*) "puffing themselves up as if he were not coming." 16: 5 following does not contradict the fact of Paul's coming, but the proximity of it. At verse 7 a complimentary reason for delay is given and at v.9 an unobjectionable one (his reason for staying longer in Ephesus). Also at 16: 5 he states first *ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς*, as if to reassure his readers that his essential intention is unchanged, only modified.

The second contradiction (2) depends upon the frequently noted fact of apparently self-contained passages and loose connections in and between Chapters 9 and 10 (e.g. 10:1-13<sup>121</sup>). It is doubtful, however, if Hering's two-letter division restores a broken unity. (The principle of 9:20-21 and its exemplification might account for some of the apparent contradictions.)

The third argument (3) bears directly upon the divisions, in the question of the apostle's authority in Corinth. Here, too, the argument for a composite letter is not compelling. The reintroduction of this topic could be mediated by the expectation of criticism for his voluntary surrender of 'freedom to eat'. (8:13). Its digressive nature does not disprove its integrity.<sup>122</sup> The difference of perspective

between 1-4, dealing with partisan spirits preferring one apostle to another, and Chapter 9, dealing with opponents challenging the validity of his apostolate, does not require the assumption of the reception of further alarming news. Héring's argument<sup>123</sup> that Paul would not have delayed reference to the issues at Chapter 9 and the attack on his apostolate, if he had been aware of them, rests on an uncertain psychological argument: that personal apologia must take precedence ( cf. the disinterestedness of Phil. 1:18). In 1-4, the perspective is that of the community, and their relationship to Paul, so that the emphasis upon a positive relationship to him as their children, and upon the apostles' servant-role, is understandable (in view of their false estimation of leaders). A clear apologetic element (especially 4:15; 4:3-4; 4:8-13) is present, but the emphasis is upon how the community should regard apostles (3:5-7; 3:21; 4:1; 4:16). In Chapter 9 the apologetic, polemical element is direct - openly described as ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν (9:3) and related to a specific, personal criticism, not mentioned in 1-4, the right to support.

Héring therefore raises important points and presents a plausible, but not compelling reconstruction.<sup>124</sup> It requires a relatively simple process of editing.

Schmithals also identifies two letters.<sup>125</sup> Compared with Héring, whose scheme he describes as "superficial" and "based on astoundingly narrow observation",<sup>126</sup> his division requires a more complex process of editing, but it stands in a stronger tradition of literary-critical analysis dating from Weiss (1910),<sup>127</sup> to whose observations he makes frequent reference.<sup>128</sup> He himself suggests that a growing consensus appears to be in the making in recent research.<sup>129</sup> (The table of Principal Source Analyses of I Corinthians given by Hurd shows a relative uniformity in the general approach of the seven partition theories tabulated.<sup>130</sup>)

A particularly significant point concerning the *σχίσματα* is one of the points of agreement: all put I Cor. 1-4 in a different letter from 11:2-34, in each case seeing the latter as part of an earlier letter. The rumour of *σχίσματα* at 11:18ff is a decisive point for Schmithals who, like Weiss, believes that this must be the first reference to *σχίσματα*, as they are known only vaguely by rumour (as *ἄκούω* and *μέρος τι πιστεύω* indicate).<sup>131</sup> If Paul had had concrete evidence about the *σχίσματα* here, he believes, it would be necessary to give more detail, since he now contradicts what he said earlier. If on the other hand he had only scanty evidence, he would identify these *σχίσματα* with those of 1-4. Schmithals sees a distinction between

ἀκούω (v.18) and ἐδηλώθη μοι in 1:11.<sup>132</sup> ἀκούω refers, in his reconstruction, to the unofficial report of Stephanas, a non-resident of Corinth, and ἐδηλώθη to the report of the official delegation of Chloe's people, also probably (Ephesian) visitors to Corinth.<sup>133</sup>

Schmithals' argument for a contradiction between 11:18 ff and the earlier treatment of σχίσματα touches also (almost in passing) on the deriving of a positive aspect from the disputes in 11:19 Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δοκίμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται.<sup>134</sup> The presumed contradiction is with what is said on σχίσματα in such passages as 3: 1-5 where they are a proof of being νήπιοι in Christ. The contradiction is, however, present in the passage itself (11: 17 ff) - where Paul at the same time criticises faction and recognises division as a necessary process of testing.<sup>135</sup>

Schmithals also emphatically rules out the possibility of taking σχίσματα and αἰρέσεις to designate disorder or abuses in connection with the Lord's Supper, seeing the reference to σχίσματα as brief.<sup>136</sup> Verse 17 and 18, however, seem to state explicitly the definite context of the σχίσματα under discussion here: συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (v.18). In verse 20, the same phrase is used in the transition from "coming together" to the

central purpose of meeting, that is eating the Lord's Supper. It is hard to see how divisions at the Lord's Supper are not at the very least part of the issue under attack and possibly the whole.

It becomes apparent later (e.g. p.114, where Schmithals argues that it would be most unusual if two completely different heresies had been able to find a place in the community at about the same time and had disappeared about the same time) that Schmithals identifies the *σχίσματα* with "heresies". If however the *σχίσματα* are seen as a sociological as well as theological phenomenon, as factions or cliques rather than heresies, as holding characteristic beliefs (of a heretical tendency) but not entirely doctrinally based<sup>137</sup> - it ceases to be inconceivable that this reference to a specific expression of factionalism in the communal meetings, which makes a mockery of the Lord's Supper, should come from the same epistle as I Cor. 1-4.<sup>138</sup>

Two further general points of Schmithals' literary-critical analysis are questionable. He thinks it unlikely that only part of the four letters of Paul (of which I Cor. 5:9 and II Cor. 2:3,9 give clear proof) would be preserved in Corinth.<sup>139</sup> But this is only guesswork, and the complicated editing which his hypothesis requires can be seen as equally unlikely.<sup>140</sup>

The second, more important, point is raised in his argument that the unity of I and II Corinthians is a literary-critical problem, not, as Lietzmann contended, a psychological one.<sup>141</sup> Schmithals argues that there is no basis for the psychological explanation of a changeable temperament.<sup>142</sup> (II Cor. 10:1 requires a remarkable change.) He supports this by reference to Romans (a literary masterpiece), Thessalonians (showing clear thought and strict arrangement) and Galatians (having a unifying sense of pastoral responsibility and regard for the psyche of the Galatians). Apart from the possibility of differences of aim and situation influencing the character and style of different writings by the same author, he ignores the fact that Galatians and Thessalonians are brief, and Galatians deals with one specific problem, while Romans is generally recognised as having a unique position and literary character within the Pauline corpus. Philippians is not mentioned, but a later footnote<sup>143</sup> concurs with the view that it comprises two or possibly three letters. The extension of the hypothesis of an editing process, often found necessary in II Cor, to explain awkward connections in all of Paul's canonical epistles, may be logical, but it makes the appeal to a typical logical framework in Pauline letters even more shaky.

Conzelmann<sup>144</sup> perceptively remarks that the literary-critical arguments against integrity become convincing when

it is shown not merely that there are sudden transitions of thought (which can be explained by pauses in dictation etc.) but that different situations must be presupposed for different parts of the epistle. The heart of the argument lies in whether the *σχιματα* of 11:18ff, or rather the extent of Paul's information about them, is in contradiction to what he knows about them in I Cor. 1-4. The necessity of presupposing a different situation (less knowledge) in 11:18ff has not been established by Schmithals, and some of the more peripheral arguments, dealt with above, with which he supports his aim, are much less convincing.

Barrett,<sup>145</sup> who gives an outline of the alternative explanations of Héring and Weiss as representatives of a simpler and more elaborate partition theory, makes the point that though both are possible and in the reconstructed contexts make good sense, "the fact that each reconstruction makes good sense is an argument against both".<sup>146</sup> It suggests a subjective element. It is somewhat ironical that Schmithals uses substantially the same argument against a reconstruction of the divisions based upon 1:12 (i.e. the variety of theses based upon it).<sup>147</sup>

Although there is substantial literary-critical support for a division along the lines followed by Schmithals,<sup>148</sup> the integrity of I Corinthians is still the most reasonable

working hypothesis. The lack of unanimity among the partition theories, and the lack of compelling proof for any one hypothesis, along with the positive fact that the epistle as it stands makes tolerably good sense, with no totally irreconcilable contradictions, are the decisive arguments.

A discontinuity of argument or theme between I Cor. 1-4 and later chapters is held not only by those who support a composite letter, but also by those, like Hurd, who see separate occasions within one letter.<sup>149</sup> Hurd claims that the basic differences which led to the partition theories<sup>150</sup> can in fact be accounted for by the different ways Paul deals with oral or written information.<sup>151</sup> There is strong evidence for the two different types of source of information, and in the use of *περὶ δε* - six times (7:1; 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1 and 16:12), a stylistic indication that written questions are being answered.<sup>152</sup> It is less clear that the further stylistic distinction between responses to written and oral information exists. It is hard to see why the tone of a passage written in response to oral information should be more emotionally involved, and that of a passage in response to written information calmer and more detached.<sup>153</sup>

Bruce<sup>154</sup> also sees a major dichotomy (between 4 and 5),

and accounts for it by Paul writing I Cor. 1-4 after the visit by Chloe's people with their news of divisions, but receiving a letter from Corinth brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus.<sup>155</sup> This letter assures Paul that they remember his teachings and keep the 'traditions', and raises the questions dealt with in Chapters 7-16.<sup>156</sup> The delegation also reports verbally on the illicit sexual relationship, litigation and disorder in the meetings.<sup>157</sup> Paul deals with some of these first in Chapters 5-6, accounting for the abrupt opening of 5:1.<sup>158</sup>

The question of the integrity of I Corinthians has therefore important bearing upon the question of how and how far information about the divisions from the rest of I Cor. can be used to supplement that of 1-4. It is not, however, the only decisive factor, since the hypothesis of new information being received makes essentially the same distinction (of a development either in how well Paul was informed about the *σχίσματα* or in the *σχίσματα* themselves). The fact that those who divide the letter do not envisage a long gap of time between the letters makes the difference even less marked.<sup>159</sup> (Schmithals in fact treats the situation in I and II Cor. as uniform, the main development being in Paul's knowledge of the 'heresy'.)

(b) The Use of II Corinthians

The question of how far evidence from II Corinthians (particularly Chapters 10-13) can be adduced, depends upon the relationship between the two situations - how far the opposition to Paul described in 10-13 (widely regarded as part of a separate letter, possibly the severe letter of II Cor. 2:4) is identical with or foreshadowed in the earlier factions.

There appear to be clear differences between the two situations, in particular the fact that II Cor. 10-13 specifically attacks the false apostles (ψευδαπόστολους) who have come in. (The Corinthians' fault is lack of discrimination and disloyalty.) There is no hint of such interlopers in I Cor., unless one makes the unlikely inference that the references to Apollos or Cephas are to deliberate and malicious direct interference. The influence of, and appeal to, "super apostles" (οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι) is also easy to imagine as a development amid a people prone to faction and adopting leaders, but clearly Paul is not addressing the same situation.

Barrett sums up the arguments for the continuity of the situation of II Cor. 10-13 with that of I Cor. as follows:<sup>160</sup>

- (i) At II Cor. 10:7, the claim of the unnamed person believing himself to be of Christ, and the reply to him, is similar

to I Cor. 1:12f - it is not wrong to claim to be of Christ (cf. I Cor. 3:23) but it is wrong to deny this to others, which divides Christ.

(ii) The Christ-group of I Cor. (which he describes as of a gnostic type, stressing charismatic and spiritual phenomena), is like those of II Cor. 10-13 who stress charismatic speech and visions, despising Paul for deficiency in these.

Barrett, however, rejects the close identification on two grounds:-<sup>161</sup>

- (i) The whole relationship of the two situations takes on a different complexion if II Cor. 10-13 is not the severe letter, but either subsequent (as Munck)<sup>162</sup> or an integral part of II Corinthians.
- (ii) In I Cor. 1:12 there is no suggestion that those attacked are anything other than native Corinthians, whereas in II Cor. 10-13 the main attack is on strangers who intrude, and only secondarily on the Corinthians for allowing themselves to be deceived by them.

Barrett's second reason, as he states, is the more cogent. In fact the establishing of a longish period of time between I Cor. and II Cor. is not absolutely essential for holding that the two situations are substantially different, although it does add to its probability. Factiousness, by its nature,

can undergo considerable and rapid change as the result of some new development such as the intrusion of ψευδαπόστολοι. Moffatt at least recognises the resilience of an inclination to factiousness, which he sees as "the curse of Greek democracy", taking on a new guise in the Christian community.<sup>163</sup>

The assumption, therefore, that II Cor. (and especially 10-13) reflects the same situation as I Cor., is not only hard to reconcile with the information given, but also seems based upon a view of 'factiousness' which is too monochrome, too inflexible, and possibly also too "theological". It may in fact be Paul, whose practical advice, as Barrett points out, is "consciously grounded in theological principles",<sup>164</sup> who sets factionalism or factiousness in a theological perspective.

(2) METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Having set out the aims (in Chapter I) and the difficulties in section (1) above), we take up the question of what methodological approach is advisable in order to achieve the historical reconstruction which is necessary, bearing in mind the difficulties outlined above. Methodological presuppositions can in fact play a decisive part, and the decision on methodology is crucial.

The principal choice lies between (1) placing the main emphasis upon I Cor. 1-4 and (2) placing the main emphasis upon the later part of the epistle (possibly including II Cor.). The difference is well exemplified by the contrasting approaches of Dahl and Schmithals. A discussion of these therefore provides a useful basis for arriving at a methodological approach to meet our aims and overcome the difficulties.

Schmithals finds the position of I Cor. 1:12 (and possibly the verse itself) something of an embarrassment.<sup>165</sup> Exegetes are accustomed to decide on its basis how many parties there are. As it can be used as a basis for all the various theses, he argues, it must be left out of consideration at the beginning, and its meaning determined conversely, when exegesis of the whole passage has clarified the state of affairs here.

Schmithals is talking of verse 1:12, but what he says applies, in effect, to all the references to σχίσματα in 1-4 - he interprets the σχίσματα in retrospect, from the situation of the whole Corinthian correspondence. Furthermore, he believes that the total length of time between Paul's first intervention and the conclusion of them, is about eight months,<sup>166</sup> making the total time between the beginning of the disputes and the end, about one year.<sup>167</sup> From this he concludes that the dispute is of a single and uniform nature, since it is unlikely that more than one "heresy" would arise in such a short time, and he does not allow for any significant change.<sup>168</sup>

(He similarly believes that only one decisive conflict and one group of opponents, which he identifies with the Christ group, would have arisen.) Schmithals' method therefore is to reconstruct the position of Paul's opponents as one group,<sup>169</sup> from the evidence of the six epistles into which he divides I and II Corinthians.<sup>170</sup> The apparent discrepancies between epistles are to be accounted for by differences in Paul's knowledge (and understanding) of his opponents' positions at different points.

Schmithals therefore deals retrospectively with the divisions of 1-4 (particularly 1:12) from the picture he has drawn of gnostics in Corinth, identifying the Christ group as the real opponents, to whom are opposed the other three groups of "apostolic" people, following apostolic tradition.<sup>171</sup>

Most of the discussion and criticism of Schmithals' thesis centres on his identification of a developed form of Gnosticism <sup>172</sup> (by analogy with second century Gnosticism) as the opposition to Paul at Corinth. (In the absence of any textual evidence of first century gnosticism, many prefer to speak of gnostic or gnosticising tendencies; others to see the roots of the apparent views of Πνευματικοί in wisdom.)<sup>173</sup> There are, however, equally questionable methodological pre-suppositions - in particular the maintaining of a single and uniform opposition to Paul's teaching, and the assumption that it is a 'heresy'. He fails to take account of broader social factors in the community and leaves unexplained the emphasis upon unity, with suggestions of greater diversity. The conclusion which Schmithals reaches is to a considerable extent affected by the retrospective method he employs.

Dahl adopts a methodology which places the emphasis primarily upon Chapters 1-4 for historical reconstruction of the divisions (although he implies a criticism of Munck and Wilckens, among others, for concentrating on 1-4 alone).<sup>174</sup> It is particularly helpful to look at his methodological presuppositions, as they are enumerated clearly in five principles of method:-<sup>175</sup>

- (i) The need to study the controversy as such, taking account of Paul's perspective on Corinth, and the Corinthians' reaction to him.
- (ii) The necessity of seeing the controversy against its historical background, but reconstructing on the basis of information in the section. Dahl implies a hierarchical or consecutive order of steps here:
- (a) "relatively clear and objective statements" concerning the situation at Corinth - to form the basis.
- (b) evaluations, allusions, warnings - to fill out the basic facts.
- (c) Paul's teaching as evidence of their views - to be used cautiously and as a last resort.
- (iii) The assumption of the integrity of I Cor. as a working hypothesis (which will be confirmed if it is possible to see I Cor. 1-4 as an introductory section). Chapters 5 to 16 can be used for comparison.
- (iv) Information from outside (Acts and the other Epistles) is not to be considered until the situation is clarified from internal evidence. In particular, similarities with II Cor. are to be noted but not to be used to prejudge the situation.

(v) Any reconstruction of the historical background will be only a "reasonable hypothesis", to be tested within the total argument.

The principal difference between the approaches of Dahl and Schmithals is the relative importance given to I Cor. 1-4 and the remainder of the Corinthian correspondence. Whereas Schmithals uses the whole of I and II Corinthians to reconstruct the *σχίσματα*, Dahl uses I Corinthians 5 to 16 to compare and test the hypothetical reconstruction of I Cor. 1-4, setting II Cor. even further outside the perimeter of admissible evidence. Dahl's distinction of different types of information (internal) is also significant, although he himself recognises its limitations. (There are only two basic facts found <sup>176</sup> and he shows the need for hypothetical interpretation, which has to be tested.) <sup>177</sup>

If the two methods typified by Dahl and Schmithals are assessed against the aims and the difficulties outlined in the preceding sections of this thesis, our reasons for preferring Dahl's are obvious. On the first two difficulties (the lack of ambiguous factual information, and the ambiguous nature of the information that is given), Dahl is aware of the nature of the problem and tries to take account of it in his methodological principles. His method also gives a place to the broader understanding of

community, division and authority as sociological phenomena, not purely theological. On the third difficulty (of how far 5-16 and II Corinthians are admissible for use in the reconstruction), Dahl's method seems patently preferable, in that giving primacy to I Cor. 1-4 avoids prejudging the issue of integrity, and makes the primary basis of reconstruction that section of the epistle which is generally agreed to deal with divisions. Because Dahl's principles go far towards meeting the difficulties discussed, they have been accepted as the basis of inquiry outlined below.

(3) THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH ADOPTED

The following principles are adopted as the basis of inquiry:-

(i) The primary source of information is I Corinthians 1-4.

The essential unity of this section is not in dispute and the  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ , from frequent references, are central. It is, therefore, the natural starting point for reconstruction of the  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ , and does not require any preliminary assumption of the whole epistle being concerned with one issue, and that an unchanging one. It also does not immediately involve a decision on the integrity of the epistle.

Within I Cor. 1-4, particular attention is to be given to the following:-

- (a) the passages dealing directly with  $\sigma\chi\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ , looking at facts and inferences, particularly those of a sociological nature, keeping in mind the distinction between basic factual information and necessary but more hypothetical interpretation. (Chapter III)
- (b) the whole structure and argument of this section - especially important is the connection between the central themes ( e.g. the power and wisdom of God and the preaching of the cross) and the divisions. (Chapter IV)
- (c) Paul's aim or purpose in this section - as indicated

by explicit statements (e.g. παρακαλώ<sup>ς</sup>), imperatives, clauses of purpose, rhetorical questions. Content and tone, taken together provide some indication of purpose, which may also facilitate an answer to the question whether defence of his own position, or concern about the divisions, is the central aim. (Chapter V)

(ii) The relationship of Chapters 5-16 to the σχίσματα

Once a reconstruction of the σχίσματα on the basis of I Cor. 1-4 has been made, their relationship to issues discussed in the remainder of the epistle is considered. For this, the integrity of the epistle is assumed as a working hypothesis, and particular attention is given to those issues which seem to have a direct connection with σχίσματα. These fall into two categories: issues with a specific (obvious) connection (the link between Chapters 4 and 5; the σχίσματα when the community gather together at the Lord's Supper 11:17ff; the defence of Paul's apostolate in Chapter 9), and issues with a more general 'theological' or 'ethical' connection. The question of the function of Chapters 1-4 in the overall structure of the canonical epistle is also raised.

Although II Corinthians (especially 10-13) provides a useful comparison with 1-4, it has not been brought into consideration in the discussion following for two reasons. The first is the limitation of space, and the second its lesser

importance. There are dangers in assuming the same situation, particularly on the basis of proximity in time. (These become clearer if the perspective is shifted from a purely doctrinal one, to one which takes human, sociological factors such as leadership conflict into account.)

Notes on Introduction and Part I

1. This point was made as early as 1898 by Henson (Apostolic Christianity p. 111).
2. F.C. Baur (The Christ Party in Corinth 1831) is usually given the credit for this, though his version of the division has been abandoned. (Schütz: Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, p.3.)
3. Cf. Dahl: Paul and the church at Corinth, p.61. (It is possible to adopt an anti-Paul picture on the lines of his opponents.)
4. The view of Hegesippus (Wilson: Gnosis at Corinth p.104), cf. Caird: The Apostolic Age pp.143ff & 149.
5. Dahl (op. cit. note 3 above, p.58) points out that the separation of theology from practical issues was not made by Paul.
6. Caird: op. cit. note 4 above p.136.
7. Hooker: Pauline Pieces, p.8.
8. Munck: Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, p.67.
9. Beker: Paul the Apostle, p ix.
10. Ibid: p. ix. (Beker assumes such a coherence exists.)
11. Ibid: p. 15f.
12. Ibid: p. ix.
13. Ibid: p. 35.

14. Ibid. p. 35.
15. Conzelmann: I Corinthians p.6 (all topics related to faith).
16. Richardson (Pauline Inconsistency: NTS 26 (1980) pp.347-62, e.g. p.348 and 361) discusses Paul's application of the principle of accommodation. Drane(Paul Libertine or Legalist e.g. pp.3-4) find a dialectical relationship between Galatians, I Corinthians and II Corinthians. Chadwick (All Things to All Men NTS 1, 1954-5, pp. 261-275) discusses the charge that Paul is a 'trimmer' (Gal.5:11).
17. Barrett: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor.), pp. v-vi.
18. Barrett: 'Christianity at Corinth' (Christianity) B.J.R.L. 46, 1964, p. 269.
19. Allo: St. Paul: Première Épître aux Corinthiens p.xxviii.
20. Robertson and Plummer: A critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. xxviii.
21. Beker: op. cit p.37f. (He chooses, however, to deal with the less obvious Romans.)
22. Cf. Caird: op. cit. p.138.
23. E.g. Schütz: op. cit. p.189 ('Specific dimensions of party strife in I Corinthians are beyond our grasp'.....); cf. Dahl op. cit. p.45 (the hypothetical nature of historical reconstruction).

24. E.g. Scroggs: 'The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament' NTS, 26 (1980), pp. 164-179;  
cf. Elliott: A Home for the Homeless, pp.1-6 & pp.14-18 (notes); Theissen(1): The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity (Introduction by Schütz, pp.1-11).
25. Gager: Kingdom and Community.
26. Kee: Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective.
27. Gager: op. cit. p.7.
28. Ibid. p. 2.
29. Ibid. (title). Cf. Meeks: The First Urban Christians, p.8; Elliott: op.cit., p.21.
30. Gager: op. cit. pp.20ff. and 36ff.
31. Ibid. p.13.
32. " p.32.
33. " p.33-4.
34. " p. 36 .
35. " p. 33f.
36. " pp.67-86.
37. " p. 140.
38. " pp.45ff.
39. " p.130.
40. " p.140.
41. Kee: op. cit. p.55.
42. Ibid. p.74.
43. " p.93.

44. Ibid. p.94.
45. See p.16 below.
46. Kee: op. cit. p.86.
47. Ibid. p. 96.
48. " p.96f.
49. " p.97.
50. " p.98.
51. Theissen:(1): op. cit. note 24 above and (2) The Sociology of Early Christianity.
52. Theissen (2): pp.31-95.
53. Ibid. p.94, 110 and 116ff.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. pp.18-21 (cf.10-14).
56. " p.38f.
57. Theissen (1): op. cit. Note 24 above p.40.
58. Ibid. p.41.
59. The sociological insights are recognised by others, e.g. Caird: op. cit., note 4, above p.117...."he refused even to consider the possibility that the church could be divided."
60. Gager: op. cit. p.13.
61. Cf. Theissen (1) (Schütz's Introduction): p.15.
62. Ibid. pp.175-195.
63. " pp.177-180.
64. " pp.180-191.
65. " pp.192-194.

66. Ibid. p. 195.
67. " p. 195.
68. Meeks: op. cit., note 29 above, pp.2-7.
69. Ibid. p. 2.
70. " pp.2-3.
71. " p.3 (referring, for example, to the Marxist  
interpretation of Kautsky: The Foundations  
of Christianity: N.Y. 1953).
72. Ibid. pp.3-4.
73. " p.3.
74. " p.4.
75. " p.5.
76. " p.5.
77. " p.7.
78. See p. 20.
79. Elliott: op. cit., note 24, title.
80. Ibid. p. 5.
81. Ibid. p. 7.
82. Ibid. p. 8.
83. " p. 7.
84. " (especially Chapters 1 and 2).
85. " (e.g. summary pp.13-14, but pervasive).
86. " p.13.
87. Theissen (1) (op. cit., note 24, p. 176): "A sociolog-  
ical statement seeks to describe and  
explain inter-personal behaviour with  
reference to those characteristics which  
transcend the interpersonal."

88. Filson: 'The Significance of the Early House Churches'  
JBL, 58 (1939) e.g. p.110.
89. Schütz: op. cit., note 2, p.190.
90. Shaw: The Cost of Authority, p.62 ("an exercise of  
magisterial authority"); Dahl:(op. cit., note 3  
above, p.44 and 52) and Schütz (op. cit., note 89,  
p.190) see 1-4 as preparatory (apologetic) to the  
exercise of authority.
91. Holmberg: Paul and Power, p.8.
92. Cf. Shaw: op. cit. p.62.
93. Barrett: I Cor., p.24.
94. Dahl: op. cit. note 3, pp.44-5.
95. Ibid. p.45f.
96. " p.45f. (TIVES is used of definite people at  
Ro. 3:8; I Cor. 15:12,34)
97. Ibid. p.46.
98. Barrett: Christianity p.269.
99. Dahl: op. cit., pp.50ff.
100. Ibid. p.52 (i.e. in the details of it).
101. " "
102. " "
103. See note 90 above.
104. Dahl: op. cit. p.45.
105. Use of Acts here relevant mainly to dating and  
sequence of letters. Cf. Hurd: The Origin of I Corinth-  
ians, pp. 12-42.
106. Ibid. p.45, Table 4.
107. Allo: op. cit. p.xxv; Barrett: I Cor. p.28;

- Schmithals: Gnosticism in Corinth, p.90; Conzelmann: op. cit. p.30; Héring: The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, p.14.
108. Bultmann: Faith and Understanding, pp. 71f. sees Pauline ideas amalgamated with that of mysteries. (See Conzelmann: op. cit. pp.57-60, for a good discussion of the problem.)
109. Wuellner: 'Haggadic Homily Genre in I Cor. 1-3' JBL 89 (1970), pp.199-204.
110. Dahl: op. cit., note 3, p. 46.
111. Sanders: 'Imitating Paul: I Cor. 4:16' Harvard Theological Review 74 (1981) pp.353-61 (e.g. p.354).
112. Dahl: op. cit., p.44.
113. Barrett: I Cor., p.12 (Cf. Hurd op. cit. p.50).
114. Barrett: I Cor., p.17.
115. Conzelmann: op. cit., p.4.
116. Allo: op. cit. p.Lxxxv (following Godet).
117. Hurd: op. cit. p.50 (Cf. Dahl: op. cit. p.44).
118. Hurd: op. cit. p.43 (Cf. Schmithals: op. cit., p.91).
119. Hurd: op. cit. p.50.
120. Héring: op. cit. p.xiiiif. (discussed in Barrett: (I Cor., pp. 12-13).
121. 10:1-23 is separated from the remainder of Chap. 10 by all the source analyses listed by Hurd: op. cit., note 105, p.45: Table 4.
122. Allo: (op. cit., p.Lxxxiii) says the suggested reconstructions lose the vitality and passion of Paul for "la sage platitude logique d'une thèse de candidat aux examens."

123. Héring: op. cit. p.xiii.
124. Cf. Barrett: I Cor. p.14.
125. Schmithals: op. cit. p.95.
126. Ibid. p.88 (footnote 8).
127. Conzelmann: (op. cit. p.3) and Barrett (I Cor. p.13f.) both summarise Weiss, whose scheme is largely followed by Schmithals.
128. Schmithals: op. cit., pp.92 and 93.
129. Ibid. p.87
130. Hurd: op. cit. (note 105), p.44f.
131. Schmithals: op. cit. p.90f.
132. Ibid. p.91.
133. Ibid. p.101f.
134. Ibid. p.91.
135. Cf. the dual attitude to suffering (as necessary but still incurring guilt) e.g. I Cor.4:10-13; II Cor.4:8-12; 11:23-30; Phil. 1:12-14, 29-30.
136. Schmithals: op. cit. p.91.
137. Cf. Theissen's analysis of I Cor.11:17-34. (Theissen (1): op. cit. note 24 above, pp.145-168.)
138. Cf. Schmithals: op. cit. p.90.
139. Ibid. p.87.
140. Cf. Barrett: (I Cor., p.17), who points out that the more elaborate the reconstructions, the harder it is to imagine the process of editing.
141. Schmithals: op. cit. p.88 (referring to Lietzmann: An die Korinther, 1949, p.139).
142. Ibid: p.88.

143. Ibid: p.89 (note 14).
144. Conzelmann: op. cit. pp.2-3.
145. Barrett: I Cor. pp.12-14.
146. Ibid. p.14.
147. Schmithals: op. cit. p.113.
148. E.g. see Hurd: op. cit. (note 105) above, p.45.
149. Ibid. p.47.
150. Ibid. p.43
151. " p.62.
152. " p.63.
153. " pp.74,82.
154. Bruce: I and II Corinthians.
155. Ibid. p.24.
156. " "
157. " "
158. " "
159. E.g. Schmithals: op. cit. p.112.(He proposes 8 months for the whole correspondence.)
160. Barrett: Christianity p.286. (He refers to it as superficial justification.)
161. Ibid. p.287.
162. Munck: op. cit. (note 8), p.171.
163. Moffatt: The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.9.
164. Barrett: I Cor., p.17.
165. Schmithals: op. cit., p.113.
166. Ibid. p.112.
167. " p.113.

168. Ibid. p.114.
169. " p.202. (He argues that the problem of the Corinthian 'heresy' becomes insoluble if there is more than one conflict.)
170. Ibid. pp.101-2 (see footnotes).
171. Ibid. pp.199ff. and 202.
172. E.g. ibid. p.138.
173. E.g. Wilson (Gnosis at Corinth and How Gnostic were the Corinthians?) gives a good summary of the problem. His definition of terms enables a distinction between full-blown Second Century Gnosticism and "gnostic tendencies" (e.g. Gnosis at Corinth p.107).
174. Dahl: (op. cit. (note 3), pp.42-3) sees Hurd's methods as an antidote to Munck's use of 1-4 alone, and Wilckens' of 1-2. (but is critical of Hurd's reconstruction).
175. Ibid. pp.44-5.
176. " pp.45-6.
177. " pp.45 and 61.

PART II - I CORINTHIANS 1-4

This part addresses itself to the search for information concerning the divisions in Chapters 1-4.

It is divided into three Chapters:-

- CHAPTER III      Factual information in I Cor. 1:10-4:21.  
(Examination of the factual statements and their interpretation.)
- CHAPTER IV      The Structure and Argument of 1:10 - 4:21  
(The development of thought and how it relates to the divisions.)
- CHAPTER V      Indications of Paul's purpose in 1:10-4:21.  
(Statements and stylistic indications of Paul's purpose.)

CHAPTER III      FACTUAL INFORMATION IN I CORINTHIANS1:10-4:21

There are a number of statements to be found in 1:10 to 4:21 about the community at Corinth, the divisions that have arisen there, and Paul's plans. The principal problem of reconstruction lies not so much in the lack of factual evidence as in the lack of clarity of it, since Paul frequently alludes to situations known to his intended readers, but unknown to us. No attempt has been made in this section to limit the basic information to "relatively clear and objective statements".<sup>1</sup> Instead it brings together as much basically factual information as possible, and discusses possible interpretations<sup>2</sup> of it. It has not, however, included the statements about his ministry which Paul presents as factual<sup>3</sup> (discussed later), on the grounds that they are more subjective judgements, and less verifiable. The criterion is somewhat vague, but it seems permissible to distinguish between the statement of 1:14, οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίστιον καὶ Γάϊον, which is objectively verifiable, and is therefore included as factual, and the statement of 1:17 οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλέν με Χρῖστος βαπτίξειν ἀλλὰ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, which is not objectively verifiable, and is therefore excluded.

Statements about his κήρυγμα and ministry (e.g. I:23; 2:1-2, 4, 6 etc.) do contain a verifiable factual element - they can be confirmed or disproved by the Corinthians own remembrance - but the verification is of a different, more subjective, order than that required for the statement about baptising in 1:14.

The factual statements identified have been grouped under five headings:

1. Statements concerning the divisions.
2. The source of information.
3. Paul's plans.
4. The social composition of the community.
5. Paul's practice of baptism.

In considering these statements, an attempt is made to evaluate the factual content, but also to look beyond it to broader possibilities of interpretation, and particularly the question of why the statement was made (i.e. the strategy of the letter).

1. Statements concerning the divisions.

(a) 1:11... ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν... (the report of Chloe's people).

(b) 1:12 ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, Ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ... Χριστοῦ (from the

introductory phrase, λέγω δὲ τοῦτο , these seem to be presented as an explanatory expansion <sup>4</sup> of the statement of 1:11).

(c) 3:3 ὅπου γὰρ εἰ ὑμῖν ξηλός καὶ ἐρις (The ὅπου clause, causal in sense, <sup>5</sup> describes the situation existing in Corinth.)

(d) 3:4 ὅταν γὰρ λέγη τις, Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἕτερος δὲ ἔγωγε Ἀπολλῶ ... (The ὅταν temporal clause also describes the actual situation at Corinth.)

An interesting feature emerges from setting down the four statements as above. It is seen that they fall into a pattern of (a) general statement (1:11 and 3:3), followed by (b) elaboration, or spelling out of this in more detail (1:12 and 3:4). It would be wrong to attach too great significance to a pattern in two examples, and 3:4 might be considered necessary <sup>6</sup> to relate the general statement of 3:3 to the Corinthian situation. But taken along with other suggestions (which will be mentioned later) the pattern indicates either that it is necessary for Paul to bring home to the Corinthians the seriousness with which he regards their party divisions, as proof of ἐρις and ξηλός , or that he wishes to let them know that he is well informed about their divisions, which they have deliberately or naïvely omitted to mention.

The second point to be considered concerns the words which Paul uses to describe the divisions, which may give an indication of how he at least regards them. The first factual reference is to the report of Chloe's people of  $\epsilon\rho\iota\delta\epsilon\varsigma \ \epsilon\nu \ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$  (1:11), but this verse is itself explanatory (as  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  indicates), giving the reason for the preceding plea for unity. In that plea, (1:10), in a  $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$  clause,<sup>7</sup> expressing the purpose of  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\omega}$ , Paul uses  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha - (\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha) \ \mu\grave{\eta} \ \eta \ \epsilon\nu \ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu \ \sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha -$  to refer to the same situation (or what he fears will develop from it). There is wide agreement among commentators,<sup>8</sup> translators and lexicographers on a distinct difference of meaning between the two words:  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ , from its literal meaning of tearing apart, denotes divisions, dissensions or cleavages; whereas  $\epsilon\rho\iota\delta\epsilon\varsigma$  is used of quarrels, disputes or wranglings. It is frequently claimed<sup>9</sup> that it can be inferred from the use of  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  in an exhortation here, that  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  do not yet exist. This is not, however, a necessary implication of 1:10, though the form makes it possible. The clause including  $\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  occurs along with two other  $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$  clauses, both of which are positive exhortations (unlike  $\mu\grave{\eta} \ \eta \ \epsilon\nu \ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu \ \sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ) but seem to imply existing negative situations: Paul exhorts them to be in agreement with one another, and to be united in the same mind and judgment, in both cases because they are not so already.<sup>10</sup> It

would therefore be logically consistent for Paul to beg that there be no divisions, because he knows divisions do exist. It is, of course, by no means certain that Paul wrote with such painstaking logic, but the argument above ought at least to cast some doubt upon the conclusion that by using two distinctive words Paul is depicting precisely both what the situation in Corinth is (less serious) and what he fears it may become (more serious).<sup>11</sup> It is at least possible that he is giving two distinctive descriptions of the same situation. (Barrett<sup>12</sup> appears to have the best of both worlds by suggesting ingeniously that Paul may be tactfully saying less than the truth, in implying that *οχισμοι* do not exist yet.)

The word *οχισμοι* is used by Paul only in I Corinthians (1:10; 11:18 and 12:25) and always figuratively. The only other figurative uses in the New Testament<sup>13</sup> are in John's gospel, where it describes the divisive effect of Jesus' appearance.<sup>14</sup> In I Corinthians it occurs in the singular at 12:25, in the context of portraying the unity of the body (i.e. the church at Corinth). Munck argues<sup>15</sup> that both in John and I Cor. 11:18ff only temporary separations are in mind. The conclusion to be drawn from the Johannine passages would appear, however, to be less a 'temporal' one (that the breach of fellowship or a difference of opinion

is only temporary) than a 'qualitative' one, concerning the nature of the divisions (that they are as yet informal and undeveloped). The facts that I Cor. 11:18ff is addressed to the whole church (even though it has *σχίσματα* it meets together), <sup>16</sup> and that the division there is not assumed by any commentators to be coextensive with the *σχίσματα* in 1:12, do provide proof that *σχίσματα* need not refer to an irreparably or irrevocably split community. However, while it is true that such *σχίσματα* need not become permanent, they are 'temporary' only in hope and not by nature - a fact which Munck tends to obscure.

Maurer <sup>17</sup> appears to define the nature of *σχίσματα* more precisely, claiming that the important point about *σχίσματα* is that they are not separated by "firmly formulated doctrinal differences and programmes" but by "attachment to individual leaders who are played off the one against the other in authority". <sup>18</sup> This interpretation, however, derives from the specific usage of I Corinthians. Héring's <sup>19</sup> distinction between *σχίσματα*, where division comes from being grouped around leaders, and *αἰρέσεις*, where it arises from particular teachings, is very similar. <sup>20</sup> (His distinction is hard to uphold at 11:18ff, where they seem to refer to the same situation, or at least where *αἰρέσεις* must logically include the *σχίσματα*.) <sup>21</sup>

There is, therefore, general agreement <sup>22</sup> that, while *σχίσματα* and *ἔριδες* are to be distinguished, the situation at Corinth described by *σχίσματα* does not refer to open schism, an irreparable breach, or hardened heresy.

The word *ἔριδες* is also essentially a Pauline word, <sup>23</sup> occurring elsewhere in the New Testament only in (the deutero-Pauline) I Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9. Though the plural is rare, <sup>24</sup> the singular is found not infrequently in lists of vices. Its meaning is more restricted than *σχίσματα*, as Munck <sup>25</sup> points out, including bickering or antagonisms working themselves out in words. Robertson and Plummer <sup>26</sup> sum up the distinctive nuance aptly, pointing out that *ἔριδες* are "not necessarily so serious" but the connotations of the word suggest something "more unseemly". <sup>27</sup>

When *ἔρις* (the singular) is coupled with *ξήλος* at 3:3, these connotations are even more explicit. They occur in a *ὅπου* clause, with a causal sense. <sup>28</sup> As Barrett points out, <sup>29</sup> the causal sense <sup>30</sup> can be adequately conveyed by the normal English equivalent 'where'.) In the context it is clear that they do not describe a hypothetical condition but the existing situation. The following verse makes it even more specific that the divisions of 1:12 are in mind. However the choice of the words *ξήλος καὶ ἔρις* is significant, implying a value judgment upon the divisions,

for these words (together or separately) occur in lists of vices, for example Gal.5:20, where they are in a list of τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός. Lightfoot,<sup>31</sup> takes the textual variant διχοστασία as original,<sup>32</sup> and finds a significant progression or sequence:<sup>33</sup> ξῆλος "cogitatione", ἔρις "verbis", διχοστασία "opere". Emulation (ξῆλος, which can be noble in the New Testament as in classical Greek, though it is more commonly used in a bad sense of jealousy or envy) leads to strife (ἔρις, which is always bad), which in turn leads to divisions (διχοστασία).<sup>34</sup>

The context of 3:3 is the application of the discussion in the previous section of σοφία ἐν τοῖς τελείοις (2:6-16) to the Corinthian situation: explaining why it is not possible to speak to them ὡς πνευματικοῖς. While the choice of words, ξῆλος καὶ ἔρις, therefore fits this context, there may be a further purpose in using these particular words - that is, to stress the σαρκικός quality of the quarrelsomeness underlying the specific divisions. It may be that the parties see themselves and their disputes in philosophical or theological terms, more befitting πνευματικοί, and that it is Paul who forces upon them the unwelcome recognition of the contentious spirit and jealousy on which their parties are founded.

The third point to be considered is the significance of the problematic party slogans of 1:12. The phrase *λέγω δὲ τοῦτο* suggests that it introduces an explanatory expansion of the statement of 1:12.<sup>35</sup> In Galatians 3:17 and 4:1, where similar phrases are used, they introduce a new attempt to explain a somewhat difficult point. At I Cor. 10:29, *λέγω* is used to clarify whose conscience is at stake, to remove possible ambiguity. It has already been suggested that this explanatory statement raises the question of why it is necessary. Two possible, if hypothetical answers, which not only explain this necessity but also are in agreement with the general impression that emerges of the Corinthian community<sup>36</sup> are: that Paul wished to make clear to the Corinthians that he had clear and specific information about what had been going on - about a deep-seated evil in their midst which they had been either wilfully or merely complacently ignoring; or that he pointedly turns them from their spiritual perfectionism to the much more earthly, fleshly roots of their factionalism. Whether or not this is a correct explanation of the purpose behind 1:12, it purports to be an elaboration of the *ἔριδες* of 1:11. (It is somewhat ironical that it has proved so problematic.)

It is characteristic of this letter, written to a church threatened with division, that the charge of adopting slogans

is directed against all: ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, as if the factional tendency were universal.<sup>37</sup> 3:4 ὅταν γὰρ λέγῃ τις may be more accurate literally, but the more inclusive ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει implies that the factional tendencies are a communal responsibility which no one can avoid.

The same inclusive emphasis is also possibly found in the placing among the slogans or watch-words of ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι Παύλου, which is at their head (and similarly the use of his name at 1:13), as it is also at 3:4 and 22. Paul's strategy in the letter regarding the divisions is not to apportion blame to one party but to involve all in his criticism. This is clearly a delicate position, difficult, if not impossible, to maintain consistently, and involving tensions which can be seen from the differing interpretations of Paul's attitude to the Pauline group. On the one hand there are those who think that there is a hyper-Pauline group who have misunderstood Paul's teaching or developed it along lines which now require him to dissociate himself from them.<sup>38</sup> That hypothesis posits a theological explanation for Paul's distancing himself from his own supporters, and takes seriously his censure of them. On the other hand, there are those who interpret Paul's criticism as a mere rhetorical device, or effectually ignore his inclusion of them in the

censure (sometimes along with the Apollos group or the Apollos and Cephas groups).<sup>39</sup> The grounds for that hypothesis are that it fits more neatly into the apology for Paul's apostolic ministry, and also that there is no further reference to this group beyond 4:6. It does however leave Paul somewhat open to the charge of insincerity, brought by Shaw.<sup>40</sup> Moffatt recognises that within the reality of the situation of division, disinterestedness is a necessary ingredient of effectiveness.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, within the course of 1:10 to 4:21 Paul presents a perfectly adequate theological basis for the rejection of dependence upon all human agency, even well-intentioned support. In the defence of his apostolate, it is true that he does not have to deal with criticisms from his supporters, but as his claim is to be the father of the whole Corinthian church, there is no real inconsistency between his rejection of the group claiming to be "of Paul" and apologetic for his apostolic ministry.

The pre-eminently problematic nature of 1:12 has already been indicated.<sup>42</sup> In spite of the fact that it is the main factual statement on the nature of the divisions, the variety of interpretations which it is capable of sustaining makes it impossible to use it as the sole basis of reconstruction. In view of the fact, however, that any

reconstruction of the situation at Corinth must be capable of providing a convincing interpretation of 1:12, it is helpful to keep the party watchwords in mind from the start, even if a final decision on their significance cannot be made. Next, therefore, we proceed to a discussion of the party slogans, which includes some of the main interpretations proposed,<sup>43</sup> and their relationship to the whole letter.

One of the first and most perplexing of the problems concerning 1:12 is the fact that however many ὀχλοματα are in view at 1:12, the remainder of the epistle appears to be addressed to the church as a whole.<sup>44</sup> Parts of the letter do have particular relevance to a specific group (e.g. 11:17ff to those "who have" or the rich) but efforts to distinguish parts of the letter as addressed to one faction (of 1:12), and parts to another, or to identify the weak and strong with the factions of 1:12, lack credibility.<sup>45</sup> This may well be because Paul deliberately avoids any such identification. In any case, there is some justification for the wry comment of Schmithals<sup>46</sup> on 1:12: "It is regrettable that this verse stands right at the beginning of the Corinthian epistles."

There are several ways in which the awkward mention of a plurality of divisions can be reconciled with the addressing of the whole church. One of the commonest is to narrow down

the number of factions, and see only one group as the object of criticism or as the real opponents.<sup>47</sup> This is seen variously as (1) the Apollos group; (2) the Cephas group; (3) the Christ group;<sup>48</sup> (4) a combination of Cephas and Christ groups (versus Paul and Apollos groups);<sup>49</sup> (5) Apollos, Cephas and Christ groups (versus Paul).<sup>50</sup> The weakness of using 1:12 as the basis is shown by the diversity of the hypotheses, as Schmithals<sup>51</sup> points out. His own reconstruction<sup>52</sup> sees the Christ group as the sole opposition to an apostolic group, represented by the three other slogans. One weakness of his reconstruction is that it is difficult to reconcile with the slogans of 1:12. His argument<sup>53</sup> that vv. 12-13 form a perfect pattern (with *μεγέρισται ὁ Χριστός* referring only to the Christ slogan and the remainder of v.13 to the other three slogans) is ingenious rather than compelling. The further ramifications of Schmithals' hypothesis are not our concern here, but it is not completely irrelevant to the present issue that he also has to add the further hypothesis<sup>54</sup> of Paul incorrectly perceiving the meaning of the slogan and its gnostic significance.

An alternative way of reconciling the mode of addressing the community as a whole with the plurality of divisions is that of Munck,<sup>55</sup> who argues that the *σχίσματα* have not

yet hardened into factions. The situation is rather one of 'bickering',<sup>56</sup> which Paul regards as an ethical failure, and hence it is not necessary to look for any more intrinsic connection with the rest of the epistle. Instead of being the basis of the discussion which follows, the bickering or cliques become the first in a series of ethical issues dealt with. The weakest point of Munck's argument is his tendency to make the dubious (and anachronistic) assumption that because they are not 'theological' and eschatological divisions, they are not taken as seriously by Paul.<sup>57</sup> This does not, however, destroy the credibility of his basic solution.

A somewhat similar solution was briefly and generally indicated by Moffatt:<sup>58</sup> "Paul does not analyse the opinion of various parties. He was concerned not so much with them in whole or part as with the quarrelsome spirit which they bred." He sees the lack of detailed information about the factions not just as a lack of necessity to elaborate upon what is well known, but as a deliberate avoidance of what is of no particular moment.<sup>59</sup> Although Moffatt, in translating *σχίσματα* as cliques,<sup>60</sup> shows an understanding of its meaning similar to Munck's, his interpretation does not underestimate the seriousness of factiousness (actual and potential) in the life of the community, or assume that factions become serious, and are treated seriously by Paul, only when they

have a doctrinal or theological basis. It therefore leaves open the possibility that the factions are the result of composite causes, and that connections may be found between I Cor. 1-4 and the remainder of the epistle. In the interpretation of 1:12 it seems more satisfactory to find the unity behind the four slogans in a common attitude of factiousness than in an amalgamation of the groups on a doctrinal basis.

There are a few areas in the interpretation of 1:12 where it is possible to talk of a consensus. Dahl,<sup>61</sup> looking at the general question of the divisions, finds a negative consensus on three points:-

- (i) that Paul is not opposing Judaisers (against the view once widely held under the influence of the Tübingen school);
- (ii) that he is not addressing one party but the whole church;<sup>62</sup>
- (iii) that the various trends in the congregation dealt with in 5-16 cannot be related to one of the groups of 1:12 (although it has been seen above that Schmithals<sup>63</sup> at least tries to identify with the Christ-group the single group of Paul's opponents whom he reconstructs from the later part of the epistle).

On other matters (such as the interrelationship of

the groups, the views which they represent, their relationship to the leaders whom they vaunt, or the understanding of the slogan  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , the number and plausibility of the various hypotheses again cast doubt upon the possibility of the acceptance of any one as definitive. That the reason for this is the inherent ambiguity of the evidence<sup>64</sup> is further supported by the fact that eminent scholars are ranged on opposite sides. There are, however, a few further minor points on which wide agreement can be claimed. The first is that the slogans or watchwords are not hypothetical inventions of Paul for the sake of argument.<sup>65</sup> (Even the Christ slogan is most commonly taken as a genuine party slogan.) This is particularly clear if 1:12 is seen as an explanatory expansion of 1:11. A further conclusion, drawn by Barrett,<sup>66</sup> is widely accepted, and does not seem to exceed the bounds of factual evidence: "Christian leaders have, voluntarily or involuntarily, become the focal points of discussion." It does not explain the fourth slogan:  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ,<sup>67</sup> and as soon as an effort is made to go beyond the general statement (e.g. by connecting the comment on baptism that follows closely, and seeing an idea of a special relationship between the parties and those who were the agents of their becoming Christians),<sup>68</sup> the agreement ends. Another common recognition is of an anti-Pauline

element in the divisions. Barrett <sup>69</sup> aptly points out that the very existence of a slogan ἐγὼ εἰμι Παύλου is evidence of opposition to Paul. Dahl <sup>70</sup> thinks the sequence of argument in Chapters 1-4 is a significant indication of an anti-Pauline element in the divisions, as defence of Paul's ministry and κήρυγμα follows immediately upon the appeal for unity. (He believes it possible to interpret the slogans of 1:12 as all anti-Pauline except the one of Paul.) The extent of agreement, it must be concluded, is limited.

In considering the slogans individually, therefore, some measure of pessimism about finding a definitive explanation is not out of place, especially as each of the slogans has been proposed as the key to interpretation.

(i) ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου

The significance of the inclusion and the placing first of this slogan has already been discussed above, and mention made of the suggestion that there is a hyper-Pauline group, misinterpreting, or developing in an extreme way, Paul's teaching.<sup>71</sup> This group is, however, not generally identified with the opponents of Paul at Corinth or seen as a serious problem.<sup>72</sup> It seems clear, however, that it is the object of censure, unless Paul's inclusion of them is regarded as a rhetorical device. It has been argued above that this censure is consistent with the later apologetic for the apostle as the proclaimer by life and word of a theology of

the cross, which leaves no place for boasting in human beings or dependence upon human support. In the strategy of the letter, Paul also must reject the implied limitations of being the apostle of one group, if he is to be accepted as the father of all. The place in the hearts of the Corinthians for which he bids is, however, his by right as their apostle, in subordination to God and in the proclamation of the gospel.

(ii) Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ

In view of the fact that Apollos is known to have stayed and worked in Corinth,<sup>73</sup> it is not surprising to find him the focus of one of the groups. The description of him in Acts 18:24-28 (especially verse 24: Ἀλεξάνδρεὺς τῷ γένει, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, and verse 28: εὐτόνωσ γὰρ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις. διακατηλέγγετο δημοσίᾳ ἐπιδεικνὺς διὰ τῶν γραφῶν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν, Ἰησοῦν) has raised the possibility that it is his eloquence, rhetoric, and the impressive form and content of his wisdom teaching or exposition of scripture, with which Paul's less impressive preaching and presence are contrasted unfavourably by some at Corinth. The Apollos group are therefore sometimes identified as the real opponents at Corinth,<sup>74</sup> possibly linked also with those claiming to be "of Christ."

In favour of this hypothesis is the fact that a contrast is to be found in the verses following, between Paul's κήρυγμα, which is the word of the cross, and σοφία λόγου

(1:17) or πειθοί[s] σοφίας [λόγοις] (2:4), between coming ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ (2:3) and preaching καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας (2:1). There are however obvious problems in seeing the Apollos group as the main opponents. Apart from the general difficulty of explaining the other slogans, the rather brief description of Acts 18:24, in particular, is made to carry a great deal of weight, often including the assumption that any Alexandrian must share Philo's outlook and method.<sup>75</sup> (It is of course not impossible that Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῷ γένει had such connotations,<sup>76</sup> and that that accounts for its being mentioned in Acts. The presence of Apollos in Corinth, the use of λόγιος (18:24 and the description of his preaching (18:28), provide a factual basis for this hypothesis.)

The most significant objection, however, is that Apollos is always spoken of warmly by Paul<sup>77</sup> - as ὁ ἀδελφός (16:12) and συνεργός (3:9). This does not rule out the possibility of a group professing allegiance to Apollos in opposition to Paul's teaching. There is no evidence that he (or Cephas) approves of the existence of the party using his name, or is even directly responsible for its formation. There are in fact two main clear pieces of evidence for the lack of friction between Paul and Apollos.

At I Cor. 16:12, Paul is at pains to stress that it is

Apollos' own wish not to go to Corinth.<sup>78</sup> The emphasis of Οὐ πάντως and the assertion πολλὰ παρεκάλεσα αὐτὸν may suggest that some in Corinth are keen that Apollos should go, and possibly even accuse Paul of preventing him.<sup>79</sup>

The reason for Apollos not wishing to go at present is not stated. Paul's emphasis is entirely upon the fact that Apollos himself does not wish to go. Far from finding a visit of Apollos an embarrassment, Paul has encouraged him to go. Unless a remarkable degree of duplicity on Paul's part is assumed, the conclusion to be drawn is that Paul would approve of a visit by Apollos, perhaps seeing it as helpful in the overcoming of divisions.

At 3:4 Paul develops only two of the slogans of 1:12, Ἐγὼ Παύλου and Ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ. The whole tenor of the passage following suggests that Paul has chosen to concentrate upon himself and Apollos because of their close relationship and the complementary nature of their work (e.g. 4:6a).<sup>80</sup>

The probable inference is that Apollos' friendship with and closeness to Paul are well-known - a point on which the effectiveness of the argument depends. If this is the reason for Paul's use of Apollos, it is ironical that the limitation of the discussion to Paul and Apollos should have been taken as proof that the Apollos group are the real or main opposition to Paul.

(iii) Ἐγὼ δὲ κηφᾶ . . .

The existence of a group following Cephas raises the possibility that he may have visited Corinth.<sup>81</sup> The Cephas party is not conclusive evidence for such a visit,<sup>82</sup> however, though it may carry weight as part of a cumulative argument. Those claiming to be of Cephas could, for example, be Jewish Christians from Palestine, possibly baptised by Peter. As was noted in connection with Apollos, there is no reason to suggest that Peter is directly responsible for the formation of this group.

The view that opposition to Paul centred upon support for Peter, in the Cephas group, was widely held under the influence of Baur and the Tübingen school. Baur's thesis is still important enough to be discussed in recent studies. Dahl,<sup>83</sup> for example, recognises several attractions in Baur's argument, most of which are in the simplified and unified view it presents. Of the strengths that he lists, one is particularly relevant to his own reconstruction: by the reducing of the conflict at Corinth to a single opposition between supporters of Paul (the Paul and Apollos groups) and opponents (the Cephas and Christ groups), I Corinthians 1-4 becomes an apologetic section in which Paul justifies his apostolic authority and ministry, instead of dealing with a variety of parties. (This view of the aim of 1-4 will be considered later.)

The integration of the conflict at Corinth into a

unified view of the early church (relating the divisions to the documented controversy between Paulinists and Petrine Judaisers) is seen as a strength by Dahl.<sup>84</sup> A diametrically opposite view of it is held, however, by Munck,<sup>85</sup> who sees the Tübingen school as reducing the lively variety of the early communities to "colourless homogeneity". Munck also attacks three of the bases of Baur's theory.<sup>86</sup> Although the argument goes beyond the situation at Corinth, once the bases of the theory are destroyed, the central significance of the Cephas group in the Corinthian divisions becomes dubious.

It still remains possible, however, that there are signs of Judaising in Corinth. The emphatic statement of Schmithals,<sup>87</sup> that there is not the slightest evidence of Judaising tendencies, goes to the opposite extreme. Apart from ἐν τῷ δεῖ κηρᾶ itself, there are other areas where Judaising influences are quite probable, as is argued persuasively by Manson,<sup>88</sup> for example in the question of food sacrificed to idols,<sup>89</sup> and litigation.<sup>90</sup> The element of questioning of Paul's apostolic status, which he sees as emanating from Palestine, is approached quite differently by Theissen,<sup>91</sup> but with a similar conclusion. Theissen sees a clash between two types of missionary at issue:

the Palestinian-rural-originating, itinerant charismatic and the Hellenistic-urban-developed, community organiser. In Corinth the two meet, and the clash reaches the surface in the question of the community's support for an apostle. Theissen therefore also supports the presence of Palestinian influences in Corinth. It is possible that these centre on the Cephas party.

It is significant that Manson finds it impossible to include all the tendencies at Corinth under one party.<sup>92</sup> He identifies two fronts on which Paul is fighting, and two separate groups of opponents: the Cephas party and the Christ party.<sup>93</sup> His reconstruction is of a complex and delicate situation, in which agents and supporters of Palestinian Jewish Christianity (the Cephas party) are attacking the laxity of the Gentiles of the Corinthian church (the Christ group) but also indirectly Paul, who is responsible for them as their father, and therefore his status and authority as an apostle. So, while endorsing much of their criticism of laxity, Paul does so upon his own independent grounds. The complexity of the situation, as Manson reconstructs it, may be a strength rather than a weakness, in spite of the common assumption that simplification is an advantage.

Manson also makes the interesting conjecture<sup>94</sup> that

as such attempts to assert the authority of Peter in Paul's work appear to arise concurrently with the emergence of the supremacy of James at Jerusalem, perhaps Peter was finding a new sphere for himself, or acting as an agent of James.

There is, therefore, ground for the presence of a Jewish-Christian element (possibly the Cephas group) in the controversies and tensions at Corinth, but it is seldom seen now as the key to the whole situation. Barrett,<sup>95</sup> who concludes that Cephas' influence is certain, and his presence probable, in Corinth, suggests that Paul experiences some embarrassment, unable to attack one who, he cannot forget, was a primary witness of the resurrection and preached Christ crucified and risen according to the Scriptures. He therefore attacks Jewish-Christian opinions, but mentions the name of Cephas with propriety. The consequence of this view for the interpretation of the Cephas slogan is clear: the link between οἱ Κηφᾶ and Jewish-Christian views will be indirect and concealed.

(iv) ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ

The Christ-slogan and party are the most problematic of the four. In view of the fact that it is clearly not 'of a piece' with the other three, which all refer to human leaders, it has been taken either as a marginal gloss -

the interjection of a pious scribe, such as Sosthenes(1:1), so horrified at the human slogans that he is constrained to interject a statement of his own loyalty - or more plausibly as Paul's own slogan (or one he approves of) which he contrasts with the Corinthians' loyalty to human leaders.<sup>96</sup> It has been argued that 1:13 militates against taking the fourth slogan as that of a real party: the question, "Is Christ divided or parcelled out?" is claimed to follow more logically if there is no Christ party.<sup>97</sup> It seems, however, quite a reasonable rejoinder not only to a real Christ slogan but to all four slogans, if they are the watchwords of separate parties. The contrast between the Christ of the party slogan, and Christ who is not divided, makes an effective and easy transition to the the reminder that it was Christ who was crucified (not Paul or any of the leaders), and it was in his name (and into the unity of his body) that they were baptised. The appropriation of Christ by one party, effectively suggests the division of the body of Christ, but so also does the existence of the other parties. There is in all of the slogans the common boastful element of "Εγώ", which denies concern for the community.<sup>98</sup>

ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ at 3:23 is also inconclusive. It occurs in close proximity to an allusion to the party slogans, but in contrast to the conclusion concerning human leaders, who are all included in the πάντα ὑμῶν of 3:22.

There are therefore grounds for the argument that  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  is in contrast to the other three slogans, describing the true state of a Christian. However, the change from the somewhat boastful and exclusive first person singular to the second person plural  $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , which embraces the whole community, is significant. Even more important, if  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  is a real slogan, it cannot, from its content, be treated exactly in the same way as the slogans claiming the human leadership of an apostle. (It is often seen as a rejection of all authority.) The  $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  of v.23 may be a deliberate allusion to the misuse of the claim to belong to Christ, involving an effort to instil it with new content, e.g. by relating  $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  and  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  <sup>99</sup> Further evidence that the fourth slogan refers to a special claim, rather than to a permissible or commendable affirmation of being a Christian, is provided by II Corinthians 10:7,<sup>100</sup> where Paul challenges the exclusiveness of 'someone' ( $\tau\iota\varsigma$ ) claiming to be of Christ, calling for recognition that 'we' ( $\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) are so too.

The formal parallelism of the four  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\iota\mu\iota$  statements, and the absence of any formal indication to distinguish the fourth from the other three,<sup>101</sup> make it unlikely that Paul (or someone else) is making his own distinctive personal comment here. (This is particularly true if more emphasis is laid on  $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\iota\mu\iota$  .) The balance is therefore

weighted in favour of seeing *ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ* as a real slogan. Indeed, if it were necessary to link one party and its watchword with the types of misconception, problems and opposition which Paul appears to be countering or dealing with in the rest of the epistle, there would probably be stronger grounds for choosing this party than any of the others. Evidence of this is given by the commentators, who give it prominence in reconstructions. Barrett<sup>102</sup> thinks that a lot of the controversial material of I Corinthians might apply to this group (more probably than to the Apollos group). Conzelmann,<sup>103</sup> sceptical about the possibility of precise definition of the groups, believes that recognition of "the pneumatic Christology of exaltation" lying behind the formation of all of the groups is the key to this slogan. It has already been mentioned that the Christ party is identified in some reconstructions with either the Apollos or Cephas group. It could even conceivably be the common but partisan slogan of all three.<sup>104</sup> A better parallelism is given, however, if *ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ* is in fact the slogan of a fourth group. Manson's<sup>105</sup> summary reconstruction of their views is cited with approval by Barrett<sup>106</sup> and Bruce:<sup>107</sup> their slogans are God, freedom and immortality (where God equals philosophical monotheism; freedom equals self-realisation, free from restrictive, puritanical, Palestinian authority; and immortality is the Greek concept, opposed to Jewish resurrection). The details, no doubt, are open to question.

In attempting to set down some conclusions about the interpretation of the information on the divisions, discussed above, it is probably wise to begin negatively, with the obvious observation that there is wide diversity in reconstruction of the *σχίσματα*. It is possible, however, to suggest tentatively the following positive conclusions:-

- (1) The way in which the divisions are introduced and explained, and the words used to describe them, make it possible and plausible that Paul is drawing to their attention his view of a threat to community - one which they have either failed to recognise or considered too shameful to report. (This is incidentally a further reason why he can write to an "undivided" church.)
- (2) Divisions exist in the form of parties which have adopted boastful slogans: *Ἐγὼ εἶμι*.... Three of these at least are generally agreed to be not hypothetical.
- (3) From the words used to describe the divisions, the context in which they are used and the mode of address of the letter, it is apparent that the church is not yet split irreparably. The divisions are, however, taken with the utmost seriousness as a denial of the true unity in Christ (1:13).
- (4) There is in the divisions an element of conflict over leadership, with three of the slogans suggesting the

following of rival apostles (two of whom are known definitely to have been present in Corinth, and the other possibly), and the fourth perhaps expressing the denial of any human or apostolic leadership.

While it is generally assumed that the 'leaders' are representative of different theological viewpoints, there are possibly other dimensions to the disputes, e.g. between the Paul and Apollos groups over the type of preaching and eloquence; or between the Paul and Cephas groups over the criteria of an apostle and form of support.

- (5) The fact that it is impossible to connect the issues discussed in the rest of the epistle with any single one of the divisions of 1:12 suggests that Moffatt<sup>108</sup> and Conzelmann<sup>109</sup> may be correct in seeing that it is factionalism as such that is attacked. (This does not, however, deny that the slogans of 1:12 represent real factions, or that features of them may be reflected in the following chapters.)
- (6) Without claiming to have found the definitive solution to such an intractable problem, we indicate below the strongest argument for the identification of each of the groups as Paul's opponents:-
- (a) A Pauline group may have been formed defensively (and would thus not necessarily be hyper-Pauline), but Paul

does not want his name used for a partisan slogan.

- (b) An Apollos group may have emphasized the unfavourable contrast between the impressive style of preaching of their champion, and his expounding of scriptures, and that of Paul.
- (b) A Cephas group, possibly Palestinian Christians or converts of Peter (at Corinth or elsewhere), may have been those with a different view of apostleship or mission (the wandering charismatic), which calls Paul's into question. Other Judaistic influences may also come from this group, e.g. in the controversy over food sacrificed to idols.
- (d) A Christ group may have been those who boasted independence in relation to all apostolic authority in their possession of the spirit as Πνευματικοί. A number of problems involving ascetic or libertarian ideas, as well as the signs of an over-realised eschatology and perfectionism, could be attributed to it.

In view of the evidence that can be produced for each of the parties, it is at least worth considering whether the best solution does not involve an amalgamation. The pre-supposition that there should be only one division and one group of opponents has no basis in reality. As an exposition of the situation in I Corinthians, it depends not upon

inherent probability, but upon the observation that it is the only explanation of the addressing of the church as a whole, and that the different problems and controversies all relate to it. If, however, it is factionalism in general with which Paul is concerned, his addressing the church as a whole does not require the explanation that there is only one division, or one standpoint, opposed to him.

## 2. The Source of Information

ἔδηλώθη γάρ μοι ..... ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης (1:11)

Paul clearly accepts the report which he has received from οἱ Χλόης as reliable and factual (although his information on the divisions may be incomplete or inadequate). It is possible to read too much into what may be no more than a casual, factual reference to the source of information - presenting one or two tantalising problems of detail (such as the significance of Chloe's name,<sup>110</sup> whether she was herself a Christian and a resident of Corinth or not),<sup>111</sup> but of no particular moment for our understanding of the situation at Corinth.

The informants, οἱ Χλόης, are most probably household servants, the decisive point being that family members would use the father's name, even if he were dead.<sup>112</sup> Theissen, who makes this point, sees their low social status as significant, especially for his view that the evidence

points to prominent people, high on the social scale, taking the leading roles in the party strife in Corinth. The status of οἱ Χλόης shows, therefore, that here, as in 11:17ff, Paul adopts the viewpoint of the weaker or lower in the social strata. Theissen's comments open up the possibility of a highly significant social dimension of the οὐχίσματα<sup>113</sup>, reflected in the reference to 'Chloe's people.'

If οἱ Χλόης are indeed the household servants of Chloe, it is impossible that Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (16:17) are included among them. Theissen<sup>114</sup> uses the four criteria of office, houses, services rendered and travel, to try to establish the social position of the Corinthians mentioned by name in the New Testament. On three of these (i.e. house, services rendered and travel) Stephanas qualifies as upper class. Achaicus' name provides evidence for an interesting conjecture of Meeks.<sup>115</sup> He and Fortunatus have Latin names in a Roman colony, which may indicate that they belong to the original colonists. Achaicus, however, is a name unlikely to be given to a resident of Corinth by Corinthians, so that he (or his father) may have been an Italian of Greek ancestry, returning to Greece as a colonist.

It is, therefore, not only clear that οἱ Χλόης are a distinctive group but it is also probable that they belong to a lower class.<sup>116</sup> Travel, in their case, is not a sign of wealth, for they travel in the service of their mistress,

most probably upon her business, and almost certainly not as representatives of the church. The lack of any reference to them at the conclusion of the epistle may be simply accounted for: they may merely have departed on their mistress's business.<sup>117</sup>

The information of Chloe's people is therefore probably unofficial<sup>118</sup> and perhaps oral, although ἐδηλώθη can refer to oral or written disclosure.<sup>119</sup> From Chapter 16, it seems likely that the official delegation bearing the letter, whose questions are answered in Chapter 7 and following, is that of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, and their higher social standing would confirm this probability.

If the information brought by οἱ Κλόης is not official and is the view of 'parties' from below, this has possible (though admittedly hypothetical) implications. A deliberate intention to conceal from Paul the true situation at Corinth (the divisions, along with the scandal of incest, and litigation) is possible but not certain. Nor is it necessary to see in the reference to οἱ Κλόης a delicately tactful effort to protect Stephanas and the official delegation from the criticism of having portrayed the Corinthians in an unfavourable light.<sup>120</sup> Such an explanation would depend upon seeing οἱ Κλόης as outsiders, not resident in Corinth, for otherwise Paul's citing of them as his informants would probably be equally embarrassing. If the silence of the

Corinthians over the *σχίσματα* is put in the context of their other views in the letter, it may be no more than a self-deceiving oversight or lack of awareness not untypical of people who believe themselves to have already achieved a state of near perfection.<sup>121</sup> Their questions<sup>122</sup> are theological ones concerning freedom or spirituality, in a context of wisdom. It may well be that to them bickering, centred around leaders and slogans, did not seem serious enough to mention. (The *σχίσματα* at the Lord's Supper 11:17 seem to have become known to Paul in a similarly casual, unofficial way.) It is the task of Paul to bring out the theological and spiritual dimension of these quarrels.<sup>123</sup> The information brought by οἱ κλόης from below is not trivial but indicates a serious weakness.

### 3. Paul's Plans

There are two distinct factual statements about Paul's plans, both of which give an indication of how Paul views the situation at Corinth, and what he deems necessary to meet it.

(a) 4:17 διὰ τοῦτο ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον

This verse presents two specific difficulties:-

(i) ἔπεμψα could be a real aorist (I sent), or an epistolary aorist (I am sending).<sup>124</sup> Since Timothy is not mentioned at 1:1 and since he is not the bearer of the letter (16:10),

it is more likely that ἔπεμψα is a real aorist and that Timothy has been sent. (Barrett gives two other alternatives:<sup>125</sup> that he has been sent but by a different route with visits to make, or that ἔπεμψα should be translated, "I have sent word to ...!")

(ii) 16:10 seems to treat Timothy's arrival as uncertain and gives a totally different emphasis. However, ἐξὺν in 16:10 is close to ὅταν and can be translated as 'when'.<sup>126</sup> The change in emphasis from the authority-bearing role of 4:17, to a plea for a warm and appreciative welcome for Timothy (16:10-11), may be accounted for by the change in context. (At the end of Chapter 4 Paul was asserting his authority as father of the community, to combat divisions and to give a lead on how to deal with immorality. In Chapter 16 he is concluding the epistle with brief exhortation and practical advice, in a warm fatherly tone.) There is also a hint in the description of Timothy in 4:17, as τέκνον ἀγαπητόν, of the fatherly anxiety<sup>127</sup> over Timothy's youthfulness, which frequently is to be found amidst expressions of high regard for his qualities. The most eloquent testimony to Paul's regard for Timothy is in Philippians 2:19-24, where he is similarly described as a 'son', commended to the regard of the community, and sent to them as Paul's representative, though Paul hopes to come soon.<sup>128</sup>

The sending of Timothy is related (as διὰ τούτο indicates) to the preceding exhortation to imitate Paul, their father and begetter. The same purpose is repeated in the relative clause following Timothy: ὅς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοῦς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ]...

At present it is sufficient to note that the sending of Timothy, with its purpose, shows something significant about how Paul regards the situation at Corinth: his teachings (ὁδοῦς)<sup>129</sup> are in danger of being abandoned. It also shows the practical consequence of the continuing role of responsibility for and authority over the community of which he is the founder. This is not a necessary conclusion from the gardening and building metaphors, nor even of his distinctive task (1:17) εὐαγγελίξασθαι - unless it is held, with Funk,<sup>130</sup> that the Corinthians' divisions prove that the crucified has not yet come to speech, and the epistle itself is occasioned by the failure of Paul's own language. The statement concerning the sending of Timothy, therefore, relates to the apostle's role in the community, to his continuing authority there, in relation to the practical situation of ἐπίδες (discussed earlier) and various abuses (discussed later).

(b) 4:18-19 ἔλευσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς

The problem of relating the intention Paul states here and the delay described in 16:5-9 has been discussed already.<sup>131</sup> (If Paul's arrival is to follow Timothy's,



which is uncertain, further doubt is cast upon the use of ταχέως .)<sup>132</sup>

The most significant indication of how Paul views the situation at Corinth is in his explanation of the purpose of his impending visit. The statement contains a critical judgment upon the attitude of the Corinthians (ἐφυσιώθησαν *TIVES* ), as well as a more factual allusion to their belief that Paul is not coming (a belief which the sending of Timothy might unintentionally confirm).

The reference to *TIVES* is the first clear ascription of an attitude to one group, rather than the whole community. It introduces a strongly polemical statement attacking their powerless talk, and asserting the power and authority of the apostolic presence. φουσιώω , a characteristic word of I Corinthians <sup>133</sup> (used elsewhere in the New Testament only in Colossians 2:18), is used in 4:6 with reference to the divisions - being puffed up in favour of one against the other - and lies near to the heart of the criticism which Paul levels against the Corinthians, not least in the matter of their divisions.

#### 4. The Social Composition of the Community

1:26ff\_ οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς.

Paul makes this statement about the composition of the Corinthian community as a relevant, topical illustration,

from the experience of his readers, of God's choice (or κλήσις) of the foolish and the weak. It leads up to the conclusion of verses 30-31, that since God is the source of life in Christ Jesus, and through him of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, there can be no human boasting, only boasting in the Lord. This description has, however, an unmistakable, though incidental, social dimension, especially apparent in the word εὐγενεῖς. The social connotations of εὐγενεῖς, and its opposite ἀγενῆ, are widely recognised. Conzelmann,<sup>134</sup> for example, suggests that it emphasizes the social aspect, while δυνατοί emphasizes the political. Theissen<sup>135</sup> argues that there are also sociological implications in the words τὰ ἐξουθενημένα and τὰ μὴ ὄντα. He cites as evidence the use in Greek philosophy and drama of οὐδενία, nothingness, as a topos derived from philosophical ridicule. Particularly significant is the use of τὰ μὴ ὄντα in contrast to εὐγενεῖς.<sup>136</sup> In Hellenistic Judaism also, μηδέν is used to describe social rank, and so Theissen concludes that for Paul too, τὰ μὴ ὄντα has a sociological significance.<sup>137</sup> From the establishing of the social implications of the third category mentioned (εὐγενεῖς κ.τ.λ.), it is reasonable to assume that the first two categories, (with their contrast in vv. 27-9) σοφοί and δυνατοί, have also this dimension,<sup>138</sup> although they are immediately connected with the preceding discussion of wisdom and

folly, power and weakness. *δυνατοί*, then, is likely to refer to the influential (with political connotations), *σοφοί* to the educated (i.e. those who are recognised as wise and accorded status for wisdom by the world).

For sociological interpretation, the implication that there are a few *σοφοί*, *δυνατοί* and *εὐγενεῖς* is as important as the lowly status of the majority. It provides a precious, incidental piece of evidence for the social diversity of early Christianity. Concerning the situation at Corinth, it reveals another potential cause of tension in the class divisions of which it gives evidence. Theissen<sup>139</sup> points out that even if this group of the wise, powerful and well-born was small, their influence is evident from the attention given to their ideas (e.g. of wisdom) and the fact that at 4:10 they appear to be identified with the whole congregation, in the use of the same three categories but different words: *φράνιμοι*, *ἰσχυροί* and *ἐνδοξοί*. He concludes that though a minority, they are in fact a dominant minority, and that behind many of the practical problems dealt with in this letter, this social division can be traced.<sup>140</sup>

It is possible that the few from the upper strata in Corinth play a dominant role in the quarrels. (Theissen<sup>141</sup> describes it as a "suspicion" and gives five considerations that support it). In an article written in 1939, Filson<sup>142</sup>

claimed that house churches may have played a significant part in disunity. He saw proneness to division as connected with the separation of the Christians of a city into house churches, as the church grew too large to meet together in one gathering, and synagogues were barred to them.<sup>143</sup> The house churches, he suggests, provided the physical conditions for Apollos' partisans, for example, to meet with others whose company they found congenial.<sup>144</sup> On this view, the parties at Corinth are distinguished also by their separate places of assembly. Both Filson<sup>145</sup> and Theissen<sup>146</sup> therefore see prominence, and ultimately a leadership role, being given to the hosts or householders. One form of special relationship between the group and their professed leader might have been the offer of hospitality to a missionary.<sup>147</sup> The group's own status would also be enhanced by the boosting of their own missionary (cf. 4:6).

It need hardly be said that none of this is in the intention of Paul's statement. However, apart from the description of the majority of Christians in Corinth, this verse is an important part of an argument (the main strength of which is cumulative) for a prominent role for the minority of wise, powerful and well-born in the life of the community, and more particularly in its divisions.

The illustration of God's choice of the weak and foolish is not, however, an indication that he is addressing only the many, for he is describing the community as a whole. For those of higher social standing, who are part of this community of predominantly weak and powerless people, it is equally important to recognise the transformation that has been effected through God's calling.

##### 5. Paul's Practice of Baptism

1:14 Οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίστων καὶ Γάϊον.

Paul's statement that he has baptised few at Corinth follows three rhetorical questions and comes in an expression of thanksgiving, which is also rhetorical (and ironical). There is little doubt that a statement so easily verifiable describes Paul's actual practice regarding baptism. There may be a particular reason for Paul's emphasis here,<sup>148</sup> but he can hardly be doing other than stating a basic fact at this point. The form of the statement is strongly negative: Οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα, creating the impression that Crispus and Gaius are exceptions (εἰ μὴ). Stephanas and his household are added almost as an afterthought at v.16 (or possibly after Paul has been reminded by Stephanas or an amanuensis). The impression of rather surprising indifference or forgetfulness, already conveyed by his overlooking Stephanas, is confirmed by the vague statement

of verse 16b λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἰ τινα ἄλλου ἐβάπτισα.

Verse 15 gives an adequate reason for Paul being thankful that he has baptised only a few: ἵνα μή τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβαπτίσθητε (The clause seems most probably to express result rather than purpose).<sup>149</sup> The impression of Paul's indifference upon the matter of whom he has baptised, however, is harder to explain, even although verse 17 gives the reason: that it was not his calling to baptise. If Theissen<sup>150</sup> is correct in identifying the the relatively high status of the three whom Paul baptised, and seeing in this further evidence of the prominent role of the "few" of higher status, it becomes even more surprising that Paul should show uncertainty about whom he baptised.

For some of these reasons, and because baptism is not generally regarded by Paul as insignificant,<sup>151</sup> the intention of Paul's emphasis here is often seen as to contradict a specific misunderstanding of baptism at Corinth. From the position of the references to baptism in the discussion, it is natural also to see a connection with the divisions.<sup>152</sup> The misunderstanding has frequently been interpreted as centred upon the relationship between the baptised and the baptiser, brought over into Christianity from the mystery religions, though that is uncertain.<sup>153</sup>

The context in which the subject of baptism is introduced is significant. It is referred to first in a series of rhetorical questions, all of which suggest unthinkable theological implications of their divisions: that Christ is divided; that Paul was crucified for them; that they were baptised in the name of Paul. The effectiveness of these rhetorical questions lies in the fact that, unthinkable as they are, these views are in fact being entertained, if the evidence of the divisions is to be believed. The questions appear to be designed to shock, for the unity of Christ, his crucifixion for them, and baptism in the name of Christ, are basic, unquestionable beliefs. The existence of the divisions, with their separate slogans, could lead to all three questions, because when Christians in disunity boast of human leaders, the true meaning of baptism in the name of Christ is lost. Even when Paul moves from his mention of baptism in an unthinkable form (the name of Paul) to thanksgiving that he has not baptised many and therefore is not likely to be open to the charge of causing this misunderstanding, it is not clear whether the misunderstanding he is talking of is hypothetical,<sup>154</sup> or current in Corinth. Verse 17 has a double function: it gives a reason for Paul's practice of baptising few (that this was not the purpose for which he

was sent) and it provides a transition to talking of his role (εὐαγγελίσεισθαι, the theme of the following section).

A specific misunderstanding of baptism as part of the divisions would give added point to the references to Paul's practice of baptism here, but is not absolutely certain.

Schütz.<sup>155</sup> sees the Corinthian conception of baptism as the origin of the 'collapsed eschatology' and misplaced sense of freedom which are, in his diagnosis, at the root of the divisions at Corinth. He places baptism, therefore, at the very heart of the controversy.<sup>156</sup> He points out that the sequence of questions in 1:13 suggests a connection between baptism and the divisions.<sup>157</sup> Baptism is entrance εἰς Χριστόν (who is undivided), which is entrance into the church.<sup>158</sup> In Romans 6, the cross is seen as the Christian's point of entry into Christ, while Romans 8 equates having the spirit with belonging to Christ.<sup>159</sup> Receiving the spirit is, therefore, participation through baptism in Christ's crucifixion.<sup>160</sup> Instead of seeing the references to baptism as a transition to talking of ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, Schütz sees ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ as a continuation of the discussion of baptism under a specialised aspect.<sup>161</sup>

The connection between baptism and the cross, which Schütz notes, is undeniable. In 1:17, however, a contrast is made between the activities of proclaiming the cross and baptising.<sup>162</sup> There is near unanimity among commentators<sup>163</sup>

that Paul is not devaluing baptism, but making a statement about his own special ministry. In the special circumstances of Corinth, he sees a fortuitous element in the fact that he has baptised only a few. It is pointed out, for example, that he assumes baptism has taken place. Barrett,<sup>164</sup> however, believes that a relative disparagement of baptism, and not just of the baptiser's role, is hard to avoid. (The only positive attitude to baptism that can be deduced from 1:13-17 is the implication behind the rhetorical question, ἡ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε, that baptism in Christ's name is acceptable.)

Some important points concerning common interpretations of 1:13-17 are raised by Schmithals<sup>165</sup> in the course of supporting his contention that the reference to baptism is hypothetical, to show the absurdity of appeal to men. He points out that the argument that the divisions are based upon a relationship between the baptised and the baptiser in mystery religions is ill-founded, because in them too the appeal to men is absurd, as the baptised person becomes connected with the God in whose name he is baptised. Even more conclusive is the point he raises of the impossibility of establishing a link between the slogans and the personal teachers or baptisers on whom special value is claimed to have been placed, since Paul baptised few, and Peter may not even have been at Corinth. It would be reasonable to

expect far more names (e.g. of Paul's helpers).

There are therefore difficulties in seeing the divisions as purely or even primarily a baptismal controversy. There is, however, a strong possibility that Paul's rather negative attitude here to the activity of baptising, is a reaction to an aspect of the leader-centred divisions. Alternatively, as Dahl <sup>166</sup> suggests, he may be meeting some criticism from the Corinthians (v.15 - of baptising in his own name). There is perhaps an implication in verse 17 of turning with relief from an issue that is important, and has had to be dealt with, but does not merit pausing over too long, since the idea of baptising in any other name than that of Jesus Christ is unthinkable, and in any case baptism is a peripheral activity of Paul.

Conclusion to Chapter III: Factual Information

From the discussion of factual information and its interpretation above, it is possible to conclude either a great deal or very little. Since almost every statement is open to different interpretations, the conclusions can only describe what is probable or possible.

Divisions exist in the form of parties which have either adopted the names of prominent leaders, or possibly reject all human authority. It is likely that there are several dimensions to the party differences, e.g. differences over the rôle of an apostle, the form of preaching and theological understanding. It is probable also that social divisions, of which 1:26ff give incidental evidence, produce some tension, and that the rich play a leading role in the community and its divisions. There is good reason to suspect that the news of the divisions, coming from Chloe's people, is a view from below. Since there is no indication that it is a matter of concern in the official letter, it is probable that it is not treated as a serious problem in Corinth (alternatively the official view might be concealing something of which they are somewhat ashamed). The prominence given to divisions and the theological understanding of them is therefore probably Paul's

initiative. An anti-Pauline element in the parties also appears evident, and Paul hopes to meet this challenge to his authority, in the interests of unity, by the sending of Timothy and his own visit. (This letter too can be seen as part of this effort.) The community in Corinth is not irreparably split, though it is in serious danger. Paul addresses it as a whole and sees even its divisions as a problem of the whole community. Both his strategy and his understanding of the church, and his role as its apostle, lead him to reject any identification with one party (and possibly also identification of one party as the opposition) and to seek to establish his own position as above faction.

CHAPTER IV : THE STRUCTURE AND ARGUMENT OF 1:10-4:21.

The aim of this chapter is to undertake an examination of the structure and argument of 1:10 - 4:21, with a view to confirming or disproving the interpretation of the factual statements outlined above, and adding further information about the divisions and how Paul regards them. The reasons for regarding 1:10-4:21 as a unit, dealing with divisions, have been outlined above.<sup>167</sup> There are two principal areas of inquiry which can be stated in the form of questions to be put to the text in each passage:

- (a) Are there any indications here of the nature of the divisions in direct references, particular allusions or unintentional indications?
- (b) How does the argument here relate to the overall theme, and to the divisions of 1:10-12?

The method followed is to divide this whole unit into passages of convenient length and unity, each of which is first subjected to a brief exegesis and then reconsidered from the point of view of connections with the divisions. (The possibility of digressions must be taken into account, although even they have a point of contact.) Since 1:10-16 have been already considered for the factual information which

they contain, 1:17 is taken as the starting point. No other passage is omitted, because the total development of argument and purpose of Chapters 1-4 is under consideration.

(1) 1:17: Transition (from divisions to argument)

This verse serves as a transition <sup>168</sup> from the description of the divisions (with some comments on them) to the first main section of argument which follows at 1:18. Paul describes his own commission, or mission, as being not to baptise (linked with the preceding statements) but to preach the gospel (linked with the following discussion). He then modifies this statement by a negative characterisation of the form of that proclamation: οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου (literally "not in wisdom of speech"). He goes on to explain the purpose of this in a further negative clause: that the cross should not be emptied (of its meaning or significance). Taken together these statements have the clear, polemical implication that proclaiming the gospel ἐν σοφίᾳ makes the cross devoid <sup>169</sup> of meaning. If Paul is introducing a Corinthian catchword in σοφία, the polemical implication would have extra sharpness. <sup>170</sup> The implied contrast between σοφία (λόγου) and ὁ σταυρός introduces the first main theme of the letter.

Connection with the divisions

The crucifixion is already set in contrast to the divisions at v.13, where it is implied that the ἐρίδες and the party slogans of the Corinthians show a misunderstanding of the cross. This is not a specific doctrinal error, but the basic and general misunderstanding that is the root cause of all divisiveness. The existence of divisions itself is a proof of being σαρκικοί, or of dependence upon human wisdom and indulgence in human boasting. There is no attempt to attack any one of the parties. (This would be inconsistent after the general attack on ἐρίδες (1:11) and the inclusion of all in responsibility (1:12) ἕκαστος ὑμῶν.....) All of the slogans can be regarded as emptying the cross of its significance, for example in their implied dependence upon men, human boasting, or adopting a human standpoint.

Conzelmann<sup>171</sup> points out that against the transformation of the understanding of faith into the support of standpoints, which leads to multiplicity of standpoints and therefore divisions, Paul's position is defined negatively as a "nonstandpoint". There is, as he points out, the possibility that such a "nonstandpoint" may be built up into an object of theological reflection (i.e. become a standpoint), instead of remaining a criterion to which his own position is subject.

Apologetic (and polemic) become delicate and dangerous activities within such a theological understanding, for the apostle must defend not himself, but the criteria which govern his life. When Paul states that his mission is to proclaim the gospel of the cross, his purpose may be partly apologetic, to emphasise his apostolic commission, but it is also already exercising the role of an apostle in proclaiming that gospel. There is therefore evidence of opposition to Paul, but an indication that he still hopes to be able to exercise authority and win back the Corinthians to the gospel which he first preached.

(2) 1:18-25: The word of the cross as folly and power.

The whole of this part is dominated by contrast, especially between opposing perceptions of the cross. Paul first contrasts how the word of the cross appears from the perspectives of these perishing (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις) and those being saved (τοῖς σωζομένοις)- eschatological terms with the present participles suggesting an incomplete process.<sup>172</sup> The judging or dividing effect of the gospel and the cross is implied in the perception of what the word of the cross is. Perceiving it as μαρτία is characteristic of those perishing, whereas perceiving it as δύναμις θεοῦ is characteristic of those who are being saved.<sup>173</sup>

The destruction or failure of σοφία τῶν σοφῶν or τοῦ κόσμου is the theme of verses 19-21a. It is God's

plan or wisdom (v.21), or his action (v.19), and establishes the necessity of a new way.

That new way or plan, which is to save those who believe, is described in a variety of ways in verses 21b-25: ἡ μαρτία τοῦ κηρύγματος (v.21b); Χριστὸν ἑσταυρωμένον (v.23); σκάνδαλον and μαρτίαν (v.23 - from the perspective of Jews and Greeks respectively); Θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ Θεοῦ σοφίαν (v.25) from the perspective of those who have been called).

At verse 25, this section ends with a rhetorically balanced general statement <sup>174</sup> of the superiority of God's foolishness and weakness. (The association of σοφία with δύναμις and μαρτία with ἀσθένεια runs through the passage.)

Connection with divisions:-

The connection between the divisions and the theme here of the word of the cross (1:18), or Christ crucified (1:23), as folly to the wise of the world (1:21) but the power and wisdom of God to those being saved or those who have been called, <sup>175</sup> appears to be that wisdom of the world is the basis underlying all of the parties or divisions, rather than the views of a specific group at Corinth. Along with outlining of the new way or plan of God, which is the salvation of believers through the folly of the preaching of the cross, there is a strong emphasis upon the destruction, and the exposure of the inadequacy, of human wisdom. Paul appears to give a comprehensive definition of wisdom.<sup>176</sup>

In verse 20 for example it is doubtful if it is helpful to distinguish too finely between the terms used for the wise of the world.<sup>177</sup> In verses 22 and 23, the seeking "signs" of the Jews, and seeking "wisdom" of the Greeks are separate and different pursuits, but both rooted in the world and human ideas of power and wisdom. Just as Jews and Greeks embody the same worldly wisdom, so too do the competing parties of 1:12, in their human evaluation of wisdom and power. The folly and weakness of the cross, which confounds human wisdom, is seen to have a new unifying effect at verse 24, for those who are called<sup>178</sup> (all the Christians in Corinth) recognise in Christ the power and wisdom of God, irrespective of whether they are Jews or Greeks. Jews and Greeks (probably both present in the church in Corinth) represent not two parties but the two main types of human wisdom (like Greek and barbarian).<sup>179</sup> The parties also represent wisdom, for only the weak and foolish can experience the power and wisdom of the cross in total dependence and submission.

Another significant detail indicating the inclusive purpose of Paul in this passage is the use of *ἡμῖν* in verse 18. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their eschatological status (with him) among those being saved. At verse 23 *ἡμεῖς* may also be inclusive<sup>180</sup> (although it is less certain). There is at any rate an appeal for the

recognition that human wisdom, the basis of party division, and division of Jews and Greeks, is destroyed and proved futile by the folly of the cross.

(3) 1:26-31 The Corinthians' own calling.

Paul gives two illustrations, both from within the Corinthians' own experience, of the general principles of 1:18-25. The first is the fact of their being called (τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν<sup>181</sup>) in a situation of "weakness" (1:26-31). The passage is built around a series of contrasts, and expressions to describe the low status and worthlessness (in the scale of worldly wisdom) of the Corinthians. (The social implications have been discussed above.)<sup>182</sup> The first contrast implied is between what the Corinthians were (and are)<sup>183</sup> and what they were (and are) not (v.26), the next, more important, between what they were (and are), and what they have become. Paul's intention is not just to recall the historical experience of the Corinthians' κλήσις, though that is part of his appeal, but to proclaim God's power to make something of the worthless, or nothing, which leaves no place for the boasting of men (verses 29 and 31). It is the action of God which is stressed in the climactic verse 30. The verse is in fact a summary of the significance of the cross. The translation of the first part of the verse, ἐξ αὐτοῦ is problematic.<sup>184</sup>

The difference of interpretation, however, does not affect the basic understanding that it is God's action which is decisive.

σοφία is given a new and favourable sense in verse 30, for Christ has become σοφία ; and boasting, with the important qualification: <sup>185</sup> ἐν κυρίῳ, is allowed. (v.31).

#### Connection with divisions

The purpose of this section, reminding the Corinthians of their state when they were called, is to exemplify by God's choice of the foolish, the weak and the low-born in Corinth, the general principle of God's choice of 'folly' to confound the wise (and to give new meaning to δύναιμι and σοφία ). The connection between 1:18-25 and this section is therefore that of a general principle and its exemplification. There is, therefore, no need to look for any further general thematic connection with divisions.

There are, however, other specific connections and elaborations which are significant. In turning the Corinthians back to their origins, or their position evaluated from the point of view of worldly wisdom, Paul implies that there is a form of boasting in Corinth which overlooks this. In 1:29 and 1:31, this point is made explicitly: the only boasting is "in the Lord" i.e. in what God has done for them, which is effectually boasting in human weakness

(as Paul does in II Cor.11:30 and 12:5). This is essentially an exposition of the "word of the cross" of the previous section, which is spelt out most explicitly in the rich theological statement of verse 30,<sup>186</sup> that the whole of Christian existence (righteousness, sanctification and redemption) is dependent upon Jesus Christ and God's action in the cross. The new emphasis here is upon the worthlessness of the Corinthians, leaving no human basis for boasting. Paul's strategy is to strike at the roots of arrogance and boastfulness<sup>187</sup> (implied in slogans vaunting leaders, which show pride in their own discrimination), by recalling all to dependence upon God.

(4) 2:1-5 Paul's own κήρυγμα.

The second example which Paul cites of power in weakness, wisdom in the folly of the word of the cross, is the personal example of his own preaching,<sup>188</sup> which is also part of the experience of his readers. The method (and to some extent content) is described negatively: οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας (2:1); οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἶδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ (2:2); οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[s] σοφίας [λόγοις] (2:3).<sup>189</sup> This negative characterisation, as well as the content, suggests an apologetic element: that Paul is meeting specific criticism of a lack of impressive eloquence. Instead of denying the charges, Paul claims to

have deliberately rejected human devices and wisdom, <sup>190</sup> knowing only Christ and him crucified (2:2). He came to them in weakness, fear and trembling, (2:3) the fitting and characteristic human vehicle for the proclamation of Christ crucified.<sup>191</sup> Through this medium (of weakness) Paul's κήρυγμα becomes a demonstration of spirit and power, that is of God's action and activity. Their faith, brought into being by his proclamation of Christ crucified, is thereby grounded in God's power and not the wisdom of man.

Connection with divisions:-

The connection of this passage with the preceding argument is that here Paul gives his second example, drawn again from the experience of the Corinthians, to illustrate the power and wisdom of the cross. His preaching of Christ crucified when he came to them, was in weakness, fear and trembling, the negation of human wisdom, so that through it God's spirit and power could be manifest. The general thematic connection with the divisions is therefore the same as 1:18-25 (and 26-31): that they imply a denial of the word of the cross and a dependence on human wisdom.

The secondary purpose of this passage, however, of apology for Paul's method of preaching, which impinges also upon content, is almost equally prominent. The

negative forms imply a possibly specific criticism of a lack of impressive eloquence, a criticism which recurs at Corinth (e.g. in II Cor. 10:10 and 11:6). The denigration of other apostles (or in the case of the Christ party, possibly of all apostles) is a likely corollary of boasting (1:29 and 31). It is tempting to see in some of the negative contrasts, the criticisms of an Apollos party, <sup>192</sup> proud of their ἀνὴρ λόγιος. However the implied criticisms may be generalised and from different parties. (in addition to rhetorical skill, σοφία and ἀπόδειξις πνεύματος κ.τ.λ. are the basis of criticism, which therefore need not be limited to οἱ Ἀπολλῶ .)

The understanding of his apostleship as personal or human unworthiness (weakness etc.), through which God's spirit and power may be demonstrated, so that the faith of the Corinthians may be in God's power, not the wisdom of man, is not merely making a virtue out of necessity.<sup>193</sup> It relates directly to the theme of the folly and power of the cross in that Paul's κήρυγμα become itself a demonstration of spirit and power in weakness, just as the cross itself is. Verse 5, in which the ἑμῶν is again inclusive, relates this fundamental theme directly to the Corinthian situation: their faith brought into being by his proclamation in weakness is grounded in the power of

God, and not the wisdom of man (i.e. not dependent on the abilities and wisdom of any human leader, or their own).

(5) 2:6-16 σοφία ἐν τοῖς τελείοις

This section presents several problems of interpretation, and often figures prominently in reconstructions. It appears to represent a significant modification<sup>194</sup> of what Paul has said of wisdom before. It may be that he feels that the picture of wisdom painted so far has been too negative.<sup>195</sup> He now wishes to make clear<sup>196</sup> that σοφία is not totally opposed to the gospel - that the real opposition is between σοφία ἀνθρώπων and θεοῦ σοφίαν. It is helpful to distinguish between two uses of the word σοφία - a good sense (the wisdom of God) and a bad sense (the wisdom of men). Barrett<sup>197</sup> defines these senses more finely, drawing a distinction between two bad senses and two good. The broad distinction is clearly identifiable in Paul's usage of σοφία. Here it helps to explain the transition from rejection of σοφία ἀνθρώπων in 2:5 to σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν in 2:6.

The argument of 2:6-16 falls into two main sections. In verses 6-9, wisdom is the theme, whereas verses 10-16 deal with the spirit as the revealer of wisdom.<sup>198</sup> The spiritual man, Πνευματικός (as defined by Paul), is the true wise man. Just how substantial this difference is becomes clear if 2:4 is compared with 2:10. In 2:4,

describing τὸ κήρυγμά μου, Paul contrasts ἐν πειθοί[s] σοφίας [λόγοις] with ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμει - σοφία and πνεῦμα are essentially in contrast. In 2:10 (and indeed the whole of 2:6-16) τὸ πνεῦμα is the agent disclosing the θεοῦ σοφίαν.

The outline of the argument is relatively clear.

#### A. σοφία (2:6-9):-

- (a) We do speak wisdom among mature Christians - contradicting the impression of the previous verses (v.6).
- (b) But it is God's wisdom, in a mystery, not the wisdom of this world (v.7).
- (c) This wisdom was hidden, though determined by God before the ages for our glory, and was not recognised even by the ἄρχοντες<sup>199</sup> of this age, who would not have crucified him if they had recognised it (vv.7-8).

#### B. πνεῦμα (2:10-16):-

- (d) But God has revealed it to us through the spirit (v.10).
- (e) The spirit can reveal all things, and since it is of God, it reveals the things of God: τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ("the inward truths about God"<sup>200</sup> or "what God is")<sup>201</sup> and what has been freely given us by God: τὰ ὑπὸ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν (v. 10-12).
- (f) The words we use to speak of these spiritual matters are also taught by the spirit (v.13).
- (g) But only a spiritual person (πνευματικός) can receive

spiritual truths and judge (or investigate) all things, and is not subject to anyone's judgement. We (who are spiritual) have the mind of Christ.

#### Connection with divisions

The central point of this passage - the wisdom of God revealed to us by the spirit, which Paul speaks among the mature - is related by contrast <sup>202</sup> to the preceding argument (of 1:18 - 2:5). It is explicitly connected with the divisions, in 3:1-4, which are presented as proof that the Corinthians do not yet qualify for the status of τέλειοι or πνευματικοί. <sup>203</sup>

The change in style and conceptuality here is striking, and it is almost certain to be accounted for by something in the situation at Corinth. <sup>204</sup> Conzelmann comments that we have moved from the language of eschatology (σώζομενοι and ἀπολλυμένοι), to the language of mysteries. <sup>205</sup> Bultmann thinks that Paul is refuting the ideas of his opponents, but in the process of using their ideas for the sake of argument, is drawn, to some extent, into their orbit. <sup>206</sup> Others have seen this passage as capable of a gnostic interpretation, even if Paul did not intend it. (Schmithals thinks he did not recognise the Gnosticism of his opponents.) <sup>207</sup> This is a particularly serious failure

if, as seems likely, Paul is setting forth his gospel in wisdom language and concepts, popular with some at least at Corinth,<sup>208</sup> to whose position he is opposed and to whose language and concepts he seeks to give new meaning. Although there are many points of contact with the content of what Paul has emphasized earlier (e.g. the contrast between wisdom of the world and God's, 1:18-31), it is difficult to see any convincing reason for the change of style and language here other than that Paul is countering a particular stance and seeking to establish a distinctive place for "Christian wisdom!".<sup>209</sup>

The central themes of 2:6-16 outlined above, σοφία and πνεῦμα, may indicate some of the ideas which Paul is attacking. σοφίαν λαλοῦμεν is used three times (at verses 6, 7 and 13), and a claim by opponents to speak wisdom, possibly along with a criticism of Paul's limitations in this regard, is possible. The preceding passage, defending the form of his κήρυγμα, and possibly meeting a criticism of his unimpressive speech could be connected. The emphasis upon πνεῦμα and πνευματικοί in verses 10-16 and 3:1 makes it likely that a claim to be πνευματικοί or to have τὸ πνεῦμα is a feature of Corinthian Christianity.

One of the approaches which may bring the ideas into sharper relief is to focus upon the emphases of Paul which

appear to counteract, or significantly modify, the views he opposes. The first emphasis is upon the difference between Θεοῦ σοφίαν and σοφίαν τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου κ.τ.λ. which relates the discussion here to the earlier treatment of σοφία ἀνθρώπων and the power of God in weakness and in the folly of the cross. σοφία Θεοῦ is in fact re-defined as the word of the cross or Christ crucified (v.8), though it is set in language reminiscent of mystery or Gnostic religion as God's eternal and hidden plan.<sup>210</sup>

A similar emphasis upon τοῦ Θεοῦ occurs in the treatment of τὸ πνεῦμα, to stress the dependence of the spirit upon God. The πνεῦμα is the agent of revelation of the wisdom of God (linking it with the previous verses) - God's activity and initiative is stressed throughout:

v.10: ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος.  
 v.11: only τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ can know τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.  
 v.12: the spirit received is τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ.  
 v.13: contrasts the words of human wisdom with those taught by the spirit (i.e. God). This leads to the contrast between πνευματικὸς and ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος.

A third emphasis is upon the hiddenness of the knowledge of God. It is, however, set in the historical scheme of God's plan of revelation in due time, and not as esoteric knowledge revealed only to a select group<sup>211</sup> (characteristic of Gnostic systems).

It is easier to reconstruct some of the views that Paul seems to be countering here, than to answer the question whether the claim to be *πνευματικοί* or to possess hidden wisdom is that of one group or a cross-section of the groups, or even adduced by Paul as characteristic of the aspiration of all the divisions. It is probably easiest to construct a hypothesis which connects the views here with the Christ group or the Apollos group - especially if the attempt is made to link together the view of *σοφία*, the claim to be *πνευματικοί*, and to have hidden knowledge with such other views in the letter as libertarianism and over-realised eschatology. <sup>212</sup>

Any such identification is made difficult and doubtful, however, because of the consistent strategy of Paul, of dealing inclusively with the situation at Corinth. This prevents him, even when dealing with views which may be characteristic of particular groups, from addressing individual factions. It is significant, in view of the high regard for *σοφία*, that after destroying the basis of *σοφία ἀνθρώπων*, Paul rehabilitates *σοφία*, by redefining a *σοφία Θεου* (rather than relegating it to the heretic fringe). This *σοφία*, however, is not a human achievement, but a gift of God; not the possession

of an élite or party, but open to all on whom God bestows it by the spirit.

The first person plural is used predominantly,<sup>213</sup> sometimes referring to Paul (2:6&7 perhaps with colleagues), but more commonly inclusively (2:10,12,16). Paul places himself among "pneumatic" Christians,<sup>214</sup> but even at v.16 (where he seems probably to oppose a claim of opponents) Paul is not exclusive. ἡμεῖς means all "spiritual Christians" or pneumatics. As τὸ πνεῦμα (the agent of revelation of σοφία) is ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ (v.12), the status of πνευματικοί is the gift of God, available to all. Paul has not abandoned his inclusive strategy for a divisive elitism.

(6) 3:1-4 ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε.

Paul now applies the previous section (2:6-16) to the situation in Corinth, in what is ostensibly an explanation of why he was unable to "speak wisdom" (2:6), or speak to them as πνευματικοί or τέλειοι, in his preaching at Corinth. For this he uses the language of παιδεία (training or education)<sup>215</sup> and a popular philosophical image,<sup>216</sup> referring to their condition as νήπιοι (children), who have to be fed on milk (γάλα), not solid food (βρώμα), because they are not yet ready for it. The climax, however, comes at vv.2b - 3 where the application is brought into the

present with the accusation that they are still not ready, still *νήπιοι* or *σαρκικοί*, because there are *ξῆλος* καὶ *ἔρις* among them, shown in their use of party slogans.

Unless Paul is speaking totally uncharacteristically and inconsistently, <sup>217</sup> the "milk" which it is necessary to feed to the Corinthians because of their "immaturity" or "fleshliness", and the solid food for *πνευματικοί* or *τέλειοι*, must both have as their basic content the word of the cross. The primary distinction would therefore be in the form in which they are presented. There is a mutuality in the act of preaching whereby the nature and condition of those addressed affect the form.

The use of the contrast of *πνευματικός* and *σαρκικός* (or *σάρκινος*) along with *νήπιος* makes clear that the essential contrast does not concern progress but comprehension, <sup>218</sup> (although vv.2b - 3 imply an absence of growth from the initial state).

#### Connection with divisions

The connection with the divisions is explicitly stated: that divisions show that the Corinthians are still *σαρκικοί* or *νήπιοι*, behaving like men (*κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε* v.3) or being men (*ἄνθρωποι ἐστε* v.4) - the number of expressions used shows how central is the emphasis on this point. For this reason, *(θεοῦ) σοφίαν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις* was and still is inappropriate for them. (This provides

the connection with the preceding section.) Such a statement must be galling for those at Corinth aspiring or claiming to be Πνευματικοί. The criticism is not, however, of one group but of the factious community. Paul again puts those using his own name first in his exemplifying of the slogans.<sup>219</sup> (The passage also serves as a transition to speaking of the complementary role of apostles.) If it is right, as the evidence suggests, that Paul has been criticised for the lack of 'wisdom' in his preaching, this charge is now turned back upon the critics, for it is their inadequacy ( i.e. their failure to understand the gospel in relation to their life together in the church) which makes 'speaking wisdom' impossible.<sup>220</sup> Paul is effectually making unity within the Christian community the criterion of being a true Πνευματικός or τέλειος (which in turn is the precondition for receiving 'wisdom'). On the one hand he moves the focus from wisdom to the community; on the other hand he sets community (and negatively its factionalism) in a theological context.

The significance of ξῆλος καὶ ἐρις has been discussed above. The limitation of the slogans to those of Paul and Apollos does not imply that these are the only real divisions, but leads into the discussion of their relationship.

(7) 3:5-17: The relationship between and responsibilities of apostles and leaders.

Paul begins with a point related to the previous criticism that the divisions and slogans using the names of leaders are proof of 'fleshliness' or immaturity (imperfection): the apostles (exemplified by Paul and Apollos) are merely *διδάκονοι*, human agents of God's action.<sup>221</sup> He then proceeds to a consideration of the relationship between his work and that of Apollos. The relationship is illustrated by the metaphor of gardening: Paul planted, Apollos watered, but only God gave growth. The leaders have each their distinctive task (and reward), not in competition, although Paul is the planter, and later 'founder', and therefore has the primary role.<sup>222</sup> There is a strong emphasis upon God,<sup>223</sup> especially in verse 9: they are fellow workers within the service of (or with) God.<sup>224</sup>

At verse 10 (or more precisely the last phrase of v.9) the metaphor changes to building, beginning as if about to repeat the same point as the metaphor of gardening. By the end of verse 10, however, the tone has changed, and verses 10b-17 abound in stern warnings. The previous stress on the complementary nature of the work of apostles is lost. Reasons for this note of warning are given:-

(1) In verse 11 it is implied that some do try to build

upon a foundation other than Jesus Christ.<sup>225</sup> In the modification of the statement of v.10: θεμέλιον ἔθηκα to the (θεμέλιον) κείμενον Ἰησοῦς Χριστός there appears to be an apologetic element. A second wrong way of building is the use of inferior materials, probably referring to the quality of the community's life and teaching.

Paul warns that each person's work will be judged or tested, and he will be rewarded appropriately, but his own salvation is not in doubt.

The building metaphor provides a link with a third metaphor (at v.16ff)-the Christian community as the temple of God,<sup>226</sup> with the spirit indwelling it, as God in his temple. It too, however, is used largely negatively, for a dire warning of the destruction by God of anyone who destroys God's temple (in contrast with the one merely building badly who himself will be saved - 3:15). The consequences match the more serious nature of the offence.

#### Connection with divisions

There is a direct link between 3:5-9 and the divisions. Having stated that the divisions are a proof of being ῥηπιοί or σαρκικοί, Paul now attacks the divisions and their implications with two specific arguments: firstly, that Paul and Apollos (exemplifying apostles) are only διάκονοι (v.5) and συνεργοί (v.9) of God, who is the real power (vv.5&7); secondly, that their work is complementary.

Divisions in the names of apostles therefore lack any basis.

It is less certain how the very perceptible change of tone and emphasis in verses 10-17 is to be accounted for. The polemic tone suggests that something specific in the situation in Corinth is attacked here. The person or people who are the object of the threats or warning are however not specified. It could hardly be assumed that ἄλλος of v.10 is Apollos, so recently described as a harmonious συνεργός, although at verse 10a, the metaphor creates the expectation of a second illustration of complementary roles.<sup>227</sup> A strong contender for identification as ἄλλος is Ceph<sup>228</sup>as. Manson (followed by Barrett) relates the reference to Θεμέλιον ἄλλον in v.11 to the tradition concerning Ceph<sup>228</sup>as in Matthew 16:18. The general and figurative terms in which the warnings are couched, in his view, avoid identifying Peter from reticence and embarrassment.<sup>229</sup> Munck's argument that it is uncertain that Matthew 16:18 is older than I Corinthians is not decisive, as the verse could represent an older tradition. He does, however, properly point out that the explanation is dependent upon uncertainties. (In addition to that relating to Matthew 16:18, there is also the uncertainty that those claiming Peter as teacher have misrepresented him and that a Ceph<sup>228</sup>as party, misrepresenting Mt.16:18, existed.) Munck<sup>230</sup> interprets the whole warning as being

addressed to the Corinthian church - each person has to watch how he builds. The context, however, following 3:5-9 and leading up to 3:21-3, suggests that the builders are to be identified with leaders. Whereas Manson saw the warning of verse 17 as essentially the same as that in verses 10, 13-15, Barrett<sup>231</sup> sees a distinction between the introduction of Jewish legalistic practices, warned against in verses 10-15, and wholesale legalism, which is totally destructive, warned against in verses 16-17. Since both situations could not exist together, Barrett's interpretation indicates that the warnings relate to dangers which are, partly at least, hypothetical (e.g. that the introduction of legalistic practices raises the danger of wholesale legalism).

Reticence about naming Peter is not the only possible explanation of the fact that the warnings are couched in general terms.<sup>232</sup> It is in keeping with the practice followed throughout, of keeping the argument inclusive, though direct references to specific claims would hardly be missed in Corinth. (ἄλλος v.10 is such a reference.) It is noticeable, for example, that there is a consistent continuation of the emphasis upon God's action. For example, Paul's work is κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι (v.10 - with a somewhat polemic ring); the only foundation

is τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (v.11 - continuing the general theme of 1-4); and the ultimate answerability of everyone (ἕκαστος) to God is stressed (v.10, vv.12-13), a theme frequently contrasted with the implicit human judgments of the divisions. The central argument of 3:10-17 therefore applies generally to all of the parties. All of the divisions can be regarded as building upon the foundation which was laid by Paul on the human level, but which in fact is there already - Jesus Christ. The warnings about responsibility and answerability to God - to be true to the foundation (v.11), and to create the quality of community life which merits God's reward - apply particularly to the leaders. So too does the warning, in even harsher vein, that some developments are a dangerous enough departure from the foundation to imperil those accepting them and result in the merited destruction of those who promote them.

There appears to be a significant distancing of the leaders from the led, especially in verses 16 and 17. The difference in tone may be accounted for by the fact that Paul has moved from an argument against divisiveness, based on the complementary nature of his ministry and that of Apollos, to a warning which is principally addressed to the leaders about their responsibility. The polemic is somewhat vague and unspecific.<sup>233</sup> It is possible to explain this vagueness, which appears deliberate, as Paul's reticence

about criticising Peter, but it seems likely that the warning may be couched in general terms, to remind all the leaders of factions of their responsibilities.

(8) 3:18-23 In becoming 'foolish', all things are yours.

At 3:18, Paul returns to the theme of σοφία and μωρία of 1:18ff. It is likely therefore that the theme has not been abandoned, but has been being developed under different aspects and terms.<sup>234</sup>

Human wisdom is a form of self deception, (v.18) and with God it is folly (v.19). God's attitude to it is illustrated by two Old Testament quotations, (vv. 19&20) and the conclusion drawn, as in 1:29 and 31, is that no one should boast in men (v.21). The one who thinks himself wise in this age should become foolish in order to become wise. The paradoxical statement shows that two different senses of wisdom are being used:<sup>235</sup> wisdom in this age and true wisdom (of God).

Boasting in men (of the 'wise') paradoxically does not recognise the true nature of pneumatic man, because all things belong to him, as he belongs to Christ who belongs to God. "All things" include Paul, Apollos and Cephas, the men in whom the groups boast, so that in effect the slogans have been reversed: instead of ἐγὼ Παύλου κ.τ.λ, it has become Παῦλος ἐμοῦ

Connection with divisions

Although this section repeats the earlier conclusions on wisdom, some ideas are brought into a closer relationship and sharper focus. Wisdom of the world, it is implied, results in boasting in men (v.21) or thinking oneself wise (v. 18). Most significantly, the party slogans are seen as the product of boasting and wisdom<sup>236</sup> - absurd and unfitting for people who, as "Christ's", possess all things. The point is fittingly made against all the party slogans, whose leaders are included in a rather incongruous list of things which the Corinthians now possess.<sup>237</sup> It would be impossible to include "Christ", and the omission of it is therefore not a convincing argument for rejecting the Christ slogan. Ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ in verse 23 describes the condition of Christians (by contrast with the implied Πλαῦλος κ.τ.λ. ὑμῶν) and seems to echo the ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ slogan. It could, however, allude to a wrong and partisan use of the slogan, at 1:12, which is now corrected. Here it is a unifying slogan, and the use of the second person plural Ὑμεῖς in place of the first person singular ἐγὼ may be the significant difference. (Ὑμεῖς is used throughout in an inclusive sense, of all the Christian community at Corinth.)

The final phrase  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \delta\grave{\epsilon} \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  re-establishes the third tier of relationship (the dependence of Christ on God).<sup>238</sup>  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$  is dependent upon  $\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\upsilon$ , which in turn is dependent upon  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ . There is therefore some ground for suspecting that the Christ slogan mistook this dependence, as well as being an exclusive partisan slogan. In 2:6-16, worldly wisdom and the claim to be  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}\iota$  were set aside for the far more amazing gift of God of  $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  and  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\acute{\alpha} \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ . Here, similarly, boasting in men (v.21) is set aside for a far greater boast (vv.21-3) in God's gift.

(9) 4:1-5 How apostles should be regarded.

These verses continue the central theme of Chapter 3 - the proper way to regard apostles (3:4-9 and 21-23). They should be considered as Christ's servants ( $\epsilon\pi\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\varsigma$  is used in place of  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\iota$  3:5 with no significant difference in meaning.) and stewards ( $\omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ) of the mysteries of God.<sup>239</sup>  $\omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ <sup>240</sup> provides a link between the idea of subordination, which has been predominant in the description of the apostles up to now (and especially in 3:22), and the new emphasis on the freedom of the apostle from human judgment - his independent status and reflected authority as steward of the gospel, which is the sense in which Paul uses mysteries here.

A steward is required to prove faithful (4:2). Applying the argument to himself personally, Paul claims that the judgment of the Corinthians or of any human tribunal is a matter of indifference to him. Even his own judgment of himself, although he is not conscious of any fault, does not justify him. The only judgment he must face is that of Christ at the Parousia.<sup>241</sup> He therefore ends with a warning against premature judgments, for each will receive his due praise at the Parousia.

Connection with divisions:

Paul's argument here concerning how apostles should be regarded is related to the divisions in two main ways. Paul first attempts to correct the over-valuing of apostles, resulting in seeing them in competition with one another. To counteract this, he stresses their secondary, subordinate role (as ὑπηρέτας and οἰκονόμους of Christ), bringing the leaders too within the central emphasis upon weakness and folly in the theology of the cross. (This is essentially the argument of Chapter 3.) At the same time Paul recognises that in selecting leaders the Corinthians set themselves in judgment over the apostles, as if they call them, denigrating other apostles. Paul therefore stresses equally the fact that apostles are not subject to human judgment. Taken together, the emphases

of Paul suggest that he recognises in the divisions an over-valuing and an undervaluing of apostles.<sup>242</sup>

The second connection is with Paul's own position in relationship to the Corinthians, which is both an element in the divisions and part of the strategy of the letter. He applies to himself the argument concerning the freedom of an apostle from judgment. His own indifference to criticism (εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστίν.) is not that of a thick-skinned campaigner, but of one who recognises that his own responsibility and answerability is to God. The Corinthians have misunderstood this. The apostle is above all division and parties, even his own. Paul now begins to work towards his own role as the founder of the community, and still responsible for it (to recall the Corinthians to unity).

The view of Theissen,<sup>243</sup> that there is a clash in Corinth over two different types of missionary, is convincing. It is significant, however, that here Paul turns the Corinthians away from such a divisive debate to the eschatological context of all apostleship, the final judgment of Christ alone upon it. In context, ἐκάστῳ applies to ἡμᾶς, us apostles, but it probably also hints at the Corinthians' own judgment by Christ.

(10) 4:6-13: The 'glorious' Corinthians and the  
'dishonoured' apostles.

4:6 is a notorious crux. It cannot be considered at length here, but as its interpretation is crucial for the whole passage, a brief discussion of the principal problems follows:-

(i) The first problem is the meaning of *μετεσχηματίσθαι* and what is referred to by *ταῦτα*. The usual meaning of *μετασχηματίζω* is 'change the form of' (Phil.3:21 and II Cor. 11:13,14, 15). Hooker<sup>244</sup> argues that it refers most naturally to the figures of speech, or to figurative change. Although this is not the usual sense of the verb elsewhere, she cites an example from Plato of its use for 'verbal change', where disease in the body is known as injustice in the state.<sup>245</sup> *σχῆμα* and *σχηματίζω* can also be used for figures of speech. She therefore concludes that the meaning seems to be: 'I have applied these figures of speech (i.e. of gardener etc.) to myself and Apollos.'<sup>246</sup> Barrett sees the reference here to how Paul has made the last few paragraphs (*ταῦτα*) look as if they applied only to himself and Apollos, by omitting other names such as Cephas.<sup>247</sup> Conzelmann appears to take *ταῦτα* as referring to the immediate context of 4:1-5, and sees the fundamental idea

as applying the principles laid down to all Christians, and not just office-bearers.<sup>248</sup> There is, however, a general agreement that Paul is referring to his use of himself and Apollos to exemplify apostolic leaders in general.

(ii) The second main problem is the notoriously difficult phrase *τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται*. Baljon's<sup>249</sup> ingenious suggestion, that a gloss has been incorporated in the text, commands support in view of the difficulty of giving a totally convincing explanation of the text as it stands. Hooker, however, makes the fundamental criticism of it that the ingenuity required for its incorporation into the text is even greater than that displayed by expositors.<sup>250</sup> She argues that from the context it seems probable that the two ἵνα clauses take up the two main points of Chapter 3.<sup>251</sup> The second ἵνα clause is a relatively clear reference to rivalry and factions (3:1-9), and so the first is likely to refer to the warning against shoddy workers and people destroying the church (3:10-17). (The second clause depends on the first because the false teaching leads to rivalry and factions.)<sup>252</sup> She therefore interprets the first phrase as a reference to "the tendency to embrace fancy trappings".<sup>253</sup> going beyond Paul's teaching of Christ and him crucified, which is the fulfilment of scripture.<sup>254</sup>

Hooker's interpretation is plausible and fits well into the context and purpose of the section as a whole. It is, however, far from certain. Conzelmann<sup>255</sup> describes the phrase as "unintelligible", and Barrett<sup>256</sup> states that though the structure of the sentence (in the use of  $\tau\omicron$ ) shows a quotation, probably a current saying, the original application can only be guessed at, though it was probably clear enough to the readers.

The second purpose clause of 4:6 is also somewhat obscure,<sup>257</sup> though the general sense is relatively clear. It appears to give at least one purpose of exemplifying these things (i.e. the relationship of, and right attitude to, leaders): so that they do not become "puffed up" one against the other.  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\nu\delta\varsigma$  and  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\upsilon$  most probably refer to leaders set up in rivalry to one another (which is a form of being puffed up). It leads naturally to a general consideration of pride, and the reminder that the whole position of Christians depends on grace.

After the rhetorical questions of verse 7 which makes this point, the tone changes to an ironical statement<sup>258</sup> of the Corinthians' assumption that they have already reached the pinnacle of achievement (vv.8ff.). The three verbs of v.8 (in the perfect and aorist) characterise the

Corinthians as believing that they have already arrived at the ἔσχατον ( a "collapsed" or "over-realised" eschatology). Paul attacks it indirectly by ironically wishing it were true, for the sake of the apostles ( ἡμεῖς ) who would be sharing in their rule at the end.<sup>259</sup> This is then contrasted with the actual situation of the apostles who are like condemned men, a spectacle to the world (v.9). At verse 10, the earlier contrast of foolish and wise (φρόνιμοι here), weak and strong, is supplemented by ἔνδοξοι (honoured) and ἄτιμοι (dishonoured or despised), which leads to the portrayal of the adversities endured by the apostles in terms that recall the teaching of Christ.<sup>260</sup>

#### Connection with divisions:-

There are two significant connections with the divisions in this passage. The first concerns 4:6 - what Paul has been doing with Apollos and himself, and what this shows of his intention and the Corinthian situation. (The verse seems to act as a summing up.) The probable meaning suggested above is that Paul has been using Apollos and himself in an exemplary way. This seems clearest at 3:5-9.<sup>261</sup> In 3:10-17 the warning to leaders who build wrongly, or destroy the community, seems to be to all (and only includes Apollos). In 3:18-23, where again the point is general - the avoidance of boasting -the only specific reference also includes Cephas.

4:1-5 uses only Paul to exemplify an apostle's indifference to human judgment. It is, therefore, true only in a broad sense that the argument is exemplified in Paul and Apollos, since the specific application of the general argument is to them or Paul alone.

The purpose of applying "these things" to Paul and Apollos is given in the two *ἵνα* clauses, which are therefore a significant indication of Paul's aim. Although the first is impossible to explain with certainty, no better explanation seems to be available than Hooker's,<sup>262</sup> which is compatible with the argument against human wisdom earlier. The second *ἵνα* clause describes the divisions at Corinth in a way consistently seen throughout, i.e. as the result of a general attitude of being puffed up in favour of one against another. For Paul, the root of divisiveness lies in human pride or arrogance, which he attacks in v.7 with a characteristic emphasis upon the recognition that all is received (God's action or grace being the dominant theme of Chapters 1-4), and boasting (which implies that it is not received) is therefore out of the question. (It is interesting to note that while Paul uses *λαμβάνω* here to stress the "received" nature of Christian life, in Philippians 3:12ff *λαμβάνω* and *καταλαμβάνω* are used to describe an assumption of achieved perfection, similar to that here, so that it does not guarantee a correct

awareness of continued dependence upon grace.)

The second significant connection with the divisions concerns the description of a particular type of boastful behaviour, a stance prevalent at Corinth, which can be characterised as a "collapsed" or "over-realised eschatology." The ironical statements of v.8, and the contrast in v.10 between ἡμεῖς and ὑμεῖς in terms of the earlier contrast between wisdom and folly, portray the Corinthians' own view of themselves, by implication at least.

The passage is often given prominence in reconstruction of the background to the divisions. The clear eschatological overtones (e.g. ἐβρασιλεύσατε) mean that it is frequently linked with the views on the resurrection of Chapter 15, and an over-realised eschatology seen as the key to the situation at Corinth.<sup>263</sup> Ellis<sup>264</sup> raises two principal objections to this view: that I Corinthians 15 supplies doubtful support for the eschatological interpretation of I Cor.4:8; and that Paul would be inconsistent in attacking them for what is essentially his own eschatological perspective (even in I. Cor. 1:5). He admits the possibility of a mistaken eschatological perspective in the false wisdom of the Corinthians, but this is not in affirming the present reality of participation in Christ's resurrection life and power, but rather in misconceiving the way in which

that reality is presently to be manifested.<sup>265</sup> Thiselton, however, argues that it would not be inconsistent of Paul to attack such a misconception as a distortion of the wholeness of truth.<sup>266</sup> He believes that the eschatological approach (of which this passage gives evidence) pinpoints a common factor of a diverse array of problems, for example the 'enthusiastic' view of the spirit, causing problems at Corinth.<sup>267</sup> It is not a necessary cause of these, but a sufficient one.<sup>268</sup> He believes that it is these views which lie behind the divisions.<sup>269</sup>

On the problem of which if any of the parties of 1:12 is to be connected with these views, Thiselton also has an apt comment.<sup>270</sup> Though it is easiest to connect them with the *ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ* slogan, as 'the slogan of hyper-spiritual enthusiasts who see no need for any human leader', he points out the dangers of making it the basis for reconstruction of the whole situation, or (as Schmithals)<sup>271</sup> seeing the other three groups as "a single 'apostolic' anti-gnostic outlook". The discernment of spiritual man can be involved not only in the rejection of all leaders, but also in the selection and overvaluing of individual leaders. This observation incidentally supports our explanation of Paul's method throughout - that he deals with factionalism as a whole, rather than addressing individual factions.

In verses 9-13, portraying the contrasting reality of the life of the apostles (ἡμεῖς) there are two different observable connections with the divisions. In the first place there is the contrast between the illusion of achieved blessings which the Corinthians envisage themselves as enjoying, and the reality of the hardships of the apostles. This highlights the error of the Corinthians, and also relates it to the broader theme of wisdom and folly, weakness and power. Secondly, however, the treatment of ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους relates directly to the divisions. Paul here presents the apostles as a united group, set over against the Corinthians. The fact that ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν is a likely personal reference, presented as a hardship, does not detract from this strategy of inclusiveness. Paul's own experience of hardship and weakness is made normative for apostles. It may be that the emphatic χάρις ἡμῶν of verse 8, and the ironical wish to share in their rule (8b), point to a general questioning of apostolic authority, which is implicit in their choosing their own leaders.

(11) 4:14-21 - Paul the father and his plans

The last section of Chapters 1-4 is sufficiently like a concluding section to give grounds for Bruce <sup>272</sup> to suggest that Paul intended to end his letter here. There

is a perceptible change of tone and direction. The most significant aspect of this is the move to the first person singular, as if Paul now separates himself from the group of apostles, with whom he had identified himself in the corporate *ἡμεῖς* of 4:6-13, in opposition to the proud Corinthians (*ὑμεῖς*).<sup>273</sup> He also sees it necessary to correct a possible misconception, that he has been writing with a negative aim to shame them (*ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς*), whereas his real intention is positive, to admonish (*νουθετῶν*), as a father, so that they will change. The contrast between *ἐντρέπων* and *νουθετῶν*<sup>274</sup> is not so much one of severity as of the standpoint or relationship of the admonisher with the admonished, and his positive aim. Now he refers to the unique and close relationship in which they stand to him as their father or progenitor in Jesus Christ through the gospel. This relationship is contrasted with the many *παιδαγωγούς*<sup>275</sup> or Christian leaders, and Paul ends as he began (1:10), with an exhortation to become imitators of him.

The remaining verses (17-21) deal with practical arrangements, discussed already:<sup>276</sup> the sending of Timothy to remind them of Paul's ways and Paul's own intention of coming soon. At verse 20, the Corinthians' arrogance is again connected with words (*ἐν λόγῳ*), contrasted with *δύναμις*, and the kingdom of God.<sup>277</sup>

Connection with divisions

The main connection with the divisions here is in the strategy of Paul in the epistle. Paul now distances himself from the apostolic group, to emphasize his uniquely close relationship with the Corinthians. He first clarifies the intention of his criticism as admonition, not shaming. He has consistently portrayed the divisions as a situation not beyond hope of amendment. (Boasting and wisdom of the world are to be replaced by glorying in the Lord and the wisdom and power of God.)<sup>278</sup> His concern as a father is warm with affection.

The claim to a unique relationship is not without previous indications. At 3:6 and 3:10 his role as planter and founder is firmly maintained, even when the primary stress is upon the complementary work of apostles. There are also several reminders of his being first to proclaim the gospel in Corinth,<sup>279</sup> though the stress is not upon the creation of a unique relationship, nor is his role necessarily a continuing one. In 4:14-21 the unique relationship and authority of Paul is that of a father, dependent upon the historical fact of his being the first to bring the gospel to them, described by the metaphor of "giving birth".<sup>280</sup> The legitimation of Paul's position is therefore functional.<sup>281</sup> Paul is careful, in his use of

the modifying phrases ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, to stress the apostle's instrumental role; but as the agent of God in bringing them into Christ through the gospel he claims a unique and continuing relationship of intimate closeness. It is also an exclusive relationship - there is only one father, but many παιδαγωγούς. It becomes the basis for the exhortation to become imitators (μιμηταί) of him (v.16).

In view of the persistent efforts of Paul for conciliation throughout Chapters 1-4, by condemning all divisions inclusively, the question arises whether the claim here to unique authority is not, in effect, if not intention, liable to create division. The question of effect is not easy to answer, but there are a number of considerations which defend Paul against a contradictory intention:-

- (1) There is no encouragement of "supporters". He is still addressing the whole community, reminding them, as before, of their common origin (historical) and claiming responsibility for them all.
- (2) His claiming of the right to admonish (v.14) and to discipline (v.21) does not invalidate earlier arguments about the proper way to regard apostles (e.g. against complementary attitudes of overvaluing and undervaluing). His own status depends entirely upon the task assigned to him by God (1:17 and confirmed by his work at Corinth (e.g. 4:15).

(3) When Paul assigns inferior, if complementary, status to other leaders, whose number (*μυρίους*) and standing as slave-guardians (*παιδαγωγούς*) is contrasted with the one "father", he has most probably in mind local leaders in Corinth, responsible for the divisions.

It is unlikely, from the previous discussion, that he refers to Apollos or Cephas, whose names have probably been misused by the local leaders. Also Paul's own pre-eminence is by God's action, *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* and *διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, and not by human wisdom.<sup>282</sup>

(4) There is a practical reason for "establishing his credentials" at this point: the plans to send Timothy, and to visit Corinth himself. If Timothy's visit is to be effective in re-establishing order and *τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ κ.τ.λ.*<sup>283</sup>, and Paul's own visit is to be effective for the whole church, the acknowledgment of Paul's authority is necessary. Apollos does not want to visit Corinth at present,<sup>284</sup> and it is not certain that Cephas was ever there. From that practical viewpoint alone, it is Paul's responsibility.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the establishing of Paul's authority is frequently seen as the central purpose of 1-4,<sup>285</sup> preparatory to answering the questions raised in the letter of the Corinthians, and dealing with

other practices of which he has been made aware less officially. While this exercise of authority can be seen as a logical extension of the establishment of Paul's unique relationship to the Corinthians, the view involves a shift in emphasis which slightly distorts the central concern of Paul in 1-4 of dealing with divisive tendencies in Corinth. The defence of Paul's apostolic status in verses 14ff is, within the context of 1-4, an attempt to re-establish unity in the community in Corinth.

Conclusion to Chapter IV.

From the study of the structure and argument of 1-4, undertaken above, it seems reasonable to draw certain general conclusions about the nature and treatment of the divisions.

In the first place, in the overall argument of 1-4, in its central themes, it seems likely that Paul is dealing radically with divisions, attacking the roots of factionalism. On the one hand he attacks human wisdom which leads to boasting (in men) or being "puffed up", and probably also to false 'perfectionism' (believing themselves already to have achieved the ἔσχατον) and claims to be πνευματικοί. On the other hand he stresses the power and spirit of God made manifest in weakness, the theology of the cross, the wisdom of God, the apostolic sufferings and hardship. The predominant theme is the total dependence on grace (though the word is hardly used).<sup>286</sup> Paul's understanding of the divisions is therefore that they are a serious theological 'misconception', the product of human wisdom, a form of boasting and a clear indication of the 'fleshly' (σαρκικοί) nature of Christians.

There is no attempt to deal with the factions individually or identify the mistaken views with one party. There are two possible explanations of this. The first is that there is only one real group of opponents whom Paul is attacking. The second is that in the strategy Paul adopts in the letter and in his theological interpretation of the factions, they are attacked inclusively, as a fault and responsibility of

the whole community. In the study above, the latter emerges as not only a possible, but also the more probable, interpretation.

A further conclusion can be drawn from the apologetic element and the discussion of the role of apostles. Part of the strategy of the letter appears to be to gain acceptance from the whole community of Paul's unique authority and responsibility, as a means to re-establish unity. Not only is there evidence of criticism of Paul for lack of 'eloquence' and 'wisdom', but there are also signs, as early as the slogans, that the divisions centre upon a mistaken view of leaders, which can be described as overvaluing and undervaluing. For these reasons, apologetic appears to be used as part of Paul's way of dealing with divisions.

CHAPTER V: INDICATIONS OF PAUL'S PURPOSE

In this chapter the aim is to bring together and examine some of the indications in Chapters 1-4 of Paul's purpose.

These have been divided into two broad categories:-

- (a) Specific references to Paul's purpose in writing and to the response which Paul hopes to evoke in the community.

(Explicit statements of purpose, imperatives, clauses of purpose, rhetorical questions, and statements showing how Paul regards the Corinthians.)

- (b) More general references to the purpose of Paul's apostolate.

(Statements about his commission and κήρυγμα ; general statements about how apostles are to be regarded; and Paul's claim to a distinctive or unique role.)

All of these statements and other indications must be evaluated within their context (which has been attempted in Chapter IV above). Bringing them together may, however, offer significant pointers to Paul's broader aims. The two categories, described above, are closely and significantly interrelated- for example, factors within the Corinthian situation appear to make necessary the defence of Paul's apostolic preaching and ministry.

(a) Specific references to Paul's purpose in writing and the response which he hopes to evoke from the community.

(1) First person statements of what Paul is doing.

The most important of such statements are the two uses of παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς at 1:10 and 4:16, at the beginning and the end of Chapters 1-4.<sup>287</sup> This acts as a form of inclusio, marking off 1-4 as a unit.<sup>288</sup>

The use of παρακαλῶ is a formal indication of the transition from thanksgiving to the body of the letter.<sup>289</sup> Mullins<sup>290</sup> believes that the formal pattern of official petition was taken over with modifications into private correspondence. He identifies four types of petition with four distinctive verbs, of which παρακαλῶ, the most frequent (21 times in the epistles), is used as a personal petition.<sup>291</sup> In 1:10 it is accompanied by a divine authority phrase: διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν κ.τ.λ., which is also a common characteristic of the petition.<sup>292</sup>

Schmitz<sup>293</sup> traces a development in the meaning of παρακαλῶ from the sense of "asking for help" to "speaking with power in the name of God". for example in the proclamation of salvation in the apostolic preaching. In a further development, for those already won (e.g. Heb. 13:22) it takes on a meaning closer to 'admonition' (cf. 4:14). Schmitz sees an important distinction between

its Christian use and a mere moral appeal, in its reference back to the work of salvation as its presupposition and basis.<sup>294</sup>

Concerning the content of the exhortation, Dahl<sup>295</sup> points out that παρακαλῶ with a periodic sentence seems to be a characteristic way of setting forth the main purpose in the letter (cf. Phlm.8ff.). The content or purpose of the exhortation is therefore likely (from all of the observations above) to express a key idea of at least this section of the epistle.

The purport of the exhortation of 1:10 is expressed in three purpose clauses of similar meaning:-

(a) ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες : that you may all be in agreement; <sup>296</sup>

(b) καὶ μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα: that there may not be divisions among you (discussed above);

(c) ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ..... γνώμῃ: that you may be restored to unity of mind and opinion or conviction.

(The meaning of κατηρτισμένοι is disputed. Conzelmann rejects the meaning of restoration.<sup>297</sup> Many commentators, however, make the connection with the literal meaning of "setting bones" and the classical metaphorical meaning of "reconciling factions".<sup>298</sup> While the difference is of some

consequence for the state of division at Corinth, its importance can be exaggerated, for even if the meaning of 'restoration' is rejected, there is still clearly a situation which Paul regards with the utmost seriousness, as his three-fold plea for unity indicates.)

The setting of this exhortation at the head of the whole epistle gives prominence to the plea for unity in face of threat of division (or already existent division), highlighting what has been seen as the central purpose of Chapters 1-4. The type of 'agreement' and 'unity' to which they are exhorted is indicated in the following section on the word of the cross: not dogmatic uniformity but agreement on fundamentals, recognition of a common dependence upon the grace of God or what they have received. 299

The exhortation at 4:16, which ends this section, is in the form of an imperative: *μνηταί μου γίνεσθε* . It relates closely to the sending of Timothy (v.17) to remind the Corinthians of *τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ...* Its immediate context (4:14-15) is Paul's claim to be in a unique relationship to the Corinthians as their father, and therefore to have the right and duty to admonish them (as a father, with their interests at heart). If the broader context of the whole of Chapter 4 is in mind, the call to imitate Paul seems a challenge to the belief that they are "satiated, enriched and ruling". (4:8), in contrast

with the apostles. If the exhortation is set within the total context of Chapters 1-4, it is likely to relate to the settlement of division. Sanders <sup>300</sup> argues that  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\alpha$  (4:14) refers to the whole discussion of 1:10 - 4:21, especially as the use of  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\omega}$  at 1:10 and 4:16 suggests that 1:10-4:21 is a unit with 4:14-21 as the final paragraph. <sup>301</sup> (He also argues that particularities of 4:16 require that we look there for the meaning of  $\mu\mu\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}\iota$  μου  $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$ , rather than parallel uses of  $\mu\mu\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}\iota$  and  $\mu\mu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha$ .) <sup>302</sup>  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\alpha$  refers, therefore to the two issues discussed in 1-4: (1) divisions in the community and wisdom; (2) instruction on the role of apostles in 3:5-17 and 4:1-13. (3:18-23 stresses the close link between the two.)

$\mu\mu\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}\iota$  μου  $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$  (4:16) and Timothy's role of reminding of  $\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\acute{\omicron}\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  μου (4:17) refer to the same practice and teaching of Paul. <sup>303</sup> In the context of 1-4 this includes: the proclamation of the word of the cross, not wisdom, and his conception of the apostle's role as servant, in complementary relationship to other apostles, but with a unique distinctive role, answerable only to God from whom his authority derives, and exemplifying in his life and witness, in hardship, God's choice of folly and weakness to confound the wise of the world.

Sanders refers the  $\acute{\omicron}\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  of Paul more narrowly to (1) his role as servant (3:5) with no dignity of his own,

only his work having value, and (2) his fatherhood through the gospel or word of the cross (1:17-19).<sup>304</sup> The role of Timothy, frequently Paul's personal emissary (e.g. I Thess. 3:1-10; Phil. 2:19-24), is, in his view, the key to the concept of imitation.<sup>305</sup> Timothy appears to know, or to embody in a special way, Paul's *ὁδοῦς*. What Paul wants them to understand is existence in conformity with the gospel (as opposed to their admiration of individuals and their believing themselves wise).<sup>306</sup> Sanders believes that the principal concern here, and indeed in the whole of I Corinthians, is communal - to deal not with a theoretical misunderstanding of the gospel, but a failure to grasp its communal implications and consequences.<sup>307</sup> Timothy's role is, then, like that of an elder brother: to remind them by words and personal example of Paul, their father's, ways.<sup>308</sup> This, he hopes, will overcome the divisiveness caused (Sanders believes) by their high regard for the apostles as teachers of wisdom.<sup>309</sup> Paul's ways are further explained, according to Sanders, in I Cor. 8-10, leading up to the further use of *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* in 11:1.<sup>310</sup> There it is indicated that what is to be imitated is concern for the community: consideration for the weak, putting the interests of others first, and even working with his own hands.<sup>311</sup>

The study of Sanders, therefore, supports the view that the exhortation at 1:16 is essentially concerned with the

establishment of unity and the overcoming of division or divisive tendencies.

Three other first person statements: (1) 1:14 (εὐχαριστῶ.....) (2) 4:6 (μετοχημάτων.....); (3) 4:14 (οὐκ ἐντρέπων..... νοουθετῶν) are not considered here because they relate principally to statements considered above.<sup>312</sup>

## (2) Imperatives

Direct commands addressed to the Corinthians<sup>313</sup> may also indicate the purpose of writing, although in some cases they relate only to the immediate context and a more limited local purpose. (For example βλέπετε γὰρ (1:26)<sup>314</sup> is used to indicate a new turn in the argument, directing attention to the Corinthians' human condition; μηδεὶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω (3:18) is also asseverative, to emphasize the imperative which follows.)

(1) ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω (1:31) if anyone is to boast, let him boast in the Lord.<sup>315</sup>

Paul concludes the section of argument on 'wisdom' in 1: 1:18-31 (especially 26-31) with an allusion to Jeremiah 9:24 which sums up the central purpose.<sup>316</sup> The futility of boasting in man has been argued generally, by opposing the folly of the cross to human wisdom (vv.18-25), and particularly, by reminding the Corinthians of the human condition in which they were called (vv.26ff.). The conclusion that boasting is futile is made negatively at v.29. After a verse describing the Christians' existence in Christ (i.e. their relation-

ship to God through him), the imperative of v.31 restates this positively. The result or purpose <sup>317</sup> of Christ becoming our wisdom (power etc.) is that the only boasting is in the Lord. The command therefore relates directly to the boastful slogans of the divisions. It sums up the aim of the presentation of the cross (or Christ) as the power and wisdom of God, in relation to the divisions.

(ii) *εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ  
μωρὸς γένησθε ἵνα γένηται σοφός (3:18)*

This imperative also sums up, in a highly paradoxical form, the whole purpose and logical conclusion of the argument about wisdom, as far as the Corinthian response is concerned. <sup>318</sup> Its context, where it seems to follow somewhat abruptly upon the immediately preceding discussion and warning of the responsibility before God of leaders, supports the other evidence that Paul sees wisdom and folly as associated with the leadership-centred disputes. This connection is confirmed by the broader pattern (of 1:10-3:21): just as the report of divisions (1:10-1:17) is followed by discussion of the confounding of human wisdom by the folly of the word of the cross (1:18-2:5), so here the responsibility and position of Christian leaders (3:5-17) is followed by the command to eschew wisdom and become fools (3:18), which is shortly followed (at 3:21) by a further imperative (even more directly related to the

divisions) not to boast in men, as the Corinthian parties do with their party slogans.

*μωρὸς γενέσθω* is a more general form of the command against boasting in men of 1:31 and 3:21 for "wisdom of the world" describes the attitude underlying boasting and finding specific expression in the divisions. Folly is a paradoxical description of proper dependence upon God.

(iii) *ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις* (3:21).

This command virtually repeats in negative form the positive imperative of 1:31 <sup>319</sup> in which also wisdom and boasting in men are related as here. In the contexts of both, Scripture is alluded to: in the rejection of wisdom (3: 19-20) and the direction of boasting to the Lord (1:31). The connection between wisdom and boasting, described above, and seen in the movement from the imperative of 3:18 to that of 3:21, provides clarification of the connection between the divisions and the discussion of wisdom (i.e. that "wisdom" results in boasting in men, which results in division, strife and jealousy). The last part of this connection, between the divisions and boasting, is seen in the reference to the party slogans at 3:22.

(iv) *οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἀνθρώπιος ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων Θεοῦ* (4:1).

The imperative is often not evident in English translation (literally: "Thus, let a man consider us as . . .") e.g. R.S.V. : "This is how one should regard us." 320

The imperative force, however, is implied. Οὕτως points back to the preceding argument, implying a summing up, rather than going with ὡς. 321

At 4:1, Paul's command is retrospectively based (οὕτως), but also introduces a new consideration of how apostles ought to be regarded, and of what is required of them. In its context it marks a turning point: from the stressing of the subordination of apostles, Paul now proceeds to the stressing of their freedom from human judgment (vv.2-5), and later to the contrasting of their humiliation with the "glory" of the Corinthians (vv.7-13), and finally to his special claims (vv.14-17). ἡμῶν, of 4:1, possibly refers to Paul and Apollos, but looks beyond them to the apostolic office they exemplify. At 4:1, Paul is still primarily concerned with the overvaluing of apostles. The transition to undervaluing, however, may occur in this verse in the use of Χριστοῦ and οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων Θεοῦ, which provide a fuller and more precise definition of the apostle's position, and the direction of their service, than does διάκονοι δι' ἔν ἐπιστεύσατε of 3:5. 322 The position of οἰκονόμους may imply a degree of reflected authority as stewards of the gospel, although it is used primarily for synonymous parallelism. 323

(v) ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε (4:5).

This command which is against judging anything before "the time", <sup>324</sup> again concludes a section of argument, ὥστε indicating result or summing up. The immediate context of 4:1-5, to which it relates, is the description of the apostles as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Beyond this, however, it points to the implicit or explicit judgments which the Corinthian parties are in fact making upon the leaders. Against such judgments, Paul asserts the responsibility of an apostle to God alone (4:2). He exemplifies this in his own indifference to judgment (4:3-4). Judgment belongs to the Parousia (καιρός here) and is the prerogative of God. There are, therefore, two distinct errors in the judgments of leaders in the Corinthian divisions: (1) they judge "before the time," as if the Parousia were already here (the attitude to the Parousia attacked with irony in verses 8ff.); (2) they usurp the role of judgment which belongs to God alone. Apostles in particular are responsible only to him.

It is possibly significant that of the imperatives used in 1-4, two occur with ὥστε, indicating result (3:1 and 4:5); one with ἵνα which also probably indicates result, though it is hard to distinguish from purpose (1:31); one

with ὅτως , with the implication of result (4:1); and one with the emphasizing clause: μηδεὶς ἐαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω (3:18). Taken together these appear to suggest that Paul uses the imperatives at key points in his argument to sum up or draw conclusions. The imperative at 4:16 in the exhortation: *μημητάί μου γίνεσθε* is also a prominent point in the argument.

### (3) Clauses of Purpose.

A further possible indication of Paul's purpose, less stylistically prominent than the imperatives, is in the clauses of purpose, introduced by ἵνα (usually) or ὅτως. The most significant of these in revealing the intentions of Paul regarding the Corinthians in Chapters 1-4 are 2:5 and 4:6. (Not considered here are 1:15, which gives, a fortuitous result of not baptising many; 1:31, discussed above as an imperative usage; and 4:8, which is hypothetical.)<sup>325</sup>

(i) 1:27-29 (3 ἵνα clauses and 1 ὅτως ).

The three ἵνα clauses of verses 27-8 describe the purpose of God in choosing the foolish, the weak, the low and the despised - to shame the wise and strong, and bring to nothing things that are. The ὅτως clause (v.29) gives a more inclusive and specific purpose, which is that no-one should boast in the presence of God. All are in fact given as God's purpose but, as his apostle, Paul applies the

consequences to the Corinthian situation, drawing out the consequence, at v.29 and 31, of no ground for boasting except the Lord.

(ii) ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει Θεοῦ (2:5).

Although the immediate reference of this clause is to Paul's proclamation of the gospel at Corinth (in verses 1-4), it may be taken as a summary statement of the whole purpose of proclaiming Christ crucified, described from the perspective of the response it is intended to evoke from the Corinthians.<sup>326</sup> 2:1-2 stress the content, and vv.3-4 the form, of Paul's λόγος and κήρυγμα in his first preaching in Corinth. It is cited as a second example illustrating how the word of the cross is folly to worldly-wise people, but the power of God to those being saved. Because of its exemplary function, the purpose of this particular proclamation can be taken as typical of the aim of preaching Christ crucified in general.

This verse indeed summarises the central purpose of Chapters 1-4 (and relates directly to the divisions) - to refocus the faith of the Corinthians upon the action of God (δύναμις Θεοῦ), his power or wisdom displayed in weakness in the cross, which is the sole object of Paul's κήρυγμα, and is exemplified in the lives of the apostles,

particularly Paul. The reference to ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (faith) is the only specific use of the word in this section, although the concept of "justification by faith" is in mind <sup>327</sup> (like 1:30, an indication of how Paul is not bound by one form of theological terminology). The distinction here, however, is between two bases of faith: (1) σοφία ἀνθρώπων, a wrong basis, resulting in boasting or glorying in men, which is at the root of the divisions; (2) δύναμις Θεοῦ, (used at 1:18 also in contrast with μαρτία), the right basis, which recognises total dependence upon God. Only in the latter can faith be properly grounded. <sup>328</sup> The existence of the divisions implies, however, that this purpose has not been realised. <sup>329</sup>

(iii) ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν (2:12).

This purpose clause comes as a conclusion and climax to 2:10-12. Following a summary of what is meant by σοφίαν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις (vv.6-9), Paul ascribes to τὸ πνεῦμα the function of revealing God's wisdom (v.10), because it alone, as τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, knows τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ (the thoughts of God or what God is)(v.11). It is this spirit which we have received, for the purpose that is given in this clause (2:12): so that we may know what God has freely bestowed on us.

The ἵνα clause here, therefore, relates to the immediate

context primarily. If, however, Paul is alluding to a wrong and divisive understanding of πνεῦμα and πνευματικοί, which seems highly probable, the emphasis here is significant. In addition to the emphasis upon the spirit "of God", distinguished from that of this world, and God as the one who gives knowledge (e.g. v.10 ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ θεὸς ),<sup>330</sup> what the spirit of God enables us to know is defined as "what God has given us"; God is therefore both the agent of knowledge and the giver of what becomes the object of knowledge. The connection between τὸ πνεῦμα and God is strikingly emphatic.

The precise reference of τὰ χαρισθέντα is not clear. It may refer back to ὃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν ... ἃ ἠτόιμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν (v.9), but that too is not specific. Conzelmann at least considers it possible that the object of knowledge, τὰ χαρισθέντα, is used of the event of salvation, rather than the power of the pneumatic.<sup>331</sup> This interpretation is supported not only by the connection with χάρις,<sup>332</sup> but also the connection with verse 9, which in its context (especially the reference to crucifying the Lord of glory, v.8) appears to refer to the cross as the event of salvation. Barrett sees it as referring to the indefinable things of heaven, associated with the eschaton but enjoyed now, as the tense suggests.<sup>333</sup> These, however, at least depend upon the knowledge of the event of salvation and may be partly identified with it.

(iv) ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε τὸ μὴ ὑπερᾶ γέγραπται (4:6)

Some of the problems and suggested interpretations of this verse have been discussed above.<sup>334</sup> It was concluded that Paul appears to be referring to the lesson which he intends the Corinthians to learn from Apollos and himself. It is likely that he is recalling them to the basic word of the cross, which their divisions and exaltation theology bring into doubt.

(v) ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπερ τοῦ ἑνὸς φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου (4:6).

The second purpose clause of 4:6 makes direct reference to a likely cause of divisions, stating the purpose of using Apollos and himself to exemplify apostles - so that they may not be puffed up in favour of one against the other. *φυσιοῦ* is a characteristic verb of I Cor., not because it is a catchword of the Corinthians, but because it is a particularly apt way of describing the attitude of human pride and boastfulness prevalent there. In this clause the connection between boosting the status of their "leaders" (e.g. in the slogans) and puffing themselves up, is explicitly made. They bask in reflected glory.

Taken together, and taking into account their immediate contextual relationship, the purpose clauses provide additional corroborative evidence that Paul's view of the divisions is as a product of human wisdom and boasting. His strategy is therefore to recall the community to recognition of their dependence upon God to whom they owe all knowledge and spiritual power.

(4) Statements about the Corinthians (i.e. how Paul thinks they should regard themselves)

There are two clear statements ( in the second person plural) of how Paul thinks the Corinthians should regard themselves. Both are closely related to their immediate context, which partly accounts for the contradictory nature of the statements. Nevertheless, taken together they provide an important summary of how Paul views the Christian community. (4:8 is not included in the discussion here, as it is an ironical statement of the Corinthians view of themselves.)

(i) ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε (3:3)

The immediate purpose of this statement, which is effectively an accusation, is to explain how the wisdom of God, which Paul speaks among τέλειοι, cannot be spoken among the Corinthians. They are not τέλειοι or πνευματικοί in the sense of the new definition which emerges in 2:10 ff, of those to whom, through the spirit of God, the hidden

things have now been revealed by God's grace. The argument here itself, as well as further evidence in the epistle,<sup>335</sup> makes it likely that some in Corinth were laying claim to the title of *πνευματικοί* or *τέλειοι*. In this case, the argument that Paul proceeds to bring forward, that the divisions show that the Corinthians are still *σαρκικοί*, would be particularly galling.<sup>336</sup> His strategy here, however, may be to provide a stimulus for efforts to remove this impediment to becoming *τέλειοι*, rather than to shame them.<sup>337</sup>

(ii) *ναὸς Θεοῦ ἐστε* (3:16-17)

The description of the Corinthian Christians as the temple of God comes in the context of warning the leaders of the dire consequences of destroying the temple of God (e.g. the 'lex talionis' of v.17a),<sup>338</sup> i.e. leading the people into serious error which would completely destroy the original foundation in Christ. The warning to the leaders at this point is indirect, since the community is addressed in the second person plural. By implication Paul wants them to recognise (*οὐκ οἴδατε*)<sup>339</sup> their status with the indwelling spirit of God - they are *πνευματικοί* or the temple of God - and that this can be destroyed (3:17).

It is unlikely that those described as *ναὸς Θεοῦ* (3:16) are a separate group from those described as *σαρκικοί* (3:3),

for both appear to refer to the community as a whole. While this can be partly accounted for by the difference in context and perspective in the two passages, it is characteristic of Paul's theology of the church that he can describe the community as the temple of God by virtue of the spirit dwelling in it, and at the same time σαρκικοί, by virtue of the ξῆλος καὶ ἐπίς which characterise their behaviour. Far from being a real contradiction, the tension between these two statements is an essential part of the condition of Christian existence in the world ( which the Corinthians on the evidence of 4:8ff may have tried to "simplify").<sup>340</sup>

#### (5) Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are used frequently throughout Chapters 1-4, and indicate a heightened tone or stronger persuasiveness.<sup>341</sup> It is therefore possible that they may provide an additional source of evidence for Paul's purpose, though the immediate context must again be taken into consideration.

(1) μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μή Παῦλος ἑσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; (1:13).

All of the questions here put the unthinkable but logical implications to be drawn from the divisive slogans. (It is generally accepted that the first clause is a question.)<sup>342</sup>

The rhetorical questions are used to evoke a sense of outrage, putting the implications in an untenable form. Paul's intention is to persuade the Corinthians that divisions and slogans deny the gospel which they profess.

(ii) ποῦ σοφός ; ποῦ γραμματεὺς ; ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ; οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου ;  
1:20.

The rhetorical questions put into more emotive language the statement that the wisdom of the wise has been destroyed by God (v.19) - the central point of this section. There is probably allusion to several Old Testament passages here, rather than citation of one.<sup>343</sup> The three types of wise person specified by the words σοφός , γραμματεὺς and συζητητῆς are intended to characterise different types of σοφία τοῦ κόσμου but the precise designation of Jews, Greeks, and the wise generally, is more questionable.<sup>344</sup> It is a representative collection of all worldly wisdom. The force of the rhetorical questions depends to a large extent upon the Old Testament allusions, to which assent can be assumed.

(iii) τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ..... 2:11  
τίς γὰρ ἔγνω ..... 2:16

As these questions relate only to their immediate context, they are not discussed here.<sup>345</sup>

(iv) ... οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε;  
 ... οὐκ ἄνθρωποι ἐστε; τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δέ ἐστιν  
 Παῦλος ; (3:3-5)

A succession of rhetorical questions is used here to apply the general discussion preceding (especially 2:6-16), and particularly the exposition of the nature of πνευμα-  
 -TIKΟΙ , to the Corinthian situation. The heightened tone, to which the multiplying of questions contributes, indicates a climactic point - the application of the general discussion of wisdom to the specific situation of divisions.<sup>346</sup>

The first two questions (of v.3 and v.4) draw from the envy and strife of the Corinthians (v.3) and their divisive slogans (v.4) the conclusion that they are not πνευματικοί or τέλειοι (as they probably claim) but σαρκικοί ,<sup>347</sup> and behaving in human ways or conforming to human standards (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε ). The rhetorical questions fill out the blunt ἐτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε (of v.3a), but also remove the discussion from theory to the actual situation of divisions at Corinth.

The third and fourth questions (of verse 5): τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς ; τί δέ ἐστιν Παῦλος , begin the attack on basing divisions on the persons of the apostles, introducing the discussion of their role as servants and co-workers, as exemplified in Apollos and himself. There is

therefore, in this group of rhetorical questions, a significant indication of Paul's purpose in the previous section retrospectively, and in the succeeding section prospectively. The intensity of tone here, suggests Paul's passionate concern to convince the Corinthians that divisions are without basis and an expression of fleshliness.

(v) τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει ; τί δὲ ἔχεις ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες ; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες , τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβῶν ; (4:7)

The cluster of three linked rhetorical questions here also creates a heightened tone. They follow the accusation that the Corinthians are puffed up in favour of one against the other, in their divisions, by a more general attack on their pride. The questions expose the lack of grounds for boasting. The Corinthians have forgotten that their Christian standing and existence is all "received". At verse 8ff, Paul goes on to show how they have also misunderstood their present blessings as the final ones. Verse 7, however, shows that this is not just a misunderstanding but also a result of pride.

The meaning of διακρίνει is disputed. The sense "sees anything different in you" <sup>348</sup> directs the Corinthians to examine themselves, with the second and third questions making clear what they should learn. The more likely meaning of "makes you different" <sup>349</sup> puts the first question

in closer parallel to the other two. It is, however, then uncertain what the implied answer is. Barrett points out <sup>350</sup> that it could be either (a) that no-one makes you different, because all are pardoned sinners, or (b) it is God who makes you different, conferring different gifts upon you. In the immediate context, as Barrett points out, the latter sense seems to be that developed in the other two questions of verse 7, where the emphasis is on the receiving of gifts, which provides no ground for boasting. In the broader context of 4:6-13, however, the assumption of receiving everything here and now is attacked, so that Paul could be attacking their misunderstanding of the nature of God's gift, which they represent as conferring special, élitist status upon them. The ironical wish of 4:8b, <sup>351</sup> for example, makes the point that all Christians would be enjoying the eschaton (i.e. it attacks the exclusiveness of their "perfection").

The general sense of the passage, as an attack upon the boastful behaviour of the Corinthians which overlooks the fact that their Christian existence is by grace or 'received', is not in doubt. This cluster of questions therefore highlights an attitude at Corinth which has probable divisive consequences in implicit elitism.

(vi) τί θέχετε ; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἢ ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι τε πραύτητος (4:21)

The questions which end the outline of Paul's plans to

visit Corinth (and indeed the whole section 1-4) finally offer the Corinthians a choice between the alternatives of coming with a rod to punish or in love and a spirit of gentleness. They are, therefore, essentially a more vivid form of exhortation, since it is the behaviour of the Corinthians which will be decisive for the form which his coming will take. Love will require him to be severe and punish if they have not reformed, but Paul would clearly prefer to show the more positive face of love, in a spirit of gentleness.

The threat implied, like the admonishing referred to in 4:14, may most probably be taken in relation to the preceding consideration of division and its causes. It may also, however, have a forward-looking element, since Paul is about to embark upon further specific instruction on matters of behaviour and church order. Having established his own right to exercise authority, he here puts the onus upon the Corinthians to decide whether he will have to exercise it in corrective punishment.

The relatively frequent use of rhetorical questions is an indication that the repudiation of rhetoric (e.g. at 1:17; 2:1; 2:4) is not a total exclusion, but a rejection of the artificial, formal rhetoric which some equated with eloquence. <sup>352</sup> It is also an indication that Paul's purpose is exhortation or persuasion in the course of which the use of a simple form of rhetoric, the eloquence of an appeal based upon the word of the cross, is inevitable.

Conclusion to Chapter V. (a)

From the consideration of some stylistically prominent features of Chapters 1-4, some corroborative conclusions can be drawn about the central aims of Paul. They contribute to the identification of Paul's view of the situation at Corinth and his strategy in the letter.

There is, for example, a strong hortatory element, particularly in the prominence of the παρακαλῶ statements, but also in the rhetorical questions. This is a significant indication of Paul's purpose, but also of how he regards his relationship with the Corinthians and what he sees as the root of the problem. He hopes to be able to bring them to see the untenable implications of divisions and uses his relationship as their founder to appeal to them to imitate him.

The imperatives and purpose clauses which go beyond the immediate context also indicate what Paul hopes to achieve, what he sees as the root of divisions, and how he regards his relationship to the Corinthians (e.g. the position assumed from which he can address imperatives to them). The imperatives addressed to the community deal principally with boasting, pride, wisdom, how apostles are to be regarded, and not judging before the time. Purpose clauses likewise deal with the dependence of man upon God's grace, as the purpose of election of the weak and foolish (1:27-9);

of Paul's Kerygma (2:5) and the gift of τὸ πνεῦμα (2:12). A specific purpose of writing this part of the epistle is also related to the divisions and "being puffed up" (4:6).

Finally, in the two statements of how Paul thinks the Corinthian church should regard itself - as the temple of God, in whom his spirit dwells (3:16), yet still σαρκικοί (3:3) there can be seen a basic tension between life in the world and new being in Christ. This too is an important characteristic of how Paul regards the Corinthians and deals with their divisions.

(b) More general references to Paul's apostolate (and the role of apostles):-

Alongside of, and interwoven with, the indications of Paul's specific purpose in writing to the Corinthians are many more general statements about his own apostolate, apostles in general, and how they should be regarded. There is little doubt that they too relate specifically to the Corinthian situation. There are signs both here and more specifically in Chapter 9, that even in I Corinthians Paul's apostolic authority and rights are already under attack, though not as openly as in II Corinthians. The existence of parties using the names of other apostolic leaders, and indeed the party "of Paul" imply a questioning of his authority.<sup>353</sup>

So prominent is the apologetic element that the re-establishment of Paul's authority has been seen by some<sup>354</sup> as the principal aim of Chapters 1-4, in preparation for dealing with the questions of morality and church order which the Corinthians themselves or the reports of the Corinthian situation have raised (Chapters 5ff). Shaw<sup>355</sup> goes much further, seeing the whole epistle, except Chapter 13, as "an exercise of magisterial authority". He sees Paul as belonging to the category of those who, while calling

vigorously for unity, act in a peculiarly divisive way.<sup>356</sup>

On his view, even in exhortations to unity Paul is unable to conceal his real intention, which is to draw attention to his own special position. <sup>357</sup>

Such an interpretation raises in an extreme form a central question about the purpose of Paul and the issue of divisions: in the relationship between (a) appeals and arguments for unity and (b) apologetic or the re-establishment of his authority, which takes precedence? Is the appeal for unity (effectively if not intentionally) a prelude to the exercise of unique apostolic authority, or is the assertion of that authority resorted to in an effort to deal with the disunity which has arisen?

An attempt to answer this question must be made, since it is so directly relevant to the present consideration of Paul's aims, but it is first necessary to look at the statements made by Paul about his apostolate. In the brief survey that follows, the statements have been collected under three categories, distinguished by their content:

- (i) Paul's commission and κήρυγμα.
  - (a) his calling; (b) the content of his κήρυγμα;
  - (c) the form of his κήρυγμα.
- (ii) How apostles are to be regarded.
- (iii) Paul's distinctive or unique role.

A significant progression in the argument is indicated by the fact that statements in the first category occur in Chapters 1 and 2, whereas statements in the second and third category occur in 3 and 4 (with the emphasis moving to the unique role of Paul at the end of 4).

(i) Paul's commission and κήρυγμα.

Statements about Paul's commission and κήρυγμα all occur in Chapters 1 and 2, in the context of discussion of the power and wisdom of God in Christ crucified, contrasted with the wisdom of men.

(A) His specific calling - εὐαγγελίξασθαι (1:17).

Paul's calling or "sending" (ἀπέστειλέν) by Christ is stated negatively at first: not to baptise; and then positively: to proclaim the gospel. The possibility of a misunderstanding involving baptism has been discussed above.<sup>358</sup> The reference to baptism immediately following the divisions (1:12-13) supports the possibility of a connection, but the lack of reference to it elsewhere argues against its being seen as the main cause of division.

The commission, εὐαγγελίξασθαι, is that of the pioneer missionary, at least the primary one. Verse 17 seems to imply distinctive roles within the one mission (cf. 3:6ff.), whereas the statements on baptism of verses 14 and 15 appear to relate to the divisions. There is perhaps, however, a claim

of primacy for the pioneer work of proclaiming the gospel.

(B) The Content

Paul several times, either directly or by implication, describes the content of his κήρυγμα as "Christ crucified":  
 ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:17); ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ (1:18); ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἑσταυρωμένον..... (1:23); Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἑσταυρωμένον. (2:2). The central emphasis in the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ throughout is that it is the action of God, opposed to the wisdom of men. Only at 1:30, which describes their being in Christ as dependent upon God, is there a fuller exposition of the content of this word of the cross. Even there, however, the rich theological terms used have to be filled out from their use in other epistles. More commonly Paul is concerned here with how the word of the cross appears, as folly or power (e.g. 1:18), and with its consequences (e.g. 1:21 saving those who believe; 1:31 putting an end to human boasting).

There is a similar lack of exposition of what is the σοφία (θεοῦ) which Paul claims he speaks (λαλοῦμεν) among the "mature". He is more concerned to claim a place for σοφία as the wisdom of God, than to specify what precisely it is. <sup>359</sup> There are two significant emphases

(seen above) in what he says about this wisdom:

(1) the hidden nature of it, unrecognised even by the rulers of this world (vv.7-9), but now revealed by God; (2) God's power and action as the source of revelation, which is in his eternal plan (vv.7-9).

The second emphasis, upon God's power and initiative, is notably similar to the emphasis of the word of the cross. The first emphasis on the hiddenness of God's wisdom, now revealed, may provide a clue to how σοφία ἐν τοῖς τελείοις can be distinguished from, but need not be inconsistent with, the simple κήρυγμα of Christ crucified. <sup>360</sup> Paul's σοφία cannot, if he is consistent (cf. 1:17, 23,2:2), be a different gospel or way of salvation. It could be, however, setting the cross in a more cosmological perspective, as the culmination of the divine plan.

(C) The form of the κήρυγμα.

Several negative statements concerning the form of Paul's κήρυγμα are given ( in which, though the emphasis is on method, content may also be included):

1:17 οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου.

2:1 οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας

2:4 οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας [λόγοις]

2:13 οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις.

In spite of differences of emphasis, the similarity is striking,<sup>361</sup> suggesting reiteration of the same essential point - the rejection of human forms of persuasiveness based on "wisdom". The form of his preaching is integrally related by Paul to the central theme of the contrast between σοφία ἀνθρώπων and λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (e.g. 1:17; and 2:1-4 where Paul's first preaching at Corinth is used to exemplify how the wisdom of God is manifest in human weakness). The repudiation of "wisdom of words" or "words of wisdom" is presented by Paul as a deliberate decision,<sup>362</sup> and the form necessary for consistency with the content of the word of the cross. This becomes clear from the positive statements at 2:4 and 2:13,<sup>363</sup> contrasted with the negatives quoted above. In 2:4 persuasive words of (human) wisdom are contrasted with ἀπόδειξις πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως. In 2:13 words taught by human wisdom are contrasted with those taught by the spirit (ἐν διδασκαίᾳ πνεύματος).

In both, a claim is made to divine power being behind the form of κήρυγμα (i.e. through the spirit).<sup>364</sup>

It is also implied that only such a form can fittingly present the dependence upon God, rejecting human wisdom, which is central to the word of the cross. Since Paul asserts that this is characteristic of his κήρυγμα, the question is raised of how far his aim is apologetic.

Is Paul, for example, turning what his opponents call a weakness (lack of eloquent rhetoric) into a strength?

Is it a retrospective awareness (like 1:15) or a conscious principle from the first (as 2:2 suggests)?

It is inherently probable that divisions based upon rival leaders would involve critical comparison of their eloquence as a proof of their authority. Paul's claim that the form of his κήρυγμα is determined by God and the spirit also involves the establishment of his authority. It is, however, no more exclusive than the claim to preach Christ crucified, to which it is related. Like Galatians 1:9, it establishes a criterion which others too may meet. In II Corinthians, specific criticism of Paul's lack of eloquence or rhetorical skill, can clearly be inferred from Paul's apology.<sup>365</sup> In I Corinthians, the repudiation of the form of sophistic rhetoric is much less specific, and in fact could be accounted for by a general tendency at Corinth to overvalue this type of "eloquence" and use it as a criterion for judgment of their leaders.

(ii) How apostles are to be regarded.

There are two main 'thrusts' of the statements about how apostles generally are to be regarded. These are directed against overvaluing and undervaluing of apostles.

(A) Against overvaluing:-

3:5ff. δίακονοι stresses the subordinate role of the apostles as servants of God, who alone gives the growth;<sup>366</sup>

3:9 θεοῦ συνεργοί - "fellow workers in the service of God" <sup>367</sup> - emphasizes the relationship of Paul and Apollos but implies subordination;

3:22 πάντα... ὑμῶν includes the apostles among the things which are "yours", reversing the order of possession of the slogans;

4:1 ὑπηρέτας... καὶ οἰκονόμους combines the subordinate position of apostles with the claim that they are responsible and answerable to Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God.

(B) Against undervaluing:-

It is, however, also wrong to judge the apostle, who is responsible only to God (4:2-5). Christ will judge him (and all) when he comes. The apostle's commissioning by, and answerability to, God or Christ, establishes his freedom to exercise authority in Corinth. (At 4:8b-13 the Corinthians appear to ignore the fact that the apostles live in dishonour, suffering and danger.)

(iii) Paul's distinctive or unique role.

Paul lays claim to a distinctive position for himself, even while arguing for an end to rivalry, on the grounds that he and Apollos, exemplifying the complementary roles of apostles, are fellow-workers:

3:6 ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα

3:10 θεμέλιον ἔθηκα

At this point, these appear to be little more than statements of the historical fact that Paul was the first to reach them with the gospel.

At 4:14-15, however, this fact is the basis of a special relationship (cf. II Cor. 10:14), characterised by the image of a father ( πατήρ ) and children ( τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά ). Paul, the father, is contrasted with κυρίους παιδαγωγούς, an image which makes two points of subordination: their inferior status and their number (contrasted with the one father). The unique father-children relationship is the basis of the exhortation (v.16), of Timothy's task (v.17), and the threat of v.21.

Conclusion to Chapter V (b):-

The role of apostles in general, and Paul's own unique position in particular, figure prominently in the argument of Chapters 1-4. The prominent exhortation at 4:16, for example, is based upon the establishment of Paul's role as father. There is therefore no doubt that Paul's apostolic role is important in the strategy of the letter and the settling of divisions.

Is it, however, the real purpose of Paul in this section to establish his unique position as the proclaimer of the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified, rather than to deal with divisions? May Paul in fact, whatever his own intentions, be aggravating divisions by claiming unique authority to settle them? If so, it would be necessary to modify the conclusion reached so far: that Paul's central concern is the divisions at Corinth. Such a modification does not however seem essential in the light of the evidence considered above.

(1) Paul's commission and κήρυγμα.

The content and method of Paul's proclamation of Christ crucified are introduced and discussed in relation to the divisions, which are interpreted as a product of human wisdom. Paul is emphatic that Christ crucified is the key-note of his κήρυγμα, but there is no explicit attack on

other leaders, and the statements take the form of establishing criteria for Christian proclamation, rather than making an exclusive claim.

(ii) How apostles in general are to be regarded.

This also is introduced in connection with divisions, which imply overvaluing and undervaluing of leaders. Questions of authority and leadership are raised. The first thrust of Paul's argument is to show the complementary roles of apostles and remove the grounds for setting up rivalry between them. Paul and Apollos have distinctive roles within one mission, and, like all apostles, are servants, not to be overvalued. But they are also not to be judged, which is what is being done when rival slogans are adopted, for they are answerable to God. The appeal by Paul to a transcendent source of authority, to which alone the apostle is answerable, is not exclusive, and is indeed related to the judgment all face.

(iii) Paul's distinctive role and relationship.

The claim made explicitly at 4:14-15 (foreshadowed in 3:6 and 3:10) is to pre-eminence as founder apostle. It is the basis for his exhortation to imitate him(4:16) and probably preparation for Timothy's and his own visit. It seems highly probable that these visits and his threat (4:21)

are still related to the divisions, the serious problem of 1-4, though they may also look ahead to other problems at Corinth (e.g. in Chapter 5 & 6). It is impossible to be certain about how acceptable and effective Paul's claim upon the Corinthian community was. II Corinthians is sometimes cited as evidence of failure. Shaw's criticism of inherent divisiveness in Paul's claim <sup>368</sup> is based upon experience of divisions. It is not completely inconceivable, however, that the "father" of the Christian community carried a unique personal respect and authority (perhaps analogous to that of the "father of the nation" of a newly independent country). The origin of the church at Corinth in Paul's proclamation could not be disputed, though the continued authority of Paul could be. The claim to unique authority was not intrinsically divisive, because it was based upon the known historical fact of Paul's part in founding the community.

Throughout Chapters 1-4, it has been argued, unity has been the dominant concern, and the divisions treated as a situation so serious in themselves that this issue can hardly be seen as leading up to the establishing of Paul's authority (in Chapter 4:14ff.). It seems more plausible that within the vacuum of authority since his departure from Corinth, competing leadership claims and divisions have emerged, forcing

Paul to lay claim to unique authority in the interests of unity. (No doubt he was also human enough to wish to defend himself against anti-Pauline attacks.) In claiming this unique position as the one who proclaimed to them first, and in weakness, the word of the cross, Paul tries to transcend factions. Just as the word of the cross is not one among several types of wisdom, but unique and the only true wisdom, so Paul is not one among many leaders, but their one and only father. The acknowledgment of this would be a substantial step to re-establishing unity, and it is significant that practical reinforcement of the letter is given by the impending visits of Timothy and Paul.

Notes on Part II (Chapters III -V)

- (1) Dahl: Paul and the church at Corinth, p.44.
- (2) Meeks: (The First Urban Christians, p.5) argues that interpretation is unavoidable.
- (3) e.g. 1:17; 1:23; 2:1-4; 2:6.
- (4) Cf. RSV and Barrett: I Cor. p.40.
- (5) Blass, Debrunner, Funk (B.D.F.): A Greek Grammar of the New Testament; p.238 § 456 (3). Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.81; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.70 ( note 7).
- (6) Barrett: I Cor., p.81.
- (7) Cf. Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., p.10): purport rather than purpose.
- (8) Conzelmann: (I Cor., p.31): 'divisions' and 'quarrels'; Barrett: (I Cor., p.40): 'divisions' and 'contentions'; Héring: (I Cor., p.4): 'cleavages' and disputes'; Moffatt (I Cor., p.8): 'cliques' and 'quarrelling'; Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., pp.9-11): 'dissensions' or 'splits', and 'contention' or 'wrangling'; Munck (Paul & the Salvation of Mankind: p.138f.): 'cliques' (non-theological) and 'disputes' (words).
- (9) Munck: Ibid. p. 139;  
Bruce: I & II Cor., p.32;  
Barrett: I Cor., p.42:
- (10) Moffatt: (I Cor., p.9) refers to similar appeals for harmony in Greek democracy.  
Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.42.
- (11) Munck: (op. cit. p.138f.) ensures his argument two ways:-

(a) σχίσματα are only temporary.

(b) σχίσματα do not exist yet.

- (12) Barrett: 'Cephas and Corinth' (Cephas), p.2.
- (13) Literal uses: Mt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21.
- (14) John 7:43, among 'the people'; 9:16, among the Pharisees and 10:19, among the Jews.
- (15) Munck: op. cit., p.137f.
- (16) Conzelmann: I Cor. p.32. Munck: op. cit. , p.138
- (17) Maurer: T.D.N.T. (Vol.VII) p. 964.
- (18) Cf. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.32
- (19) Héring: I Cor., p.4.
- (20) Maurer (op. cit., p.964) points out that the distinction is known in Jewish thought.
- (21) Barrett: I Cor. p.261 (Cf. Munck op. cit. p.136)
- (22) E.g. Allo I Cor. p.7; Héring: I Cor. p.4; Robertson and Plummer: I Cor. pp.10-11; Barrett: I Cor. p.43; Bruce: I & II Cor. p.32; Munck: op. cit. p.139 etc.
- (23) Barrett: I Cor., pp.42-3; Arndt & Gingrich (Bauer): A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 309.
- (24) B.D.F. (op. cit. note 5 above, p.78f.) point out frequent use of plural of abstract nouns for concrete phenomena.
- (25) Munck: op. cit., p.139.
- (26) Robertson & Plummer: I Cor., p.11
- (27) Cf. Munck: (op. cit. p.139): more noisy (bickering).
- (28) See note 5 above.
- (29) Barrett: I Cor., p.81

- (30) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.72; Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., p. 53): in classical authorities it acquires the force of a conditional particle as here, meaning 'seeing that'.
- (31) Lightfoot: Notes on Epistles of St. Paul: p.186
- (32) It has good attestation (p<sup>46</sup> D,G,) but is almost universally rejected. See Barrett: I Cor. p.79, note 4.
- (33) Lightfoot: op. cit.p.186.
- (34) Cf. Robertson and Plummer: I Cor., p.53 (strife as expression of envy).
- (35) See Note (4) above.
- (36) E. g. use of φυσικός and καυχάομαι. (See note 133 below.)
- (37) Barrett: I Cor. p.43. Conzelmann: I Cor. p.33  
Ellis (Prophecy and Hermeneutic, p.47, note 8): not parties but individual preferences or tendencies in I Cor. (Cf. p.103.)
- (38) Hurd: The Origin of I Corinthians pp.215ff. Bruce (I & II Cor. p.32) sees him as one of θείοι ἄνθρωποι.  
Cf. Allo: I Cor., p.9 and 81; Robertson & Plummer: I. Cor., p.6.
- (39) E.g. Schmithals: Gnosis in Corinth : pp.201-6.  
Dahl: op. cit. (note 1), p.49.
- (40) Shaw (The Cost of Authority, pp.62ff.) implies this.
- (41) Moffatt: I Cor., p.38.
- (42) See p. 46f. above

- (43) Cf. Allo: I Cor. pp.80-87: Excursus IV on the parties.
- (44) Schütz: op. cit., pp.189-90; Hurd: op. cit., p.96f.
- (45) Munck: op. cit., p.139f. Hurd: op. cit. p.96.
- (46) Schmithals: op. cit., p.113.
- (47) E.g. Schmithals: op.cit., p.114; Dahl: op. cit. (note 1), pp.40-1.
- (48) Hurd: (op. cit., pp.97-106) gives a good summary of the support for different parties as real opponents.
- (49) Baur and' Tübingen School (e.g. Munck: op. cit., p.135).
- (50) Dahl: op. cit., p.49.
- (51) Schmithals: op. cit., p.113.
- (52) Ibid. p.114, 200-4.
- (53) " pp.200-1.
- (54) " p.201.
- (55) Munck: Paul and the Salvation of Mankind pp.135-40.
- (56) Ibid. p.139.
- (57) " pp.138-9,140. He presents as proof the disappearance of the factions, and treating the church as a whole.
- (58) Moffatt: I Cor., p.9.
- (59) Schütz: (op. cit. p.190) sees Paul driving behind the divisions to the theological basis.
- (60) Moffatt: I Cor. p.8.
- (61) Dahl: op. cit., p.42.
- Allo (I Cor., p.91) speaks of near agreement on the first 3 slogans.
- (62) E.g. Schütz: op. cit., p.189; Munck: op. cit. p.140.
- (63) Schmithals: op. cit. e.g. p.202.

- (64) Schütz (op. cit., p.189) sees the way he approaches the community as the reason.
- (65) Allo (I Cor. pp.9 and 80) gives reasons.
- (66) Barrett: I Cor. p.43.
- (67) Munck (op. cit., p.142 footnote 2) thinks Christ is also seen as a Christian leader or teacher.
- (68) E.g. Schütz: op. cit., p.188.
- (69) Barrett: I Cor. p.43.
- (70) Dahl: op. cit., p.47.
- (71) Hurd (op. cit., p.97) says no scholar suggests the Pauline group as chief opponents. Allo (I Cor. p.6) links with Marcion's supra-paulinism.
- (72) Barrett: I Cor., p.43; Munck: op. cit., p.141, sees censure only of those professing as teacher of wisdom.
- (73) Acts. 18:1.
- (74) See Hurd: op. cit., pp.97-9; Allo: I Cor., p.81.  
(Baur sees petro-Christians opposing pauline-apollonians).
- (75) Cf. Conzelmann( I Cor. p.33, note 22): 'precarious'.
- (76) Cf. connotations in Britain of 'a German theologian'.
- (77) Manson: St. Paul in Ephesus (3) The Corinthian Correspondence, p.7; cf. Bruce; I & II Cor., p.32 etc.
- (78) Conzelmann (I Cor. p.297): his matter of fact manner counteracts divisions.
- (79) This would be evidence of an Apollos group but not of his approval of it.
- (80) See below pp.144ff.
- (81) Barrett: 'Cephas and Corinth', e.g. p.11f. ; I Cor. p.44.

- (82) Hurd: op. cit. (38) above, p.100 especially note 6.)  
 cf. Allo: I Cor. pp.81f; Héring: ICor.p.5: Conzelmann:  
I Cor. p.33.
- (83) Dahl: op. cit. pp.40-1 (but he says the weaknesses of it  
 are well known).
- (84) Ibid. p.41.
- (85) Munck: op. cit., p.70.
- (86) Ibid. pp. 76-84. The three bases attacked are:  
 (1) a period of writing of two centuries;  
 (2) the weight given to Acts;  
 (3) the highlighting of controversial passages disregarding  
 positive utterances.
- (87) Schmithals: op. cit., p.120; cf. Munck, op. cit., p.168;  
 Dahl: op. cit., p.41.
- (88) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.44.
- (89) Manson: op. cit., pp.13ff.
- (90) Ibid: pp.10-12.
- (91) Theissen: (1) The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity,  
 pp.28ff.
- (92) Manson: op. cit., p.20.
- (93) Ibid. p. 7 (He sees Apollos as no problem.)
- (94) " pp. 9-10.
- (95) Barrett: Cephas: p.11.
- (96) See Hurd (op. cit., pp.101-7) and Allo (I Cor., pp.9-10)  
 for accounts of conflicting arguments. Hurd concludes  
 there is no real party, as Meeks (op. cit., p.117).

Héring ( I Cor. p. 4 and 6), supports a gloss or Paul's slogan.

- (97) Hurd: op. cit., pp.104-5. Cf. Schmithals' interpretation of 1:13 (op. cit., p.201).
- (98) Cf. Munck: op. cit., p.150.
- (99) Cf. Conzelmann: I Cor. p.34.
- (100) The critical attitude to someone who claims to be 'of Christ' is corroborative evidence, but does not require that the situations of I and II Cor. be considered identical.
- (101) E.g. use of ἀλλὰ. Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.45.
- (102) Barrett: I Cor., p.45.
- (103) Conzelmann: I Cor. pp.33-4.
- (104) Dahl: op. cit., p.49; Allo(I Cor., p.83) gives as view of Rübiger.
- (105) Manson: op. cit., p.20.
- (106) Barrett: I Cor., p.45.
- (107) Bruce: I and II Cor., p.33.
- (108) Moffatt: I Cor., p.9.
- (109) Conzelmann: I Cor., pp.33-4.
- (110) See below note 113.
- (111) E.g. Meeks: op. cit. (note 2) p.59.
- (112) Theissen (1) op. cit. (note 91) p.93.
- (113) Hitchcock (JTS xxv, 1923-4 pp. 163-7: 'Who are "the people of Chloe" in I Cor. 1:11?') suggests a religious body, parallel to οἱ Παύλου etc., votaries of

- Demeter, because *Χλόη* is used of Demeter by Aristophanes and others. The inherent improbability that Paul would cite such a source is decisive.
- (114) Theissen (1) op. cit., pp.56-7; cf. Meeks: op. cit., pp. 57-8.
- (115) Meeks: op. cit., pp.56-7.
- (116) Theissen (1) op.cit., p.94.
- (117) Conzelmann (I. Cor., p.32) points out the reverse problem of no reference to Stephanas etc. in Chap.1.
- (118) Allo: I Cor., p.8; Barrett: I Cor., p.42; Hurd: op. cit., p.48.
- (119) Cf. Bruce: I & II Cor., pp.23 & 32; Robertson & Plummer (I. Cor. p.10): *ἐδηλώθη* used of official evidence. Arndt & Gingrich (op. cit., p.177) used of giving information or revealing.
- (120) Dahl: op. cit., pp.50ff. Allo (I Cor., p.8): sees *οἱ Χλόης* as too numerous and insignificant to fear attack as informants. Schmithals (op. cit., p.102) sees the 'blunt' description *οἱ Χλόης* as an indication that they are non-resident.
- (121) 4:8.
- (122) Chapter 7 ff.
- (123) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.17.
- (124) Barrett: I Cor. p.116; Conzelmann: I Cor. p.297.

- (125) Barrett: I Cor. p.116.
- (126) Conzelmann: I Cor. p.297; Moulton (Turner): A Grammar of New Testament Greek:Volume III, p. 114 - expectation (more than probable). Arndt and Gingrich (op. cit. p.210) concur. Héring (I Cor., p.184) sees the change as surprising.
- (127) Barrett (I Cor., p.390-1) concludes we must admit ignorance. Héring (I Cor., p.184) suggests shyness (Cf. II Tim. 1:7).
- (128) Cf. Ro. 16:21; II Cor.1:1,19; Phil. 1:1.
- (129) Arndt & Gingrich (op. cit., p.556-7): 'My Christian teachings'; Barrett (I Cor. p.117): moral standards which can be taught.
- (130) Funk: Language Hermeneutic and Word of God, p.276.
- (131) See above p. 34.
- (132) Used in a similar context in Phil.2:24 (Cf.2:19).
- (133) Moulton: A Concordance of the Greek Testament p.997; Barrett: I Cor. p.107. (Cf. 5:2; 8:1; 13:4 and II Cor. 12:10.)
- (134) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.50.
- (135) Theissen (1): op. cit., pp.71ff.  
Meeks: op. cit., p.69 and 183.
- (136) Theissen (1): op. cit., p.71.
- (137) " p.71.
- (138) " p.72

- (139) Theissen (1) p. 72.
- (140) " pp.96-9.
- (141) " pp.55-7.
- (142) Filson: 'The Significance of the Early House Churches', pp. 105ff.
- (143) Ibid. p.110.
- (144) " p.110.
- (145) " p.111f.
- (146) Theissen (1): op. cit. p.55.
- (147) Ibid. pp.54ff.
- (148) A wrong emphasis upon the baptiser, analogous to the mystagogue of mystery religions, has been frequently held since Reitzenstein (see Schütz: op. cit. p.188). Cf. Meeks (op. cit., p.117), who links baptism with over-realised eschatology (Apollos).
- (149) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.47; Arndt & Gingrich: op. cit., p. 378; Robertson & Plummer: I Cor. p.14.
- (150) Theissen (1): op. cit., pp.55ff. and 102; Meeks: op. cit., pp. 118-9; Filson: op. cit., p.111.
- (151) Schütz: op. cit., p.189.
- (152) Dahl (op. cit., p.48) thinks he is meeting criticism. Meeks ( op. cit., p.117) sees it as connected with an over-realised eschatology.
- (153) E.g. Schmithals' arguments, below p. 110.
- (154) I.e. a likely but not actual result.
- (155) Schütz: op. cit., p.189; cf. Meeks: op cit. p.117.

- (156) Schütz: (op. cit., p.189) sees Paul as setting baptism there.
- (157) Ibid. p.191.
- (158) Ibid.
- (159) "
- (160) "
- (161) "
- (162) Ibid. p.189.
- (163) E.g. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.36; cf. Schütz: op. cit., p. 189.
- (164) Barrett: I Cor., p.48; Schütz: op. cit., p.189.
- (165) Schmithals: op. cit., pp.256f.
- (166) Dahl: op. cit., p.48.
- (167) P. 31f. above.
- (168) Robertson & Plummer: I Cor., p.15.
- (169) Cf. Ro. 4:14; II Cor.9:3 for use of *κενός*. Schütz (op. cit., p.202f.) sees as robbing of eschatological capacity.
- (170) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.37. Cf. Schmithals: op. cit., p. 143f.
- (171) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.38.
- (172) Barrett: I Cor., p.51.
- (173) Cf. Bruce: I & II Cor., p.34; Barrett: I Cor., p.52. Conzelmann (I Cor., pp.41-2) points out it is not just a subjective attitude.

- (174) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.48.
- (175) 1:18 and 1:24.
- (176) Bornkamm (Faith and Reason in Paul's Epistles,  
NTS 4, 1957-8, pp.93-100) argues that a definite  
way and content of thinking is being attacked, not  
reason. Conzelmann (I Cor., pp.43-4) see wisdom  
as an attitude and related to revelation.
- (177) See below p. 178.
- (178) Barrett (I Cor., p.55) sees it as a redefinition of  
ΤΟΥΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΥΝΤΑΣ of v.21.
- (179) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.46) points out that they are  
the Jewish equivalent of Greek and barbarian.
- (180) Barrett (I Cor., p.54) takes as Christians. Conzelmann:  
(I Cor., p.47) finds the style of confession here.
- (181) Cf. 1:24 ΤΟΙΣ ΚΛΗΤΟΙΣ and 1:27 ἐξελέξατο.
- (182) See pp. 102-106 above.
- (183) "Were" at their calling, but still "are". Barrett  
(I Cor. p.57) and Conzelmann (I Cor. p.49) use the  
present.
- (184) Conzelmann (I Cor. p.51) translates, "By his act"....  
Barrett (I Cor., p.59) thinks the context suggests  
Christ as the means and God as the goal and source  
of being.
- (183) V.31 alludes to Jer.9:23-4 and supports the view that  
Paul may be using the substance of a sermon preached

on Jer.8:13-9:24, the Haphtorah for Ab: 9.

(Thackeray: The Septuagint and Jewish Worship, pp.80ff.) Barrett (I Cor., p.51) cites with approval. Munck (op. cit., p.148) is sceptical, as is Bruce (I & II Cor., pp.36-7).

- (186) See Barrett: I Cor., p.59ff. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.52.
- (187) Moulton (op. cit. (note 133) p.542f.) lists 16 uses of καυχάομαι in II Cor. and 5 in I Cor. (out of 32). It is more characteristic of II Cor., unlike φυσιώω (see note 133).
- (188) Acts 18:5-11 describes an 18 month stay.
- (189) For this reading see Conzelmann: I Cor., p.55.
- (190) Barrett (I Cor., p.63) refers to (and rejects) the supposition of a change after the Areopagus Speech of Acts 17:22-31.
- (191) Cf. II Cor. 11:30; 12:5&9.
- (192) Hurd (op. cit. pp.97ff.) lists some who support this. Cf. Meeks: op cit., p.117.
- (193) Von Campenhausen: Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, p.41.
- (194) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.57) sees as contradictory.
- (195) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.67.
- (196) δὲ (v.6) and ἀλλὰ (v.7) show contrast. ἀλλὰ does not introduce a contrast with the main statement of v.6.

- (197) Barrett: I Cor., p.67f.
- (198) Cf. Scroggs: Paul: σοφός and πνευματικός (NTS.14) pp.50ff; Conzelmann (I Cor., p.57) divides into (a) 2:6-9 wisdom (b) 2:10-16 (wisdom) among the perfect.
- (199) Carr ('The Rulers of this Age', NTS 23, 1976, pp.20-35 and Angels and Principalities, pp.118ff.) discusses the significance of ἄρχοντες, but it is not apposite to the present study.
- (200) Barrett: I Cor., p.67.
- (201) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.56.
- (202) Scroggs (op. cit., p.34) sees 2 contrasts in I Cor.1-2: (a) between the σοφία of the Corinthians and Paul's κήρυγμα (b) between their σοφία and Paul's.
- (203) Painter (Paul and the πνευματικοί at Corinth, p.237) points out its distinctive absolute use in I Cor.
- (204) Painter (ibid. pp.237-8) lists and then discusses 4 possibilities.
- (205) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.57.
- (206) Bultmann: Karl Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p.71f (Cf. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.57).
- (207) Schmithals (op. cit., pp.151ff) describes it as "formally gnostic". (Cf. Bornkamm: T.D.NT. IV, pp819-820)

- (208) Wilckens: T.D.N.T. Vol. VII, pp.519ff.
- (209) Schmithals (op.cit., p.152ff.) suggests defence against the charge of not revealing because he is not πνευματικός.
- (210) The evidence is against a developed gnosticism but for gnosticising tendencies. Cf. Painter: op. cit., p. 244; Wilson: Gnosis at Corinth and How Gnostic were the Corinthians?
- (211) Scroggs (op. cit., p.38 argues that τέλειοι is used metaphorically. It does not denote a higher salvation and access to it is not by initiation.
- (212) E.g. Painter (op. cit., p.237) points out the terms used are not Jewish. Scroggs (op. cit., p.34) points out that not much is told of the content of Paul's wisdom (i.e. we are dependent on the terms and form).
- (213) Conzelmann (I Cor. p.59) sees "we" as "those in the know", polemic by its context. Barrett (I Cor. p.68f) sees it as a stylistic mark of the passage.
- (214) Cf. Meeks: op. cit., p.119.
- (215) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.71 note 25) suggests it might be associated with the way of perfection.
- (216) Barrett (I Cor., p.80) points out that its wide use need not indicate dependence.
- (217) Cf. 1:17 and 2:1. All Christians are πνευματικοί (Cf. Schmithals: op. cit., p.152).
- (218) Francis: As babes in Christ (J.St.N.T. 7, 1980) pp.41-60, e.g. p.56.

- (219) Cf. 1:12 and 3:22.
- (220) Francis: op. cit., p.56.
- (221) Not in later technical sense (cf. Barrett: I Cor. p. 84) but Robertson & Plummer: (I Cor. p.57) think it connotes active service.
- (222) Ro. 15:20; II Cor.10:14 etc. attach importance to being first.
- (223) As in 2:6-16.
- (224) See Robertson and Plummer: I Cor., p.58. Barrett (I Cor., p.86) sees the context as emphasizing Apollos and Paul working together. Conzelmann (I Cor. p.74) sees the emphasis on Θεός. The difference is principally one of emphasis.
- (225) Manson: op. cit. (77) above, p.9 Barrett: I Cor., p.87f. and Cephas pp.6-8.
- (226) Barrett (I Cor., p.90) and Conzelmann (I Cor. p.77f.) see an allusion to the apocalyptic or eschatological temple of Judaism, although it is also a common Hellenistic image for God dwelling in man.
- (227) It is possible to see the change coming after 10(a) with the warnings (cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.87).
- (228) See note 225 above.
- (229) Munck: op. cit., p.141f.
- (230) Ibid.
- (231) Barrett: I Cor., p.91 Manson: op. cit. p.7.

- (232) See note 338 below on εἰ τις.
- (233) Cf. Phil.3:2ff. and II Cor.11.
- (234) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.93; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.79.
- (235) See p.125 above and note 197.
- (236) Funk (op. cit., pp.277ff.) giving an account of Wilckens: Weisheit and Torheit, says 3:18-23 has a special place in the interrelation of themes:- (a) it summarises the section on σοφία ; (b) it solves the question of factions on the basis of this.
- (237) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.80): a philosophic(stoic) maxim is adapted in πάντα ὑμῶν.
- (238) See Conzelmann: I Cor., p.80-81; Barrett: I Cor., pp.96-8.
- (239) Barrett: I Cor., p.99; Conzelmann (I Cor., p.83) states that both are from the language of administration.
- (240) Arndt and Gingrich (op. cit., p.562) cite a cultic use for administrator.
- (241) Judgment of Paul is more prominent in II Cor. 10-13.
- (242) Cf. Note (236) above.
- (243) Theissen (1): op. cit., p.41.
- (244) Hooker: 'Beyond the things which are written', NTS X, 1964, p. 131.
- (245) Ibid. p.131 (Plato: Leg. 906c).
- (246) " p.131 (Cf. Schneider: T.D.N.T. Vol. VII. p.957f.)
- (247) Barrett: I Cor., p.104 and 106.
- (248) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.85.
- (249) Howard: E.T.XXXIII, 1922 pp.479-80, gives a clear account of 3 suggested emendations.

- (250) Hooker: op. cit. (244) above, p.128.
- (251) Ibid. p.128.
- (252) " p.128. (She sees the two clauses as not co-ordinate.)
- (253) Ibid. p.130.
- (254) ἃ γέγραπται refers to the use of quotations to support the argument of Chapter 1-3 (referring especially to 3:19ff. which goes back to Chapter 1f.). (Hooker: op. cit, p.129f.).
- (255) Conzelmann: I Cor. p.86.
- (256) Barrett: I Cor. p.106f.
- (257) Barrett: I Cor. p.107, Conzelmann: I Cor. p.86
- (258) The irony of v.8 seems to require taking these as statements (cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.108f. Robertson & Plummer: I Cor., p. 83).
- (259) B.D.F. op. cit., p.183, § 361 (use of the subjunctive in place of the indicative of unreality in final clauses).
- (260) E.g. Mt. 5:5, 10,44; Lk. 6:27 (cf. Ro.12:14,20; II Cor.4: 7-12; 6:4-10 etc.)
- (261) But too faraway to be the only point of reference.
- (262) See note (253) above.
- (263) E.g. Käsemann: Essays on New Testament Themes, p.171; Munck op. cit., p.165; Bruce: I & II Cor. p.49f.
- (264) Ellis ("Christ Crucified" in Prophecy and Hermeneutic, pp.77ff.) argues that I Cor.15 seems to

reflect the Platonic view of the release of the immortal soul at death.

- (265) Ibid. p.78.
- (266) Thiselton: 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth' (NTS 24 1978 pp.510-526), p.512.
- (267) Ibid. p.512.
- (268) " p.512.
- (269) " p.513.
- (270) " pp.513-4.
- (271) Schmithals: op. cit., e.g. p.205.
- (272) Bruce: I & II Cor., pp.24 and 52.
- (273) It is often difficult to be sure who are meant by  $\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  and  $\sigma\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  e.g. The 'Literary Plural' in Paul and contemporary writing is hard to identify (B.D.F. op.cit., p.146. § 280; Moulton (Turner) op. cit., p.28).
- (274) The context makes it clear. Conzelmann (I Cor., p.91, notes 6 and 7) points out that both could be used of a father.
- (275) Tutor guardians, not teachers. Bruce: I & II Cor., p.51. Cf. Gal. 3:24.
- (276) See above p. 33f.
- (277) Cf. 2:4 etc.
- (278) Cf. 1:31; 2:6.
- (279) 2:1-5; 3:1-2.
- (280) The same metaphor is used in Judaism (see Barrett: I Cor. p.115; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.91f, note 12),

and also of the relationship of mystagogue and initiand. Its use here is not conclusive evidence for or against seeing this relationship as the cause of divisions, as it is not based on baptism here.

- (281) Cf. 1:17; 9:1-2.
- (282) The ultimate confirmation is the existence of the Corinthian church (9:2).
- (283) See note (129) above.
- (284) 16:12.
- (285) E.g. by Dahl: op. cit., p.55. Schütz (op. cit., p.190) sees 1:10 to 4:21 as "an elaborate exposition of apostolic authority in preparation for its specific application in 5:1".
- (286) Only *χαρισθέντα* 2:12.
- (287) I.e. effectually the end because practical matters follow.
- (288) See p. 31f. above.
- (289) Sanders: 'The Transition from opening epistolary thanksgiving to body in the letters of the Pauline Corpus' (J.B.L. 81, 1962), pp.348 ff.
- (290) Mullins: 'Disclosure. A Literary Form in the New Testament' (Nov. Test. 7, 1964) pp.46-54.
- (291) Ibid.
- (292) Ibid.
- (293) Schmitz: T.D.N.T. Vol.V. pp.773-799 (especially 794-9).

- (294) Ibid. p.799.
- (295) Dahl: op. cit. (1) above p.46.
- (296) Moffatt (I Cor., p.9): "drop these party cries" may catch its intention.
- (297) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.31 note 2.
- (298) E.g. Robertson & Plummer: I Cor. p.10; Barrett: I Cor., p. 42.
- (299) Hooker: (Pauline Pieces: Chap.12, p.72) points out that the analogy of the body is illustrating diversity.
- (300) Sanders: 'Imitating Paul: I Cor. 4:16' (H.T.R. 74, 1981) pp.353-5.
- (301) Ibid. p.354. ( $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$  is crucial in his argument)
- (302) " p.351.
- (303) See note (129) above.
- (304) Sanders: op. cit., p.356.
- (305) Ibid. p.356f.
- (306) " p.358.
- (307) " p.361.
- (308) " " " .
- (309) " p.360.
- (310) " p.361.
- (311) " " .
- (312) See pp. 151ff.
- (313) Cf. Von Campenhausen (op. cit., p.52): "The hortative and not the imperative is really the mood of the verbs in Pauline paraenesis."

- (314) Barrett (I Cor., p.56) following Schlatter, thinks that  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  indicates the indicative.
- (315) Conditional sense. Barrett (I Cor., p.61) sees as the Semitic use of the conditional participle as a subject, dependent on LXX.
- (316) Ellis (Exegetical Patterns in I Corinthians and Romans (in Prophecy and Hermeneutic), p.213.) sees grounds for supposing it a midrash or independent exposition.
- (317) See note (149) above.
- (318) See note (236).
- (319) See above p.165f Cf. 1:29.
- (320) Cf. Barrett: I Cor. p.99.
- (321) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.82, note 1, gives reasons against  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\rho\nu\omicron\iota$  could have connotations of service of the community at 3:5.
- (323) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.100.
- (324) I.e. the Parousia . Cf. Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., p. 78) who comment that there is no exact equivalent in English, French or German.
- (325) See note (259) above.
- (326) Because its emphasis is on the Corinthian response, it is discussed here, rather than in the following section, with the form of Paul's proclamation.
- (327) Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., p.34) the verse is coordinate with 1:31 but in a higher plane because  $\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is used for  $\kappa\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  (O.T.).

- (328) Barrett (I Cor., p.66) sees the contrast of human wisdom and divine power as analogous to that of works of the law and divine grace accepted in faith, but apt for Greeks.
- (329) 3:1-5.
- (330) See p. 129 above.
- (331) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.67.
- (332) Conzelmann (ibid) says  $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$  can also be the power of the pneumatic ( $\tau\iota\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ ) in Hellenistic usage.
- (333) Barrett: I Cor., p.75.
- (334) See pp.144 ff. above.
- (335) E.g. Chapters 12-14; 4:8ff.
- (336) See above p.133:
- (337) Cf. 4:14.
- (338) Käsemann (New Testament Questions of Today: Ch. III p. 66f. ) lists as one of sentences with structure of 'jus talionis'. ( $\epsilon\iota\tau\iota\varsigma$  indicates a casuistic legal expression).
- (339) Hurd (op. cit., p.85) lists 10 usages in I Cor., elsewhere only one in Ro. He thinks they indicate thrusts aimed at the Corinthians.
- (340) Küng: The Church, pp.79-104; Schweizer: Church Order in the New Testament, pp.99 and 104.
- (341) B.D.F.(op. cit., p.262f., § 496) describe use as for vivacity and lucidity or vivid emotion.
- (342) See Barrett: I Cor., p.46.

- (343) E.g. Isa.19:12; 33:18; 44:25; Jb.12:17  
Conzelmann: I Cor., p.42.
- (344) Clement of Alexandria etc. distinguished σοφός  
- Greeks; γραμματεὺς - Jews; συζητητής - general.  
(See Conzelmann: I Cor., p.43).
- (345) 2:11 - use of an analogy. 2:16 a step in development  
of argument.
- (346) Cf. note 341.
- (347) σαρκικοί not habitually sinful but 'natural' man  
(cf. ψυχικός 2:14). Barrett: I Cor., p.80; Conzelmann:  
I Cor. p.72.
- (348) RSV. Cf. intention of 1:26 βλέπετε.
- (349) Barrett: I Cor., p.107; Cf. Conzelmann (I Cor. p.85):  
"Gives you preference"
- (350) Barrett: I Cor. p.108.
- (351) See note (259) above - 'unreal' final clause.
- (352) Not a subtle rhetorical device.
- (353) Barrett: I Cor., p.43.
- (354) E.g. see note (285) above.
- (355) Shaw: The Cost of Authority: Chap. 5: I Cor., p.62.
- (356) Ibid. p.62.
- (357) Ibid. p.62.
- (358) p.106ff. above.
- (359) Cf. Scroggs: Op. cit., (198) above, p.34.

- (360) See p.128f.above.
- (361) E.g. σοφία and λόγος occur together in all four.
- (362) 2:2 οὐ γὰρ ἐκρινά .
- (363) Both introduced by ἀλλ' ἐν .
- (364) This is particularly clear in 2:5. Cf. II Cor.12:9.
- (365) E.g. II Cor.10:1,10ff, 11:5f.
- (366) Cf. 3:11.
- (367) See note (224) above.
- (368) Cf. Shaw: note (355 ) above.

PART III: I CORINTHIANS 5-16CHAPTER VI: THE DIVISIONS AND CHAPTERS 5-16.

The conclusions from I Cor. 1-4, especially those concerning the centrality and seriousness, in Paul's view, of the threat posed to unity by divisions (not yet hardened into open factions), will be considerably strengthened if further evidence of Paul's concern can be adduced from Chapters 5-16. The lack of such evidence would not by itself invalidate the conclusions already reached, though it would affect the evaluation of their importance in the letter as a whole. The conclusions would remain valid for Chapters 1-4, but be limited to that part of the Epistle.

It is not impossible that Paul should treat disunity and factionalism as only one among several problems (such as dealing with immorality, or the attitude to εἰδωλόθυτα), rather than the central problem. It is, for example, generally recognised<sup>1</sup> that Chapters 7-16 deal principally with questions raised in a Corinthian letter to Paul (some clearly marked by περὶ δὲ)<sup>2</sup> and that arguments raised in this letter are quoted for refutation or qualification. The questions raised may, deliberately or through self-deception, bypass more significant failings, but, as a good pastor and teacher, Paul begins with their concern, though giving a new

dimension to their inquiry in his answer. It is, therefore, not unlikely that such a discussion should have a different emphasis and should not always be related to factionalism.

It is, however, not unreasonable to expect that Paul should have the threat of divisions at least intermittently in mind, having been alerted to it, and having given it such prominent treatment in 1-4. Nor is it unreasonable to look for evidence of further factors which may have contributed to faction in the situation in Corinth, mediated to us through Paul's replies and advice.

In the search for a more organic unity connecting the apparently fortuitous sequence of topics of the letter, a 'theological' explanation is often given (as in explaining the divisions). Barth,<sup>3</sup> for example, finds the key to such a unity in the denial of the resurrection in Chapter 15. (Bultmann<sup>4</sup> concurs and supports the search for an integrating theological standpoint, present not only in the accidental occasions of the writing, but even the compilation of a redactor.) Such an approach has validity, but becomes distorting if, as has been aptly, if facetiously, suggested, it makes the epistle look like a debate between German theologians.<sup>5</sup> Paul's own perspective is certainly primarily theological, but it is socially conditioned - by the socio-cultural context in which he wrote, and by the practical

problems of the community, such as divisions.

In the following sections, parts of Chapters 5-16, selected for their relevance to the divisions, are examined:-

- (1) The connection between Chapters 4 and 5.
- (2) Tensions in the community and its relationship to society, seen in the specific problems of
  - (a) litigation (Chapter 6)
  - (b) εἰδωλόθυτα (8:1-11:1).
- (3) Paul's relationship to the community (seen in the defence of his apostolate in Chapter 9).
- (4) Disorder (σχίσματα) in worship (11:17-34).
- (5) The function of χαρίσματα (Chapters 12-14).
- (6) The denial of the resurrection of the dead (Chap.15).

(1) The Connection between Chapters 4 and 5.

The suddenness of the transition to *Πορνεία* has often been remarked upon <sup>6</sup> even by those who find an organic connection between Chapters 4 and 5.<sup>7</sup> Conzelmann suggests a general connection: that 1-4 deal with *λόγος*, while 5-6 deal with *βίος*.<sup>8</sup> Together, he believes, they imply that the arrogance of human wisdom is expressed in false freedom and disregard of immorality. A single, comprehensive theological refutation is therefore sufficient.

(Conzelmann's neat pattern ignores the prominence of divisions in 1-4, which would also be an aspect of *βίος*.)

*ὅπως ἀκούεται*<sup>9</sup> indicates a probable oral source (unspecified) for the information. However, since *ἀκούω* is used of the divisions at the Lord's Supper (11:18), oral information is not by itself adequate reason for dealing with this problem here.

The prospective aspect of 4:14-21 (suggested above), in the exhortation to imitate Paul their father, in Timothy's reminder of *τὰς ὁδοὺς μου* and in the note of warning (vv.19-21), supports the interpretation that 5:1 ff. is the type of conduct against which Paul's unique authority is to be exercised. The view that Chapters 1-4 establish Paul's authority,<sup>10</sup> while 5ff. exercise it, tends however, to ignore the prominence given to *σχίσματα* as a central

issue in its own right. There is a transition in Chapter 4, from the emphasis on the right regard for apostles as complementary servants of God, responsible to him (Chap.3), to their position above human judgment (4:1-6), through the contrast between their humiliation and suffering and the 'glory' of the Corinthians (4:7-13), to the climax of Paul's unique relationship, with its attendant authority and continued responsibility. References to the divisions, or causes of division, however, suggest that they are the main problem in 1-4, so that it is likely that the claim to authority and the exhortation to imitate Paul relate to the divisions.

The use of the characteristic word *πεφυσισμένοι* in 5:2 (cf. 4:6, 18f.) seems to indicate a specific link between the Corinthians' attitude to *τιορνεία* and the vaunting of leaders in opposition to one another (4:6), which leads to division. Barrett<sup>11</sup> points out that it is not the *τιορνεία* but the Corinthian reaction to it which shows 'enthusiastic antinomianism'. (v.6 *καύχημα* in particular suggests more than passive tolerance - active boasting based on 'wisdom'.)<sup>12</sup> The same theological argument as is used in 1-4 against wisdom which results in arrogance, and in favour of the word of the cross, serves for their behaviour here.<sup>13</sup>

In the action proposed against the anonymous offender<sup>14</sup> who seems most probably to have married his stepmother after his father's death or divorce<sup>15</sup> the role of Paul is striking. Not only does he give a clear lead by stating his own judgment (5:3), but he also envisages his own participation in the community's action, through τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος (v.4). Allo<sup>16</sup> sees this as undemocratic - Paul has fixed the judgment and sentence. However, even if the preceding chapter had successfully recalled the Corinthians to loyalty to Paul, it seems unlikely that he should put it immediately to the test in a letter (unless he has chosen an occasion where his decision is unlikely to be challenged). Paul is also aware of the dangers of exercising authority in absence (4:18),<sup>17</sup> and knows that his authority is being questioned (Chap.9 in particular). It is noticeable also that the judgment is reasoned and not arbitrary: (a) 5:1 ἰδιούτητι τιμωρία ἧτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν characterises the seriousness of the offence, and implies that the Christian community should be blameless in the eyes of the Gentiles; (b) in 5:6-8 the analogy of yeast is used to support the call for purification of the community. Paul's "presence in the spirit" throws the weight of his teaching, his concern as father, and his clear judgment, behind the decision which he confidently expects, as the only proper judgment to be made in the name of the Lord. Since this is not a merely human

tribunal but in the power of our Lord Jesus, the apostle's presence is appropriate. There may also be an indication here that Paul senses, in their inadequate response to the *πτορνεία*, the consequences of a vacuum of authority (or perhaps the somewhat anarchic conditions of purely charismatic authority), which he attempts to fill by the apostolic parousia in the spirit.

The emphasis of the whole passage is upon the community - their responsibility to condemn the *πτορνεία* and to purify the community (e.g. the metaphor of leaven in vv.6-8) - though the erring member and the salvation of his *πνεῦμα* are also important (v.5). *συναχθέντων ὑμῶν* (v.4) implies an action of the whole assembled church. Allo<sup>18</sup> may be right in seeing this as impossible practically, but his conclusion that it must be undemocratic, composed of leaders (*τιποῖστάμενοι*) and delegates, is without basis. The O.T. concept of the "assembled people" (equally impossible practically) provides a good analogy, especially if the judgment here is related to the curse and ban of the contemporary world, particularly Judaism.<sup>19</sup>

The issue of how to deal with *πτορνεία* is set within the broader context of the Christian's position in the world in 5:9-13. It also appears to deal with an attitude to immorality (*συναναμίγνυσθαι τίποις* v. 9) different from

that suggested by *Τεφυσιωμένοι* (v.2) and *καύχημα* (v.6). (It might suggest that Paul now includes the tolerantly indifferent with the enthusiastically antinomian.) Paul moves on to a related (possibly deliberate) misunderstanding of an injunction in an earlier letter, not to mix with immoral people. He concedes the impossibility of not mixing with the *πίστοι τοῦ κόσμου*, as he does not contemplate withdrawal from the world (5:10). Mixing with immoral Christians is, however, a totally different matter, and he strongly advocates the purity or purification of the Christian community. The tension between relating to the community (and community ethics) and relating to the world, can be seen at the root of several of the questions in succeeding chapters (e.g. litigation in Chapter 6 and *εἰδωλόθυτα* in Chapter 8ff.)

The clearest general connection between the central issues of Chapters 1-4 and 5 is, therefore, that in the former 'unity' is threatened, in the latter 'purity'. In both, however, the attitude of *τεφυσιωμένοι* based on wisdom, is responsible: in the former it results in vaunting one leader against another; in the latter it results in toleration, and boasting of the presence of *τιορνεία*, on the grounds that it cannot harm the *πνευματικός*. In both also, the Corinthians seem unaware of the seriousness of the issue for the community. There are therefore significant similarities.

Paul does not deal with *πορνεία* as if it was a cause of division or as if the *πεφυσισμένοι*, boastfully accepting the one practising *πορνεία*, belonged to one faction. Instead he ranges himself along with the whole congregation, in a common resolve to purify the church. He envisages united action by the whole church as not only possible but an inevitable response to his letter. In spite of indications elsewhere of opposition, <sup>20</sup> he appears not to doubt that the assembled community will act in accordance with his view of what disciplinary measures are necessary.

The role of Paul in instigating and guiding the disciplinary action of the community against the *πίσπος* implies a lack of the leadership and machinery to deal with such a situation. The vacuum of authority which Paul attempts to fill in absence by his presence in spirit, and by the guidance of his letter, is a plausible context for the emergence of competing leadership roles leading to *σχίσματα*. However, Paul leaves the ultimate responsibility of acting as agents of the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to the community, under his guidance and with his spirit. Their discipline is to be exercised to save the spirit of the offender and to purify the community. Purity is not to be sought by withdrawal from

the world. The type of community Paul addresses (as well as envisages) could not be a church broken into hardened factions.

(2) Tensions in the community (in relating to the world)

(a) Resorting to Litigation (Chapter 6: 1-11)

The criticism of those resorting to litigation follows naturally upon the discussion of the Christian's relationship to the world and to his own community (5:9-13). The tensions implicit in such a position emerge. As a citizen of the world, the Christian has the right to appeal to civil law-courts, but when disputes are within the community (and it is such disputes Paul appears to be considering throughout), Paul thinks it shameful that Christians who will ultimately judge angels (6:3) should be unable to settle their own disputes. (There is probably here too an element of 'evangelistic' concern with how such litigation appears to non-Christians.)<sup>21</sup>

A second implicit link with the problem of Chapter 5 is the explicit indication that there is no recognised authority or mechanism for the settlement of disputes, as the ironical

question of v.5 shows. Paul's intention is to discredit the resort to civil courts, whose judges are ἐξουθενημένους<sup>22</sup> (with no standing or respect) in the Christian community. His criticism is not of Roman justice, but of the Christian community which should have people wise enough to sit in judgment.<sup>23</sup>

At v.7, Paul reveals the basis of his criticism, but also incidentally a reason for the lack of a structure of authority or justice within the community: a Christian should submit to wrong being done to him, rather than bring a fellow-Christian to civil judgment (i.e. the Christian community should not need a structure of authority or justice). There is a striking similarity between 6:7 and the teaching of Jesus (e.g. Mt. 5:39). Toleration of injustice or passive submission to robbery in I Corinthians is set, however, in the context of a city community, where the form of retaliation is legal redress.

A further implication of litigation, also appropriate in the city community, is that real wrongs give rise to it. In an abrupt change of direction, effected through the change from the passives of v.7 (ἀδικεῖσθε and ἀπιστερεῖσθε) to the actives of v.8 (ἀδικεῖτε and ἀπιστερεῖτε), Paul attacks those committing wrongs. Conzelmann and others<sup>24</sup> see defensive litigation as constituting a wrong - the passives

and actives effectively equivalent. Paul does, however, seem to talk of something new: the active commitment of wrong (which recognises the responsibility of those whose robbery or wrong-doing leads to court cases). This is a realistic recognition that the ideal of a Christian community in which there is no recourse to law depends not only on the refusal of the 'wronged' to retaliate in courts, but also on the removal of occasion for feeling wronged. Ideally, robbery and other forms of immoral behaviour, which some (ΤΙΥΕΣ) practised, have been left behind. They have been 'washed, 'sanctified' and 'justified' (v.11). Verses 8-11, therefore present a necessary corollary, in community ethics, to passivity in the face of wrong.

Even at verses 7 and 8, which logically would be appropriate for different groups ('wrongers' and 'wronged'), the whole church appears to be addressed in the predominant second person plural. The hypothetical ΤΙΣ of v.1, and the narrowing ΤΙΥΕΣ of v.11, recognise that the behaviour (v.1) or experience (v.11) is not universal, but particular groups are not singled out. In this respect it is not totally inaccurate to say that he treats retaliation in the courts as equivalent to wrong-doing - both are equally destructive to community.

The type of cases brought against brothers in civil courts is not clearly specified. The list of vices at vv.9-10 offers little clue, following the traditional literary form of a catalogue of vices.<sup>25</sup> Theissen points out that litigation was a more likely recourse of the rich, who tend to trust it and be able to afford it.<sup>26</sup> (If Erastus was an aedile, as he thinks, reliance upon civil justice at Corinth is even more understandable.)<sup>27</sup> The list of vices (or vicious people) in vv.9-10 includes κλέπται, πλεονέκται and ἄρτιαγες and in vv.7 and 8, ἀπιστερέω is placed alongside the more general ἀδικέω, so that robbery seems in mind. Theissen takes βιωτικά, usually translated 'everyday', as referring to property and income.<sup>28</sup> It is likely in any case that crimes of property are a prominent cause of litigation, though Barrett suggests that even the events of 5:1 could have led to a lawsuit.<sup>29</sup>

The litigation which Christians at Corinth bring against one another may not relate directly to the divisions of 1-4, but it offers a significant insight into the community at Corinth in which division is a real danger. The leadership slogans and theological catchwords may be the outward manifestation of more subtle and complicated social tensions.

Litigation implies limitations in the structure of the community. For Paul the principal failing is the disputes themselves, for he upholds the ideal of a society where the wronged forego their rights and the wrong-doers are transformed in their new life. He does, however, make the concession that the Corinthians should find some wise or competent man to settle disputes (v.5). This concession, for Paul a sign of failure (v.7), is a more realistic recognition of the tension of life in the world.<sup>30</sup> Wrongs are committed and the wronged do look for redress, finding it in civil courts in the absence of a Christian machinery of justice or acknowledged, competent judge. There are therefore signs here (as in the preceding section) of awareness of the need for human authority, even if Paul's spirit-led, litigation-free community remains a challenging ideal.

A community where people have taken one another to court is one where the unity of Christ is threatened, and this thought appears to lie behind the passage, though Paul concentrates on the inappropriateness of Christians, destined to be judges, submitting to civil courts. The tensions and grievances leading to and ensuing from litigation provide a breeding ground and social context for divisions.

(b) Food sacrificed to idols

The Christian community's new identity in Christ, but continued existence in the world, is the source also of the tensions evident in the discussion of εἰδωλόθυσια.<sup>31</sup> At least three different situations involving εἰδωλόθυσια are discussed:-

- (1) (purely private) meat brought from the market;
- (2) (partly public) participation in a meal at a non-Christian's house;
- (3) (public) participation in a sacrificial meal in a temple.

Paul agrees with the view of the 'strong' that the food itself is harmless, since we 'know' that idols do not exist (8:4; 10:19). We now have freedom to eat, without questioning, food from the market (10:25 and 8:8) or even when invited to a non-Christian's house (10:27), and possibly even to eat at the shrine of an idol<sup>32</sup> (though not participating in idol worship - 10:20-21). The last two freedoms which are not purely private are qualified by concern for the conscience and effect on others, and by the precise context.

Paul's judgment on the issue is related to his identification of two groups: the 'strong' and the 'weak' (most clearly defined at 8:7). The 'strong', probably identifiable

with those claiming to be τέλειοι or πνευματικοί<sup>33</sup>, appeal to 'knowledge' (of the non-existence of idols) for their belief, that εἰδωλόθυτα are harmless. The 'weak' avoid εἰδωλόθυτα from conscience, because for them the ritual actions with which it is associated retain spiritual reality. They possibly include Gentile Christians, used to partaking, but having scruples about it, now, regarding it as a return to paganism, and Jewish Christians, accustomed to avoid partaking, and retaining their scruples about it after conversion.<sup>34</sup>

An important sociological dimension of the 'strong'- 'weak' division is pointed out by Theissen.<sup>35</sup> Poorer Christians were less likely to be involved in social contacts such as invitations to meals, and for them buying meat from the market would be purely theoretical. The rich would be most involved in social contacts with non-Christians, and therefore most likely to work out the accomodation which the 'strong' do. The 'poor', by contrast, would be most likely to regard participation in a cultic meal with particular significance, since their own experience of it was limited to special occasions such as distribution on religious feasts, or community meals.

It is to the strong that Paul addresses himself and with whom he identifies<sup>36</sup> those who 'have knowledge' although

in 8: 1-3 knowledge is limited (v.17) and effectively redefined as 'being known by God' (v.3). To the 'strong' he concedes the freedom to eat εἰδωλόθουτα (where it is not participation in idol worship) since idols are nothing and food is neutral. (8:8 suggests that there was a boastful participation to demonstrate the freedom which knowledge brings.)

However, the freedom of the strong is over-ridden by consideration for the conscience of the weak, in accordance with the ruling principle of 8:1: knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The situations of 8:10 and 10:27 present problems for detailed exegesis, but both clearly indicate that private 'freedom' gives way to consideration for the other. At 8:10, the conscience of the one who sees, and the effect of seeing the strong Christian partaking of εἰδωλόθουτα, turn an apparently allowable exercise of individual freedom (based on knowledge) into sinning against brothers and therefore against Christ (v.12). At 10:28, participation by the 'strong' Christian in a meal to which he has been invited becomes wrong when it is pointed out that it is sacrificial food. Verses 28-30 involve exegetical problems - the identity and motive of τὸν μηνύσαντα (v.28); the reference of τοῦ ἑτέρου (v.29); and the point of the two questions of 29b and 30.<sup>37</sup>

The most significant point for the present discussion, however, is relatively clear: freedom to eat (v.27) is circumscribed by consideration for 'the other' and his conscience. The statement of τὸν μὴ νόσσαντα and 'being seen' (in 8:10) turn eating into an act of proclamation, involving conscience. It can no longer be done to the glory of God (v.31) and without offending (v.32).

Paul's strategy is, significantly, to place himself unequivocally among the 'strong' (e.g. 8:1) and the 'free' (e.g. 9:1),<sup>38</sup> from where he defends the interests and conscience of the 'weak'. There is no suggestion of an onus upon the weak to adopt a more enlightened view of εἰδωλόθυτα. He sees himself as the apostle of reconciliation (9:20), becoming all things to all men.<sup>39</sup> From a concern for unity in the community, he calls the 'strong' to consider the 'weak', from love that builds up (not knowledge that puffs up), and to think not in terms of extending the limits of freedom (as πάντα ἔξεστιν implies), but in terms of what is helpful or expedient (συνφέρει) or builds up (οἰκοδομεῖ).<sup>40</sup>

From the prominence given to it by Paul, the food offered to idols is clearly a controversial issue, which involves, for converts from paganism or Judaism, their whole relationship to their former religion. There is strong evidence that the

question posed to Paul included a theological argument, on the basis of 'freedom' and knowledge of the non-existence of idols, for participation in eating εἰδωλόθουτα .<sup>41</sup> It is significant, therefore, that Paul largely ignores this theological or metaphysical approach (apart from Chapter 10:20-21), though he concedes that in a private situation εἰδωλόθουτα are neutral and harmless. Paul deals instead with the question as an aspect of proclamation and community, shifting the central concern from the nature of εἰδωλόθουτα, to care for the weaker brethren.<sup>42</sup> This concern was presumably lacking in the 'strong' Corinthians. He therefore almost reverses the process of Chapters 1-4 where he gave theological significance to factionalism, which the Corinthians failed to recognise. Here, he transform their γνώσις- based arguments into an issue of ἀγάπη and οἰκοδομή. This is not merely injecting a pastoral dimension into the discussion, but giving a new theological understanding, based on a recognition of the community as the body of Christ. Lack of concern for the conscience of the weak, like lack of concern for the unity of the community, comes from arrogant self-centredness, often implied, and explicitly stated at 8:1, where φυσιώ is used again (ἡ γνώσις φυσιοῖ ). In 1:18ff. Paul argues that this attitude, from γνώσις, treats the word of the cross as folly; at 8:12 he goes further: if

a 'strong' Christian (with 'knowledge') leads a 'weak' one (who has not the 'knowledge' or 'freedom' to eat εἰδωλόθουτα without being compromised) to go against his conscience, he sins against Christ (8:12), who died for the ἀδελφόν (8:11). Communal responsibility is therefore paramount.

There is, therefore, a connection between the 'strong' who have γνῶσις and the discussion of σοφία (1:18ff). This is sometimes used as a **ground for** seeing the situation at Corinth as only a two-way division, ignoring the evidence of a plurality of parties in 1-4 (grouping ideas dealt with by Paul under the 'opposition' of the 'strong', 'wise' or 'pneumatic'). The categories of 'strong' and 'weak' cannot be identified with the social groupings of the σχίσματα and their slogans. The broad division, however, which seems to play a part in some of the issues and problems of the letter, could be a major contributory factor to the tensions leading to the divisions. Simplification and uniformity have often been sought in interpreting divisions, but the background appears to be complex, involving several types of 'division' (such as between rich and poor, strong and weak), which may take concrete form in the leader-centred parties.

(3) Paul's defence of his apostolate (Chapter 9)

The important question of Paul's relationship (authority) with the Corinthians, dealt with briefly at Chapter 4:14ff (and implicit throughout), is given its fullest and most explicit treatment in Chapter 9. It is important not just for Paul's understanding of his apostolic authority, but also for what is implicit about the attitudes of the Corinthians to him. (The relationship of Chapter 9 to its context has been discussed above.)<sup>43</sup> The length and tone of Paul's apologetic here clearly indicate the need of a defence against a questioning of his apostolic status. (Other passages, e.g. 2:6-16, also have an apologetic element.) The slogans at 1:12 and the argument of 3:4-4:6 also indicate that the position of Paul and other apostles is a prominent element in the divisions.

Chapter 9 begins with a general defence, from the standpoint of freedom, suggesting that the very basis of his apostolate is in question. Theissen thinks ἐλεύθερος (9:1) has the sense of 'free from labour', related to criticism for not depending on support as an itinerant charismatic.<sup>44</sup> This sense seems likely at 9:19, but the word may be used with differing overtones. At 9:1 οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος may be a reference to Paul's freedom to limit freedom (8:13), in response to the Corinthians' claim to exercise it. The limitation of 'freedom' of the 'strong' is the true freedom

of the apostle - a connection made more explicitly at 9:19ff.<sup>45</sup>

Of the two criteria of apostleship given in vv.1-2, (a) seeing the Lord Jesus (b) Paul's work, it is the latter, the proof or seal (*σφραγίς*) of which is the Corinthian church, which is stressed. In the first place this is where the question is raised; in the second place, their existence in Christ is where it is most emphatically answered. Of all people, they have least reason to doubt Paul's apostleship, for to do so casts doubt upon the foundation of their own Christian existence. The special relationship of Paul with them as the one who first proclaimed Christ crucified<sup>46</sup> and brought the community into being is further developed here. To question his apostolic status is bound up with questioning what he proclaimed, and also what his proclamation brought into being - their life in Christ.

In vv.3-18, Paul deals with the issue of his right to support, which appears to lie at the heart of the questioning of his apostolic authority and status.<sup>47</sup> The fact that it is raised again in sharper form in II Corinthians, and apparently alluded to in the acknowledgment of the Philippians' gift (Phil.4:10-20), shows its prevalence. It is not immediately clear against what type of attack Paul is defending himself.

He first argues cogently, with an impressive accumulation of types of proof, for the principle of the right of an apostle to be supported (along with his wife). He adduces in support: the practice of other apostles (οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι), the brothers of Jesus and Cephas (who is specially singled out);<sup>48</sup> analogies of the soldier, vineyard owner, shepherd, and those officiating in the temple or attending upon the altar (v.13); Old Testament Law; Jesus' specific command; and even the natural justice of a material reward for spiritual blessing. Yet having established this point, he proceeds to stress that he made no use of the right to which he was entitled (v.12 and 15), giving his reason as 'to put no obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ' (v.12). At verses 15-18, where the broken syntax suggests strong feeling, he seems to begin by making this renunciation of support a 'boast' (καύχημα), but ends by presenting it as the 'reward' (μισθός being given a new definition, in effect)<sup>49</sup> for preaching the gospel under constraint or compulsion. By preaching the gospel in hardship and suffering, he puts no obstacle in its way. Paul therefore seems to argue on two separate fronts: (1) that he and Barnabas are entitled to the same rights as other apostles (and indeed special ones); (2) that he has not made use of the right or ἐξουσία (authority) of an apostle. The first, elaborately supported, argument appears to be intended to

establish the voluntary nature of his renunciation of this right, to counter the mistaken view that his lack of support is because he is not an apostle, and therefore not entitled to it. Paul states that his renunciation is to put no obstacle in the way of the gospel. He does not specify how an apostolic right can also become an obstacle to the gospel,<sup>50</sup> but the reference to ἄλλοι (v.12a) may indicate a contrast between his practice and the misuse of the ἐξουσία of an apostle by others. Paul at any rate regards his renunciation as a matter for pride, while some at Corinth use it to call his apostleship into question.

One of the most convincing explanations of the form of Paul's defence is that of Theissen, who believes that in this issue can be clearly distinguished the views of mission which come into conflict in Corinth.<sup>51</sup> He believes that the criticism of Paul is from the standpoint of 'charismatic poverty' (e.g. in the commissioning speeches in the gospels). Paul's working for a living is seen as an evasion of duty or lack of trust. Paul, however, argues for charismatic poverty as a privilege, not an obligation. At vv.14-15, the saying or command of Jesus is followed by Paul stating that he has renounced these (privileges). Theissen's thesis provides a convincing explanation of the length and seriousness of the treatment of this issue, and of the lengthy justification of

the right to support (9:3-12a, 13-14) which is subsequently renounced (9:12b, 15ff).

The apostle's freedom is defended in vv.19-23. Paul probably uses a Corinthian catchword (ἐλευθερος 9:1 and 9:19) which he essentially redefines. The overtone of 'freedom from labour' <sup>52</sup> is probably present at v.19, but verses 20-23 have a broader implication, redefining the freedom and responsibility of the apostle as becoming all things to all men for the sake of the gospel. This is an apostolic counterpart to the redefinition of the community's freedom and responsibility at 10:23, where πάντα ἔξεστιν is modified by οὐ πάντα συμφέρει and οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ

Paul ends this ἀπολογία with a comparison of the Christian life to a race, with a goal. The emphasis (like 4:7ff) upon continued tribulations and struggle for a future goal, suggests a possible mistaken attitude of regarding the present as the fulfilment of the ἔσχατον. <sup>53</sup> Paul is (and the Corinthians ought to be) prepared to subject himself to discipline analogous to the athlete's training. Suffering and hardship may not impress the Corinthians, but they are the mark of an apostle.

This passage therefore sheds light not just on Paul's view of his apostolate, but also upon the community and the nature and potential causes of its divisions.

It is unlikely that the issue of support, given prominence here, would have led to questioning Paul's apostolic status in isolation. A contrast with another type of mission or missionary seems a necessary hypothesis. Visits of other missionaries (apart from Apollos) are possible, e.g. Cephas, who is mentioned specifically. When Paul refers at v.12 to others sharing in authority over you, however, he appears to have no particular reason to attack them, and it is not clear that they are intruders.

The situation at Corinth indicated in the previous sections provides a probable context for the type of questioning of Paul's apostleship which appears to have arisen through contrasting Paul with itinerant charismatic missionaries. The Corinthian community has no structure of authority for dealing with disputes (litigation) or with unacceptable conduct of an individual ( *προνεία* ). Paul believes that such situations should not arise,<sup>54</sup> and proposes measures of a temporary, 'ad hoc' nature to deal with them. It is unlikely that he saw any need to establish his own authority, until it was called into question and became necessary to restore order and unity. He still sees his own particular calling as proclaiming the gospel (1:18,23; 9:12, 16-18,23).

Though not jealous of his own authority, Paul is, however, concerned about reports of divisions (and indications, in their questions, of rifts, dangerous practices and damaging theological positions). These point to a need for a more structured human

authority, although Paul still appeals to the principle of ἀγάπη, and advocates discipline by consensus, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Competing claims to leadership have probably arisen to fill the vacuum of authority.<sup>55</sup> Finally, the gospel itself may be threatened. In recalling his κήρυγμα Paul recalls its content, the word of the cross, which called the community into being. (Conversely, questioning his apostolate calls into question the word of the cross.) Effectively the defence of the gospel and the defence of Paul's apostolate coincide.

There is, moreover, an exemplary, as well as apologetic, element in Paul's description of his apostolate (vv.19ff.). His apostolate exemplifies the same principle of concern for others, for the sake of the gospel, as is advocated in the attitude to εἰδωλόθυτα. In the case of the apostle it is to 'gain' or 'save' others (v.22) and so share in the gospel (v.23). In the case of the Corinthians, accomodation is a principle of unity, for the well-being of the community.

In the practical matters at the end of the epistle (Chapter 16), it is of interest to note firstly that the collection arrangements are not autocratic, but require the co-operation of the community (e.g. v.3 οὐς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε).<sup>56</sup>

More significantly, at vv. 15-18, Paul not only commends

Stephanas,<sup>57</sup> Fortunatus and Achaicus, but also urges the Corinthians to submit or subordinate themselves (ὁμοτάσσησθε) to such people as Stephanas and his household (16:16) or 'recognise' such people (ἐπιγινώσκετε 16:18).<sup>58</sup> It would be wrong to read into this the establishment of a structure of authority (and certainly of office).

But there is here at least a recognition of the need to give place (or authority) to the right people. The criterion common to the recommendation of Stephanas and household, and of the three Corinthian messengers, is service performed: to the saints (v.15) and to Paul (v.17). Particular significance is attached to Stephanas' household as the first-fruits of Achaëa.<sup>59</sup> Paul is at pains, however, not to limit the group of those who deserve recognition, adding τοιοῦτοις (at v.16 and 18) and παντὶ τῷ συνεργούντι καὶ κοτιῶντι. While recognising the value of submission to proved leaders, Paul does not wish to formalise their authority or establish a formal structure of authority.

In spite of the necessity for apologetic in the epistle, there is an implicit assumption that Paul's words will be listened to and acted upon. The questioning of his authority has not reached the point where his influence is irredeemably lost, or even, it appears, where he must address only part of the Corinthian community. He can still hope to exercise authority in Corinth in the interests of unity.

(4) σχίσματα at the Lord's Supper

The attack on σχίσματα in the Lord's Supper comes in the broader context of problems of order in the assembly (especially in worship), to which Chapter 11 is devoted. Immediately preceding it, for example, is Paul's ruling on women being veiled in the assembly - based finally on an appeal to custom, in the apparent consciousness of the inadequacy of his theological argument.<sup>60</sup>

The criticism of behaviour at the Lord's Supper and the correction of it (11:7-22 and 11:33-4) surrounds, and frames, an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which stands without argument as if in judgment. The σχίσματα here have already been discussed in connection both with the word σχίσματα<sup>61</sup> and also with the integrity of the epistle.<sup>62</sup> It was argued (in discussion of the latter) that Paul is talking of particular σχίσματα at the Lord's Supper, and the disorder here can be seen as a specific manifestation of the tensions and tendency to division observed throughout the epistle.

ἄκοῦσθαι (11:18)<sup>63</sup> probably implies an oral report, but the source is unspecified, unlike 1:12. It is clearly not part of the official letter and may not have been treated too seriously, or may have been concealed, as it presented the Corinthians in a bad light. 11:2, from which the word ἑταίριον is picked up at 11:17, may indicate how the Corinthians tried

to present themselves to Paul.

σχίσματα (11:18) is plural, as in 1:10, indicating not just one broad division. They are treated as a seriously damaging distortion of the Lord's Supper. Even at v.19, where they<sup>64</sup> are seen as necessary for eschatological judgment (to discriminate between the genuine and false), their necessity does not remove the scandal of their presence at the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper has already been presented as a symbol of unity at 10:16-17, in the context of discussion of εἰδωλόθυτα. An implication of this is respect for the conscientious scruples of other Christians.<sup>65</sup> Here, conversely, the selfish manner of eating, without consideration for others, turns the Lord's Supper into their own Supper. Paul, therefore, suggests that they should eat at home (vv.22 and 34). Their unwillingness to share their food and drink, their greed in not waiting for others, and gluttony while others are hungry (v.21), make it into 'their own meal'. Paul's drastic suggestion is therefore not so much a call for the abandonment of the common meal, though that could become inevitable,<sup>66</sup> as an appeal to recognise that their contempt for the church, and humiliation of the poor, has already effectively destroyed the fellowship meal. Paul hopes for a change of heart.

At v. 22, he describes their behaviour as despising

(καταφρονεῖτε) the church of God, and humiliating  
 (καταισχύετε) the poor, or those who have nothing  
 (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας). The two phrases at least overlap in  
 characterising their action as destructive to the community.

The criticism and the injunctions are directed to those who  
 have enough to eat and drink (e.g. v.22).<sup>67</sup> Theissen believes  
 that Paul's practical solution is a compromise drawn from two  
 different spheres: (a) 'sociological' perceptions which inform  
 his analysis of the conflict (b) theological perception of  
 it.<sup>68</sup> The suggestion to eat at home is not merely pragmatic  
 but an appeal to the real meaning of the Lord's Supper.

The account of the institution of the Lord's Supper  
 (vv.23ff) reminds the Corinthians of this meaning, and the  
 tradition Paul handed on.<sup>69</sup> Its solemn significance starkly  
 contrasts with the Corinthian conduct. At v.27, the  
 consequences of partaking unworthily (ἀναξίως) are spelt  
 out. It results in becoming guilty (ἔνοχος) of the body  
 and blood of the Lord. At v. 29, partaking without distinguish-  
 ing (μὴ διακρίναν) the body leads to eating and drinking  
 judgment, and the existence of sickness, illness and death  
 are cited as proof. They are also used as incentives to  
 encourage self-examination (v.28 and v.31). While it is  
 possible that the 'real presence' of Christ (treated disrespect-  
 fully by the Corinthians) may be in mind,<sup>70</sup> the context here,  
 and the idea of the church as the body of the Lord, make it

likely that the central feature of offending against Christ himself (in offending against the elements) is the egotistic, disorderly behaviour of the Corinthians, in contempt of their fellow-Christians at the Lord's Supper.<sup>71</sup> The emphasis upon self-examination (at v.28 and 31) is not general, but specifically related to participation in the Lord's Supper, and to conduct which, in despising Christ's body, the church, also despises his body in the elements. It is significant that, at verse 33f., waiting for one another and not eating selfishly, or gluttonously, are consequences of self-examination. Verses 33-34, which sum up Paul's practical solution, lend further support to the interpretation that the intervening verses (23-26 and 27-32) have in mind the same disorderly selfish conduct as verses 17-22.

The *σχιματα* at the Lord's Supper are, therefore, attributed to a contemptuous attitude towards the community, the body of Christ, and associated with unworthy participation at the Lord's Supper (not distinguishing the body). 10:16-17 establish unity as an essential element of the Lord's Supper, which the type of behaviour described in 11:17-22 fails to realise. It seems likely that many in Corinth were unaware of the significance of their action - and hence the necessary emphasis here on self-examination. Paul's view is that of

the humiliated poor of whose grievance he has heard . A dangerous trend to division, at the very heart of the community's worship, is in evidence.<sup>72</sup> Paul, however, does not address a church irrevocably divided. He does not identify those participating unworthily, and thus becoming guilty of Christ's body and blood (i.e. like his crucifiers), with one party. Instead he strikes a cautionary note, once more making a plea against division, based on a concern for others, with a particular emphasis here upon self-criticism - a quality to which the Corinthians appear to have given little value. Paul's practical solution, posed as a question at v.22, and a command in v.34, clearly requires assent. (It gives high importance to the Lord's Supper.) There is no suggestion from Paul that someone should be appointed to preside over the meal, although there appears to be no host or leader in charge.

(5) The function of χάρισματά.

From the long section dealing with spiritual gifts (Chapters 12-14), it is only possible to indicate some points where divisions are touched upon. There seems little doubt that χάρισματά are a divisive issue. People claiming to be πνευματικοί have been alluded to in Chapters 2 and 3:1. There, as here, Paul includes himself among them but is aware of the disruptive consequences of their claim,

which he effectively modifies.<sup>73</sup> It is likely that their emphasis upon the more spectacular gifts, especially glossolalia, is connected with competing leadership claims, for they offer the most spectacular form of authentication.

At 12:1-3, it is necessary for Paul to give a criterion for recognition of the Holy Spirit (the confession that Jesus is Lord). Whatever explanation is given of those saying, "Jesus is anathema",<sup>74</sup> the introduction of this criterion implies that not all the forms of ecstasy current in Corinth are 'of the Lord'.

An important emphasis is upon variety within unity,<sup>75</sup> the varieties of *χαρίσματα* belonging to one *πνεῦμα* (e.g. 12:4 and 12:12ff, especially 12:14 and 20). This emphasis suggests a tendency at Corinth to value one type of gift (clearly the ecstatic). An aspect of being *πεφυσιασμένοι* may be despising others with different less spectacular gifts, thus creating a division. The emphasis upon one spirit, from which all *χαρίσματα* come, highlights their interdependence (common source) as well as their 'givenness'. The analogy of the body is the most elaborate argument for mutual recognition and concern, based upon mutual dependence. From a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds<sup>76</sup> they have been called into the organic, pneumatic unity of the community, but that unity is expressed in, and served by, variety or distributions of gifts.

A further significant point is the use of *ἐκάστῳ*

(12:7 and 12:11). Each one is given his own manifestation of the spirit for the common good.<sup>77</sup> The implication appears to be that some were considered by others to lack any *χάρισμα*. This is supported by the emphasis (in 12:22 ff) of the body analogy, upon the special honour given to the weaker, less honourable parts. The purpose is given in v.25, where a significant connection is made between avoiding *σχίσμα* in the body, and care for one another, in the context of valuing the weaker, less honourable, 'members'. As frequently in the epistle, Paul, who belongs to the 'strong' and *πνευματικοί*, takes the part of the 'weak'.<sup>78</sup> The failure to value the gifts of the weaker and less honourable no doubt creates tension and potential division, and the whole suffers. The community is also, it is implied, weakened if the gifts given to each *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον* (12:7) are not recognised.

Paul, does, however, establish a form of hierarchy of *χάρισματά*, which may seem to contradict the emphasis on interdependence, but is in fact to counter the hierarchy set up in Corinth, with its false over-estimation of gifts which are individual and do not build the community (especially glossolalia). It is therefore for the good of the community, not just that all gifts should be recognised, but that the greater (*τὰ μείζονα* in 12:31), which he defines in Chapter 14 as those which build up, should be sought and given more

prominence. Tongues and prophecy are both valuable, but it makes a significant difference to the community which is valued more highly. It is therefore not really inconsistent that, after arguing for acceptance of the variety of gifts, Paul goes on to urge that they strive after (ἑξήλουτε 12:31 and 14:1,39) the greater.

The criterion for distinguishing the 'greater' is the building up of the church, especially in their assemblies (e.g. 14:4 and 14:26). This prominent concern of Paul throughout is most sharply evident in his preference for prophecy over glossolalia (Chap. 14).<sup>79</sup> The latter is not condemned (e.g. 14:5), but Paul probably is attacking the Corinthian evaluation of it: (a) by emphatically placing it lower than prophecy (14:5) on the grounds that it is for self-edification or gratification, whereas prophecy builds up and edifies; (b) by emphasizing the importance of interpretation of tongues,<sup>80</sup> which in fact transforms it into intelligible speech, like prophecy, for the edification of the community.

A particular concern which Paul expresses is for the community's witness to unbelieving outsiders (14:22-5), who will be convicted by seeing everyone prophesying, but will consider disordered and disunited speaking in tongues as madness. This gives a new perspective to the need for order, which is an important concern of 14:26-36.

In this situation can be distinguished the self-gratification and selfish lack of concern for others encountered before, and also lack of any local authority. Paul has to appeal for acceptance of his injunctions, and does so upon wide grounds: conformity with the nature of God, which is peace, not disorder (14:33a); the practice of other churches (14:33b & 36); a general sense of what is decent and orderly (14:40); the recognition that what Paul is writing is not a private opinion but a commandment of the Lord (14:37-8).

He himself makes an emphatic claim to be a pneumatic on their terms, speaking in tongues more than any of them (14:18-19), but uses this in an exemplary way, as well as for part of his argument. He is ready to renounce or surrender all of it in preference to saying a few words which will instruct, and so build up, the community. Although tongues are not condemned (4:5), the final summing up at v.39 is significantly negative.<sup>81</sup> Tongues are not to be forbidden (only the disruptive effects are to be limited), but prophesying is to be positively sought after ( $\xi\eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ ).

It is an inherent probability that gifts valued more highly confer higher status in the community. In view of this, it is significant that Paul does not seek to safeguard his status this way, although he does claim superiority on their criterion of 'tongues' (14:18), and puts apostles first in his own 'hierarchy' (12:28).<sup>82</sup> His own evaluation of

Χαρίσματα is based upon the extent to which they build and edify the community (their purpose), and in fact makes status for its own sake impossible, since it depends upon service of the community.

The great hymn of love (Chapter 13) contributes to this impression. While there are strong grounds for seeing it as a separate composition, sitting somewhat awkwardly in its immediate context, its appropriateness is hardly in doubt.<sup>83</sup> ἀγάπη, set apart from all other spiritual gifts as the fundamental requirement of a Christian community, the link between God and man, and between human beings, is the οἰκοδομή of the community in its purest essence. It should not go without notice that the most impassioned pleading of Paul, here and throughout the epistle, is not for his own position in the esteem of the Corinthians but for their unity, mutual concern and ἀγάπη.

#### (6) The Denial of the Resurrection of the Dead (Chapter 16)

The inclusion of a necessarily brief consideration of the denial of the resurrection of the dead, in Chapter 15, is required by the fact that it is often given a key position in the interpretation of the epistle, and particularly in the reconstruction of viewpoints opposed to Paul, since it is the most explicitly theological problem dealt with in the letter.<sup>84</sup> (Other practical and ethical problems or situations are given a theological interpretation by Paul.) There is no

unanimity, however, about the point of view from which the resurrection was denied, and indeed a common interpretation (which Conzelmann<sup>85</sup> concludes is almost inescapable) is that Paul misunderstood and misrepresented the views of *TIVES*.<sup>86</sup> It is often connected with Gnostic dualism, denying the corporeality of future existence,<sup>87</sup> or with an over-realised eschatology, denying a final, future resurrection<sup>88</sup> (though it may be also at least partly related to the troublesome question of the respective fates of those still living at the Parousia, and those who will have died or fallen asleep).<sup>89</sup>

Whereas many of the false views or wrong practices are treated as if they were characteristic of the whole community, here the group denying the resurrection is narrowed to *TIVES ΕΝ ἙΜΙΝ* (v.12). There is no indication of how widespread the view is, nor of the damaging divisive effects of it, except by implication and association with other prevalent ideas and their disruptive effects.<sup>90</sup> Instead Paul demonstrates the damaging consequences (and logical inconsistency) of this denial to those holding it. Their misunderstanding is presented by Paul in theological terms, and its bearing upon the community (or its social dimension) is not obvious.

An apologetic element is again found in verses 8-11 where, after citing himself as the last witness, an *ἔκτρομα*

born out of time and the least of the apostles,<sup>91</sup> he goes on to contrast this with what he has become through the grace of God - labouring more abundantly than any of them. The broader context in which this is found is an exposition of the gospel which Paul preached, and in which they believed, in order to remind them of the importance of the resurrection of Christ in the foundation of their faith. Therefore, although Paul may be turning their criticisms into a reminder of dependence upon grace, his argument here would hardly be effective if the opposition to him was hardened. Nor would the use of his own personal hardships (at vv.30ff) be an appropriate or convincing proof.

The first main argument which Paul brings against their denial of the resurrection is its inconsistency with the proclamation of the resurrection of Christ. The argument of vv.12-19 seems to depend upon their acceptance of Christ's resurrection (possibly while denying a general, future or their own resurrection).<sup>92</sup> He argues, therefore, that this is inconsistent, since the two resurrections are interdependent: denial of one is denial of the other. In the preceding verses (1-11), whose significance becomes clear only later,<sup>93</sup> he had emphasized that Christ's resurrection was a central part of his κήρυγμα or the gospel which he preached (i.e. of Christ crucified). Although the emphasis on the attestation of it by eye-witnesses might suggest that it too is being denied, the later use of it in his argument shows that it is rather

because this essential, undeniable foundation of their own faith is being effectively called into question by their denial of the resurrection of the dead. At vv.20-28, he goes on to explain the significance of Christ's resurrection, using the Adam-Christ typology<sup>94</sup> which recurs at v.45, for their views show that they have not properly understood the significance of it. There is a particularly strong emphasis on the future stages of the ἑσχατὰ in vv.22ff,<sup>95</sup> which supports the probability that the future of the resurrection was being denied in an 'over-realised' eschatology. The illogicality and inconsistency of those denying the resurrection is demonstrated by two further practical examples in vv.29-32: the mysterious baptism ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν (with which his readers are familiar and of which Paul shows a knowledge that suggests he may be well-informed about practices in Corinth); and the dangers which Paul undergoes daily. The Corinthian practice and Paul's hardships are pointless if there is no resurrection of the dead.

The next major part of Paul's exposition (v.35ff) is devoted to resurrection of the body, introduced in diatribe style by a hypothetical questioner (ΤΙΣ). Paul dismisses the question as a foolish objection,<sup>96</sup> rather than a genuine question. It is probable that he deals with either the basis of denial of the resurrection of the dead, or at least one argument used to support it. The questions imply the

impossibility (of resuscitating corpses). Paul argues not only that resurrection of the body is possible by God's power, (v.38) but also that a complete transformation, including death, is necessary (v. 36 and 44) and appropriate (v.39 and 42).<sup>97</sup> It is a logical necessity of the pneumatic existence in *σώμα* and *σώματος* (vv.43-4) that the *σώμα ψυχικόν* dies and is raised a *σώμα πνευματικόν*. (It is likely that Paul is using some of the current words and distinctions to support the resurrection of the dead or the body.)

The final section of Paul's argument is an apocalyptic climax (vv.51-8), where he holds up before the community a vision of the last days, or their eschatological common goal, as an incentive to steadfastness (v.58). The tone of triumphant confidence culminates in an open exhortation at v.58, to be steadfast (*ἑσθαῖοι*) and immovable (*ἀμετακίνητοι*) and abounding in the work of the Lord. There is a significant emphasis, as in 9:24-7, upon working towards a goal, in contrast to devoting their efforts to less essential and sometimes harmful side issues, and also in contrast with the assumption of achieved 'glory' of 4:7ff. In reminding them of their eschatological hope of final transformation and ultimate victory, Paul not only reaches the climax of his argument against the denial of the

resurrection of the dead, but also appeals to a recognition of a common, shared goal. The clarification of the community's goal, like the recalling of its foundation (Chapters 1-4), has therefore a unifying purpose.

Conclusion to Chapter VI:

From this brief survey of some of the issues raised in Chapters 5-15, it is now possible to consider whether or not they support the conclusions reached in Part II, from the examination of Chapters 1-4.

Though a number of controversial issues are raised, there is no attempt to link any of them with the divisions of 1-4. Grounds can certainly be found for detecting connecting theological threads between several of the issues (especially 'over-realised' eschatology). There are, however, also strong grounds for seeing the situation of divisions as compounded of a variety of tensions, rather than a single opposition to Paul.

A socio-economic dimension has been noted as an element of many of the issues which have arisen (e.g. the disorder at the Lord's Supper and resorting to litigation). The duality of the position of Christians, as members of a new community, yet also still in the world, is a further cause of tension (e.g. litigation and εἰσωλόθουτα ). Paul's division of Christians into the broad groups, the weak and the strong, suggests not a division along party lines, but rather a context for factions in the tensions it creates (unless the 'strong' voluntarily limit their freedom).

The exhortations of Paul, and the values he upholds,

support the contention that in Chapters 5-15 also, Paul is still centrally concerned with the unity of the community, threatened by divisive tendencies of which the parties of 1:12 are the logical consequence. This central concern for the community is an important connecting theme:-

- (i) The community should unite in the action of condemnation necessary for its purification (as well as for the good of  $\delta$  πόρνος ).
- (ii) Christians should submit to wrongs, rather than bring litigation against fellow-Christians. They should also abandon wrong-doing. This will make the community undivided (and a better witness).
- (iii) Although  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda\acute{o}\theta\upsilon\tau\alpha$  are generally harmless or neutral, the freedom to eat should be limited in consideration for the conscience of the 'weak'.
- (iv) People who are greedy, impatient, and refuse to share their food with those who have nothing, should eat at home, and not turn the Lord's Supper into their own meal, destroying its unity by divisions.
- (v) The  $\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  to be valued most are those which build up the community (not those for self-gratification).

Although Paul is no advocate of authority formalised into office, there are indications in the epistle of the effects of a lack of recognised authority, e.g. to deal with disputes between Christians (Chap. 6); to deal with the case of  $\pi\omicron\rho\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$  (Chap. 5); to preside at the Lord's Supper (11:17ff) or bring order to the assembly when uncontrolled

glossolalia threatens to disrupt it. Paul continues to appeal for voluntary restraint (a higher, if less practical, ideal), to exhort and to recall to fundamentals ( e.g. the foundation of their faith in 1:18ff. or their common goal in 15:51ff.). However, it is possible to detect at least a passing recognition by Paul of the need for acknowledged authority, e.g. at 5:4ff in the procedure for dealing with *τροπεία* (especially his own role); at 6:5, in the ironical question, "Is there no wise person able to judge?" and at 16:15-18 in the recommendation of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, and the appeal to submit to or recognise such men.

In addition to this, Paul's own apologetic for his apostolate supports such a reconstruction. The probable context of the challenge to his position (seen in Chapter 9) is the vacuum of authority created by Paul's departure, the uncertainty of his return, (4:18) and his clear reluctance to appoint those in authority, whom an ideal, spirit-led community should not require. It seems likely also that it is the information Paul has received about divisions which necessitates his reassertion of his own authority, based on his 'founding' of the community. The gospel of Christ crucified, whose proclamation is Paul's responsibility, is in peril. His apology also gives clear evidence of a clash of types of mission, suggesting that other missionaries were at work in Corinth. Paul does not, however, see it necessary

to attack these, which is consistent with the treatment of rival leaders in 1-4 (especially 3:5-9). It is also consistent with the fact that Paul, in spite of the challenge to his type of apostolate, can still apparently expect a hearing at Corinth and address the whole church. The strategy or stance which Paul adopts consistently in advising the Corinthians is to identify himself with the 'strong', the Πνευματικοί or τέλειοι, but to defend the interests of the 'weak' - another indication that the reconciliation of differences is his aim. So total is Paul's concern for the community, and its unity, that it is reasonable to see Paul's defence and efforts to exercise authority as from this motive, rather than personal pride.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made at the end of each section of this thesis to indicate the significant conclusions reached. This conclusion, therefore, is not intended to rehearse all those points, but simply to assess their cumulative significance. The aim of this study has been to reconstruct the situation at Corinth, with an emphasis on the divisions as they manifest themselves. It now remains to bring these findings together in a final brief summing up of conclusions reached.

Any precise identification of the *σχίσματα* at Corinth must be made with caution. However, the way in which Paul deals with the divisions as a whole, and the signs within the epistle of different types of tension and groupings, appear to support the initial impression from 1:10-12, and further statements about *σχίσματα* in 1-4, that the unity of the church is threatened by divisions in the plural, grouped around leaders (or rejecting all leadership). In the epistle as a whole, there is evidence of views which may be connected with the different parties indicated in the slogans of 1:12 (and elsewhere in 1-4) - for example, criticism of lack of eloquence may be linked with followers of Apollos; 'libertarian' views with the Christ party; scruples about *εἰδωλόθυτα* with the Cephas party. However, Paul's approach is consistently to attack factionalism

as a failing of the whole community, including those who support him, and not to identify particular views with the particular factions. His approach explains why it is so difficult (indeed impossible) to reconstruct the viewpoints of individual parties.

Paul ascribes this factionalism to an attitude of pride (characterised by the verb *φυσιδῶ* and *καυχάομαι* ), and dependence upon human wisdom rather than the 'folly' of the cross, which is dependence upon God's wisdom and power. This theological understanding of the divisions, however, seems to be Paul's own perspective, as the main information on divisions comes to Paul unofficially. It is consistent with the characterisation of the Corinthians, who regard themselves as *πνευματικοί* and are puffed up, that they should treat divisions lightly (or try to conceal them). Their questions are of a more philosophical or 'theological' nature (e.g. about freedom to eat *εἰδωλόθυστα*; whether or not to marry; pneumatic gifts) - another reason why Paul attacks human wisdom. Paul effectively reverses their emphasis by treating the community problem of divisions as one of serious theological significance (a sign of 'fleshliness'), and by treating theological questions such as *εἰδωλόθυστα* and *χαρίσματα* as questions where the overriding concern is for the community.

Pride is also involved in the 'over-realised eschatology', of which there is evidence in 4:7ff, and which provides the most plausible explanation of the denial of the resurrection (15:12). This misunderstanding may also underlie the attitude to other

issues in the community (e.g. to immorality, marriage etc.). It is not, however, presented as the attitude of one group, or as a divisive issue. It could, nevertheless, heighten one of the tensions identified in the epistle, that between living in the world and yet being part of the new community in Christ.

A diversity of tensions and division within the community is brought to light by the sociological perspective which has been kept in view throughout. For example, a division between the rich, and poor emerges in the issues of litigation, εἰδωλόθυτα, and most clearly in the σχίσματα at the Lord's Supper. Paul's own broad division of the 'strong' and the 'weak' (which has a social dimension) is also one which cannot be exactly identified with the parties of 1:12. A clash over different types of missionary apostle is also evident. The fact that a more complex situation, of diverse forms of tension and division, existed in the community makes the existence of a plurality of leader-centred divisions (of which 1-4 give evidence), expressing or even exploiting such tensions, highly probable.

An anti-Pauline element is frequently noted in reconstructions of the situation of the letter. The most important evidence for this is the apparent need for Paul to defend himself. There are indications of particular criticisms in the content of his apology. Of these the most important concern the issues of support and impressive eloquence. The criticism of Paul, however, appears somewhat general, and some of it possibly implicit and unintentional (not personal). His own apologetic, even in Chapter 3,

where stern warnings are given to leaders, is couched in general terms, with opponents not clearly identified. This milder tone of apologetic (by comparison with Galatians 1-2 and III Corinthians 10-13) is one of the reasons which Dahl gives for modifying his thesis that I Cor. 1-4 is primarily apologetic.<sup>98</sup> In this study, one of the most significant conclusions reached is that the apologetic parts can be seen as a part of Paul's strategy in dealing with divisions, rather than as an end in themselves. In as far as they are a bid for authority, it is for authority which will be exercised for the community. The most likely hypothesis that has emerged is that Paul's departure from Corinth has created a vacuum of authority in which groups rallying round leaders have emerged. (The advent of other missionaries - Apollos and possibly Cephas, for example - may have aggravated this.) Inevitably this involves and implies questioning of Paul's authority (and apostolic authority in general). Paul is forced to reassert his unique authority as the founder-apostle, in an attempt to transcend the leadership dispute. He does so with some reluctance, still preferring to appeal for voluntary restraint, even although there are clear indications that he is aware of effects of a lack of a mechanism or structure of authority to deal with grievances in the community. Paul refuses, however, to 'formalise' even his own authority, proposing only 'ad hoc' measures. His own visit, and Timothy's are part of his strategy for dealing with divisions (as is the letter).

It is quite possible that his position and standing in the community gave grounds for hope that his exhortations for unity would be heeded by the Corinthians, especially as the hardened opposition to him of II Cor. 10-13 is not in evidence.

These conclusions have relevance to the evaluation of the character and work of Paul, as well as to the practical, pastoral concern stated in the introduction as a motivation of this study. The central concern of Paul in the epistle, as well as his most passionate pleading, is to restore the threatened unity of the Christian community, by returning to the proper dependence upon God in the folly of the cross, and by making the paramount concern in community disputes, the interests of others.

Notes on Part III (Chapter VI) & Conclusion.

- (1) Hurd: The Origin of I Corinthians, pp.61ff.
- (2) 7:1; 7:25; 8:1; 12:1, 16:1.
- (3) Bultmann: Karl Barth: The Resurrecion of the Dead,  
1926, (Chap.3: Faith and Understanding) pp.66-7.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Hooker: Pauline Pieces, p.10.
- (6) E.g. Bruce: I & II Cor., p.24 and 53.
- (7) Allo: I Cor., p.116; Dahl: Paul and the Church at Corinth  
p. 56.
- (8) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.95. (Note 19, citing Schmiedel,  
suggests that 5:1 is an effective asyndeton).
- (9) ὅπως probably means 'actually' - Barrett: I Cor., p.120.  
Héring (I Cor, p.34): 'everywhere' (others: 'universally').
- (10) E.g. Schütz: Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic  
Authority, p.190; Dahl: op.cit. p.52.
- (11) Barrett: I Cor., p.120.
- (12) Presumably claiming that πορνεία cannot harm.
- (13) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.95; Barrett: I Cor., p.120.
- (14) τίνα (v.1), ὃ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξις (v.2),  
cf. v.3., τὸν τοιοῦτον (v.5).
- (15) See Barrett: I Cor., p.121; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.96.
- (16) Allo: I Cor., p.122.
- (17) Cf. II Cor.13:2.
- (18) Allo: I Cor., p.122.

- (19) Barrett: I Cor., p.126f; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.97.
- (20) E.g. Chapter 9.
- (21) Cf. 5:1. Barrett (I Cor., p.135) points out that Judaism settled its own disputes.
- (22) Cf. 1:28.
- (23) See Conzelmann (I Cor., pp.103 & 105) and Barrett (I Cor., p.137) for discussion of problems of v.5.
- (24) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.106; Barrett: I Cor., pp.139-140. (Also Barth: Church Dogmatics III, IV. 429.)
- (25) See Conzelmann: I Cor., pp.100-101.
- (26) Theissen (1): The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, p.97.
- (27) Ibid. pp.75-83.
- (28) " p.97.
- (29) Barrett: I Cor., p.139.
- (30) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.104) sees as the first hints of internal jurisdiction.
- (31) 8 and 10: 14-33 (Cf. also Chapter 7, questions about marriage).
- (32) 8:10 appears to suggest this, although the limitations make it impossible practically.
- (33) Cf. 3:1f.
- (34) Theissen (1) op. cit. (note 26) pp.128-9.
- (35) Ibid. pp.125-9.
- (36) E.g. οἶδαμεν 8:1 and 8:4.
- (37) Barrett: I Cor., pp.241ff.; Conzelmann: I Cor., p.177f.
- (38) Cf. 2:12&16 etc., placing self among πνευματικοί.

- (39) Cf. 10:32.
- (40) 10:23, Cf. 6:12.
- (41) E.g. 8:1, 8:4; 8:8. See Hurd, op. cit., pp.67ff.
- (42) E.g. 8:1; 10:23.
- (43) Part I, Chap.II, p.34f.
- (44) Theissen (1) op. cit., p.44f.
- (45) Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.200.
- (46) 3: 6-9; 3:10ff; 4:14-16 Cf. 1:17, 23; 2:1-5.
- (47) Barrett (I Cor., p.200), Cf. Theissen (1) (op. cit., pp.40ff.)  
sees a confusion of grounds of apostolic office and  
privileges.
- (48) Barrett: I Cor., pp.203f.
- (49) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.158): paradoxical use of *μισθός*.
- (50) Barrett (I Cor. p.207) gives 3 levels at which this right  
could be an obstacle.
- (51) Theissen (1): op. cit. (note 26) pp.40-9.
- (52) Ibid. p.44f.
- (53) Cf. Phil. 3:12-16.
- (54) Cf. 6:7a.
- (55) Not the unscrupulous exhortation of the intruders of  
II Cor. 10-13.
- (56) Also v.4, if Conzelmann's translation (I Cor., p.295) is  
right: 'if it is your mind'.
- (57) Twice.
- (58) There is no significant difference in the meaning of the  
two verbs.
- (59) Cf: Ro.6:5 - Meeks (The First Urban Christians, p.57f.)  
sees significance in the social status of those baptised  
by Paul.

- (60) 11:16.
- (61) See p. 70f. above
- (62) " p. 36f. above.
- (63) Also μέρος τι πιστεύω
- (64) αἰρέσεις is used but with no significant difference  
(Cf. Barrett: I Cor., p.261)
- (65) Barrett: I Cor., pp.234-5.
- (66) Barrett (I Cor., p.277) cites Schlatter.
- (67) Theissen (op. cit. note 26, p.96) suggests the possibility that they have houses (cf. p.106).
- (68) Ibid. p.164.
- (69) Cf. 11:2.
- (70) Allo: I Cor., p.70. Cf. Héring: I Cor., p.120.
- (71) Conzelmann (I Cor., p.202) agrees. Barrett (I Cor., pp.274-5) gives an account of 4 possible interpretations, but reaches a different conclusion from the one given here.
- (72) Theissen (op.cit. (26) above, p.106) suggests a division between houses, rather than a simple rich and poor division.
- (73) I.e. by redefinition of πνευματικοί and by limitation and downgrading of glossolalia.
- (74) Barrett (I Cor., pp.279-81) lists some.
- (75) Also 'distribution'. Barrett: I Cor., p.283f; Héring I Cor., p.125. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.207 ('assignments').
- (76) 12:12-13 e.g. Jews, Greek, slave etc.
- (77) Robertson & Plummer (I Cor., p.264) see ἑκάστῳ and συμφέρον (12:7) as emphasized.

- (78) Weiss (cited by Conzelmann: I Cor., p.213, note 29) saw vv.14-20 addressed to less privileged, vv.21-25 to more gifted.
- (79) The differentiation between them may be Paul's contribution.
- (80) E.g. 14:13, 27.
- (81) Hurd (op.cit. (1) above, pp.188f.) goes further, seeing Paul's attitude to glossolalia as totally negative, 'damning with faint praise'.
- (82) Schütz (op. cit (10) above, p.258) states that 12:28 is the only text which treats apostleship as a charisma.
- (83) Héring: I Cor., pp.133-4; Barrett: I Cor., pp.297,299 and 314f.; Bruce: I & II Cor., p.124.
- (84) E.g. Bultmann (and Barth): op.cit. (3) above,pp.66f.
- (85) Conzelmann: I Cor., p.262.
- (86) Hurd (op cit. (1) above p.196f.) lists supporters of this view. Cf. Schmithals: Gnosticism in Corinth, p.156.
- (87) E.g. Schmithals: op.cit., p.157ff.
- (88) E.g. Thiselton: 'Realised Eschatology at Corinth' (NTS 24 1978) p.510f. and 524; McCaughey: The Death of Death (in Reconciliation & Hope), p.249; Barrett: I Cor., pp.347ff. Schütz: op. cit. (10)above, pp.85ff.
- (89) Cf. Conzelmann: I Cor., pp.262-3.
- (90) Hurd (op. cit. (1) above, p.200) says the difference is not between groups in Corinth but between Paul and the church.

- (91) See Barrett: I Cor., p.344.
- (92) Schütz: op. cit. (10) above, p.85.
- (93) Cf. Conzelmann: I Cor., p.249 on the function of vv.1-11.
- (94) Barrett: I Cor., pp.351ff.
- (95) Also 50 ff.
- (96) E.g. ἄφρων (v.36).
- (97) Thiselton (op.cit. (88) above, p.524) sees the 2 main emphases on futurity (against over-realised eschatology) and on God (against spiritual enthusiasm).
- (98) Dahl: op.cit., p.61 (footnote).

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ABBREVIATIONS

BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library (Manchester).
ET	Expository Times.
E.T.	English Translation.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature.
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies.
Nov. Test.	Novum Testamentum.
NTS	New Testament Studies.
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology.
SNTS	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas.
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.
ed.	edited by.
rev.	revised by.
tr.	translated by.

