

The Corinthian Crisis

**A reconstruction of the events leading up to the composition of the Letter
of Tears, and of 2 Corinthians**

by

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**A dissertation submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of Trinity College, Bristol
validated by the University of Bristol**

23 June 1999

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Dr. John Nolland, who taught me New Testament Exegesis, and supervised this research; his careful supervision has been a model of excellence. I am particularly grateful also to Professor Ralph Martin, who read my work at an early stage and offered helpful suggestions, and to Dr Bruce Winter for his encouragement and helpful suggestions towards the end of the project. Thanks also to Dr Janet Fairweather for access to her translation of Ambrosiaster's Commentary on 2 Corinthians, and some useful discussions.

Hearty thanks are due to Jessica Turner, Angela Cattell, my parents, and to one who would remain anonymous, for their generous financial assistance. Thanks also to Su Brown, Assistant Librarian of Trinity College, Bristol, and to Drs. Andrew Clarke and David Brewster, successive Librarians of Tyndale House, Cambridge, for their assistance in gathering materials for this study. Thanks also to Beverley Godfrey for her tuition in the German language, and help with Italian texts.

Thanks are due also to my son Matthew for help computing and finding materials on the Internet. Finally, I am especially grateful to my wife for her support and encouragement over these many years.

Abstract

Reconstructions of the situational context of 2 Corinthians, or its constituent parts, are analysed. It is argued that a neglected reconstruction due to F. Bleek (1830) is, in its broad outline, probably correct. Following 1 Corinthians the church in Corinth, influenced by teachers opposed to Paul, rejected the demand of 1 Cor 5:1-13 for the expulsion of the notorious “incestuous man”, precipitating a major crisis in Paul’s pastoral ministry. He responded by letter, the so-called Letter of Tears, which is now lost. This study attempts to reconstruct the main thrust of that letter, and the responses to it of the Corinthians, and of Paul’s rivals. It is argued that Paul’s handling of the crisis was governed by his understanding of the church as a covenantal community, closely analogous to the Israel of the Pentateuch, and also subject to divine discipline. New arguments are offered for the literary unity of 2 Corinthians, and it is shown that at certain points in 2 Corinthians Paul is dependent on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Contributions are made to the exegesis of 1 Cor 5:5 and a number of passages in 2 Corinthians.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ABR | <i>Australian Biblical Review</i> |
| AGJU | Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums |
| AJP | <i>American Journal of Philology</i> |
| ATANT | Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments. |
| BAGD | <i>Bauer, W., 1979, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 2nd. ed., tr. W. F. Arndt and W. Gingrich; revised by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker; Chicago: University Press |
| BBR | <i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i> |
| BDB | F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, 1907, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford Clarendon |
| BDF | Blass, F., and Debrunner, A., 1961, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , tr. and revised by R. W. Funk; Cambridge: CUP |
| BDR | Blass, F., and Debrunner, A., 1984, <i>Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch</i> , ed. F. Rehkopf, Göttingen. |
| BETL | Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium. |
| BHT | Beiträge zur historischen Theologie |
| Bib | <i>Biblica</i> |
| BibTheolBull | <i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i> |
| BZAW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| BZNW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| CBQ | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> |
| CNT | Cominetaire du Nouveau Testament |
| EvQ | <i>Evangelical Quarterly</i> |
| ExpT | <i>Expository Times</i> |

| | |
|--------|---|
| FB | Forschung zur Bibel |
| FRLANT | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments |
| HNT | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| HNTC | Harper's NT Commentaries |
| HTKNT | Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen estament |
| HTR | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i> |
| ICC | International Critical Commentary |
| JBL | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> |
| JSNT | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> |
| JSNTSS | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i> |
| JSOT | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> |
| JSOTSS | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i> |
| JTS | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> |
| KEK | Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament |
| MNTC | Moffatt New Testament Commentary |
| NCBC | New Century Bible Commentary |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NovT | <i>Novum Testamentum</i> |
| NPNF | Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers |
| NTD | Das Neue Testament Deutsch |
| NTS | <i>New Testament Studies</i> |
| PGM | <i>K. Preisendanz (ed.), Papyri graecae magicae</i> |
| RB | <i>Revue biblique</i> |
| RGG | Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart |
| SANT | Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| SBLDS | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series |
| SBLSP | Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers |
| SHAW | Sitzungsberichte heidelbergern Akademie der Wissenschaften |
| SJT | <i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i> |

| | |
|--------|---|
| SNTSMS | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series |
| TDNT | G. Kittel and G. Friedrich eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 vols., ET; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76 |
| TDOT | Botterweck, G. J., Ringgren, H., and Fabry, H.-J., eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , tr. J. T. Willis et al, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974- |
| TLG | <i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i> |
| TNTC | Tyndale New Testament Commentaries |
| TSK | <i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i> |
| TU | Texte und Untersuchungen |
| TynB | <i>Tyndale Bulletin</i> |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament |
| ZAW | <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |
| ZKNT | Zahns Kommentar zum NT |
| ZNW | <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |

Chapter 1

Reconstructing the Corinthian Crisis

1. Introduction

The overall objective of this study is to reconstruct and explain the main events leading up to the composition of 2 Corinthians. This will include a reconstruction of at least some of the main points of the Letter of Tears, and will lead to new arguments for the literary unity of 2 Corinthians. The present chapter will introduce the main issues, setting our study in the context of the history of research, and discussing certain issues of methodology. The shape of the study as a whole will be indicated when the topic itself has been introduced.

The Corinthian Crisis

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the Corinthian community was not maintaining the high moral standards which the apostle expected of his churches. The church was divided, certain factions declaring personal loyalty to one leader over against the other(s) (1:12; 4:6).¹ There were serious disorders in community worship (11:17-22), and one man

¹ It has been widely assumed, on the basis of 1 Cor 1:12, that the church was divided into rival factions, each claiming allegiance to a particular leader (Paul, Apollos; some include Cephas; some also claim the existence of a party claiming allegiance only to Christ). Each party claimed the superiority of its chosen

was even openly having an affair with his step-mother (5:1-13). Timothy had already been dispatched to Corinth, with a mandate to “remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 4:17). Nevertheless the church, which Paul had founded, had asked his advice (7:1), and in 1 Corinthians “nothing hinders him from taking them to task.”² Despite all the disorders, he was planning to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, and then to travel through Macedonia to Corinth, where he might well spend the winter (1 Cor 16:5-9). He saw no difficulty with this plan, even though he might have to come “with a rod” (4:21).

In 2 Corinthians, however, Paul has apparently cancelled the planned visit to Corinth (2 Cor 1:23; 2:1). The letter as a whole is apologetic in character, and the apostle has to defend his conduct, authority and personal integrity. He refers to a letter written “out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears” (2:4), and to a man who has grieved the whole church, and has been expelled from the community (2:5-11; 7:12). This expulsion was apparently carried out in response to this so-called “Letter of Tears” (2:3-4, 9; 7:8-12). The cancellation of the planned visit was related to this man's offence, and until he was expelled from the community some guilt attached also to the whole church (1:23; 7:9, 11).

A few scholars identify the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians³, and their views will be considered later. The great majority, however, believe that this letter was composed after 1 Corinthians, and deduce that a major crisis occurred between the two letters. At

leader over the others. However, Hall (1994), following Chrysostom, has argued persuasively that throughout 1:12-4:5, Paul is using the rhetorical device of covert allusion: though he speaks of himself and Apollos, he is really alluding to rival teachers currently present in Corinth. He spells this out in 4:6, ταῦτα δέ, ἀδελφοί, μετεσχημάτισα εἰς ἑμαυτὸν καὶ ἀπολλῶν... . Paul has transformed (μετεσχημάτισα) the names of the false teachers who were really responsible for the divisions into (εἰς) himself and Apollos. The common interpretation, that he “applied” the figures of speech (gardeners, builders, stewards) to himself and Apollos (e.g. Hooker 1963/64 p 131; Fee 1987 p 165) seems to be lexically unsupported.

² Kümmel 1966 p 207,

³ Notably Hughes 1962; Hyldahl 1973, 1986; Borse 1984.

its centre was “the offender”, the man referred to in 2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:12. The almost unanimous exegetical tradition of the ancient church was that this man is to be identified with the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5.⁴ Of the Fathers, only Tertullian opposed this view, and his position was certainly not impartial, as Thrall points out:

he was contesting the Catholic Church's claim to have the power to reconcile penitent fornicators, and was determined to deprive the Catholics of what might appear to be scriptural support for their position i.e. Paul's lifting of the sentence of excommunication he had originally imposed on the incestuous man.⁵

Though this identification has now been abandoned by most scholars,⁶ this study will offer new arguments in its support.

The ancient consensus that the Letter of Tears was 1 Corinthians was broken in 1830 by F. Bleek.⁷ Bleek postulated that this letter is in fact lost. Following Chrysostom and Erasmus and arguing from 2 Cor 2:1, 12:14, 13:1f, Bleek also postulated a visit by Paul to Corinth between his founding of the church and the composition of 1 Corinthians.

⁴ Thrall 1987 p 66

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ The hypothesis has been supported recently by Hyldahl (1991 p 31 n 26) and Kruse (Kruse 1987; 1988). Borse (1984) maintains that 2 Cor 2:5-11 refers to the incestuous man, but identifies *ὁ ἀδικήσας* and *ὁ ἀδικηθείς* of 2 Cor 7:12 as the litigants referred to in 1 Cor 6:1-8; yet in 2 Cor 7:8-11a Paul has in view only the case of the fornicator. Since the two cases are dealt with together in 1 Cor 5-6, they may be dealt with together in 2 Cor 7 also (pp 190-92). The transition to a reference to the litigants is confirmed, says Borse, by the legal term *πρᾶγμα* in 2 Cor 7:11b (cf. 1 Cor 6:1). However, *πρᾶγμα* belongs to the set of legal metaphors employed throughout 7:11-12 (*ἐκδικήσεις; ἄγνός; πρᾶγμα; ἀδικέω*; possibly *συνίστημι*; cf. *ἐπιτιμία*, 2:6; Martin 1986 p 236). Moreover, the Letter of Tears was concerned with one specific issue and one offender; note the singulars in 2 Cor 2:5-10, 7:12. It is likely therefore that Paul is referring to the same *πρᾶγμα* throughout 2 Cor 7:8-12, namely, “the offence” which provoked the Corinthian crisis and gave rise to the letter which is mentioned in 2:4, 2:9, 7:8 and 7:12. It is quite possible, nevertheless, that the litigation was in some way related to “the offence”; see Richardson 1983.

⁷ Cited by Hyldahl 1973 p 290. I have not seen Bleek's work; my understanding of him is derived from secondary sources including Thrall 1994 pp 50, 65, Hyldahl 1986 pp 36f; and Betz 1985.

He concluded that the incident mentioned in 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:12 must have been the subject of the missing letter. The offender was the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5:1, who acted at the instigation of Judaistic opponents.⁸

The modern consensus, that Paul's intermediate visit occurred between the canonical epistles, that he was attacked, insulted or otherwise offended during that visit by a member of the Corinthian church, and subsequently wrote the Letter of Tears, was apparently first developed by Ewald (1849),⁹ who abandoned the traditional identification of "the offender" with the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians; H. D. Betz summarises Ewald's reconstruction of the sequence of events as follows:

After having written 1 Corinthians, Paul received distressing news which prompted his decision to undertake an immediate journey to Corinth from Ephesus. During this visit he was attacked by the "offender" (ἀδικήσας) (2 Cor 7:12). Paul attempted to confront his opponent, but lost in the showdown. Following this distressing visit he wrote the intermediate letter which is identical with the "tearful letter" mentioned in 2 Cor 2:4.¹⁰

Until the First World War, scholarly opinion was divided regarding the timing of the intermediate visit. The majority (including Alford, Denney, Lightfoot, Meyer, Sanday, Zahn and other illustrious names) followed Chrysostom and Bleek in placing this visit before 1 Corinthians;¹¹ but a significant body of opinion (including Lake and Plummer) followed Ewald. Still others denied that Paul visited Corinth at all between founding the church and composing 2 Corinthians. The division of opinion is vividly illustrated in Robertson and Plummer's commentary on 1 Corinthians (1914): on p xxiv they tentatively adopt a reconstruction of the events leading up to the writing of 1 Corinthians which places the intermediate visit before that epistle, indeed, before the

⁸ Bleek 1830 pp 630-31..

⁹Cited by Hyldahl 1973 p 292. I have not seen Ewald's work either.

¹⁰ Betz 1985 p 12

¹¹ Robertson and Plummer 1914 p xxiv.

Previous Letter referred to in 1 Cor 5:9. Commenting that this placing “has decided advantages”; yet on p xxxi we read

The language of our Epistle is difficult, or impossible, to reconcile with the supposition that the Apostle's Ephesian sojourn had been broken into by a visit to Corinth.

Since Lake and Robertson-and-Plummer, little appears to have been added to the case for denying the possibility that the intermediate visit occurred before 1 Corinthians. Their arguments are far from decisive;¹² yet since the First World War, the vast majority of commentators have agreed that the intermediate visit occurred after 1 Corinthians. In his commentary on 2 Corinthians (1915), Plummer is rather cautious about the timing of the intermediate visit, and it seems likely that the stronger remarks of the earlier commentary on 1 Corinthians are the work of A. Robertson, whom Plummer lists as among those who doubt or deny that the intermediate visit ever occurred.¹³ Though he tentatively places the visit between 1 and 2 Corinthians, in a footnote Plummer remarks that this visit might possibly be placed between Apollos's time in Corinth and Paul's Previous Letter (referred to in 1 Cor 5:9), or possibly between the Previous Letter and the arrival of Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11).¹⁴

This study will argue that in fact Bleek had the more probable outline (though the opponents could not be described as “Judaizers”),¹⁵ and that the development of his ideas leads to a coherent reconstruction which has a number of important advantages over the present consensus - if, in fact, one can speak of a consensus. For although there is a consensus that Ewald rather than Bleek has the correct basic outline, there is little agreement on the details. For example, scholars are divided over the precise

¹² See below, Chapter 2..

¹³ Plummer 1915 p xvii.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p xviii.

¹⁵ That is, Jewish Christians who taught that Paul's gospel alone would not bring salvation, demanded circumcision and continuing obedience to the full rigours of the Law of Moses.

sequence of Paul's travels, and the timing of their announcements. There have also been a number of attempts to reconstruct a plausible account of the offence against Paul (2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:12). Many scholars are content to admit ignorance regarding the precise nature of the offence, simply proposing that Paul was offended by a member of the church while in Corinth.

Paul's Letter of Tears was evidently closely connected with his travel plans. In 2 Cor 1:23 he says that the reason he did not come to Corinth was to spare them (φειδόμενος ὑμῶν). In 2 Cor 13:2 he warns that when he does come he will not spare those who continue in sin (οὐ φείσομαι); but at the time of the crisis he had decided not to come, because he does not “rule over their faith” (2 Cor 1:24). He wanted to avoid another painful visit (2:1), which would bring grief upon both the Corinthians and himself (2:2). He wrote his Letter of Tears in order to avoid such a confrontation (2:3). The natural conclusion is that the composition of the Letter of Tears coincided with the cancellation of a planned visit, and the cancellation of the visit may well have been announced in that letter.

The Literary-Critical Problem

Research into the historical background of 2 Corinthians has been greatly complicated by the emergence of partition theories of the canonical letter. Many scholars regard canonical 2 Corinthians as a composite of fragments from two or more Pauline letters.¹⁶

¹⁶ A recent example is Taylor (1991), who identifies six fragments, placing the Corinthian correspondence in the following chronological order: A, including 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, at least partly concerning moral conduct in a pagan environment; B, 1 Corinthians; C, substantially preserved in 2 Corinthians 10-13: the Letter of Tears; D, substantially preserved in 2 Cor 2:14-6:13, 7:2-4: carried by Titus, aiming to restore good relations between Paul and the Corinthian Christians once the crisis has been resolved; E, substantially preserved in 2 Cor 1:1-2:13, 7:5-8:24; and F, substantially preserved in 2 Corinthians 9, anticipating Paul's third visit to Corinth, whence he would take the collection to Jerusalem. Betz (1985 pp 3-31) gives a valuable account of the history of these theories.

The first partition theory of 2 Corinthians was apparently proposed 1776 by J. S. Semler. According to H. D. Betz, Semler divided 2 Corinthians into two letters: the first, carried by Titus to the Christians of Achaia, consisted of 2 Cor 1-8; Rom 16; 2 Cor 9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; the second letter, composed later after distressing news had arrived from Corinth, consisted of 2 Cor 10:1-13:10. Furthermore, Semler doubted the original unity even of the first of these two letters. Betz quotes Semler as saying that 2 Cor 9 was originally

a separate piece which others, who had already set off for the towns of Achaia, not to Corinth, were to receive from Paul, in order that they should hand it over to the officials of the churches. Later the Corinthians rightly joined this piece to the letter [to the Corinthians] at the very place at which Paul dealt with this very issue.¹⁷

Many modern partition theories of 2 Corinthians assume that 2 Cor 9 is at least part of a letter separate from 2 Cor 8;¹⁸ and there has also been substantial support for the view that 2 Cor 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4 is a separate piece, written to the Corinthians at an earlier stage in the crisis than the so-called Letter of Reconciliation,¹⁹ 2 Cor 1:1-2:13+7:5-16;²⁰ 6:14-7:1 is then usually regarded as a non-Pauline interpolation. However, there are also strong arguments for the literary unity of 2 Cor 1-7.

Most scholars view 2 Cor 10-13 as belonging to a letter distinct from 2 Cor 1-9, though many do indeed maintain the literary unity of 2 Cor 1-9. Many, following Hausrath (1870) and Kennedy (1900), regard 2 Cor 10-13 as (usually part of) the missing Letter

¹⁷ Semler 1776; as translated by H. D. Betz, 1985 p 3 n 4

¹⁸ E.g. Betz 1985, esp. pp 91-95; Georgi 1986 p 17; Thrall 1994 pp 38-42.

¹⁹ E.g. Bornkamm 1961 pp 21-23, 29-31; Schmithals 1973 pp 286-87; Georgi 1976 p 184; Koester 1982 vol.2 p 137; Taylor 1991; Welborn 1996..

²⁰ For a list of scholars who now regard 2 Cor 1:1-2:13, 7:5-16 as an independent letter, see Welborn 1996 p 560 n 6.

of Tears (the "Four Chapters Hypothesis").²¹ On the other hand, many others regard 2 Cor 10-13 as a separate letter written later than 2 Cor 1-9.²² Some claim that the visit by Titus to Corinth announced in 2 Cor 8:16-19 must be equated with the visit mentioned as a past event in 12:18, and that therefore Titus visited Corinth between 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13, and that 2 Cor 10-13 is therefore a separate, later letter.²³ Some even postulate a visit by Paul to Corinth between 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13.²⁴

Nevertheless, the hypothesis of the literary unity of 2 Corinthians is not without substantial scholarly support; commentators taking this view have included Heinrici, Allo, Lietzmann and Kümmel, Tasker, Hughes and Barnett; the hypothesis has been vigorously defended by, among others, Stephenson (1964, 1965), Bates (1965), Hyldahl (1973), Young and Ford (1987), Segalla (1988a, b); and Bieringer (1994). Hughes reports the view of J. Jeremias that 2 Corinthians is "undoubtedly a unity" (1962 p xxii).

This study will proceed in two phases. In the first phase, Chapters 2-4, the literary unity of 2 Corinthians will not be assumed. A new reconstruction of the events leading up to the composition of 2 Corinthians will be developed, drawing upon the evidence of 1 Corinthians, the so-called Letter of Reconciliation, and 2 Cor 8. It will be shown that this reconstruction implies that 2 Cor 10-13 belongs to the same original letter as the so-called Letter of Reconciliation. The second phase, Chapters 5-8, will then offer necessary exegetical support for the reconstruction, and in the course of this argument, new arguments will be offered for the literary unity of 2 Cor 1-7, including 6:14-7:1.

²¹ E.g. Lake 1930 pp. 155ff., 160; Robertson and Plummer 1914 pp. xx, xxixf, xxxvf; Héring 1967 pp. xif; Watson 1984; Talbert 1987 pp xx-xxi; Welborn 1995.

²² E.g. Furnish 1984 pp 37-38; Thrall 1994 pp 5-20.

²³ e.g. Pherigo 1949 p 341; Barrett 1982 pp 125-27.

²⁴ Windisch 1924; Gilchrist 1988.

The Corinthian Opponents

In considering the development of the Corinthian crisis, one inevitably runs into the question of the Corinthian opponents. There are occasional direct and indirect references to them in 2 Cor 1-7 (2:17, 3:1, 5:12), but Paul deals with them head-on only in 2 Cor 10-13. Who were they, and what role did they play, if any, in the crisis which led to the composition of the Letter of Tears? The problem of the *identity* of the Corinthian opponents is notoriously difficult; Gunther lists fourteen distinct identifications.²⁵ I agree with Hafemann that it is not possible to begin with (actual or supposed) references to them in the epistles and from these to reconstruct a detailed picture of their origin and theology:

the absence of direct evidence from their hands renders all attempts to *begin* with such a reconstruction as the interpretative key to Paul's writings uncontrollably circular at best, and at its worst simply a matter of historical phantasy.²⁶

This study will not address the issue of the identity of the opponents. However, it will be argued that they arrived in Corinth around the same time as 1 Corinthians, probably by invitation, and that they played a major role in the crisis that followed. Evidence will be offered that they promoted idolatry and sexual immorality in the church in Corinth as a means of gaining favour, and of undermining Paul.

2. Note on Methodology

A reconstruction of the Corinthian Crisis will consist of a set of propositions listing a sequence of events and identifying the main players and their activities, together with a literary-critical analysis of the epistle. Many of these propositions will be interdependent; indeed, in assessing the balance of probabilities in relation to a given historical or literary decision, one is often faced with assessing the feasibility of a whole

²⁵ Gunther 1973 p 1

²⁶ Hafemann 1986 p 3

complex of consequent propositions. For example, if the Letter of Tears is identified with 1 Corinthians, it will follow almost of necessity that 'the offender' would be the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5.²⁷ Again, many reconstructions of "the offence" depend on the presupposition that Paul visited Corinth between writing 1 Corinthians and the Letter of Tears; this, in turn, almost certainly requires that the travel plan to which he refers in 2 Cor 1:15-16 superseded that announced in 1 Cor 16:5-9. Any attempted reconstruction must give a coherent account of the following, each of which is intimately related to the others:

- The travels and travel plans of Paul, Timothy and Titus.
- The purpose and impact of the Letter of Tears.
- The offender and the offence.
- The administration of the Collection in Corinth.
- The role of the Corinthian opponents in the crisis.
- The literary composition of 2 Corinthians.

In the face of such complexity, Lake advocates the following approach:

As a matter of method it should be noted that complicated problems of this kind can only be satisfactorily handled by reducing them to a number of subordinate problems. Each of these problems is capable of alternative solutions, and in choosing between them the critic has to be guided by considering which is consistent with the solutions of other co-ordinate problems. The solutions not consistent with any of the alternatives must be struck out.²⁸

It is important to realise, however, that the vast majority of exegetical decisions, including literary and historical decisions, are judgements of relative probability; caution is therefore required in "striking out" solutions. Nevertheless, this study has found that the most probable solutions of each of these subproblems, apart from the literary-

²⁷ So e.g. Hughes 1962

²⁸ Lake 1911 p 149 n 1

critical question, when examined in isolation, together produce a coherent reconstruction which throws much new light on the text of 2 Corinthians.

It is generally recognised that no-one interprets a text without methodological presuppositions that are not necessarily shared by others. Certain presuppositions have been followed consciously; I will attempt to set them out here, as axioms of interpretation.

Paul's Psychological Profile

In this study a number of decisions depend upon certain presuppositions as to the sort of man Paul was, and his likely behaviour under certain circumstances. I have made the assumption that Paul was exceptionally level-headed and rational in the conduct of his ministry. This conclusion seems to me to follow with some confidence from his extraordinary success of his ministry, and it will be argued later that in the present letter he defends at length his rational handling of the Corinthian crisis.

The Principle of Inertia

This principle concerns changes in Paul's travel plans. When plans are laid, they will, in general, affect other people, and to alter them without good cause is to be irresponsible. It will be assumed therefore that Paul and his co-workers made every effort to keep their appointments. Indeed, Paul expressly denies the charge of ἐλαφρία in relation to his travel plans (2 Cor 1:17), showing that he had weighty reasons for changing his plans, and he emphasises that his decisions were taken in the best interests of the church (1:23-2:2).²⁹ If a given reconstruction accounts for a broken

²⁹ A possible objection to this principle is the following: Is it not possible that Paul changed his travel plans, not in response to external circumstances, but in response to divine revelation (cf. Acts 16:6-10)? The Apostle claimed to be God's messenger, and he would quite properly change his plans if he was so commanded. Indeed, Young (1986) has argued that this is the thrust of the ἵνα clause of 2 Cor 1:17; Paul cancelled his planned visit to Corinth because of promptings from God (p 412). However, the reason Paul gives in 1:23 for not coming to Corinth is not "God told me not to come", but "in order to spare you", a claim which he supports with an oath; and in 2:1 he states clearly that he *made up his mind* (ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ) not to visit them again ἐν λύπῃ. Thus Paul takes personal responsibility for his

promise or a changed plan in terms of a *timely, rational response* to known or proposed external circumstances, whereas another reconstruction does not, then the former reconstruction will, *in this respect*, be preferred. The same reservation will apply to reconstructions which propose that, being under pressure, Paul failed appropriately to respond to changing circumstances, and had subsequently to correct his mistakes. This criterion will be termed *The Principle of Inertia*.³⁰ There may be a need to allow that Paul's response to an external event might be somewhat delayed. For example, some interpreters suggest that the change in Paul's travel plans to which he refers in 2 Cor 1:23; 2:1 was a delayed response to "the offence", which occurred while he was in Corinth.³¹ However, I am still inclined to the view that such an assumed delay would weigh against such reconstructions.

Planning for economy

Paul and his co-workers were busy men, and they had limited financial resources. It would be expected therefore that their journeys were carefully planned, and travel kept to a necessary minimum. An example of the application of this principle concerns the travels of Timothy. Some reconstructions, including my own, assume that when Timothy set out from Ephesus on the journey which would bring him to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11), Paul had planned to follow the travel plan outlined in 2 Cor 1:15-16.

decision, and does not claim that he merely "followed orders". Thus, at least in the case of the cancelled visit, Paul appears to rule out "divine directive" as the sole ground of his decision. This is not to say that he took his decision without seeking divine guidance, but he does claim to have taken the decision for himself. In the same way, he states that he had rational grounds for the plan stated in 1:15-16, namely, to give the Corinthians a double χάρις. In 1 Cor 16:7-9 Paul also gives reasons for his travel plans. These examples do not rule out the possibility that Paul did change his travel plans in response to a divine directive, but such a hypothesis does not appear to command any direct support from the testimony of the Apostle. If Young is right that in 2 Cor 1:17b Paul asks, "Does 'yes' being 'yes' and 'no' being 'no' lie with me?", or (if the shorter reading is followed), "Does 'yes' and 'no' lie with me?" - and she makes a strong case that this is the most natural construction - this could just as well mean that Paul's decision was determined by external circumstances - perhaps by the actions of the Corinthians themselves - as by divine prompting.

³⁰ Newton's First Law of Motion, the Law of Inertia, states that a body will continue in a state of uniform motion unless acted upon by an external force. By analogy, the Principle of Inertia presupposes, essentially, that we should expect that Paul (or Timothy, or Titus) would continue with his travel plan unless diverted from it by some external cause.

³¹ E.g. Furnish 1984:151, 159.

Timothy was expecting to spend some time in Corinth, and it happens that Corinth was also the first stage of the journey planned by Paul. It would therefore be likely, as Hyldahl points out,³² that Paul and Timothy had arranged to meet in Corinth. It may be assumed that Timothy would join Paul on his journey, and Corinth, rather than Ephesus, would be the best place for the meeting, from the point of view of the economy of travel. Again, if Paul planned to meet one of his co-workers while they were both travelling, it is likely that they would have agreed routes and times and places where meetings could take place, with fall-back arrangements in case either was delayed. In particular, they would not have wanted to cross paths on the sea, without being aware of it!

If, therefore, a given reconstruction presupposes planning for maximum economy of travel, whereas another does not, then *in this respect* the former reconstruction is to be preferred.

Paul's Integrity

Second, I have assumed that Paul was a man of integrity. In such passages as 2 Cor 1:12-2:13; 7:5-16, where Paul is apparently speaking frankly, declaring the plain truth, it is assumed that Paul's own statements concerning his state of mind, his motives, his letters and his travel plans are sincere and honest, and hence are probably the best information available to us (cf. 2 Cor 1:12-13a).

Importing historical hypotheses: the Principle of Parsimony

Some historical details may be deduced directly from the primary texts with considerable confidence; for example, that Paul sent his Letter of Tears to Corinth in place of a planned visit. Other details may be decided only with rather less certainty. For example, did Timothy actually visit Corinth, as promised in 1 Cor 4:17? Was the travel plan outlined in 2 Cor 1:15-16 formed before or after 1 Corinthians was

³² Hyldahl 1986:41-42.

composed? Had Titus visited Corinth before the visit mentioned in 2 Cor 7:5-16? Was Paul the victim of "the offence"?

Many different kinds of hypotheses may make up a reconstruction. The following types, however, are of particular importance in assessing the credibility of reconstructions:

Type I: hypotheses which make necessary choices between limited sets of alternatives offered by the primary texts.

Type I would include, for example, the hypothesis that the plan mentioned in 2 Cor 1:15-16 was made by Paul before 1 Corinthians was composed; the only alternative is that the plan was made after 1 Corinthians was composed.³³ Into this category would also fall choices which become necessary once previous hypotheses have been adopted; for example, if 2 Corinthians 10-13 is considered to be originally later than and separate from 2 Cor 1-9, and if it is proposed that Paul visited Corinth at least once between founding the church and composing 2 Cor 10-13, then the hypothesis that Paul visited Corinth between composing 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13 would be type I.³⁴

Type II: hypotheses which equate or propose relationships between persons and/or events mentioned in the primary texts.

For example, the hypothesis that Titus was among the "brothers" who were to accompany Timothy from Corinth to Ephesus (1 Cor 16:11) would fall into this category, as would the hypothesis that the offender referred to in 2 Cor 2:5-11 is to be identified with the fornicator of 1 Cor 5:1, or was one of the intruders mentioned in 2 Cor 11:4. Another group of Type II hypotheses maintain that events expected in an earlier letter

³³ The plan of 2 Cor 1:15-16 cannot be identified with that of 1 Cor 16:5-9, for in the former Paul plans to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, whereas in the latter he explicitly excludes this option (v 7: οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ὄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν).

³⁴ So e.g. Windisch 1924; Batey 1965; Gilchrist 1988.

had in fact occurred, or, alternatively, had in fact not occurred, when a later letter was composed. For example, it may be supposed that the visit of Timothy to Corinth expected in 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11 actually took place; or, in fact, did not take place. A type II hypothesis which is central to the reconstruction to be developed here is that, though 1 Corinthians expects that the instructions of 1 Cor 5:3-5 will be carried out without dispute, they were in fact carried out only after the Letter of Tears.

Type III: hypotheses which add details to the historical picture by introducing persons or events not directly mentioned in the primary texts, and are neither of Type I nor Type II.

An example of a set of Type III hypotheses is found in Thrall's recent reconstruction of "the offence":³⁵

After Paul had arrived in Corinth on the occasion of his interim visit, one of the members of the Corinthian church handed over to him his own contribution to the collection the apostle was organising for the Jerusalem church. ... We may then suppose that Paul was robbed of this money, in circumstances which suggested that some particular member of the congregation was responsible. The man denied the charge, however. It was the apostle's word against his, and the church as a whole was uncertain whom to believe. Because they did not immediately accept Paul's view of the matter, he began to suspect that some of them (perhaps in substantial numbers), might themselves have had something to do with the theft, at any rate as accomplices after the fact. Since he was unable to persuade them to take the necessary action he left Corinth, and returned to Ephesus. It is possible that he had originally intended to use his stay in Corinth to further, or even complete, his plans for the collection. Since the kind of incident we have postulated would have made it impossible for him to do this, there may have been little point in prolonging the visit, altogether apart from any personal humiliation he may have experienced. On his return to Ephesus he wrote the letter which caused such a revulsion of feeling among the Corinthians. They were moved to investigate more closely, and their investigation brought about the offender's confession and punishment.³⁶

³⁵ 1987:73-75.

³⁶ Thrall 1987:74-75.

Thrall claims that the link between the offence and the Collection explains why Titus was able to "make a beginning concerning the Collection" during his visit to Corinth with the Letter of Tears (2 Cor 8:6);³⁷ if no such link existed, this would be hard to understand.³⁸ But it is quite possible that 8:6 refers to an earlier visit by Titus to Corinth. The reconstruction also accounts for Paul's concern to make his arrangements for the Collection as fool-proof as possible, so that no one who was involved could be accused of financial misconduct. Those Corinthians who had initially disbelieved his charge against the offender might also have insinuated that he was himself not altogether blameless in the matter. However, since Paul had been accused of attempting to line his own pockets from the proceeds of the Collection (2 Cor 12:16-18), no further explanation would be required for these precautions.³⁹

The following represents the relevant data from 2 Corinthians, and Thrall claims that the reconstruction of the offence fits them all:

1. The offence was a single definite act. This is indicated by the aorist participles in 7:12.
2. It was something to which the verb ἁδικέω could properly be applied.
3. It was a single individual who was responsible. Note the singulars in 2:5-8, 10 and 7:12.
4. The person was subject to the discipline of the Corinthian church (2:6), and thus, in all probability, a Corinthian himself.

³⁷ Thrall 1987:76.

³⁸ Ibid. If Titus had been sent to Corinth to put down a rebellion, he is not likely to have begun a collection for, as Barrett puts it, "a collection bag is not the most tactful of instruments for such a purpose" (1982:126). (Barrett, however, maintains that no such rebellion occurred; cf. 1973:6-9).

³⁹ Provided that the unity of 2 Corinthians is presupposed; then the accusation answered in 12:16-18 must have been made before Ch. 8-9 were composed.

9. For example, similarities between the case of the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5:1-5 and "the offender" of 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:8-12 weigh in favour of the identification of the two men; see below, Chapter 3.

5. Paul considered it an act which affected him personally (2:5, 10). In some sense, however, it had affected the whole community as well (2:5).
6. The offence was something in which the church had appeared originally to be implicated, but also something of which they were later able to prove themselves innocent (7:11).
7. Nevertheless, their own conduct had been such as to move them to penitence when they received Paul's letter (7:9-10). The incident must have been of such a kind, therefore, as to involve them in some sort of guilt.
8. The offence was of a very serious nature. It had caused Paul to write the Painful Letter, to postpone a further visit to Corinth, and then to abandon the promising opportunity of missionary work in Troas, in his anxiety to know from Titus what the response to his letter had been.

This data, and the good fit achieved by Thrall's reconstruction of the offence, is not disputed. However, it is submitted that the following reconstruction meets these criteria equally well:

Paul had a report from Timothy of serious disorders in the Corinthian church, and in particular of widespread sexual immorality - though the church had reluctantly expelled the incestuous man. Paul therefore paid an unscheduled visit to Corinth. During his visit, a member of the church made a pass at the wife of a certain unbeliever, and a brawl ensued. Paul, outraged by the man's conduct, demanded his immediate expulsion, but the church, already distressed by the expulsion of the incestuous man, brushed aside the offence as a minor misdemeanour, and refused to take action. Angry and humiliated, Paul left Corinth, but promised to return on his way to Macedonia, and warned that on his return he would not spare any who continued in sins of division, disorder or sexual immorality (2 Cor 12:20-13:2). Having returned to Ephesus, however, Paul had second thoughts and delayed his return. In place of the planned visit he sent his Letter of Tears, in which he explained that by refusing to discipline the man, the whole church had

become guilty by association in his sin; he was not prepared to return to Corinth unless the man was disciplined. The church responded by expelling the offender, and the crisis was resolved. They had thereby cleared themselves of guilt in the affair (7:11), and Paul was encouraged (7:13a). However, he warned that his earlier threat held good (13:2).

This reconstruction also explains (as does Thrall's) why Paul makes no reference in 2 Corinthians to the forgiveness of the offender by the one offended: the latter was not a member of the church. It also explains Paul's personal involvement (2 Cor 2:3-4), and the impression that he himself had been injured in some way (2:5, 10). The connection of Titus with the Collection (2 Cor 8:6) may be explained by postulating that Titus was one of the bearers of 1 Corinthians, and took a leading part in organising the weekly collections in Corinth, as instructed in 1 Cor 16:1-4. It is not claimed that this reconstruction improves upon that of Thrall; the point is this: if one is prepared to introduce persons and events which are not mentioned explicitly in the text, it is possible to invent many scenarios which may appear to fit the facts. However, it is doubtful whether one will have the luck to reconstruct historical reality. And even if this were to be achieved, we have no means of proving that this "true" reconstruction is in fact "true". The most that we can hope to achieve is to show that one reconstruction which seems to fit the data is more likely to be close to the truth than is another. We can only deal in probabilities.

Type I hypotheses may be unavoidable; type II hypotheses may help clarify the interrelationship of people and events which are mentioned in the primary texts, and hence may add cohesion to the overall picture of the chain of events. Type III hypotheses however, though they may claim support in that they help to create a logically consistent picture, are inevitably more speculative. It is asserted that if a given reconstruction has fewer type III hypotheses than a rival, it is *in this respect* to be preferred.

In addition, many type I and type II hypotheses may be supported by direct evidence from the primary text which, while falling short of certainty, nevertheless weighs in favour of a given hypothesis.⁹ The strength of such evidence must also be considered.

Local coherence: consistent use of language

There are occasions when the repetition of distinctive language in closely connected contexts creates the impression of an allusion to an earlier statement, or even a common reference. An important example is the repetition of the verbs προενάρχομαι and ἐπιτελέω in 2 Cor. 8:6 and 8:10f. Watson comments:

‘the contrast between ‘beginning’ and ‘completing’ [in 8:10f] is identical to that of viii.6, exactly the same verbs being used. The ‘beginning’ must therefore be the same in both cases.⁴⁰

Thus from 2 Cor 8:6, 10f, Watson deduces that Titus made a beginning with the collection in Corinth ἀπὸ πέρυσι (8:10). Murphy O’Connor, however, replies that this would be to demand too great a precision or logical consistency from Paul’s language (1991 p 40). I propose, however, that if a given reconstruction does in fact reveal such a consistency in Paul’s use of language in a given passage, whereas an alternative reconstruction requires the assumption that he has been a little careless, then *in this respect* the former reconstruction is to be preferred.

These criteria do not in the end constitute proof that a given reconstruction is right, or to be preferred over its rivals. As Barrett rightly says,

All attempts to analyse 2 Corinthians and to trace out the record of Paul’s dealings with the church stand or fall by the exegesis of the relevant parts of the epistle.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Watson 1984:334.

⁴¹ Barrett 1973:18.

In particular, the reconstruction must enable a satisfactory account to be given of the rhetorical situation, and the argument of each literary subunit, and of the letter (or letters) as a whole. Much of the present study will be devoted to an exegetical study of 2 Corinthians 1-7, particularly of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, in order to demonstrate that the reconstruction to be advocated here throws substantial new light on this part of the letter, and allows it to be read as a literary unity. Together with earlier arguments for the unity of the "Letter of Reconciliation" and 2 Cor 10-13, this will amount to a substantial contribution to the case for the literary unity of the whole letter.

3. The Shape of the Argument

The second, third and fourth Chapters will argue that a careful analysis of a substantial subset of the available data, using the principles set out above, leads to a reconstruction which follows the outline suggested by Bleek. It will then be argued that this reconstruction points to the literary unity of 2 Corinthians. The analysis will suggest that the issue of dining in idol temples, so prominent in 1 Corinthians, lay also at the heart of the Corinthian Crisis, and that the false apostles encouraged the church to take a stand against Paul both on this issue and on questions of sexual morality. In the following Chapters, it will be shown that traces of these issues may be found in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, and the broad outlines of Paul's debate with his opponents will be traced out. It will also be argued that in handling the Crisis, Paul thought of his role in terms of the administration of the new covenant. Finally, it will be argued that when he composed 2 Corinthians, Paul believed his "Affliction in Asia" to have been an integral part of his ministry to the Corinthians, and that his sufferings played an active role in the resolution of the Crisis.

Chapter 2

Paul's Travel Plans and the Letter of Tears

In his extant correspondence Paul mentions two distinct plans to visit Corinth on *en route* from Ephesus to Judea: the "*Single* visit" plan announced in 1 Cor 16:5-9 (Ephesus - Macedonia - Corinth - Judea); and the "*Double* visit" plan mentioned in 2 Cor 1:15-16 (Ephesus - Corinth - Macedonia - Corinth - Judea). We will denote by Plan S the travel plan of 1 Cor 16:5-9, and by Plan D that of 2 Cor 1:15-16. It is clear from 2 Cor 1:23 that Plan D was not carried through; at least the second of the two planned visits had evidently been abandoned. The fate of Plan S is disputed, though Paul did in fact travel to Macedonia (2 Cor 2:12-13), and when he wrote 2 Corinthians he was apparently on his way to Corinth, as envisaged in Plan S (2 Cor 9:4; 12:14; 13:1-2, 10). But the analysis of Paul's travels and travel plans is complicated by the literary-critical problem, by the ambiguities of language, and by the fact that some sort of crisis had intervened between 1 and 2 Corinthians. Hyldahl and Bosenius argue that Paul did not visit Corinth at all between founding the church and 2 Corinthians.⁴² Drescher, Batey and Quesnel postulate that Paul did not visit Corinth before 2 Corinthians 1-9, but rather between 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13.⁴³ Windisch and Gilchrist postulate a visit between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9,

⁴² Hyldahl 1973, 1985; Bosenius 1994. According to Plummer (1915:xvii), this view was shared by, among others, Baur, Heinrici, Lange and A. Robertson.

⁴³ Drescher 1897 (cited by Thrall 1994:56); Batey 1965; Quesnel 1998.

and a further visit between 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus, on the basis of 2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1f., that Paul visited Corinth at least once between founding the church and composing 2 Corinthians. This conclusion is required by the most natural construction of 2 Cor 13:2,⁴⁵ and of 2 Cor 2:1, ἔκρινα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ τοῦτο, τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν. The introductory τό and the position of πάλιν both argue for the inclusion of ἐν λύπῃ in its reference.⁴⁶ Even Hyldahl, who nevertheless takes πάλιν with ἐλθεῖν alone, concedes "Es ist philologisch durchaus möglich und vielleicht naheliegend, πάλιν mit ἐν λύπῃ, nicht mit ἐλθεῖν zu verknüpfen".⁴⁷ It is clear that if a reconstruction places a visit by Paul before the composition of 2 Cor 1-9, it is *in this respect* to be preferred over those reconstructions which deny such a visit. Batey argues that since in 2 Cor 1:16, πάλιν ἀπὸ μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, πάλιν is clearly to be taken with ἐλθεῖν, not ἀπὸ μακεδονίας, so in 2:1, τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, πάλιν may be taken with ἐλθεῖν. However, if Paul meant πάλιν to be taken with ἐλθεῖν, a more natural word order would appear to be τὸ μὴ ἐν λύπῃ πάλιν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, and it is still much more probable that πάλιν is to be taken with ἐν λύπῃ.⁴⁸

It is usually assumed that, following 1 Corinthians, the situation in Corinth deteriorated, and accordingly Paul changed his plans. Instead of following Plan S (1 Cor 16:5-9), he paid a visit to Corinth earlier than planned and, while he was there, he was seriously offended by one of the Corinthian Christians. The church did not take Paul's part,

⁴⁴ Windisch 1924; Gilchrist 1988.

⁴⁵ Hyldahl (1986:104) maintains that the phrase ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν (13:2) cannot mean 'as when I was present the second time, so also now when I am absent', as is commonly assumed, as this would require a οὕτως before καί; καί cannot be equivalent to οὕτως καί, here or anywhere else (p 104 with n 62). He paraphrases "*Gleichsam schon zum zweitemal anwesend und doch jetzt abwesend*" ("As it were ... present already the second time, though in fact now absent"), so that Paul is speaking of his epistolary presence. Thus Hyldahl takes the whole phrase ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν with προλέγω, and not with προείρηκα. But the construction ὡς ... καί, meaning "as ... so" appears to be quite well attested: Matt 6:10; Acts 7:51; Gal 1:9; Phil 1:20 (BAGD, s.v. ὡς, II.1); Furnish 1984:169-70.

⁴⁶ Thrall 1994:55.

⁴⁷ "It is absolutely linguistically absolutely possible, and perhaps obvious, to take πάλιν with ἐν λύπῃ and not with ἐλθεῖν."; Hyldahl 1986:36.

⁴⁸ Meyer 1890:144.

however, and, humiliated, he returned to Ephesus.⁴⁹ Opinions vary as to how this “intermediate visit” fits in with Plan D (2 Cor 1:15-16); was this visit the first leg of this revised itinerary?⁵⁰ Or did Paul make a brief, unscheduled visit to Corinth, promising to return shortly on his way to Macedonia?⁵¹

1. Reconstructions Placing Plan S Before Plan D

It may be assumed that the Corinthians were already aware of Plan D when Paul composed 2 Cor 1:15-16. If this intention was not known, he would have had no need to mention it, still less to defend his decision to abandon it.⁵² If Plan D replaced Plan S, as most scholars assume, then 2 Cor 1:15-2:2 allows only two possibilities: either Plan D was only partially executed, or it was totally abandoned.

The reason Paul gives for planning to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia is that the Corinthians might receive a second χάρις⁵³ (2 Cor 1:15). Most scholars take χάρις to mean here something to be received by the Corinthians, whether “divine grace”, in the sense of some “spiritual gift” (cf. Rom 1:11)⁵⁴, or simply “personal favour”, “kindness”⁵⁵, “benefit”⁵⁶, “proof of goodwill”⁵⁷, etc. Fee,⁵⁸ on the other hand, takes χάρις to mean “opportunity for kindness”, that is, an opportunity to help Paul with his travel expenses. None of these senses seems to be compatible with the assumption that Plan D was intended to include a disciplinary visit. It would follow that the trouble

⁴⁹ A few scholars maintain that the offence took place not during, but after Paul's intermediate visit (e.g. Allo 1937:55-56, 62; Schmithals 1971:104).

⁵⁰ e.g. Manson 1962:212-13; Barrett 1973:85-86; Fee 1978:537-38; Thrall 1994:72-74.

⁵¹ e.g. Furnish 1984:143-44; Gilchrist 1988:57-58.

⁵² Thrall 1994:72.

⁵³ Some witnesses, including B, read χαράν for χάριν. The reading χάριν is perhaps more probable, but the arguments so far advanced are not decisive (see Thrall 1994:137 n 58). The reading χαράν is therefore discussed further below.

⁵⁴ E.g. Meyer 1879:151; Windisch 1924:83; Lietzmann 1949:102; NAB; cf. TEV.

⁵⁵ Barrett 1973:74.

⁵⁶ E.g. Hughes 1962:30; Danker 1989:39; AV.

⁵⁷ BAGD s.v. 3.

⁵⁸ 1978; followed by Martin 1986:22, 25.

which Paul then encountered in Corinth was unexpected (cf. 1:15, καὶ ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει..).

The following analysis will focus on the following questions: when, and why, did Paul move (a) from Plan S to Plan D, and (b) from Plan D back to Plan S; and when were the Corinthians informed of these decisions?

Case 1: Plan D totally abandoned

Some scholars hold that Paul made a brief, unscheduled visit to Corinth after 1 Corinthians which was not a part of Plan D, but a hurried response to disturbing news from Corinth.⁵⁹ The question then arises, at what point did Paul move from Plan S to Plan D? There are four possibilities: before the interim visit; during the interim visit; after the interim visit but before the Letter of Tears; or after the Letter of Tears had been despatched.

If the interim visit was not part of Plan D, it seems unlikely that Paul changed from Plan S to Plan D before the emergency visit. It is assumed that the emergency visit was a hurried response to news from Corinth. If the decision to move to Plan D was made before Paul arrived in Corinth, it would surely have made sense not to return to Ephesus and then set out on Plan D, but rather to go on from Corinth to Macedonia. Moreover, knowing that he faced trouble in Corinth, it seems unlikely that Paul would have committed himself to such a change of plan, or informed the Corinthians of it, until he had seen how things worked out.

Furnish⁶⁰ suggests that the change from Plan S to Plan D was announced during the interim visit. This visit had been very difficult, and had been cut short; Paul needed to ensure that the Corinthians would be ready with the collection for Jerusalem when he

⁵⁹ Brought, perhaps, by Timothy (so Furnish 1984:143).

⁶⁰ Furnish 1984:143-44.

returned from Macedonia.⁶¹ The announcement of the reversal of the change of plan was given in the Letter of Tears,⁶² and the first leg of Plan D never took place (1:23). The following sequence results:

Plan S announced (1 Corinthians) - unscheduled visit to Corinth; Plan S cancelled and Plan D announced - Paul returns to Ephesus - Plan D cancelled and Plan S reinstated (Letter of Tears) - Plan S executed, as far as Macedonia

Furnish explains⁶³ that, once back in Ephesus, Paul had second thoughts about Plan D, and instead switched back to Plan S. Instead of the promised visit (the first of Plan D), he sent his Letter of Tears. He may have hoped that Plan D would bring a blessing to the Corinthians but, on reflection, have seen that it would only cause them pain.

Though no immediate *external* cause is suggested for the change back to Plan S,⁶⁴ Furnish does mention the possibility, suggested by Allo and Windisch, that “the offence” occurred, not during the interim visit, but afterwards; it could be that the offence consisted in a slander against one of Paul’s associates.⁶⁵ In that case, Paul would have received news of the offence from Corinth, and this news would then constitute an external cause which might explain the shift back from Plan D to Plan S. However, as Allo and Windisch both note, the immediate victim of the offence is unlikely to have been either Timothy or Titus; it is unclear, then, who this associate might have been. One could postulate that, before he changed his mind about Plan D, Paul received further bad news of some sort from Corinth; but the Principle of Parsimony would weigh against this.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.:144, 151.

⁶³ Ibid.:151, 159.

⁶⁴ Furnish does offer two possible contributory factors: fear of being unable to cope with the situation in Corinth; or an unwillingness to abandon the planned mission to Troas (1984:159). But there is no reason to suppose that Paul was not well aware of both these factors when he announced Plan D.

⁶⁵:164, citing Windisch 1924:238-39 and Allo 1937:61-62. Furnish considers this unlikely, however, since there is no clear evidence.

Gilchrist⁶⁶ proposes that Plan D was announced after the interim visit, in the Letter of Tears: Paul wanted the offender expelled from the church, and with this matter cleared up he would make a friendly visit to Corinth on his way to Macedonia, in order to consolidate his position before returning with Collection representatives from Macedonia (2 Cor 9:4). He then changed his mind, instead sending Titus to see what effect the letter had had. Titus was also charged with announcing the cancellation of Plan D. But the Principle of Inertia also weighs against this reconstruction; no external cause is suggested for the return to Plan S. Moreover, as will be shown below, it is likely that, far from announcing an additional visit, the Letter of Tears cancelled a planned visit.

It is very unlikely that the change from Plan S to Plan D was later than the Letter of Tears. This reconstruction would require that, after Titus had left for Corinth, Paul had considered sailing for Corinth, presumably expecting to join Titus there; but he had changed his mind, fearing a negative response to his letter (1:23). But it would then be difficult to explain why he should mention Plan D in 2 Cor 1:15-16.

In conclusion, though it is possible to maintain that Plan S preceded Plan D, and that Plan D was subsequently totally abandoned, the Principles of Inertia and Parsimony weigh against such reconstructions.

Case 2: Plan D partially executed

As we have seen, when Paul formed Plan D, he did not anticipate a painful visit to Corinth; rather, his purpose was to give the Corinthians a second χάρις. If the first leg of Plan D was in fact executed, it then seems to follow that Paul cancelled the return visit to Corinth after “the offence”, giving this sequence:

⁶⁶ Gilchrist 1988:58-59.

Plan S announced (1 Corinthians) - Plan S replaced by Plan D - Plan D partially executed (Ephesus - Corinth) - Paul returns to Ephesus (possibly via Macedonia); Plan D cancelled - Plan S reinstated (though probably delayed by a year), and executed as far as Macedonia - 2 Corinthians

Manson proposes that, having announced Plan S in 1 Corinthians, Paul changed his mind, and decided to give the Corinthians the benefit of an additional visit on his way to Macedonia, as well as staying with them for some time after he had completed his business there.⁶⁷ Anticipating a successful visit, he set out on the first leg of Plan D, but unexpectedly encountered trouble in Corinth.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he intended to return to the city from Macedonia, continuing with Plan D. But having left Corinth for Macedonia, Paul changed his mind again and, abandoning his plan to return to Corinth and from there sail for Judea, returned instead to Ephesus. His reason, Manson explains, was that had he returned to Corinth, he would have been “compelled to deal drastically with his opponents”, thus bringing suffering both upon the church and, in consequence, upon himself (1:23-2:2); and this he wished to avoid.⁶⁹ But again, no *external* cause has been suggested for the change of plan. Unless he received further bad news from Corinth after he had left but before he dropped Plan D, Paul would have been aware of the risks of a return visit before he left Corinth.

A variant of Manson’s reconstruction is due to Fee, who takes χάριν (1:15) to mean ‘opportunity for kindness’; thus the Corinthians were to be the agents of the χάρις,

⁶⁷ Manson argues against the ‘emergency visit’ theory on the grounds of the Principle of Parsimony: “There are no indications that any sort of crisis had developed in Corinth. Rather, the situation may have appeared to be one that could be dealt with by friendly discussion on a personal visit. ... It is necessary to point out that a good deal of this reconstruction is pure conjecture, without a shred of evidence to support it. There is not a word in our documents about disturbing news coming from Corinth to Ephesus and causing Paul to undertake a special visit to Corinth. There is not a word about a return to Ephesus after the painful visit, not a word about winding up the Ephesian missionary campaign after the painful visit” (Manson 1962:212-13).

⁶⁸ Similarly Barrett 1973:7, 75.

⁶⁹ Manson 1962:213. Barrett, 1973:7-8, maintains that Paul decided that a return to Corinth would have done no good, and would only have lead to ‘recrimination and angry talk’. It was better to spare the church the rebuke which this would have precipitated.

rather than passive beneficiaries.⁷⁰ The Corinthians had complained that Paul would not accept financial support from them (1 Cor 9:1-18), and Fee's proposal is, in this respect, attractive. It is perhaps possible that this complaint had come to Paul's ears with renewed force since 1 Corinthians was composed (perhaps through Timothy), and that the new complaints were strong enough to cause him to revise the travel plan which he had announced in that letter. But given the rather delicate situation in Corinth reflected in 1 Corinthians, and his decision not to visit them in passing through, but to spend some time with them after he had passed through Macedonia (1 Cor 16:7), it would be surprising if he had changed his plans without some urgent necessity. If the Corinthians were very keen to help Paul with his travel costs, they would have the opportunity when he left them for Judea (2 Cor 1:16; cf. 1 Cor 16:6). It is also possible that Paul's financial situation had changed since 1 Corinthians, and he now needed the Corinthians' help to get to Macedonia. Indeed, Fee translates 1:15-16 as follows:

I planned to visit you first, so that you might have a double opportunity for kindness. I planned by means of you to go to Macedonia, and then to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea.⁷¹

Thus Fee takes the first *καί* of 1:16 to be epexegetic of *ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε*. But the structure of 1:15-16 weighs against this interpretation. Thrall rightly comments:

The order of words, however, suggests that the *χάρις* is connected with the fact of the visit, rather than what the Corinthians will do on the occasion of it, and were this the meaning, we should expect v.16 to begin not with *καί* but with, e.g., *τοῦτ' ἔστιν*, 'that is'.⁷²

⁷⁰ Fee 1978:534.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Thrall 1994:138. A further difficulty with Fee's translation (though not to the sense he gives to *χάρις*) is that it is doubtful that *δεύτερος* can have the sense 'double' (Thrall 1994:139 n 71). However, a 'second opportunity for kindness' would be offered by Plan D: second, that is, to the opportunity already announced in Plan S (1 Cor 16:6).

Each καί is clearly connective, as Paul sets out in turn the four stages of his plan.⁷³

Thrall suggests that Paul revised Plan S to include a preliminary visit to Corinth in order to “ensure that the collection was well in hand”.⁷⁴ On his arrival in Corinth, Paul immediately announced his intention to return from Macedonia in fulfilment of the promise made in 1 Cor 16:5-7. But trouble flared up during the visit, and he decided to cancel Plan D and return to Ephesus. Two reasons are suggested for this further change of plan; first, Paul may have been relying on the Corinthians to finance his journey to Macedonia.⁷⁵ Second, the “offence” may have had an adverse effect on the collection project, resulting in a serious delay. This would provide a credible explanation for Paul’s decision to return to Ephesus, but we must then assume that he left Corinth promising to return in the not too distant future (cf. 2 Cor 13:2). Neither of these points would explain why Paul did not return. Paul declares with an oath that the reason he did not return to Corinth was to spare the Corinthians.⁷⁶ But again, he must have been aware of the risks of a return visit when he left Corinth, unless he received further information after he left, and the Principles of Inertia and Parsimony therefore weigh against such reconstructions.

Conclusion

We have examined various reconstructions of the apostle’s travels and travel plans under the assumption that Plan S preceded Plan D. Given that the apostle acted rationally and carefully to changing situations, whether Plan D is taken to have been

⁷³ ‘It makes better syntactical sense to see all four as equally dependent on the main verb ἐβουλόμην, rather than to suppose that v.16 is virtually dependent on the subordinate clause in v.15.’ (Thrall 1994:139 n 81).

⁷⁴ 1994:72. This hypothesis could be supplemented by the further suggestion that Timothy’s report, though in no way suggesting that disciplinary measures were required, indicated that such a visit might be wise. However, in describing the purpose of this planned visit, Paul makes no mention of the Collection (2 Cor 1:15).

⁷⁵ 1994:73-74.

⁷⁶ 2 Cor 1:23: φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς Κόρινθον; almost the same language which he uses in the stern warning in 2 Cor 13:2 (ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι).

partially executed, or totally abandoned it has proved impossible satisfactorily to account for the changes of plan implied in the various reconstructions.

2. Reconstructions Placing Plan D Before Plan S

Some scholars place Plan D (2 Cor 1:15-16) earlier than Plan S (1 Cor 16:5-9).⁷⁷ If Plan D indeed preceded Plan S, and the Corinthians were aware of the earlier plan (perhaps through the Previous Letter,⁷⁸ or through Timothy), then it is most unlikely that Paul visited Corinth between composing 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1:1-2:13, 7:5-16. For Paul was following Plan S and had reached Macedonia when he composed 2 Cor 2:13; 7:5-7, and if he had in fact also visited Corinth between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1:1-2:13, 7:5-16, it would be very odd indeed that he should have found it necessary to explain why he had *not* come to Corinth (2 Cor 1:23).⁷⁹ The sequence of events would therefore have been:

Plan D announced - Plan D cancelled and Plan S announced (1 Cor 16:5-7) - Plan S executed, as far as Macedonia - 2 Corinthians

Paul explains his reasons for moving from Plan D to Plan S in 1 Cor 16:7-9. Such an interpretation fits well with 1 Cor 16:5-12. Paul carefully explains and emphasises several points in this passage:

1. He must go through Macedonia before coming to Corinth (16:5; ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω, Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι).
2. In contrast to his merely *passing through* Macedonia, he hopes to spend some time in Corinth (16:5b-7).
3. He has good reasons for delaying his visit to Corinth (16:8-9).

⁷⁷ So e.g. Denney 1910:36; Duncan 1930:168-75; Lenski 1937:844; Hughes 1962:xvii; 31; Hyldahl 1973; Borse 1984b.

⁷⁸ So Lightfoot 1904:275-76

⁷⁹ Hughes (1962:52) points out that he would also have had the opportunity to explain his change of plan during his interim visit, and it would therefore be difficult to account for 2 Cor 1:15-17.

4. Though he cannot himself come, he has sent Timothy, and would have sent Apollos if the latter had been willing (16:10-13).

It seems likely that he was also anxious to give the church time to resolve such serious pastoral issues as idolatry and sexual immorality before his arrival. G. S. Duncan rightly observes:

Clearly he is anxious that the Corinthians should not interpret his delay in coming to them as implying any lack of interest. Throughout all this passage there sounds an apologetic note. It is the language of a man who is announcing a decision that he knows will not be popular ...⁸⁰

This interpretation also fits well with 2 Cor 1:15-16, which consists of four parts, joined by καί's and governed by ἐβουλόμην:

καὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πεποιθήσει ἐβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε,
καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν,
καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν ἰουδαίαν.

Hence Paul is saying that he planned four journeys: Ephesus - Corinth, Corinth - Macedonia, Macedonia - Corinth, Corinth - Jerusalem.⁸¹ πρότερον is to be taken with ἐβουλόμην,⁸² giving "I formerly⁸³ intended to visit you in order that you might have a

⁸⁰ Duncan 1930:172. Thrall argues (1994:71) that Paul is here correcting his remark that he will come to Corinth ταχέως, "soon", "without delay" (1 Cor 4:19), while in fact he will not be coming for some months. But the sense of ταχέως may be "more quickly than you think", the comparison being provided by the context (BAGD s.v. 2a; Barrett 1971:118), or "as soon as possible" (Fee 1987:191). As Fee says, the emphasis in 4:19 is on the certainty of a visit, not on its timing.

⁸¹ The four infinitives are best seen as equally dependent on the main verb ἐβουλόμην, each indicating successive stages of the journey and linked by connective καί (Thrall 1994:139 n 81).

⁸² Thrall 1994:136-37.

⁸³ Many commentators take πρότερον with πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, arguing that the context requires the sense 'first'; 'I intended to visit you first' (these include Plummer 1915:31-32; Windisch 1924:62; Allo 1937:24-25; Barrett 1973:74; Bultmann 1976:41; Furnish 1984:133). But this seems to lack lexical support. In any case, πρῶτον would have been a better choice (Thrall 1994:137).

second χάρις ..”⁸⁴ That intention ceased when Paul moved from Plan D to Plan S, which would take him first to Macedonia. None of the four journeys of Plan D had been executed when 2 Cor 1:15-16 was composed.

Consideration of the travels of Timothy also supports the hypothesis that Plan D preceded Plan S. Before 1 Corinthians was composed, Timothy was dispatched on a mission which would eventually take him to Corinth.⁸⁵ If it is supposed that when Timothy departed, Paul still expected to follow Plan D, then the first station on Paul's route would have been Corinth. Economy in Timothy's travels could then be achieved by an arrangement that they should meet in Corinth.⁸⁶ The purpose of Timothy's mission to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17), to “remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus”, may suggest that his visit to Corinth was expected to last some time, and to prepare the church for the apostle's arrival. Probably Timothy was to wait in Corinth until Paul arrived; they would then set out together for Macedonia, returning later to Corinth on the way to Judea (Plan D). It would not make much sense for Timothy to return to Ephesus from Corinth, only to set sail immediately with the apostle for Corinth. But 1 Cor 16:5-11 announces that Paul will delay coming to Corinth, for he does not want to make a passing visit (as Plan D envisaged), and he asks that Timothy be sent back to Ephesus. Thus it may be supposed that Timothy learned of the change in Paul's travel plans when he arrived in Corinth,⁸⁷ probably by means of a message from Paul brought

⁸⁴ Gilchrist (1988:57) notes that in 1:15b, πρὸς ὑμᾶς precedes ἐλθεῖν, contrary to Paul's usual practice as seen in 16b. Perhaps the position of πρὸς ὑμᾶς may be explained by an intention to indicate that πρότερον is to be taken, not with ἐλθεῖν, but with ἐβουλόμην; in the same way, in 2 Cor 2:1 Paul places πρὸς ὑμᾶς before ἐλθεῖν, making the construction of πάλιν with ἐν λύπῃ rather than with ἐλθεῖν the natural choice. Thrall notes (1994:137) that the aorist ἐχρησάμην (1:17) suggests that the time when Plan D was formulated (ἐβουλόμην, 1:15), was still in view, and this also favours taking πρότερον with ἐβουλόμην.

⁸⁵ The aorist in 1 Cor 4:17, ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, is not likely to be epistolary, as Timothy's name does not appear in 1 Cor 1:1, 16:19f, and he was clearly not in Ephesus when 1 Corinthians was composed.

⁸⁶ Hyldahl 1986:41. Hyldahl considers this point decisive in his consideration of the question of whether Timothy did in fact reach Corinth.

⁸⁷ It is not likely that Timothy was the bearer of 1 Corinthians; rather, he was expected to arrive in Corinth after the letter. As Lane says with reference to 1 Cor 16:10f, “It is unlikely that the Apostle would have waited until the closing paragraphs of his letter to provide for the respectful reception necessary for the completion of his lieutenant's mission.” (Lane 1982:12 n 14).

to him in Corinth by the bearers of 1 Corinthians.⁸⁸ The presupposition of this order of the two plans therefore reveals careful, rational planning on the part of the apostle in respect of the travels of his colleague Timothy, as well as in his handling of his own travel plans.

As already noted, 2 Cor 2:1; 13:1-2 strongly suggest that Paul visited Corinth between his founding visit and 2 Corinthians. On the most natural reading of 2 Cor 2:1, this was not a pleasant experience. The reconstruction under consideration would require that this "painful visit" be placed before 1 Corinthians. The modern consensus, that this visit occurred between 1 and 2 Corinthians, is difficult to explain. Kirsopp Lake reasons as follows: From 1 Cor 4:21 it is clear that Paul was planning a visit to Corinth which, due to the party divisions, he feared would be unpleasant. When 2 Cor 2:1-11 is read in this light,

Is it not plain that this passage implies a recent visit which had ended so unpleasantly that St. Paul had determined not to come back if he was likely to undergo similar experiences, and that he was, at the moment of writing, delighted to find that such action had been taken by the community that he was able to return without fear, since the leader of the opposition had been punished by a vote of the majority?⁸⁹

Lake deduces that the fears expressed in 1 Cor 4:21 had been realised when Paul visited Corinth between 1 and 2 Corinthians.⁹⁰ But it is not at all plain that Paul had *recently* visited Corinth. Lake is simply stating his preference for Ewald's reconstruction over that of Bleek.⁹¹ His judgement is purely subjective.

⁸⁸ It is not likely that, after composing 1 Corinthians, Paul changed his mind and sent to Timothy a message instructing him not to go to Corinth. It is difficult to see how Paul could have done this. Timothy was expected in Corinth shortly after the arrival of 1 Corinthians, and Paul's messenger would have had to travel via Corinth, or Timothy might have arrived there ahead of him. The exercise would seem to be pointless. The message could not have been taken by the bearers of 1 Corinthians, since they would then contradict the letter which they carried.

⁸⁹ Lake 1911:150.

⁹⁰ Ibid.:151.

⁹¹ See above,:8.

Robertson and Plummer argue as follows:⁹²

1. The intermediate visit, if paid at any time, was of a painful character (2 Cor 2:1).

But it is difficult to identify the cause of this pain with any of the issues which Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians, some of which Paul responds to with indignant surprise, and others of which he has learned only by hearsay.

If a distressing visit had preceded our Epistle, the painful occasion of it was dead and buried when St. Paul wrote, and St. Paul's references to it (clearly as a recent sore) in 2 Corinthians become inexplicable.⁹³

It is clear that a painful visit in which Paul confronted the church and was unable to impose his will is indeed unlikely before 1 Corinthians. Nor is it likely that he had successfully disciplined some members, thus grieving the community; if he had, one would expect a reference to this in 2 Cor 4:18-21. But it is quite possible that Paul had paid a brief visit to Corinth before 1 Corinthians, during which he had warned them against sexual immorality (cf. 2 Cor 12:21-13:2). Those who had sinned previously (13:2)⁹⁴ had been let off with a warning on his previous visit. If this visit had been brief and painful, and had occurred before the Previous Letter (1 Cor 5:9), then Paul may well have repeated his warning when announcing Plan D in that letter;⁹⁵ there may then have been no compelling reason to mention it again in 1 Corinthians.

Paul does mention this visit twice in 2 Corinthians - in 2:1 and in 13:2; but the intervening crisis has forced his hand. In 2:1 he is explaining that he stayed away from Corinth in order to avoid carrying out threats he made during that visit (cf. 1:23); his allusion to the visit serves as a reminder of those threats, which were the ground of his

⁹² Robertson and Plummer 1914:xxxii.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ τοῖς προσημαρτηκόσιν - the same term is used in 12:21 of those who had committed sins of sexual immorality.

⁹⁵ Such a warning would not necessarily be ruled out by Paul's statement that he intended his visit in passing through as a second χάρις (2 Cor 1:15); he could simply have expressed the hope that, this time, he would find the church in good order.

cancellation of the expected visit, and hence central to his argument. Even so, in this apologetic passage his allusion is conciliatory (cf. 1:24; 2:2-3). In 13:2, on the other hand, he is preparing the ground for his return to Corinth, and he reminds the delinquents, and the rest, that he will not again spare them. Given the intervening crisis, and its resolution, he understandably wishes to make clear that he has not relaxed his approach to church discipline (cf. 12:20; 10:6).⁹⁶

2. Robertson and Plummer's second point is this: that in 1 Cor 4:21 Paul is clearly anticipating a painful visit to Corinth, but he gives no indication that a previous visit has proved painful; there is no *πάλιν*.

This point would be weighty if Paul had disciplined deviant members during his last visit; but the hypothesis under consideration is that, on this occasion, Paul had spared them, only giving a stern warning (2 Cor 13:2, *ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι*). Though he could have referred in 1 Corinthians to this warning, he could not have done so by attaching *πάλιν* to *ἐν ῥάβδῳ* (4:21). Nevertheless, Paul's threat to come *ἐν ῥάβδῳ* would have acted as a reminder of the warning given on his last visit.

3. There is "a clear inference from 1 Cor. ii. 1 sqq."⁹⁷ that Paul's first stay in Corinth had so far been his only visit there. This final point is taken up by J. C. Hurd:

⁹⁶ Hall argues that in 2 Cor 12:19-21 Paul's language implies a distinction between aberrant behaviour which he himself observed during a visit before 1 Corinthians, and hearsay:

1. When he comes, he may perhaps find (*μὴ πῶς ἐλθὼν ... εὕρω*) party spirit, puffed-upness (*sic*), and disorders. These are the things he has learned by hearsay from Chloe's household (1 Cor 1:11), and he therefore mentions them in this hypothetical way.

2. When he returns to Corinth God may humble him, and he may mourn many of those who had previously sinned and not repented of their immorality (*μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ... πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων*). Here Paul is not being hypothetical. He remembers how on his second visit God humbled him and he mourned over certain sinners. On that occasion the sin was immorality (Hall 1969:20).

The term "those who have sinned earlier" (*προημαρτηκότες*) refers both in 12:21 and 13:2 to those he warned on his second visit, and their sin was sexual immorality. The term is best explained, says Hall, by the hypothesis that their sins came at an earlier time than the sins of "the rest", listed in 12:20. The argument is not decisive, but it does demonstrate that such a reconstruction would make good sense of these verses.

⁹⁷ Robertson and Plummer 1914:xxxii.

The simplicity of Paul's statements in 1 Cor 2:1 ("When I came to you, brethren .."); 3:2 ("I fed you with milk .."); and 11:2 ("I commend you because ... you maintain the traditions even as I have delivered (παρέδωκα) them to you") all imply a single previous campaign in Corinth.⁹⁸

However, if his intermediate visit had been brief, and concerned largely with disciplinary matters, and not with the preaching of the gospel, it is hard to see why this should have affected Paul's language in 1 Cor 2:1; 3:1-2 or 11:2.⁹⁹

Hurd also notes that 1 Cor 4:19; 11:34 and 16:5-9 all indicate that when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians he intended to visit Corinth in the near future. Presumably his point is that when 1 Corinthians was written, Paul was not reluctant to visit Corinth in the near future, whereas in 2 Corinthians he says that he wished to avoid "another painful visit" (2:1). But this does not rule out a visit before 1 Corinthians; it shows only that when Paul composed 1 Corinthians his way appeared to be clear for a successful visit to Corinth, whereas subsequent events forced a change of plan. He had planned to visit them in order that they might receive a benefit (χάρις; 1:15-16); he had subsequently postponed this visit (1 Cor 16:5-9), and finally, due to conditions in Corinth, had cancelled it altogether (2 Cor 1:23).

The sequence of visits and letters would therefore have been something like this:

Founding visit - disciplinary visit - Plan D (Previous Letter) - Plan D replaced by Plan S (1 Corinthians) - Plan S executed, as far as Macedonia - 2 Corinthians

The question then arises, is the Letter of Tears to be identified with 1 Corinthians?

⁹⁸ Hurd 1965:56-57.

⁹⁹ Zahn 1909:272 n 14.

3. The Letter of Tears and 1 Corinthians

The following difficulties arise if one attempts to identify 1 Corinthians with the Letter of Tears:

1. Paul says that he wrote this letter "out of great distress and anguish of heart, and with many tears, not to grieve you, but to let you know the depth of my love for you" (2 Cor 2:4). Though many scholars maintain that 1 Corinthians could not have been written in this frame of mind¹⁰⁰, Hughes argues that a man of Paul's strong feelings could not fail to be deeply distressed by the disorders and doctrinal irregularities which he addresses in that letter.¹⁰¹ However, when the apostle speaks of his letter, and of his relief at the news Titus carried, he is concerned largely with the case of one particular offender (2 Cor 2:3-13; 7:5-12), and he makes no explicit mention of the other matters which Hughes lists as justifying the apostle's distress - such as the factions, widespread sexual immorality, idolatry, greed and drunkenness at the Lord's Supper, and other disorders in worship. Paul's relief is explained solely in terms of the expulsion of this one offender from the church. It is difficult to explain the apostle's focus on this one issue, if he is referring to 1 Corinthians.

Borse, who is among those who identify the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians, is of the opinion that the identification is not credible if, in 2 Cor 2:4, Paul is making an accurate statement regarding his state of mind when he composed the letter.¹⁰² He maintains, however, that Paul was traumatised by his near-death experience in Asia (2 Cor 1:8-11),¹⁰³ and by the situation which he encountered in Macedonia (2 Cor 7:5), and that his memory of the circumstances when he wrote 1 Corinthians was thereby

¹⁰⁰ Thrall 1994:58.

¹⁰¹ Hughes 1962:57. Martin quite properly concedes that this objection is not decisive: 'it is at least possible - but not probable - that his words give a flashback to his subjective reactions while he was writing the first letter, though he had managed to conceal his feelings.' (Martin 1986:xlvi).

¹⁰² Borse 1984:175, 177-78.

¹⁰³ Ibid.:179.

distorted. This solution is possible, but should be considered only if the case for identifying 1 Corinthians with the Letter of Tears is otherwise convincing. We should not, without very sound evidence, assume that we now understand the apostle's state of mind better than he did.

2. In 2 Cor 7:8, the apostle states that, for a time, he regretted sending the Letter of Tears, though, in view of the satisfactory outcome, he no longer regrets it. His regret is again closely related to the case of the offender (vv 8-12). The identification of the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians would almost certainly require the identification of "the offender" (2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:12) with the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5. If a mere expulsion from the community¹⁰⁴ is required by 1 Cor 5:3-5, as Hyldahl maintains,¹⁰⁵ then I find it difficult to see why the apostle should have regretted sending 1 Corinthians, even for a moment. His reasons for demanding the action are clearly stated in 1 Cor 5, and he probably felt that there was no alternative. The man was a danger to the church; if left unchecked, this sort of wicked behaviour might spread throughout the church (5:8). His cultic language in 5:6-8 indicates a concern for the holiness of the church, which he saw as God's temple.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, on the most probable reading of 1 Cor 5:5, the disciplinary action was intended to result in the salvation of the offender.

If the measure demanded was more severe than merely an expulsion, even a death sentence, then the apostle might perhaps have regretted it. However, Paul does not say that his regret was for the suffering which would be caused to the offender, but for the hurt which the letter had caused the church (2 Cor 7:8).¹⁰⁷ If the punishment which he demanded was just, as he seems to imply (2 Cor 7:11), and if it fell short of death,

¹⁰⁴ The common view that 1 Cor 5:5 intends that the sinner should suffer death as a (direct or indirect) result of the ritual action of the community is unconvincing; see below..

¹⁰⁵ 1991:31 n 26.

¹⁰⁶ Newton 1985:86-97.

¹⁰⁷ The claim that Paul felt the pain of a father who sees his son suffering under the surgeon's knife (Hughes 1962:268, following Chrysostom and Calvin), is therefore not entirely convincing as an explanation of Paul's statement in 2 Cor 7:8 that, for a time, he regretted writing his Letter of Tears.

as it must have done,¹⁰⁸ then it seems rather unlikely that Paul regretted demanding that penalty. Perhaps his regret might be explained by widening the scope of this remark from Chapter 5 of 1 Corinthians to the whole letter;¹⁰⁹ but it is still difficult to see why, given the situation in Corinth, the apostle should have regretted writing 1 Corinthians.¹¹⁰

3. In 2 Cor 7:12, Paul says that he wrote his Letter of Tears “not on account of the offender, nor of the one offended, but so that before God you might see for yourselves your zeal/devotion for us”. This is difficult to reconcile with the identification of 1 Corinthians as the Letter of Tears, however one interprets 1 Cor 5:3-5. It is simply not credible that Paul should mean that he demanded the expulsion of the incestuous man “so that before God you might see for yourselves your zeal for us”.¹¹¹ Hughes argues that 2 Cor 7:12 gives an apt description of the purpose of 1 Corinthians as a whole,¹¹² but this conclusion is questionable, to say the least. It is true that Paul lays some stress on his position as spiritual father to the church (1 Cor 4:14-16), and had sent

¹⁰⁸ It is not likely that the punishment actually imposed by the Corinthians was less than that which Paul had demanded; he says that the punishment is sufficient (2:6), and praises the Corinthians for their zeal in its execution (7:11); by their action they have established their own innocence in the matter. Moreover, he implies that in the carrying out of the punishment they have demonstrated their obedience to him (2:9).

¹⁰⁹ Meyer cites 1 Cor 1:15ff; 3:2, 3; 4:8, 18-21; 6:8 and 11:17ff, in addition to Ch. 5, as reason enough ‘to excite in Paul apprehensions regarding the severity of his letter’ (1879:127), but most recent scholars have not been convinced by this argument.

¹¹⁰ Hughes (1962:xxix-xxx) maintains that it was not the writing of 1 Corinthians that Paul regretted, but the pain which the letter caused his readers: “paternal love does not rejoice in the sorrow which necessary correction brings; but the correction itself is not a matter for regret, especially when, as in this case, it is effective.” However, though 1 Corinthians may have hurt the Corinthians, “one would not have thought it would do so to an extent to make his hurtfulness its main feature” (Barrett 1973:209).

¹¹¹ Lampe (1967:344) suggests that the incestuous affair had become “a focal point for the disobedience of the Corinthian church towards its apostle”, and he maintains that a reference to 1 Cor 5 would be “a very natural explanation” for Paul’s reference to previous correspondence in 2 Cor 7:12 (p 354). This might explain the apparent severity of the punishment demanded in 1 Cor 5:5, but 7:12 would nevertheless be a remarkable and probably damaging admission. In 1 Cor 5:1-5 Paul called the church to repentance, and perhaps the carrying out of his demand for the punishment of the notorious fornicator would indeed have stirred up the Corinthians’ zeal for the Apostle; Paul may even have been glad of the opportunity which this case presented for the improvement of his standing with the church. But it seems unlikely that he would have admitted that this was his purpose in demanding the punishment; in 1 Cor 5 his stated concern is primarily with the salvation of the sinner (v 5), and with the purity / holiness of the church (vv 6-8).

¹¹² 1962:276-77.

them Timothy to remind them of his way of life (4:17). But it has not been demonstrated that the principle theme of 1 Corinthians is the relationship of the apostle with the church, or that its primary purpose is to awaken in them zeal for himself. He is dealing with serious pastoral problems which seem to have their origin in a false understanding of wisdom and of the ethical implications of the gospel, and with a number of queries which have been addressed to him in a letter from the church. He writes throughout 1 Corinthians in the confidence that his authority is accepted.¹¹³

4. Difficulties also arise regarding the travels of Timothy. Timothy was sent to Corinth, and was expected by Paul to arrive there shortly after 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10f). Lightfoot, who takes the Letter of Tears to be 1 Corinthians, argues that Timothy did not reach Corinth, but returned to Ephesus without having completed his mission:¹¹⁴

- i. Paul expresses doubts whether Timothy will actually come to Corinth: ἐὰν δὲ ἔλθῃ Τιμόθεος (1 Cor 16:10). But ἐὰν is probably close in meaning here to ὅταν, "when".¹¹⁵
- ii. Acts 19:22 speaks only of Timothy travelling to Macedonia, not on to Corinth. But Timothy may nevertheless have returned to Ephesus via Corinth; Luke says nothing of the Corinthian crisis, and may deliberately have omitted mention of this disgraceful episode.
- iii. If Timothy did reach Corinth, he would have returned to Ephesus with news of the reception of 1 Corinthians, whereas after Timothy's return Paul was still waiting for this report from Titus (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-12).¹¹⁶

However, Timothy had been commissioned by the apostle to visit Corinth as his delegate, and it is doubtful that he would have cut short his journey and returned to Ephesus without having carried out this task.¹¹⁷ If he did not, then an explanation is

¹¹³ Kümmel 1975:282.

¹¹⁴ 1904:276-80.

¹¹⁵ Conzelmann 1975:297.

¹¹⁶ Hyldahl, though he maintains that 1 Corinthians is the Letter of Tears, concludes that Timothy did in fact reach Corinth (1986:27-42); yet he has not answered Lightfoot's third point.

¹¹⁷ Meyer 1879:125; Hyldahl 1986:27-42.

required, both for his decision to return to Ephesus without having completed his mission, and for the silence of 2 Corinthians regarding this failure. For since Paul was criticised for altering his own travel plans, surely he would also have been criticised for failing to keep his promise of sending Timothy. Yet in 2 Cor 1:12-2:2, where we would expect something to be said, there is nothing.¹¹⁸

The best (though ultimately unsuccessful) argument against Timothy having reached Corinth, according to Hyldahl, is that in 2 Cor 1:19 Paul calls attention to Timothy's role in founding the church in Corinth, whereas he does not mention a recent visit.¹¹⁹

Hyldahl explains the silence of 2 Corinthians regarding Timothy's visit by postulating that, on arriving in Corinth, Timothy left immediately for Ephesus, without carrying out his mission as described in 1 Cor 4:17; hence there was no reason to mention this very brief visit. But he does not explain why Timothy did not carry out his mission in Corinth. It is not enough to say that the letter, 1 Corinthians, did Timothy's work for him,¹²⁰ since Timothy's mission is announced, not cancelled, in that letter.

The silence of 2 Corinthians concerning Timothy's visit becomes understandable, however, if we suppose that his visit had resulted in a painful confrontation with the church. For in the Graeco-Roman world, 'reconciliation was held to consist in an act of deliberate forgetfulness',¹²¹ and this is reflected in the genre of reconciliatory letters.¹²² If Timothy's report had led to the composition of the Letter of Tears, the visit may well

¹¹⁸ Meyer 1879:126

¹¹⁹ Hyldahl 1986:31. Paul's silence concerning this visit does require an explanation. As Lane says,

In earlier correspondence he had made a point of commenting on the mission and report of Timothy (1 Thess. 3:1-6), and in 2 Corinthians itself he makes explicit reference to the mission and report of Titus (2 Cor. 2:3-13; 7:5-16). Moreover, Paul's silence would appear to be in conflict with the concern for the success of Timothy's mission he expressed in 1 Corinthians (16:10f) (Lane 1982:13).

¹²⁰ So Hyldahl 1986:42.

¹²¹ Welborn 1995:151.

¹²² Welborn 1995:146-52.

have been mentioned in that letter; but 2 Corinthians (or 2 Cor 1:1-2:13, 7:5-16) was composed after Titus had returned with news that the crisis had been resolved.¹²³

It is possible, though not likely,¹²⁴ that Timothy was not in Corinth when 1 Corinthians arrived, and hence did not see for himself the reception of that letter;¹²⁵ but even so, he would surely have known whether or not the church had expelled the incestuous man. If they had disciplined him, then it is difficult to see why anxiety connected with this affair should have driven the apostle, accompanied by Timothy, who had now returned from Corinth, to leave a promising mission field in Troas (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:8-12). If they had not disciplined him, Timothy's brief (1 Cor 4:17) would seem to require that he made every effort to have this action taken. Had he failed, this would have been a very serious matter, and would certainly have been reported to Paul. Though Paul may well have sent another delegate in response to this situation, rather than himself travelling to Corinth (cf. 2 Cor 1:23-24), it seems highly probable that he would not have sent him empty handed, but in possession of a further apostolic letter, spelling out the precise implications of their position.¹²⁶ This latter letter, not 1 Corinthians, would then have been the Letter of Tears.

It is therefore to be expected that Timothy brought news of the reception of 1 Corinthians, and would certainly have known if the incestuous man had been disciplined. It is then very difficult to explain why the apostle, with Timothy at his side,

¹²³ By referring to the founding visit, Paul may have intended to bury the memory of a brief but painful incident; cf. his silence regarding his own painful visit in 1 Corinthians.

¹²⁴ It is very likely that 1 Corinthians was carried from Ephesus by ship, a journey of perhaps a week, and Paul would have chosen bearers who could be expected to deliver the letter in good time.

¹²⁵ Hyldahl 1986:28.

¹²⁶ In the ancient world letters were normally understood as a substitute for personal presence (Betz 1985:35 n 341. Seneca comments: "If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and insubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter which brings us real traces, real evidences of an absent friend." (*To Lucilius*; quoted by Talbert, 1990:15).

anxiously awaited news from *Titus* of the reception of his letter, and in particular of the church's decision concerning the incestuous man (2 Cor 2:3-13; 7:5-12).¹²⁷

Conclusion

In conclusion the identification of the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians is not likely to be right. It is difficult to reconcile this identification with 2 Cor 7:12, and 2 Cor 2:4; 7:8 also present difficulties. The identification is also incompatible with the proposition that Timothy arrived in Corinth, as expected by the apostle (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11).

Moreover, the silence of 2 Corinthians concerning Timothy's visit is difficult to explain if he had not reached Corinth, but quite understandable if his visit was connected with the incident which led to the composition of the Letter of Tears.

The development of events must be reconstructed as follows:

Founding visit - 'painful' visit - Plan D (Previous Letter) - Plan D replaced by Plan S (1 Corinthians) - Timothy returns - Letter of Tears - Plan S executed, as far as Macedonia - Titus returns - 2 Corinthians

5. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses": 2 Cor 13:1

We now turn to 2 Cor 13:1, which has long been an exegetical *crux*:

13:1a τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς:

13:1b. ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα.

¹²⁷ Borse circumvents this difficulty by claiming that in fact Timothy and Titus were two names for the same person. Timothy stayed in Corinth after delivering 1 Corinthians, and met the Apostle in Macedonia with news of the reception of that letter. But his supporting arguments for this identification of the two men are not decisive, since our reconstruction provides an alternative explanation for the points he raises (see below, Chapter 4). Furthermore, Borse has to assume that the author of 2 Timothy, a member of the Pauline school if not Paul himself, was not aware of the identity of the two (see 2 Tim 4:10).

The first clause picks up the thought of 12:14a:

12:14a ἰδοὺ τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

In both passages the phrase τρίτον τοῦτο is in an emphatic position, and a satisfactory solution to the problem of 13:1 will have to account for this. Why does the apostle in both places emphasise τρίτον τοῦτο? Why does he repeat the phrase in 13:1? The question needs to be addressed in connection with the interpretation of 13:1b.

In 13:1b Paul quotes, in a slightly abbreviated form, Deut 19:15 LXX,¹²⁸ and some scholars maintain that Paul proposes, when he comes to Corinth, to convene a court and, on the testimony of two or three witnesses, to punish offenders.¹²⁹ However, the sins to which Paul refers in 12:20-21 were no secret, and as Lietzmann says, "Clearly it is not a question of unmasking secret sinners, but of leading open sinners to repentance, for which witnesses cannot help".¹³⁰ Moreover, there is no reference anywhere in 2 Corinthians to a formal court inquiry, not even after 13:2, where one would most expect it.¹³¹

Paul must intend that the phrase τρίτον τοῦτο add something to the sense of 13:1; otherwise there would be little point in repeating it (cf. 12:14). It seems clear that he wishes to make a connection with δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν; he must intend that somehow it support the warning he is about to give in 13:2.¹³² Many maintain that Paul is referring to his two previous visits and his forthcoming visit to Corinth as witnesses against the wrongdoers.¹³³ Paul would then be taking his own witness on three separate occasions as three independent witnesses. But 13:1 would then imply two occasions on which Paul had encountered the sort of behaviour he is dealing with here,

¹²⁸ The LXX reads, ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα.

¹²⁹ E.g. Hughes 1962:475; Allo 1937:335.

¹³⁰ Lietzmann and Kümmel 1969:160; as quoted by Martin, 1986:469.

¹³¹ Hyldahl 1973:304; Furnish 1984:575.

¹³² Plummer 1915:372; Furnish 1984:574; *pace* Hyldahl, 1986:103.

¹³³ e.g. Windisch 1924:413; Lietzmann 1949:160; Bruce 1971:253.

and it is also unlikely that Paul would now dredge up misdemeanours from the founding visit as a witness against them.¹³⁴ Gilchrist deduces that Paul visited Corinth once between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1-9, and then again between 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13.¹³⁵ He supports this conclusion with a second argument: it is unlikely that the second visit of 13:1 is the “painful visit”, for the issues are different. The issue in the former case is the immorality of many (12:21), but in the latter Paul is insulted by one man (2:6). The second of the two visits is therefore later than 2 Cor 1-9 but earlier than 2 Cor 10-13 (Paul certainly did not visit Corinth twice between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1-9, and Gilchrist rules out a visit before 1 Corinthians). However, this argument depends upon the questionable presupposition that despite the threat of 1 Cor 4:21, Paul had tolerated widespread sexual immorality while in Corinth between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1-9, and even on his return, between 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13, had only issued a stern warning.

Van Vliet¹³⁶ has shown that the rule of Deut 19:15, quoted in 2 Cor 13:1, was widely used in Palestinian Judaism as a sort of proverb, to support the requirement of the oral law that those suspected of wrongdoing should be warned by two or three witnesses before punitive action was taken against them. Paul may mean, therefore, that the two or three warnings required by the oral law had been given by his repeated visits.¹³⁷ This interpretation does have the merit of making a link between the emphatic *τρίτον τοῦτο* of 13:1a and the three witnesses of 13:1b; and it is possible that, even when he founded the church, Paul made clear the possibility of disciplinary action against members who openly disregarded the moral demands of the gospel. However, the sins listed in 12:20-21 seem to reflect the situation which Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians, a situation which seems to have developed comparatively recently. It is also possible to understand the warning given on Paul’s earlier visit, and its repetition in 2 Cor 13:2, as

¹³⁴ Gilchrist 1988:53.

¹³⁵ 1988:32-33; similarly Windisch 1924:431.

¹³⁶ 1958:53-62; followed by Barrett 1973:333.

¹³⁷ Van Vliet 1958:96.

two witnesses.¹³⁸ However, we are again left without an explanation for the emphatic τρίτον τοῦτο of 13:1. A comparison of the use of the phrase in 12:14 and in 13:1 is illuminating.

In 12:14a the theme is Paul's readiness to come to Corinth: ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. The statement is modified by the phrase τρίτον τοῦτο, in emphatic position, but the essential point of the announcement is that Paul is now *ready to come* to Corinth. He makes this announcement in order to make the further point that, when he comes, he is determined not to accept any personal financial benefit from the church. In 13:1a, on the other hand, the theme is that Paul *is coming* to Corinth: ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς. This clause is again modified by the phrase τρίτον τοῦτο, in emphatic position. This time Paul repeats the announcement of his visit because he is about to warn the church that, when he comes, he will not flinch from taking punitive measures against continuing offenders. The common ground between 12:14a and 13:1a is that Paul is coming to Corinth: he is now ready to come, and he will come. If an interpretation can be offered in which the sense of the phrase τρίτον τοῦτο is essentially the same in both places, and which ties the phrase to the three witnesses of 13:1b, then this interpretation is, in this respect, to be preferred, as it gives greater coherence to the apostle's argument. I maintain that this can in fact be achieved, by taking the three witnesses to refer to three written warnings that the apostle is about to come to Corinth, warnings given in the Previous Letter, in 1 Corinthians, and in the present letter, 2 Corinthians, respectively.

It is usually assumed that in 13:1 (and in 12:14), τρίτον τοῦτο has the sense "This is the third time"¹³⁹ or "For this third time".¹⁴⁰ However, a few scholars have proposed that Paul refers here not to two previous visits, but to two previous plans to visit.¹⁴¹ Then

¹³⁸ Bultmann 1976:243.

¹³⁹ Furnish 1984:568.

¹⁴⁰ Porter 1992:64.

¹⁴¹ Grotius 1646:510 (quoted by Thrall, 1994:50 n 320); Baur 1876:306; Hyldahl 1973:303; Bosenius 1994:12; Riesner 1994:266. Meyer (1879:499) also cites Estius, Wolf, Wetstein, Zachariae, Flatt and Lange as being of this opinion.

τρίτον τοῦτο could be equivalent to τὸ τρίτον τὸ τοῦτο, or τὸ τοῦτο τρίτον: “this third time”.

¹⁴² Lenski asserts that this sense is not possible, for (as in classical Greek) it would require the definite article.¹⁴³ However, Radermacher presents inscriptional evidence that in Hellenistic Greek the definite article was not always retained with attributive adjectives.¹⁴⁴ He also gives a collection of idioms in which the anarthrous demonstrative is almost certainly attributive: τούτου πράγματος; ταῦτα ἀδικήματα; τοῦτο μνημα; ὀνόματα ταῦτα; τούτῳ δικαίῳ, τόδε σῆμα. Moreover, Turner states that in the NT there are clear instances of the anarthrous demonstrative in attributive phrases; he cites Mk 16:17 and Ac 1:5; 24:21.¹⁴⁵ A further clear example occurs in John 2:11: ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς.¹⁴⁶ It should be noted that the phrases τοῦτο τρίτον and τρίτον τοῦτο are used synonymously in Num 22:28, 33 respectively.

The present ἔρχομαι could be conative,¹⁴⁷ or futuristic. Hence there appear to be the following interpretative possibilities:

1. “This is the third time I am coming to you.”¹⁴⁸
2. “For this third time I am on the point of coming to you.”¹⁴⁹
3. “This third time I (really) am coming to you.”¹⁵⁰

The great majority follow the first interpretation; Paul has twice before been to Corinth, and is now about to come there again. However, the second and third possibilities would be consistent with the hypothesis that Paul had not again visited Corinth since

¹⁴² Hyldahl 1986:103.

¹⁴³ Lenski 1937:1313.

¹⁴⁴ Radermacher 1925:113; cited by Turner 1963:193.

¹⁴⁵ Turner 1963:193; he concedes that in Mk 16:17, σημεία δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα might be construed as the object of the participle.

¹⁴⁶ Suggested to me by Dr John Nolland.

¹⁴⁷ Bosenius 1994:12, following Baur 1850:153.

¹⁴⁸ E.g. Furnish, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Bosenius, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Hyldahl 1986:103

he founded the church, though the apostle's words would only require that he had twice previously planned to visit, but had not actually carried out either of these plans.

For 12:14a there seem to be the following interpretative possibilities:

1. Paul is now ready to make his third visit to Corinth (taking τρίτον τοῦτο with ἐλθεῖν).¹⁵¹
2. He is for the third time ready to come (taking τρίτον τοῦτο with ἐτοίμως). The implication would be that he had twice previously been ready to come (though he had not come).¹⁵²
3. This third time, he is ready to come (taking τρίτον τοῦτο with the whole sentence ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς). The implication will be that on two previous occasions, though a visit had been planned, he had not come; this third time, however, he is ready to come.

Word order perhaps weighs marginally against the first option. A weightier objection is that coherence would then require us to take τρίτον τοῦτο with ἔρχομαι in 13:1, so that Paul states there that he is about to come for the third time. But, as has been noted, this does not give a satisfactory link with the three witnesses of 13:1b, unless we are prepared to follow Windisch and Gilchrist in postulating a second interim visit, probably between 2 Cor 1-9 and 2 Cor 10-13.

The second option is also unlikely. Plummer, who regards Plan S as earlier than Plan D and places a visit between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 10-13, quite properly objects:

If he had never visited Corinth, but he had twice before made preparations to come, then "This is the third time I am making preparations to come to you" would be a very natural thing to say; but it is not a natural thing to say if he had paid one

¹⁵¹ E.g. Furnish 1984:557.

¹⁵² Hyldahl 1973:303; however, he has now retracted this interpretation in favour of a modified version of the third option (1986:105); see below.

visit and prepared to come again, and now for a *second* time was preparing to come again.¹⁵³

This objection can be overcome, however, if we suppose that Paul had twice in the recent past prepared to come to Corinth, but had not come, and was now for the *third* time planning a visit. But even then, it is difficult to account for the connection of thought with the immediately following statement that he will not be a burden to the church when he does come. The first statement, 12:14a, would then remind the Corinthians that Paul had twice before been ready to come, but had not come. It would therefore raise the possibility that once more, though ready, he would not come. We would expect him to follow up immediately with either a strong assertion that this time he will come, or a clarification of the conditions which might yet cause a further postponement.¹⁵⁴

The third option, however, can be made to work. Stressing *τρίτον τοῦτο*, we may translate 12:14a, "See, this third time I am ready to come", and 13:1a, "This third time I really am coming". The point of *τρίτον τοῦτο* in both cases would then be that Paul had twice announced a visit, but in both cases had cancelled. The first of these plans will have been Plan D, which was later postponed (1 Cor 16:5-9). The second plan will have been Plan S.¹⁵⁵ It is only necessary to hypothesise that in the Letter of Tears, Paul cancelled the visit which he had announced in Plan S.¹⁵⁶

Hyldahl proposes that Paul does not mean that he has already come to Corinth twice in person; rather, he refers to his recent letters as *Ersatz* for visits; this third time,

¹⁵³ Plummer 1915:361.

¹⁵⁴ Hyldahl (1986:105) now objects that one cannot logically maintain that three times Paul was ready to come, but only once actually came; since on the first two occasions he did not actually pay a visit, he was self-evidently not ready to come. His logic is forced.

¹⁵⁵ Baur 1876:306; Hyldahl 1986:103. Hyldahl, however, does not follow Baur in taking the three witnesses to be three notifications of a visit, but identifies them as Titus and his two companions, who were to take 2 Corinthians to Corinth, and would be answerable for Paul's promise that this time he really is coming. However, Hyldahl has to deny any connection between *τρίτον* and *τριῶν* in 13:1.

¹⁵⁶ Naturally, this would rule out the identification, in whole or in part, of the Letter of Tears with 2 Cor 10-13.

however, he is ready to come in person. As already mentioned,¹⁵⁷ Hyldahl takes the phrase ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεύτερον καὶ ἄπὼν νῦν (13:2) to mean “as though already present the second time (meaning, his epistolary presence in the present letter),¹⁵⁸ and yet now absent”. He then takes προείρηκα (13:2) to refer similarly to Paul’s epistolary presence in 1 Corinthians: specifically, to 1 Cor 4:19-21.¹⁵⁹ This interesting proposal will make sense, however, only if, as Hyldahl indeed claims, 1 Corinthians is in fact the Letter of Tears, and if 2:1 does not refer to a previous “painful visit”. Neither of these hypotheses can be ruled out absolutely at this point, but both have been shown to be unlikely. We maintain that reconstruction which require neither of these hypotheses are, in these respects, to be preferred.

Why the emphatic “This third time” in 12:14? In 12:13, after answering the accusation that he had failed to demonstrate “the signs that mark an apostle”, Paul returns with “splendid irony”¹⁶⁰ to the theme of his refusal to accept financial support from the church in Corinth, even though he had accepted support from other churches (11:7-11; cf. 1 Cor 9:3-18). He will continue to refuse payment, in order to undermine the claim of his opponents, the ‘super apostles’,¹⁶¹ to equality in ministry with himself (11:12). Evidently his rivals were being paid, indeed, had demanded payment (11:20; cf. 2:17). Paul acknowledges that twice he has promised to come, but has not come; this third time he is ready to come (12:14a). He then emphasises once more that when he does come, he will not accept any personal financial benefit from the church; but he now gives a different reason for this refusal: a parent should save for his children, and not children for the parent; rather, as their spiritual father he will give all he has for them (12:14b-15). Dale Martin argues that, in “the Graeco-Roman symbol system of patron-

¹⁵⁷ See above, :27 n 45.

¹⁵⁸ For the letter as *Ersatz* for a visit in the ancient world, see Bosenius 1994:86-88.

¹⁵⁹ Hyldahl 1986:104; cf. Bosenius 1994:13.

¹⁶⁰ Furnish 1984:556.

¹⁶¹ The ‘super-apostles’ (11:5; 12:11) are to be identified with the ‘false apostles’ of 11:13; Furnish 1984:502-05; Thrall 1980.

client ideology”, Paul’s refusal to accept financial support could be taken differently by different people.¹⁶² He offers three possibilities:

1. A refusal to enter into a “‘friendship’ relationship with the donors”.
2. A gesture to differentiate himself from sophists and charlatans.
3. A refusal to become a client of the donors.¹⁶³

The first interpretation Paul vigorously denies (11:11). The second he spells out (11:12). In 12:14b, however, he also acknowledges the third interpretation,¹⁶⁴ and this is the context of his announcement of his impending visit; he will come, not as a client of the social élite, but as the spiritual father of the church (12:15). He goes on to deny that he intends to profit from the visit by means of fraud (12:16-18), and then asks quite suddenly, “Do you imagine that all along we have been defending ourselves?” He states that his purpose, rather, was their edification (ὕπερ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς). The term οἰκοδομῆς is found elsewhere in 2 Corinthians only in 5:1, in a discussion of life beyond the grave, and in 10:8, and 13:10. In both these latter texts Paul speaks of the authority which the Lord has given to him “for building up, and not for tearing down” (εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν). He is making clear that his defence of his ministry and his polemic against his opponents has been carried out in the proper exercise of the authority which the Lord has given him for building up the church. But he then expresses his fear that when he comes, he will find that he has no alternative than to use that same authority to discipline certain offenders (12:20-21). He announces again his intending visit, 13:1, in language which recalls 12:14a, and goes on to make explicit his threat of disciplinary action. The repetition of the language of 12:14a in 13:1 strongly suggests a connection between the respective contexts of the two announcements: Paul’s refusal of financial support, and in particular his refusal to become a client of the Corinthian élite; and his concern that, when he comes, he may

¹⁶² D. B. Martin 1990:138.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

have to discipline certain offenders. We may infer that he wished to warn the church that social status and financial muscle will prove no protection to those who continue in the sins which he specifies in 12:20-21. In 12:14, as in 13:1, his announcement of his impending visit is intended as a warning: 'this third time I really am coming!' (cf. 1 Cor 4:18-21).

By emphasising the phrase *τρίτον τοῦτο* (12:14), Paul prepares the ground for a decisive blow against his (probably Jewish) critics.¹⁶⁵ This third time, he is ready to come to Corinth; but he will not be diverted from his purpose by the hope of financial gain: he will not accept the patronage of the rich élite, as they have done; neither is intent on making a profit by deception. At this point he looks back over his argument, and he asks his readers if they think that, all along, he has been defending himself. We shall see below that 2 Corinthians is a unity. If this is accepted, for the moment, as a working hypothesis, then Paul will be referring not only to the four chapters, 2 Cor 10-13, but to the argument of the whole letter. In particular, he recalls his initial explanation of the changes in his travel plans (1:15-2:4). His purpose has not been merely to defend himself; everything he has said, he has said in Christ, in the presence of God (*κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ*; cf. 2:17), that is, with full apostolic authority, for the building up of the church (12:19). For the danger remains that when he comes, he will find that the immorality and disorders that caused him to abandon his previous plans to visit will still be present in the church (12:20-21). He then shows that his two previous announcements of a visit, together with the current announcement, have met the requirements of the law: three warnings have been given. When he does come, he will be in a position to discipline severely the disobedient (13:1-2). Those who demand proof that Christ speaks through him will not be disappointed (13:3)! There is no major break at 12:19; the two announcements of Paul's imminent visit, 12:14a and 13:1a, are both parts of an integrated polemical argument.

¹⁶⁵ R. P. Martin rightly observes, "We should not fail to note that in 12:13, 14 Paul is still writing in a polemical fashion" (1986:428)..

Paul's opponents have argued that he has stayed away from Corinth because he is too weak to deal effectively with those who disobey him. Paul, however, has replied, with an oath, that the reason he did not come was to spare the church (1:23; φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἦλθον εἰς κόρινθον). When he was with them the second time (that is, during the 'interim visit'), he had threatened that he would return, and would not spare the delinquents, and he now repeats this warning (13:2; εἰ ἂν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν οὐ φείσομαι). If the unity of 2 Corinthians is granted, then it is impossible to deny that 13:2 recalls 1:23. Twice he had cancelled a planned visit to Corinth in order to spare them (the switch from Plan D to Plan S, and the cancellation or postponement of Plan S announced in the Letter of Tears). This third time, he is ready to come (12:14), and he is coming (13:1). But when he comes, he will not again spare them. His reference to the issue of financial support suggests that his warning is directed in particular at the rich social élite, who have sponsored his rivals, but who will have no power over him.

If the possibility is allowed that, since he was last in Corinth, Paul had twice announced a visit, and had twice cancelled, then there can be no doubt that this is the natural exegesis of 13:1: three times now he has announced that he is coming, though he has not yet come. This third time, he really is coming. Three warnings of this visit have been issued, as the law requires; he is now ready to punish continuing offenders (13:2). We will now consider further the feasibility of this hypothesis.

6. The Letter of Tears and 2 Cor 1:23-2:3

In 2 Cor 1:23 Paul claims, with an oath, that the reason he did not return to Corinth was to spare the church (φειδόμενος ὑμῶν). Yet in 13:2-4, he promises the proof that his readers have demanded, that Christ speaks through him: he will demonstrate Christ's power working through him, by punishing those who remain impenitent.¹⁶⁶ The question arises, then: from precisely what fate had Paul spared the church, when he

¹⁶⁶ Furnish 1984:576.

cancelled his planned visit? And had the Letter of Tears failed to secure the punishment of the offender, what options would then have been open to him?

Munck maintains that in the Letter of Tears Paul presented the Corinthians with an ultimatum: if they did not discipline the offender, he would come to Corinth and discipline severely the whole church:

If the church would not give way and comply with the demands that the apostle put forward to test its obedience, he intended to deliver the church over to Satan

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...

In 2 Cor 2:3, Paul seems to refer to what he had said in the Letter of Tears: καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό¹⁶⁸ ("I wrote this very thing").¹⁶⁹ It seems likely that he refers to his statement in 2:1, ἔκρινα γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο ..; that is, that in the Letter of Tears, Paul made a statement to this effect: ἔκρινα γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο, τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν.¹⁷⁰ Rather than give the Corinthians an ultimatum, Paul may have given them a genuine choice: if they punish the offender, he will come to Corinth as planned (Plan S); if not, he will not return to Corinth.

This reconstruction may throw some light on the relationship between 2 Cor 1:23 and 1:24. A visit would have been inappropriate, under the circumstances. Had Paul come to Corinth, he would have felt obliged to inflict severe punishment on a church which had chosen to reject his authority. But, he says, "we do not rule over your faith".¹⁷¹ If

¹⁶⁷ Munck 1959:190.

¹⁶⁸ Some witnesses omit αὐτό (A 81^{*} 1881 pc); 630 omits τοῦτο αὐτό. But the usual text is well attested.

¹⁶⁹ Plummer 1915:49. τοῦτο αὐτό could be an adverbial accusative, "for this very reason" (BAGD s.v. αὐτός 1h; BDF 290(4)). However, when elsewhere Paul wishes to say 'for this reason' he uses εἰς τοῦτο (2 Cor 2:9; Rom 9:17; 14:9; Thrall 1994:168 n 270). Where the phrase αὐτὸ τοῦτο occurs elsewhere in Paul without a preposition, it acts as the subject or object of the verb (2 Cor 7:11; Gal 2:10; Phil 1:6; Thrall, *ibid.*). Windisch argues that the phrase can possess adverbial force only when the verb is intransitive, or when the verb is transitive but already has an object (1924:80; followed by Allo 1937:34; Furnish 1984:154).

¹⁷⁰ Furnish 1984:160.

¹⁷¹ The ἀλλά clause, συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν, carries a very positive evaluative content; therefore κυριεύομεν carries a strongly negative valuation.

his authority had been rejected by the church, he would not attempt to re-establish it by force. He is not a tyrant,¹⁷² but a “co-worker for your joy”. Therefore he gave the church a clear choice: they could remain under his apostolic oversight, and be subject to his discipline; or they could reject his oversight, and he would not return. He had stayed away from Corinth in order to give them this free choice.¹⁷³ It seems that the disobedience of the church in the matter of “the offender” was inseparable from the question of their salvation, and therefore of their faith; for their repentance following the Letter of Tears is characterised as “leading to salvation” (μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν; 7:10).¹⁷⁴ By disciplining the offender, the church restored its credentials as a community of faith; this choice they had to make freely for themselves (τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε, 1:24).

In 2:9 Paul reformulates the his earlier account of his reasons for sending the Letter of Tears:¹⁷⁵ “so that when I come, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice ... not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love I have for you” (2:3-4; NRSV). Now he says that his reason for writing was “to test you and to know if you are obedient in everything” (NRSV). Thrall comments that in 2:9 Paul leaves himself open to the charge of inconsistency:

In 2:4 Paul maintains that his aim in writing the Painful Letter was to demonstrate his love for his readers, whilst here he suggests that he intended to exercise his apostolic authority. Furthermore, in 1:24 he disclaims authoritative control over the Corinthians’ faith, whilst here he speaks of testing their obedience in every particular.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Cf. Bultmann 1976:48.

¹⁷³ Plummer cites Chrysostom: “What power, asks Chrysostom, can make an unconvinced man believe? All you can do is make him say that he believes” (Plummer 1915:44).

¹⁷⁴ σωτηρία is opposed to θάνατος, and so has its full theological sense, as does μετάνοια; Thrall 1994:492.

¹⁷⁵ εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, ... Here καὶ does not mean “also”, as this would require something like ἔγραψα γὰρ καὶ εἰς τοῦτο (Thrall 1994:178). Rather, καὶ adds emphasis to the whole clause (ibid.; for this use of καὶ cf. Matt 8:9, καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, cited by Porter 1992 p 211). It will be argued that a similar construction occurs in 2 Cor 6:13; see below, n 755.

¹⁷⁶ Thrall 1994:179; citing Windisch, Bultmann and Prümm.

But our reconstruction suggests that in his letter, far from exercising authoritative control, Paul offered the church a free choice: if they were really unwilling to discipline the offender, he would not come to Corinth and impose discipline; he would allow them to go their own way. Thus without “ruling over” their faith as a tyrant,¹⁷⁷ he was able to determine their character as a church, whether they would be obedient in everything. The point of his remark seems to be that the expulsion of “the offender” was the obedient response to the Letter of Tears for which he had hoped. By taking this step, the church has proved itself obedient in all things. Now, however, it is time to forgive the offender, and to restore him to the fellowship of the church. The real issue in the Letter of Tears was not the expulsion of the offender *per se*, but the willingness of the church to obey a direct instruction from the apostle.

The development of events may then be reconstructed as follows. Before 1 Corinthians Paul visited Corinth, perhaps unannounced, and issued a stern warning to some who were guilty of serious sexual misconduct: he said that he would return, and he would not again spare them (2 Cor 13:2). His return was however delayed, possibly by a period of imprisonment in Ephesus (1 Cor 4:18). He subsequently wrote his Previous Letter, announcing his intention to visit them soon on his way to Macedonia (Plan D - 2 Cor 1:15-16). The imminent visit was then again postponed, when Paul received news of the situation in Corinth from Chloe's people and/or the delegation of Stephanas et al (1 Cor 1:11; 16:17)¹⁷⁸: the situation had deteriorated. There was

¹⁷⁷ It is not entirely clear as yet, however, how an offer to end his relationship with the church could be understood as a demonstration of his abundant love for them. We will return to this point; see below, 118, “Missing Links”..

¹⁷⁸ De Boer (1994) has argued from an analysis of Paul's epistolary conventions that in 1 Cor 1-4 Paul responds to news of divisions in the church brought by Chloe's people, whereas in Chapters 5-16 he responds to further oral reports brought by Stephanas et al, as well as to the Corinthians' letter. He proposes, in fact, that when the Stephanas delegation arrived, Paul 'had already written, and very nearly completed, chapters 1-4 as a self-contained letter to the Corinthians' (p 230). The Apostle was therefore forced to make a fresh start. But rather than begin again, he appended chapters 5-16 to the almost completed letter. When the delegation arrived, De Boer argues (pp 240-41), Paul changed his travel plans: he had intended to visit Corinth 'very soon' (4:18-21; cf. plan D), but by Chapter 16 he planned to visit 'when it is feasible, though this will not be soon' (16:5-9; cf. plan S). Hyldahl (1986) also distinguishes the travel plans of 1 Cor 4:18-21; 16:5-9. If this is right, then the plan that Paul would meet Timothy in Corinth (Plan D) may be reflected in 1 Cor 4:17-18. However, De Boer goes too far in

continuing sexual misconduct, and indulgence in the pagan cults; even the acceptance of a quite open incestuous relationship. Since he had good reasons for staying in Ephesus a little longer (1 Cor 16:8-9), Paul again postponed his visit, and wrote 1 Corinthians, dealing with the pastoral issues and calling the church to repentance. In the letter he announced the change to Plan S, promising to come to Corinth after he had been to Macedonia, and to stay with them for some time. However, Timothy returned from Corinth with disturbing news, and Paul therefore cancelled his promised visit “in order to spare you” (2 Cor 1:23); this cancellation was the subject matter of his Letter of Tears. Thus Paul had twice promised to come to Corinth, and had twice abandoned his plan in order to give the church an opportunity for repentance. This third time he really would come: the three warnings of his coming had been given to those who had sinned earlier (2 Cor 13:2; cf. 12:21), and to the rest, and he would not tolerate continuing delinquency when he came.

In conclusion, if Plan S is taken to precede Plan D, it is difficult to give a satisfactory exegesis of 2 Cor 13:1; whereas if Plan D preceded Plan S, the repeated, emphatic phrase *τρίτον τοῦτο* in both 12:14 and 13:1 is seen to play an important role in the apostle’s argument.

It is worth noting at this stage that, if the Letter of Tears is identified with 2 Cor 10-13, we find that in that letter, far from announcing a further change of plan, a postponement or cancellation of an expected visit, as 2 Cor 2:3 seems to require, Paul is emphasising the imminence of a visit (12:14; 13:1).¹⁷⁹ This observation must weigh against the Four-Chapters Hypothesis.¹⁸⁰

deducing that the disorders combated in Ch. 5-16 are therefore not related to the divisions and wisdom teaching addressed in Ch. 1-4.

¹⁷⁹ Contra Lake (1911:158-59), who maintains that 2 Cor 12:20-13:2 shows that Paul was hesitating as to whether he should come to Corinth; he feared that he would not be able to spare the Corinthians.

¹⁸⁰ Goudge 1927:xlix; Furnish 1984:38, 159-60; Martin 1986:469.

There remains a textual matter to be considered: the reading *χαράν* in 2 Cor 1:15.¹⁸¹ Our reconstruction would probably rule out the reading *χαράν*. Before 1 Corinthians, Paul had visited Corinth, and the visit was painful both for him and for the church (2 Cor 2:1; 13:2). He then planned two further visits to Corinth. It is not likely that he would refer to the first of these visits as a second *χαρά*. However, if his previous visit was intended as a “benefit”¹⁸² or “mark of goodwill”, then even if he had been distressed by what he found,¹⁸³ he might well refer to the first visit of Plan D as a second *χάρις*.

7. Conclusion

Our analysis has been limited to a subset of the available data, and our conclusions must be treated with due caution. However, the weight of the evidence so far examined strongly favours the conclusion that Plan D was formulated before Plan S, and was announced in the Previous Letter. This decision permits a reconstruction of the sequence of Paul’s travels and travel plans which seems to be optimal so far as the principles of Inertia and Parsimony are concerned, and which also ties in well with our analysis of the travels of Timothy.

¹⁸¹ \aleph^c B L:81 104 365 614 1175 2464 *a/* *bo* read *χαράν*, but p^{46} \aleph^* A C D and the other major witnesses have *χάριν*. The minority reading might be explained as an accidental transcription error (Thrall 1994:137 n 58), or may have been a deliberate alteration under the influence of 1:24 and 2:3 (Lietzmann 1949:102; Metzger 1971:576); on the other hand, *χαράν* may have been altered to the familiar *χάριν*.

¹⁸² In 2 Cor 1:1-2, Paul has identified himself as ‘a person of exceptional status, namely an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God’ (Danker 1991:267). Following the conventions of the Hellenistic reciprocity system, he has supported this claim by describing his sufferings on behalf of the Corinthians (1:3-11). For “A distinctive mark of distinguished figures in the Hellenic world is their ability to endure hazards and perils in behalf of their constituencies in times of crises.” (Danker 1991:265).

In 1:12-14 ‘Paul writes in the vein of a public Benefactor’ (Danker 1990:38). It is not unlikely, therefore, that in 1:15 Paul speaks of his planned passing visit as a ‘benefit’, ‘favour’, or ‘mark of goodwill’. Given this cultural and theological background, there is little force in Fee’s claim that this interpretation implies ‘latent egotism and condescension’ (Fee 1978:535).

¹⁸³ It might be objected that in 2 Cor 2:1 Paul is saying not only that his interim visit was a cause of sorrow, but also that it was originally undertaken in a state of sorrow (Windisch 1924:61). Then the visit would have been disciplinary in purpose, and hardly a ‘mark of goodwill’. But Paul uses *ἐλθεῖν* “to indicate the aftermath of arrival as much as arrival itself (see 1 Cor 2:1; 4:21; cf. Rom 15:29)” (Thrall 1994:73).

Our analysis points to a visit by Paul to Corinth before 1 Corinthians, in which Paul issued a stern warning to certain members who were guilty of sexual immorality: he would return, and would not again spare them. The silence of 1 Corinthians regarding this visit does not weigh against its historical reality; the apostle formed Plan D in the confidence of a successful visit (2 Cor 1:15). However, on hearing of the worsening situation in Corinth, he switched to Plan S, which he announced in 1 Corinthians.

Paul probably did not visit Corinth between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians; however, due to a certain offence, and the church's failure to deal properly with it, he cancelled Plan S, and in the Letter of Tears announced his decision not to make another painful visit to the church (2 Cor 1:23-2:3). This letter brought about a change of heart in the church, and the punishment of the offender, according to the apostle's wishes, and in 2 Corinthians we find the Plan S visit reinstated. This reconstruction allows us to make good sense of 2 Cor 13:1.

Even if Plan S is considered to have preceded Plan D, our analysis weighs against the Four-Chapters Hypothesis. The identification of the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians has effectively been ruled out.

It remains, of course, to consider the nature of the offence which caused this cancellation, and the identity of the offender, and of the one offended (7:12). This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Offender and the Offence

The analysis of the previous chapter has virtually ruled out the traditional identification of the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, our analysis of Paul's travel plans weighs heavily against the Four-Chapters Hypothesis.¹⁸⁵ It was concluded that the travel plan mentioned in 2 Cor 1:15-16 (Plan D) probably preceded that announced in 1 Cor 16:5-9 (Plan S). However, these judgements are necessarily provisional, being based on a limited evaluation of a small subset of the available data. As we proceed to a study of the offender and the offence mentioned in 2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:8-12, we will therefore make cautious use of some of the stronger arguments of the previous chapter, but will put aside, for the moment, its main conclusions. We first consider proposed identifications of the offender, and of his offence, using the primary categories of the previous chapter.

1. Reconstructions Placing Plan S Before Plan D

As we have seen, most scholars who take Plan S as preceding Plan D assume that Paul visited Corinth between 1 Corinthians and the Letter of Tears. There is then a

¹⁸⁴ This conclusion presupposes that the supporting arguments will not be called into question by subsequent exegetical studies. As already mentioned, one argument, due to Borse, which might undermine our conclusion is that Timothy and Titus were in fact the same person. Borse's arguments will be considered in Chapter 4 below, and will be shown to lack real force.

¹⁸⁵ For "The Four-Chapters Hypothesis", see above, :12.

strong possibility that Paul was present in Corinth when “the offence” occurred. As already mentioned, there are several suggestions as to the nature of the offence, but no consensus has yet emerged.

Watson's reconstruction

A seemingly forceful objection to the “Four-Chapters Hypothesis”, in its usual form, is that these chapters apparently contain no reference to the offence which led to the Letter of Tears being written (2 Cor 2:4-11). As Munck puts it, “the one thing that is certain to be found in the letter is not contained in what is believed to be a fragment of it.”¹⁸⁶ Of course, it is commonly claimed that the four chapters preserve only a part of the letter, and that the more personal part has been lost.¹⁸⁷ But the fact remains that, in this important aspect, what we have, 2 Cor 10-13, does not correspond to what we would expect from Paul's references to the letter in 2 Corinthians.

Watson has attempted to demonstrate that 2 Cor 10-13 does in fact address the issue which so offended Paul. His argument depends upon a reconstruction of the offence. Paul seems to have possessed

a mysterious supernatural power to inflict punishment on offenders (cf. 10:2-6, 8-11; 13:10, 1 Cor 5:1-5), through which he will prove to those who doubt it that Christ speaks and works through him (cf. 2 Cor 13:3f.).¹⁸⁸

Paul had expressed his intention of using this power on his next visit to stamp out disorders in Corinth (1 Cor 4:18-21). But although on his second visit (assumed by Watson to be after 1 Corinthians) he found that some in the congregation had not repented of ἀκαθαρσία, πορνεία and ἀσελγεία (2 Cor 12:21), he did not use this power, but only warned that he would return, and would not again spare them (2 Cor 13:2f). This leads to the offence of 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:12:

¹⁸⁶ Munck 1959:170; quoted by Hughes, 1962:xxxiv.

¹⁸⁷ Kennedy 1900:xiv-xvi.

¹⁸⁸ Watson 1984:342.

a member of the congregation (perhaps the leader of a group of dissidents) claims that Paul's failure to carry out his threat is due to the fact that he does not have the power to do so, and that he is therefore no true apostle.¹⁸⁹

This, says Watson, is the situation underlying 2 Cor 10:1-11.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, it had undoubtedly been alleged by his opponents that Paul was afraid to come, and could only "terrify people by letters written from a comfortable distance (v 9)".¹⁹¹ However, it is not so clear that the offender of 2 Cor 2, 7 is mentioned, or even alluded to, in 10:1-11. Watson notes the singular verb in 10:10, φησί,¹⁹² which many take to be a reference to a specific individual, a leader of the dissidents in Corinth.¹⁹³ If it is right to say this, then the accusation may be attributed to the offender of 2 Cor 2, 7 (a member of the Corinthian congregation).¹⁹⁴ Then τίς (10:7) and ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11) could also refer to the offender. However, it is perhaps more likely that Paul has the false apostles "in his sights",¹⁹⁵ whereas the offender was almost certainly a member of the congregation, as Watson rightly says;¹⁹⁶ Barrett's arguments that the offender was an outsider are unconvincing.¹⁹⁷ The occurrence of the same indefinite pronouns in 2:5-7

¹⁸⁹ Watson 1984:343.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Martin 1986:314.

¹⁹² Watson 1984:344. Note, however, that B lat sy have the plural, φασί; this variant, if not original, may have developed as a result of an assumption that the false apostles are referred to.

¹⁹³ Goudge 1927:96; Barrett 1973:260; Martin 1986: 311; Thrall 1994:18.

¹⁹⁴ A third possibility, a diatribe-style "Someone will say" (BDF 130.3; Betz 1972:8, 44, 45), probably does not fit the context; Paul is referring to allegations which have actually been made (Barrett 1973:260).

¹⁹⁵ Thrall rightly maintains that the τίς of 10:7 is likely to refer to a representative of the "rival missionaries": "Verse 8 shows that it is a question of whether Paul is a genuine apostle, so that the claim in v.7 to be 'Christ's' is the claim to be διάκονος Χριστοῦ (as in 11:23). The parallel with v.7 suggests that ὁ τοιοῦτος in v.11 has the same reference." (Thrall 1994:18). Indeed, Paul argues that he is Χριστοῦ (= διάκονος Χριστοῦ), for (γάρ; v.8) he may properly boast that the Lord has given him authority to build up the church (and not to tear it down - hence his absence!).

¹⁹⁶ It is difficult to believe that "the offender" could be one of the rival apostles. This hypothesis would imply that one of the intruders whom Paul denounces in 2 Cor 10-13 had been subjected to, and accepted, some form of discipline by the church in Corinth; had repented, acknowledging Paul's apostolic authority; and had expressed a wish to be restored to the fellowship of the Corinthian church. It seems highly unlikely that one claiming to be an apostle would submit to such discipline. Moreover, if in fact 2 Corinthians is a unity (as I maintain, against Barrett), then it is hardly credible that in the same letter Paul should instruct the Corinthians to receive the offender back into their fellowship (2:6-8), and then denounce him as a false apostle and a servant of Satan (11:13-15).

¹⁹⁷ Barrett (1982:112-14) reasons as follows: ἄγνός (7:11) implies that the Corinthians, those addressed in 2 Cor 7:9-11, were totally innocent of "the offence" *per se* (ἄγνοι τῷ πράγματι, v11; dative of respect: "as

is of little significance, as Paul is fond of τίς / τοιοῦτος.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, Watson's theory fails to explain why Paul should have regretted writing 2 Cor 10-13 (cf. 2 Cor 7:8).¹⁹⁹ Why should he have regretted writing, for example, about his authority as an apostle, or the glory of his sufferings as a minister of Christ? He writes again of these matters in 2 Cor 4:7-15, 6:4-5, assigned by Watson to the same letter as 7:8. Nor could he regret the threats that he made in 10:2-11; 12:20-13:10; for he would certainly have been prepared to carry out these threats when he arrived in Corinth. Otherwise it would have become clear that all along he had been bluffing, and that the accusation of "the offender" was in fact justified. Hence a final warning in this Letter of Tears would be appropriate (cf. 13:1). Nor is it likely that he regretted his attacks on the "false apostles"; nor his "boasting", which was intended to undermine his opponents (10:12-12:13); there is no indication in 2 Cor 1-9 that he had revised his opinion of them for the better. Nor could he have regretted something said in the part of the letter which is now lost, for Watson holds that the four chapters preserve the whole of the Letter of Tears.

far as this affair was concerned"), having had nothing to do with the affair, just as "a pure virgin has had no sexual relations with a man" (cf. 11:2). Yet the "severe letter" evoked repentance (v 9); therefore their offence was not the offence of the offender; rather, they had failed to respond to the offence with that ζῆλος and that σπουδή which they should have shown - thus they became guilty by association (p 114). However, the offender was certainly not totally innocent of the offence; moreover, "the offender" repented of his offence, but the Corinthians could not have repented of that offence, for they were totally innocent of it. Therefore "the offender" was not among those addressed in 7:9-11, and must have been an outsider. However, the logic is forced. Suppose that the offender was a member of the church - though he had been expelled. Those addressed in 2:5-11 were instructed to receive the offender back into their midst; hence at this point in the letter, the offender is not one of the addressees, and there is no reason to suppose that later in the same letter (7:9-11) the apostle assumed that the offender had already been restored to the church, and was now among his addressees. He would surely assume that his whole letter would be read through before any action was taken. One must assume, then, that the addressees of 7:9-11 did not include the offender, whether or not he was a member of the church. Moreover, we will argue below that, in Paul's view, the church had been guilty by association of the sin of the offender until they disassociated themselves from him by expelling him from the community. Their total innocence, therefore, was not due to their never having been involved in the offence in the first place, but to their having vigorously separated themselves from it. For arguments to the contrary, that the offender must have been a member of the congregation, see preceding note.

¹⁹⁸ Thrall 1994:18, 62.

¹⁹⁹ Tasker 1958:32.

Finally, in 2 Cor 7:12 Paul denies that he wrote on account of ὁ ἄδικηθείς, claiming that he wrote rather that, before God, the Corinthians' "ardent concern" (σπουδή) for the apostle might be made manifest; this would seem a rather odd statement if, as Watson's reconstruction seems to require, by ὁ ἄδικηθείς Paul means himself.²⁰⁰

Taylor's reconstruction

According to Taylor, who also embraces the Four-Chapters Hypothesis, the offender

would almost certainly have been the householder who had offered hospitality and patronage to Paul's rivals, and may previously have been a ringleader of opposition to Paul in the Corinthian church.²⁰¹

This seems at first glance an elegant solution. Paul's major concern in his Letter of Tears would then have been not with the offender himself, nor with his offence, but with the false apostles whom the offender was hosting. The church would have responded to the letter by breaking off their relationship with them, and expelling from their midst the man who was primarily responsible for their presence among them. Thus the apparent silence of 2 Cor 10-13 concerning the offender and the offence may not be a decisive objection to the Four-Chapters Hypothesis. However, the reconstruction still does not explain Paul's temporary regret regarding the Letter of Tears (2 Cor 7:8), moreover, we must again identify ὁ ἄδικηθείς (7:12) with Paul himself, which as we have seen is contextually difficult.²⁰²

The "Insult Hypothesis"

A few scholars who place Plan S before Plan D nevertheless maintain that Paul did not visit Corinth between writing 1 and 2 Corinthians (or 2 Cor 1-9).²⁰³ Given this

²⁰⁰ Windisch 1924:238.

²⁰¹ Taylor 1991:80.

²⁰² Windisch 1924:238; see above,:69.

²⁰³ E.g. Batey 196; Quesnel (1997) denies a visit between the founding of the church and the despatch of 2 Cor 1-9 (he regards 2 Cor 9 as separate from, and a little later than 2 Cor 1-8, and sent to Corinth just prior to a visit).

hypothesis, since “the offence” clearly involved a challenge to Paul’s authority, it is generally assumed that one of his delegates must have been “the one offended”. However, it is unlikely that Timothy was the victim of the offence;²⁰⁴ for he was a co-signatory of 2 Corinthians,²⁰⁵ and it would then be difficult to explain the emphatic first person singular in 2 Cor 2:10: ὃ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὃ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι²⁰⁶ (cf. 2:5, οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, ἀλλὰ ... πάντας ὑμᾶς). Could Titus have been the victim? This hypothesis would involve postulating a role for Titus in Corinth before he delivered the Letter of Tears. He might have delivered 1 Corinthians, in which case he would presumably have had a role in relation to the Collection (2 Cor 8:6; cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4). But then, it is difficult to imagine that he could have been the victim of a serious personal attack, in which the church became implicated, without doubts being raised concerning his motives in relation to the Collection. Hence the appeal to his integrity in 2 Cor 12:16-18 would be rather odd. Moreover, it would be surprising that Paul should have chosen him to deliver the Letter of Tears,²⁰⁷ and that he should have been received μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου (7:15). Finally, if the victim had been some other Pauline delegate, we would have expected some mention of him by name in 2 Corinthians; this silence would be particularly odd in view of Paul’s denial that he had written on behalf of “the one offended” (7:12).

Most scholars assume that Paul did in fact visit Corinth between 1 Corinthians and the Letter of Tears. It is commonly supposed that he himself was seriously insulted or abused by a member of the congregation,²⁰⁸ and that the fault of the rest of the church lay in their silence.²⁰⁹ If Paul had been in some way abused or injured by a member of the congregation, it could be that he had wished to deal with the offender by means of

²⁰⁴ So e.g. Lane 1982:13-14.

²⁰⁵ Or of the letter which originally included 2 Cor 1:1-2:13.

²⁰⁶ Windisch 1924:238.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ E.g. Weiss 1959:342-43; Plummer:xvi-xvii, 55, 225; Bruce 1971:164; Barrett 1973:89. Barrett maintains that the offender was one of the false apostles, who had “challenged the apostle’s position, belittled his authority, and had thus both injured and insulted his person” (1982:113).

²⁰⁹ E.g. Weiss 1959:342-43; Plummer:xvi-xvii, 55, 225; Bultmann 1976:51; Bruce 1971:164.

a communal action along the lines of 1 Cor 5:3-5, and that the church had refused to co-operate. This could then have precipitated the crisis. This seems feasible, especially if the offender was rich and powerful. However, if we accept this reconstruction we are forced to postulate, in rather vague terms, that an unknown individual carried out an act which is not actually mentioned or described in our sources.²¹⁰ Moreover, as Zahn points out, nowhere in the LXX or the NT is the verb ἀδικέω or any cognate used of insult or slander.²¹¹ Furthermore, we must again identify ὁ ἀδικηθεὶς (7:12) with Paul himself which, as we have already noted, does not fit well with 2 Cor 7:12.

Kruse's reconstruction

Kruse has proposed that the offender who insulted Paul during his visit was in fact the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians, whom the church had failed to discipline.²¹² This does have the advantage of a definite identification of the offender, and as we shall see, there are a number of pointers to this identification. However, the other objections raised in our discussion of the Insult Hypothesis still apply. If the incestuous man had not been disciplined then, as has already been argued, Paul would have heard of this situation from Timothy before he set out for Corinth. He would then have travelled to Corinth, knowing that the church had refused to carry out his instructions, and that Timothy, his delegate, had failed to restore order. He would then himself have failed to have the offender disciplined, and have left Corinth with the matter unresolved. It would then be very difficult to explain his statement in 2 Cor 1:15 that he had decided to visit the Corinthians first ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε!²¹³ The combined force of these objections must be considered decisive.

²¹⁰ As was argued in Chapter 2, reconstructions which identify the offender and / or the offence with periods and events actually mentioned in the primary texts are, in that respect, to be preferred.

²¹¹ Zahn 1909:349; cited by Thrall 1994:67. Zahn suggests that Paul might instead have used the verbs λοιδορέω or ὑβρίζω. However, in 1 Cor 6:9-10, the λοιδοροὶ are included in the general category of the ἄδικοι (Thrall 1987:72).

²¹² Kruse 1987:21-23; 42-43; Kruse 1988.

²¹³ The visit referred to in 1:15 would then have been announced either before or during the "emergency visit". In these circumstances the apostle could hardly have left Corinth with the understanding that he would return in peace; cf. 1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 13:2.

The reconstructions of Krenkel and Thrall

Krenkel proposed that one member of the congregation was offended by another, and had turned first to the church, and then to Paul, for redress. But Paul had also failed to get the one offended a fair hearing, and began to suspect that the whole congregation was involved in a conspiracy.²¹⁴ But then one would expect that Paul would speak of the specific need for the one offended to forgive,²¹⁵ and the hypothesis fails to explain Paul's apparent lack of concern for the welfare of the one offended, which contrasts sharply with his concern for the offender (7:12; cf. 2:5-11); moreover, as Thrall correctly observes:

This suggestion does justice to the impression we get from 7:12 that the ἀδικηθεὶς was someone other than Paul. Conversely, however, it fails to explain why in 2:5 and 2:10 Paul should write as though it is he himself whom the offender has injured, with no mention of the need for individual forgiveness on the part of the other injured person, i.e., the person who had appealed to the congregation, and then to Paul, for redress.²¹⁶

Thrall has proposed a somewhat speculative modification of this hypothesis, which has already been discussed. It is admitted that her reconstruction gives a good fit to the data she considers, though it has been shown above that another speculative scenario fits the data equally well.²¹⁷ In order to arrive at a reconstruction which fits all the available data, Thrall has been driven to introduce highly questionable (Type III) hypotheses.²¹⁸ Given the presupposition that Plan S was superseded by Plan D, the following remark therefore seems to be well justified:

It has become clear that it is not easy to reconstruct an hypothesis which would do justice to all the varied aspects of the situation which appear to be reflected in the text.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Krenkel 1890:306; cited by Thrall 1994:68.

²¹⁵ Thrall 1994:68.

²¹⁶ Thrall 1994:68

²¹⁷ See above,;22.

²¹⁸ See the discussion in Chapter 1 of the Principle of Parsimony.

²¹⁹ Thrall 1994:68.

Indeed, so far as I am aware, no one has yet succeeded in offering a reconstruction of the offence which assumes that Plan S preceded Plan D, fits all the available data, and is also historically probable. As we shall now see, no such difficulty arises if we take Plan D to have preceded Plan S.

2. Reconstructions Placing Plan D Before Plan S

As we have seen, if Plan D preceded Plan S, then a visit by Paul to Corinth between 1 and 2 Corinthians can almost certainly be ruled out. Scholars who place Plan D prior to Plan S have generally assumed that 1 Corinthians is to be identified with the Letter of Tears and, so far as I can determine, have made the then obvious identification of the offender of 2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:12 with the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5, and the offence with his incestuous affair.²²⁰ This identification of the offender has been widely opposed on a number of the grounds; as we shall see, however, some of these objections are not convincing, and others collapse when we lift the presupposition that 1 Corinthians is to be identified with the Letter of Tears.

We have already argued that 1 Corinthians is unlikely to be identical with the Letter of Tears. A serious objection to the combined hypothesis of this identification, together with the identification of the offender with the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5, has been cited by Kruse: given these identifications, it is incredible that Paul should say that he had written the Letter of Tears so that before God the Corinthians' zeal for the apostle might be revealed (2 Cor 7:12).²²¹ As is made crystal clear in 1 Cor 5, the issue at that time was not the community's relationship with, or attitude towards the apostle, but the moral and cultic purity of the church. Together with the objections already raised to the

²²⁰ An exception is Borse (1984:190-92), who argues that in 2 Cor 2:5-11 and 7:11a, Paul has in mind the incestuous man, but in the remainder of 7:11 makes a transition to a discussion of the legal dispute of 1 Cor 6:1-11, so that in 7:12 the reference of "the offender" and "the one offended" is to the respective litigants.

²²¹ 2 Cor 7:12; Kruse 1988:137. The force of this objection is not resolved by Borse's modification of the hypothesis. Borse's argument that the Corinthians showed their *σπουδή* for Paul by accepting his remonstrance and resolving their legal dispute is not persuasive.

identification of 1 Corinthians with the Letter of Tears,²²² I consider this objection to the combined identification hypothesis to be decisive. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive of any other identification of the offender than the incestuous man, if we identify 1 Corinthians with the Letter of Tears. We may therefore assume that the Letter of Tears followed 1 Corinthians, but has been lost.

As we have argued in the previous chapter, there is a strong *prima facie* case for placing Plan D prior to Plan S; we turn now therefore to a detailed analysis of the implications of this hypothesis for the questions of the identity of the offender, and of the nature of his offence.

3. The Offender and the Offence Reconsidered

We now consider the possibility that Plan D did indeed precede Plan S, but the Letter of Tears followed 1 Corinthians and is now lost. Then Paul had planned to visit Corinth on his way to Macedonia, then return to Corinth and sail from there for Judea, presumably with the completed Collection, (Plan D). However, before he could set out, news reached him of a serious disturbance in Corinth. The church had divided into factions, and idolatry and sexual immorality was being tolerated, perhaps even encouraged; one man had even entered into an affair with his father's concubine.²²³ There were also disorders in communal worship, particularly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and misuse of spiritual gifts. Rather than deal with these issues in person, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, which included a demand that the man guilty of incest be severely disciplined. He also altered his travel plan so that he would remain in Ephesus a little longer and then set out for Macedonia, coming to Corinth from there rather later than originally planned, and perhaps spending the winter there. In the short time between the composition of 1 Corinthians, around Passover, and the return of

²²² See above, :42, "The Letter of Tears and 1 Corinthians."

²²³ Most scholars have assumed that the woman concerned was his father's stepmother; however, it is far more likely that she was his concubine; see De Vos 1998, and the discussion below.

Timothy, around Pentecost, a major crisis arose. A disturbance of such magnitude occurred that, under the circumstances, a visit to Corinth would have resulted in much grief both for Paul and for the Corinthians. Paul therefore decided to cancel his promised visit, and wrote another letter to Corinth, the Letter of Tears, stating and explaining his decision. The Corinthians responded to the letter by disciplining one of their number; as a result, Paul's relations with the church improved, and he was then prepared to visit Corinth as planned, after he had completed his business in Macedonia.

What had happened in Corinth, so that the apostle had no alternative than to withdraw from the church? The expulsion of one man from the congregation was sufficient to remedy the situation. Who was this man, and what was his offence? Whatever the man's offence, it is clear that the Corinthian church had in some way become implicated in his guilt; for Paul's Letter of Tears had led them to repentance (2 Cor 7:9f). Yet by disciplining the one offender, they had cleared themselves of guilt (7:11), proving themselves ἀγνοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι. However, the thrust of 2 Cor 7:11 is not that the Corinthians were never guilty in the first place, but that they had made vigorous efforts to disassociate themselves from the guilt of the offender. The godly sorrow induced in them by Paul's Letter of Tears had galvanised them into action. Their response, their ἀπολογία, ἀγανάκτησις, φόβος, ἐπιπόθησις, ζῆλος and ἐκδίκησις was characterised by σπουδή, "earnestness", perhaps "earnest haste".²²⁴ The precise sense of each of these terms is debated, but the structure climaxes with ἀλλὰ ἐκδίκησιν, "what punishment" or possibly "what revenge"; the final outcome of the godly sorrow produced by the Letter of Tears was the punishment of the offender, and by this action the Corinthians had cleared themselves of guilt by association. Whatever the precise nuance of each of the other terms in the structure (ἀπολογία etc.), the substance of the Corinthians' repentance was this: that with earnestness and probably with haste they had disciplined the offender. It is submitted, therefore, that the central issue between

²²⁴ BAGD s.v. gives the distinct senses "haste" and "earnestness"; however, it is quite possible that both senses are applicable here.

Paul and the Corinthians, and the cause of the cancellation of his visit and the composition of his Letter of Tears, was probably that the offender, at the time of writing, had *not* been disciplined.²²⁵ The two halves of the narrative may be linked by the simple expedient of identifying the man who we know had not been disciplined, the incestuous offender of 1 Cor 5, with the man who we know should have been disciplined, had Paul's instructions been carried through, ὁ ἀδικησάς. There is no need to introduce the hypothesis of an unknown offender, or to attempt to reconstruct his offence. The offence of incest could certainly be described in terms of the verb ἀδικέω. Moreover, this development would beyond doubt have precipitated a major crisis in Paul's relations with the church.

It has been suggested that the silence of 2 Corinthians concerning Timothy's mission to Corinth would be understandable if his visit had been both brief and painful. The explanation is now apparent: Timothy had been unable to persuade the church to follow the instructions to follow the instructions of 1 Cor 5:3-5, and had left for Ephesus to report that his authority as Paul's delegate had been rejected. This identification must be evaluated, but if it is found to be plausible, then it has a clear advantage over any other solution.

Accepting this identification, for the moment, as a working hypothesis, Paul's response, a decision that he must indefinitely suspend his visit to Corinth, is then seen to be consistent with his response to earlier reports of disorders in the church, and with his own explanation of the changes in his travel plans, 2 Cor 1:23-2:3. Paul wanted to avoid a head-on collision; he did not wish to use his authority to impose discipline on a rebellious church. If he were to come to Corinth when the church was in a state of open rebellion, his coming could only bring grief. Since the Corinthians were unwilling to put their affairs in order, he thought it better not come at all.

²²⁵ Bleek argued that the incestuous man persisted in his offence, despite 1 Corinthians (1830:630-31); cited by Thrall, 1994:65.

Rosner has argued cogently that in fact Paul regarded the Corinthians as bearing a corporate responsibility for the sin of the incestuous man, so long as he remained among them.²²⁶ Throughout 1 Cor 5 Paul addresses the church as a body, the second person plural pronoun occurring nine times in thirteen verses.²²⁷ He rebukes the church for arrogance (5:2, 6), and calls for the body to “show passionate grief that will lead to action”,²²⁸ ἐπενθήσατε in 5:2. Most commentators understand πενθέω in 1 Cor 5:2 as “a mourning over the impending loss of the sinning brother, whose sin will lead to his destruction”;²²⁹ another possibility is a reference to grief at the shame brought on the church by the incest. But the only other use of the verb by Paul (2 Cor 12:21), and its usage in the LXX points rather to the sense of “godly sorrow” or “repentance”.²³⁰ In particular, this sense is paralleled in Ezra 10:6, but in all six occurrences of the verb in the LXX in relation to sin, the sense is “mourning over sin” and, in five of these cases,²³¹ mourning over the sin of others.²³²

The metaphor of cleansing from impurity is also applied to the church as a body; they are to become “a new lump”, not “new lumps”.²³³ Thus the church incurred corporate guilt through the sin of one of its members. Rosner rightly comments:

If the offender in [2 Cor] 2:5 and 7:12 can be identified with the incestuous person of 1 Cor 5 ... then it is noteworthy in 2:5 that the sinner caused pain (λυπέω) to *all* the Corinthians (πάντας ὑμᾶς). The fact that in 2 Cor 7:9 λυπέω and μετάνοια are associated, supports the supposition that the pain the sinner caused the Corinthians may have involved their identification with his sin and need for godly sorrow.²³⁴

²²⁶ Rosner 1992b; 1994:70-73.

²²⁷ Rosner 1994:70.

²²⁸ Ibid.,:71.

²²⁹ Ibid.:71-72.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ezra 10:6; Neh 1:4; 1 Esd 8:72; 9:2; Dan 10:2.

²³² The exception is Neh 8:9, but even there, as Rosner points out, the verb is used in a corporate context.

²³³ Rosner 1994:71.

²³⁴ Rosner 1992b:472 n 14.

Paul's ἀλλὰ ἀπολογίαν (2 Cor 7:11) would then be a commendation of the Corinthians' removal of the incestuous man from the church; they had cleared themselves of any responsibility in the affair.

Forkman has set out the following parallels between the two cases:²³⁵

1. The sinner's behaviour caused distress to the community (1 Cor 5:2; 2 Cor 2:5).
2. The man is characterised by the same periphrase (1 Cor 5:5, τὸν τοιοῦτον; 2 Cor 2:6, τῷ τοιούτῳ).
3. The punishment takes place on the grounds of Paul's written command (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:9, 7:12).
4. The whole community takes part in the punishing (1 Cor 5:4; 2 Cor 2:6).
5. Paul takes part in the community's decision (1 Cor 5:4; 2 Cor 2:10).
6. Christ is present at both decisions (1 Cor 5:4; 2 Cor 2:10).
7. If the punishment is not rescinded, the sinner will perish (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:7).
8. Satan can profit from the punishment (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:11).
9. By the punishment the community has maintained its purity (1 Cor 5:6-8; 2 Cor 7:11).

Hyldahl²³⁶ considers these points, together with the arguments of Lampe, to be decisive.²³⁷ Most of these points do indeed strengthen the case for the traditional

²³⁵ Forkman 1972:212 n 316.

²³⁶ Hyldahl 1991:31 n 26.

²³⁷ Lampe argues as follows (1967:353-54):

- a) "Paul was more concerned with the attitude of the Corinthian church than with the individual offender, and we need not expect him to dwell more fully on the latter's repentance than he does in 2 Cor 2:5ff";
- b) Cor 2:9 and 7:12 "are exactly appropriate to what he wrote in 1 Cor about the attitude of the Corinthians and to his insistence that the Corinthians must take decisive action against the sinner";
- c) "The phraseology of 2 Cor 2:9-11 strongly recalls that of the earlier passage";
- d) "Whereas the offender had been handed over to Satan for chastisement, to leave him in Satan's power after he had once shown penitence would be to allow Satan to exceed the limits of his permitted task (2 Cor 2:11). To give him more scope would be to allow him a victory";
- e) the language of 2 Cor 2:7ff closely parallels that of the condemnation;
- f) "The language of 2 Cor 7:11 ... would admirably suit a situation in which, obeying Paul's rebukes and injunctions in 1 Cor 5, the Corinthians had punished the offender and he had now repented";

identification.²³⁸ It must be admitted that some of these points (1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) might well occur in connection with any formal expulsion from the community, respectively, the reversal of such an act; moreover, the significance attributed to points 2 and 8 has rightly been questioned.²³⁹ Nevertheless, the occurrence of so many points of similarity in two such short passages (1 Cor 5:2-8; 2 Cor 2:5-11) is remarkable, and a strong, though not decisive indication that they deal with the same expulsion.

The traditional identification: some objections considered

Are there, then, irreconcilable *differences* between the two situations? Furnish finds that there are:

1. "The effect of the anonymity in 1 Cor 5 is to emphasise the need to dissociate oneself from the individual, but in 2 Cor 2 the anonymity serves to help shield the person from further criticism."²⁴⁰ But this distinction would be perfectly understandable; in the first case the offender is unrepentant and is to be disciplined; in the second, he has repented, has been forgiven, and is to be received back into the church; further criticism would now be inappropriate.²⁴¹

2. It is argued that "the entirely democratic handling of the case presupposed in 2 Cor 2 does not accord well with the more authoritarian position taken by the apostle in 1 Cor 5."²⁴² If the Letter of Tears is to be identified with 1 Corinthians, then this might be a forceful point. However, it has been proposed that the action demanded in 1 Cor 5:3-5 was not carried out in unquestioning obedience to the apostle. Rather, the church rejected this demand. Action was taken against the man only later, in a considered

g) "Reference back to 1 Cor 5 would be a very natural explanation for the allusions in 2 Cor 2:9 and 7:12 to previous correspondence (ἔγγραφα)."

²³⁸ It is not likely, however, that 2 Cor 2:9; 7:12 refer back directly to 1 Corinthians; rather, they refer to the later Letter of Tears.

²³⁹ Thrall 1987:67.

²⁴⁰ Furnish 1984:164, citing de Boor.

²⁴¹ Cf. Meyer 1879:169.

²⁴² Furnish 1984:165, citing Allo 1956b:59-60; Prümm I 1960-67:68.

response to a further letter, the Letter of Tears. This action was taken by the decision of the church, not of the apostle. It has been argued that in the Letter of Tears, the apostle did not demand obedience, but gave the church the opportunity to reach their own decision.

3. The roles of Satan in the two cases appear to conflict: "In 1 Cor 5 [Satan] serves as the agent of punishment for the offender, but in 2 Cor 2 he is portrayed as a threat to Paul and the congregation unless the offending party is forgiven and reconciled."²⁴³

Again, however, the changed situation accounts for the change in the role of Satan. In 1 Cor 5 the man is unrepentant and is to be handed over to Satan for punishment. But in 2 Cor 2 the man has repented, and to refuse to receive him back into the church would give Satan the opportunity to exercise his other role as the supreme enemy of Christ and his Church.²⁴⁴ To refuse him re-admission into the church would be to deny the principle of forgiveness and reconciliation which lies at the heart of Paul's gospel (2 Cor 5:16-6:2).

4. Furnish also points to the difference in the role of Christ in the two passages: "the authority by whom Paul pronounces judgement" (1 Cor 5) vs. "the "eschatological Lord" before whom both Paul and his readers are called to account".²⁴⁵ However there is no specifically eschatological language in 2 Cor 2:5-11 other than the title "Christ", which also occurs in 1 Cor 5. In 1 Cor 5 the man is to be punished in the authority of Christ; in 2 Cor 2, the man has been forgiven (κεχάρισται, 2:10) in the authority of Christ. Again, the difference in the role of a key player is explained by the changed situation: in 1 Cor 5, the offender is unrepentant; in 2 Cor 2, he has repented.

5. The punishment demanded in 1 Cor 5:5 was irrevocable and would have led to physical death. Hence "Paul's counsel in 2 Cor 2:6-8 to forgive and restore the

²⁴³ Furnish 1984:165, citing Windisch 1924:92; Allo, Bruce and Dibelius.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Lampe 1967:354 quoted above, :78 n 237.

²⁴⁵ Furnish 1984:165, citing Dibelius and Tasker.

offender is simply inexplicable if the same case is in view.”²⁴⁶ Furnish reflects a common, perhaps the majority view of 1 Cor 5:5.²⁴⁷ The case rests largely on proposed parallels to the curse formula παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, and on the judgement that ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός must mean the destruction of the physical body. However, as Fee rightly says,

it is out of character with Paul’s theology as we meet it elsewhere that one who sins within the Christian community should be so punished in the present age that he lies beyond the redemptive, restorative love of that community.²⁴⁸

The following parallels to the curse formula have been proposed:

a. It is claimed that παραδίδωμι is a technical term in Greek for handing over offenders to supernatural powers.²⁴⁹ However, as South points out, in the three texts cited by A. Y. Collins, PGM 5.70-95, 174-80, and 185-210, “the suppliant delivers no one, but rather calls upon various deities to hand over an enemy to the person casting the spell, i.e., to the suppliant him/herself.”²⁵⁰ In another such text, PGM 4.1247, it is a demon who is handed over, not a person.²⁵¹ Moreover, the known magical curse formulae are not for communal use, but for personal revenge.²⁵²

b. The Jewish *birkat ha-minim* has been considered. Apparently an addition made to the so-called Eighteen Benedictions around AD 90, it was a curse designed to force Christian “heretics” to exclude themselves from the synagogue, since they would be unable to pronounce the curse in worship. This does not provide an adequate parallel to the direct exclusion proposed by Paul.²⁵³

²⁴⁶ Furnish 1984:165-66.

²⁴⁷ See Thiselton 1973:204 for references.

²⁴⁸ Fee 1987:212. Besides 2 Cor 2:5-11, Fee rightly cites Gal 6:1; 2 Thess 3:14f.

²⁴⁹ A. Y. Collins 1980:255f.

²⁵⁰ South 1993:544-45.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ A. Y. Collins 1980:254.

c. The most severe of the synagogue exclusion provisions, the “great ban” (גְּדוּלָּה), is another possible parallel.²⁵⁴ However, though this did lead to indefinite exclusion, it was not irrevocable;²⁵⁵ nor is there evidence of a curse formula being used.²⁵⁶

d. South argues that Job 1:12; 2:6 LXX, in which Job is handed over to Satan (2:6, ἰδοὺ, παραδίδωμί σοι αὐτόν), is the background of Paul’s thought.²⁵⁷ The language certainly provides a close parallel to 1 Cor 5:5; however, the context, as South admits, is rather different: Job is not being punished for any offence; nor is the curse pronounced by his peers as an act of community exclusion.

e. Parallels have been suggested with certain Qumran curse formulae. Some of these do seem intended to bring about the death of the offender;²⁵⁸ the ultimate fate of the offender in such cases will apparently be the same as that of the “sons of darkness”.²⁵⁹ Of particular interest is CD 7:23-8:3:

... the apostates were given up to the sword, and so it shall be for all members of His covenant who do not hold steadfastly to these (Ms B: to the curse of the precepts). They shall be visited for destruction by the hand of Satan [Belial]. That shall be the day when God shall visit.²⁶⁰

Even this, however, does not provide a complete parallel, for there is no intention of providing for the offender’s ultimate salvation. In 1 Cor 5:5, however, the purpose is ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.²⁶¹ The action is intended to bring about the

²⁵⁴ Forkman (1972:87-108) discusses both the *birkat* and the synagogue bans.

²⁵⁵ South 1993:543.

²⁵⁶ South 1993:547.

²⁵⁷ South 1993:550f.

²⁵⁸ A. Y. Collins (1980:257; 261) cites 1QS 2.5-6; 15-17; 8:21-24; CD 7.21-8.3.

²⁵⁹ A. Y. Collins 1980:263.

²⁶⁰ Quoted by A. Y. Collins; Collins 1980:257; tr. Vermes 1962:105.

²⁶¹ Given Paul’s usual syntactical patterns, it is likely that the preceding phrase, εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, does not indicate purpose, but anticipated result; see Fee 1987:209 n 67.

salvation of the offender (though Paul gives no guarantee that repentance will in fact follow).

A. Y. Collins denies any redemptive intention in 1 Cor 5:5;²⁶² she is followed by Shillington.²⁶³ The purpose clause, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου, he interprets in a corporate sense:

Paul's assumption in 1 Cor. 5:5 seems to be that the Holy Spirit has been given to the individual members of the community and that the Spirit will remain with them until the day of the Lord and its final judgement. If they have lived in accordance with the Spirit it will be preserved or kept safe for the community, that is, they will remain in union with it, God, and Christ. If they have defiled the Spirit by, for example, sexual sins, the Spirit will be lost to the community and they will be excluded from the kingdom of God (see 6:9-11).²⁶⁴

However a serious weakness in this hypothesis is that it is hard to conceive of the Holy Spirit as, in effect, the *object* of σώζω.²⁶⁵ The verb could, in the passive, have the sense of "remain (in good condition)",²⁶⁶ but elsewhere Paul uses the verb σώζω, in the passive, exclusively in the technical sense of eternal salvation. The Corinthian community, not the Holy Spirit, would be saved on the Day of the Lord. Moreover, if τὸ πνεῦμα refers to the presence of the Spirit in the community, then one would expect something like ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα ἐν ὑμῖν σωθῇ ἄχρι ἡμέρας τοῦ κυρίου.

f. Shillington maintains that the background of 1 Cor 5:5 is Lev 16:10:²⁶⁷ "The goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement for it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness for Azazel." In the same way the offender is to be handed over to Satan, his function being to bear away the impurity of

²⁶² A. Y. Collins 1980:259f.

²⁶³ Shillington 1998:35.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.:260.

²⁶⁵ South 1993:557.

²⁶⁶ BAGD:798.

²⁶⁷ Shillington 1998:33: "the volume of that text in Paul's re-texturing in 1 Cor. 5:5 seems louder than 'echo' and more like allusion."

the community; he is to be “the new sacrificial victim of atonement”.²⁶⁸ Azazel Shillington identifies as “a mythical embodiment of contaminants, in opposition to the Lord and the elect community.” However, for Paul, Christ is the only sacrifice of atonement needed for the sins of God’s people (Rom 3:24-26; cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13-14).²⁶⁹

It is often claimed that there are other examples of the curse / death phenomenon in the NT (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30). South rightly argues that these are not genuine parallels: “conspicuously absent is any hint of a curse or solemn act of the assembled church ... As to their purpose, their deaths are evidently punitive rather than redemptive and serve as an example to the rest of the community”.²⁷⁰

It is also argued that the phrase εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός requires physical death.²⁷¹ Though ὄλεθρος is certainly a strong term, a figurative use may not be ruled out simply on the grounds that it usually refers to physical death. Of course, if σάρξ is here synonymous with σῶμα, referring to the offender’s physical body as opposed to his immaterial πνεῦμα, then a figurative sense does seem to be ruled out. However, in the vast majority of cases in which he opposes σάρξ to πνεῦμα, Paul uses the terms in a quasi-technical, metaphorical sense, setting up “a polarity between what accords with the working of the Spirit of God and human characteristics which, to all intents and purposes, have been arrived at independently”.²⁷² It may not be the man’s physical body which is to be destroyed, but his commitment of will to a self-centred and iniquitous lifestyle; the punishment would be intended to secure his repentance.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Shillington 1998:46.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Dunn 1998:207-33, esp.:212-18.

²⁷⁰ South 1993:547f.

²⁷¹ E.g. MacArthur 1980:251.

²⁷² Thiselton 1973:215.

²⁷³ There are a number of possible figurative senses for σάρξ in 1 Cor 5:5; Thiselton lists the following (1973:209): ‘the offender’s sinful lust or “lower” nature’ (Grosheide 1953:123); human self-reliance (noted by Bultmann, *Theology* I:239-46, and by Robinson 1952:25-26; though neither applied this sense to 1 Cor. 5:5); “the individual offender in so far as he also stands under a given evaluation”; and “the general characteristics of a ‘fleshly’ outlook”. The first alternative would probably imply that the death of the offender was after all intended, for in Paul’s thought the lower nature is not destroyed or removed by

South argues persuasively that the intention of bringing about the death of the offender simply cannot be reconciled, within Paul's theology, with the intention of bringing about his salvation; or at the least, that no one has so far demonstrated the feasibility of this position.²⁷⁴

Rosner has pointed out what is almost certainly a quotation of Test Rub 5:5 in 1 Cor 6:18a: φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν.²⁷⁵ It will be argued below that at various points 2 Corinthians echoes or alludes to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and in particular the Testament of Reuben. The Testament of Reuben concerns the evils of πορνεία, and in particular Reuben's incestuous act with his stepmother, Bilhah. It is of special interest, therefore, that a figurative use of ὄλεθρος occurs in Test Rub 4:6; Paul was almost certainly familiar with this passage:

For fornication is a destruction of the soul (ὄλεθρος γὰρ ψυχῆς ἐστὶν ἡ πορνεία), separating it from God and bringing it near to idols ... For fornication has destroyed many; for whether a man be old or noble, he brings upon himself disgrace, and the derision of Beliar and of the sons of men.

There is a close thematic parallel with 1 Cor 5:5; the incestuous man is to be handed over to Satan = Beliar (εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός); his expulsion could be expected to result in psychological and spiritual torment, "disgrace, and the derision of Beliar, and the sons of men" (cf. 2 Cor 2:6-7, 11), in order that the offender's regenerate ψυχή = πνεῦμα might be saved on the day of the Lord.²⁷⁶

conversion, but must be denied (e.g. Rom 8:12-14; Gal 5:16f). The other three are not mutually exclusive.

²⁷⁴ South 1993:556-59.

²⁷⁵ Rosner 1992a.

²⁷⁶ Satan as God's agent of punishment of those who break his covenant is also found in CD 8:2; Thornton 1972:152. In 1 Cor 10:10 Paul refers to the rebellious Israelites being put to death by "the Destroyer" (ὁ ὀλοθρευτής; cf. ὁ ὀλεθρεύων, Wis 18:25; τὸν ὀλεθρεύοντα, LXX Exod 12:23); but in Jub 49:2 the slaughter of the first-born males of Egypt (the work of "the Destroyer", Exod 12:23) is attributed to the powers of Mastema (= Satan). Thornton suggests therefore that Paul may have regarded "the Destroyer" as a Satanic agent working for God. This suggestion is supported by the fact that in Deuteronomy Rabba 11, 207a, c, "the angel of death", sent by God, is identified with Satan (ibid.).

Conclusion

The analysis supports the traditional identification of the offender of 2 Corinthians 2:5; 7:12 with the incestuous offender of 1 Cor 5. It has been suggested that he was encouraged in his offence, for political reasons, by a rich patron of the church, who was himself influenced by rival teachers opposed to Paul.

Various interpretations of 1 Cor 5:5 have been discussed, and rejected. It will now be argued that Paul's thinking is grounded in his understanding of the church as a covenantal community.

4. The Curse Sanctions of the New Covenant

The intention of the Mosaic covenant was that God should dwell among his people (Exod 25:8; 29:45f; cf. 19:5f; 24:9f; Lev 26:9, 11-13);²⁷⁷ consequently, the covenant imposed upon the people the requirement of holiness.²⁷⁸ Hence the covenant carried a set of stipulations: the Mosaic Law. Obedience to this Law would result in the community receiving divine blessings, but disobedience would result in the imposition of curse sanctions (Lev 26; Deut 27:9-28:68). The curse sanctions of the covenant were intended to bring about national repentance. For example, Lev 26:14-17 threatens disease, famine and military defeat, if Israel breaks the covenant. If this does not secure repentance, then the sanctions will become progressively more severe (vv 18-26). The final stage of the sanctions involves a terrible famine, the laying waste of

²⁷⁷ Hafemann 1995:226.

²⁷⁸ Newton (1985:84) quotes the following passage from Levine (1974:75), which helpfully sums up the OT concept of cultic purity, which Paul seems also to maintain with respect to the church as temple: "Becoming impure as the result of an offence against the deity introduced a kind of contagion into the community. The more horrendous the offence, the greater the threat to the purity of the sanctuary and the surrounding community by the presence of the offender, who was the carrier of the impurity. The person required purification if the community was to be restored to its ritual state, which, in turn, was a precondition set down by the resident deity for his continued presence among the people. The deity had made a vital concession to the Israelites by consenting to dwell among the impurities endemic to the human situation (Lev. 16:16). If his continued residence was to be realized, Yahweh required an extreme degree of purity (Ex. 25:8). In his heavenly abode, Yahweh was well guarded from impurity, and this condition was to be reproduced as nearly as possible in his earthly residence." Cf. Davies 1965:232.

the land, and then exile in the land of their enemies (vv 27-39; cf. Jer 23:9-10); but even then, when the nation is in exile, they will not be without hope; they will not be destroyed completely. When they confess their sins, Yahweh will remember the covenant. When they return to their God and obey him with all their heart, a time will come when he will gather them from the nations and restore them to the land (Deut 30:1-10; cf. Jer 23:7-8). Indeed, Yahweh promises that at that time he will circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their descendants, so that they will love him with all their souls and live (Deut 30:6; cf. Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-27). This, in embryo, is the promise of the new covenant, which is taken up and expounded by the later prophets (see especially Jer 23:1-8; 24:5-7; 30:3-22; 31:1-40; 32:36-44; Ezek 11:16-20; 20:33-44; 34:11-31; 36:1-37:28; Isaiah 11:1-16; 14:1-2; 35:1-10; 51:11-12). The essential content of God's covenant with Israel is spelled out in the formula, "I will be their (your) God, and they (you) will be my people." The full, twofold Covenant Formula occurs in two main contexts in the OT: in association with the Exodus from Egypt; and in association with the eschatological Second Exodus, the return from exile.²⁷⁹ Scott summarises the context of the eschatological use of the full Covenant Formula as follows:²⁸⁰

- The restoration of a remnant of Israel from exile ²⁸¹
- Restoration of the United Kingdom ²⁸²
- The Davidic Messiah as Ruler ²⁸³
- The new covenant ²⁸⁴
- God's dwelling in the land in the midst of Israel ²⁸⁵
- Cleansing from sin (particularly from idolatry) / sanctification ²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ Scott 1992:198.

²⁸⁰ Scott 1992:198-99.

²⁸¹ Jer 24:7; 31(38):33; Ezek 11:20; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Zech 8:8.

²⁸² Jer 30:22 (MT only); Ezek 37:23.

²⁸³ Jer 30(37):22; 31(38):1; Ezek 37:27.

²⁸⁴ Jer 31(38):33; 32(39):38; Ezek 37:27.

²⁸⁵ Zech 8:8 (LXX only); Ezek 37:27.

²⁸⁶ Jer 31(38):33; Ezek 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27.

- New heart or spirit / giving of the Holy Spirit ²⁸⁷
- Obedience to the Law ²⁸⁸

Paul refers explicitly to the new covenant only in the Corinthian epistles: in 1 Cor 11:25, within a citation of a form of the eucharistic tradition; and in 2 Cor 3:6, in which he contrasts his ministry of the new covenant with Moses' ministry of the old covenant (cf. v 14). In the first passage he speaks of the Corinthians taking part in the cultic meal of the new covenant, and in the second he claims that he has been made competent by God as διακόνος καινῆς διαθήκης.²⁸⁹ It is quite clear, and generally accepted, that Paul understood the local church to be a community living in relationship with God under the new covenant. In the former context he points out that, as a result of inappropriate behaviour at the Lord's Supper, "many among you are weak and sick, and a number have fallen asleep (κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί). But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement" (1 Cor 11:30-31). It is evident, therefore, that Paul believed that just as the old (Mosaic) covenant involved certain laws, the breach of which could result in curse sanctions falling upon the community, so also the careless disregard of certain cultic responsibilities by a new covenant community could also result in divine judgement;²⁹⁰ not necessarily in the loss of eschatological salvation,²⁹¹ but certainly in sickness, and even death. It seems appropriate to describe these sanctions as the curse sanctions of the new covenant. It will be argued that Paul understood the discipline of the Church in terms of covenant administration, by analogy with that of the old covenant, and his own role in this by analogy with that of Moses in the old covenant.²⁹² Just as Israel under the old covenant was required to maintain its holiness, and was liable to punishment by Yahweh when it failed to do so, so divine

²⁸⁷ Jer 24:7; 31(38):33; 32(39):39; Ezek 11:19 ; 36:26.

²⁸⁸ Jer 31(38):33; Ezek 11:20; 36:28; 37:23.

²⁸⁹ For discussion see below, Chapter 7.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Millard 1970:243; Hafemann 1995:121.

²⁹¹ Paul uses the verb κοιμάομαι only of the "sleep" of believers who have died and are awaiting the Parousia (1 Thess 4:13, 15; 1 Cor 7:39; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; Fee 1987:355 n 37).

²⁹² So also Lane 1982:8: "As Moses was pre-eminently the mediator and prophet of the old covenant, Paul is the mediator and prophet of the new covenant. His pastoral ministry is an expression of covenant administration".

sanctions would eventually be applied to the local church, should it fail to maintain certain standards of holiness. Such sanctions could and would be applied not only in response to disorders at the Lord's Supper, but also in response to persistent idolatry, sexual immorality, and certain other sins, should the covenantal community itself fail to absolve and purify itself. The remainder of this work will support this hypothesis by means of a coherence argument: it will illuminate many aspects of the apostle's handling of the Corinthian crisis, and of the text of 2 Corinthians.

Community exclusion under the new covenant: 1 Cor 5:1-13

In the LXX the verb παραδίδωμι is used extensively of the implementation by Yahweh of covenantal curses: the handing over of the covenant people into the hands of their enemies.²⁹³ As has been mentioned already, the curse sanctions were intended to bring about not total destruction, but repentance, and the restoration to Israel of the blessings of the covenant. Since Satan is the enemy of God's people of the new covenant (cf. 2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11-12), there is a conceptual parallel with the purpose clause of 1 Cor 5:5:²⁹⁴ the offender is to be handed over to his enemy, Satan, with the anticipated result that his "flesh" will be destroyed, in order that he may humble himself and repent, resulting in the salvation of his "spirit" on "the Day of the Lord" (cf. 2 Cor 7:10).²⁹⁵

As has long been recognised, Paul saw a parallel between the spiritual experience of the Church under the new covenant, and the communal experience of the nation Israel

²⁹³ e.g. Lev 26:25; Deut 32:30; Judg 2:14, 6:1; 13:1; 1 Kgdms 28:19; 3 Kgdms 8:46; 14:16 (A); 4 Kgdms 3:13; 21:14, etc.; See Isa 25:5; Jer 24:7; Ezek 11:9; 16:27, 39; 21:15; 23:9, 28; 39:23; Hos 8:10; Mic 6:14, 16; Zech 11:6 (cf. v10).

²⁹⁴ Cf. Millard 1970:244: "Excluded from the Covenant's present benefits, the miscreant might be brought to realise his error, repent, and be received again. There is an obvious similarity with the machinery of the Old Testament Covenant which delivered the disloyal nation to its enemies for a time, they acting as the, unwitting, agents of the Lord (so the Assyrians Is. 8:5f, etc., Nebuchadnezzar Jer 25:9 etc.)", quoted by Rosner 1994:85.

²⁹⁵ See above, n 276.

under the old covenant.²⁹⁶ Having died with Christ, the Passover Lamb, believers have come out of exile (in the realm of Satan, the old aeon) in a New Exodus, and are in the wilderness,²⁹⁷ on the way to Canaan; hence the church is continually to celebrate a new Passover, a feast of remembrance (1 Cor 5:7-8; cf. 11:23-26). The offender, who has broken the covenant,²⁹⁸ must be sent back into exile, into the power of the enemy, in order that his sufferings may lead to his repentance, and hence his restoration and ultimate salvation (v 5, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ..). He is “unclean”, and must be excluded from the holy community, in order that the purity of the church might be restored.²⁹⁹ The central role of second exodus / new covenant traditions in Paul’s thinking in relation to the Corinthian Crisis will be demonstrated as the argument proceeds.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, the community would become guilty by association, should an individual member commit certain offences; this could result in the covenantal curses falling upon the nation as a whole.³⁰⁰ Such people were to be excluded from the community; in this way, the purity of the community would be maintained. The disciplinary action was to be carried in the presence the assembly (Deut 19:20; cf. Lev 24:14, 16; Num 15:35; 35:24), and of the Lord (Deut 19:17); cf. 1 Cor 5:4.³⁰¹ Paul evidently had a similar (but not identical) model in mind when he called for the expulsion of the incestuous man. In 1 Cor 5:13 he quotes the Deuteronomic exclusion formula, ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (Deut 17:7; 19:19;

²⁹⁶ Elg. Davies 1955:130, citing Carrington, 1940.

²⁹⁷ Ezek 20:35; cf. 1 Cor 10:1-13. Cf. Jones 1974:230-31.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Deut 27:20, “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father’s wife; this covenantal curse was to be proclaimed from Mount Ebal when the people had crossed into Canaan, and all the people were to say ‘Amen!’.”

²⁹⁹ The normal life of the church is described metaphorically as a continual celebration of the death of Christ (v 8, ἐορτάζωμεν), “our Passover Lamb”. If the restoration / new covenant imagery is followed through, then just as the Passover is a celebration of the redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and of the inauguration of the old covenant, so the Lord’s Supper is a celebration of the redemption of the Church, the community of believers, from slavery in “Babylon”, and the inauguration of the new covenant. There may well be an allusion in 1 Cor 5:8, therefore, to the Lord’s Table, especially in view of v11, “do not even eat with them” (cf. Fee 1987:218).

³⁰⁰ Rosner 1992b:470-71, cites Exod 16:27-28; Num 16:24, 27; Deut 19:13; 21:9; 29:19-21; Jos 7:1, 26; 22:16, 18; 1 Sam 14:27, 28; Neh 1:9; 13:18; Dan 9.

³⁰¹ Rosner 1994:84.

21:21; 22:21; 24:7 LXX);³⁰² cf. ἀφανιεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, Deut 13:6(5) LXX.³⁰³

The verb ἐξαίρέω translates the Hebrew בָּעַר. Ringgren points out that the בָּעַר formulae are concerned, not with the punishment itself, but with the purification of the community.³⁰⁴ Though the Mosaic Covenant required death as the procedure by which community exclusion was to be effected, this was not necessarily Paul's understanding of community exclusion under the new covenant. Rather, Paul may be concerned simply that the community be purified by the exclusion of the offender; the quotation of the formula does not necessarily support the claim that Paul advocates a death penalty.³⁰⁵

Following Prior, Ellingworth and Hatton, Rosner notes that the vice list in 1 Cor 5:11 closely resembles the particular sins to which the exclusion formula "drive out the wicked person from among you" is connected in Deuteronomy.³⁰⁶ The five correspondences are not exact;³⁰⁷ however, they are close enough to justify the following important conclusion:

It appears that the contents of the Pauline vice catalogue can thus be explained in terms of the *prima facie* purpose of 5:11, namely, to list those persons warranting

³⁰² The text is identical with the LXX, except that the singular future indicative ἐξαρεῖς has changed to the plural aorist imperative, "presumably to suit the epistolary context"; Rosner 1994:63. A number of scholars have questioned whether 5:13 is in fact a quotation; see Rosner's concise summary, 1994:61-63; there can be no doubt, however, that a quotation is intended.

³⁰³ If there should be any doubt that a citation is intended, it should be noted that ἐξαίρέω is a NT *hapax legomenon*; *ibid.*

³⁰⁴ TDOT 2:203-04; quoted by South 1993:555.

³⁰⁵ South 1993:555-56.

³⁰⁶ Rosner 1994:69-70; ἐκπορνεύω (LXX Deut 22:21) = πόρνος; idolatry (17:3, 7) = εἰδωλολάτρης; malicious false testimony (19:18-19) = λοιδόρος; the rebellious son as a profligate and a drunkard ((21:20-21) = μέθυσο; theft (24:7) = ἄρπαξ. The exception, πλεονέκτης, is conceptually linked with ἄρπαξ in 1 Cor 5:10 (τοῖς πλεονέκταις καὶ ἄρπαξιν) and may have a related sense.

³⁰⁷ See Rosner 1994:69 n 41. Until recently it has generally been assumed that the Pauline vice catalogues were traditional forms which functioned "to embellish his argument, or to show familiarity with or linkage to Graeco-Roman philosophy or Jewish moral literature. The scholarly consensus has nearly always been that the message of the catalogues is their provenance ... the vices in the catalogues have little or nothing to do with the epistolary situation of the letter" (Zaas 1988:623). Rosner's work confirms Zaas' own conclusion "The vice catalogues of 1 Cor 5 and 6 are intricately connected to the epistolary situation of the letter" (Zaas 1988:629).

exclusion from the Christian community according to the legislation of Deuteronomy.³⁰⁸

I suggest, therefore, that the apostle's argument in 1 Cor 5:1-13 is best understood against the background of the understanding of the church in Corinth as a new covenant community, a community of believers who, having left "Babylon", are dwelling in the wilderness, on their way to "Canaan". Though the purity of the covenantal community must be maintained, and essentially the same criteria for community exclusion apply as in the case of Israel under the old covenant, under the new covenant the penalty of community exclusion does not necessarily involve physical death, but rather the return of the offender to spiritual exile, to the domain of Satan, "Babylon", that he may repent and be restored.³⁰⁹ When 1 Cor 5:1-13 is read against the background of this conception of the church as a community of the new covenant, it becomes clear that the whole chapter is a unified argument. In his previous letter, Paul had given instructions that believers were not to associate with those who claim to be brothers but are sexually immoral, or fall into certain other categories. From this they should have been able to infer that they must remove the incestuous man from their community (ἀρθῆν ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας; v 2).³¹⁰ However, as South rightly says, "vv 9-11 clearly specify that πόρνοι are to be avoided, not killed".³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Rosner 1994:70.

³⁰⁹ Forkman correctly characterises the process of "handing over to Satan" as the reversal of baptism: "The one who was baptised in the name of Jesus was transferred from the domain of Satan to that of Christ, from the sphere of death to that of life; for his old man, his flesh, must die, and his new man, his spirit, must live. Now, when the life of the fornicator stands in obvious and conscious contrast to the character of the church, he must once again, in the name of Jesus, be given over to Satan, from where once he came." (Forkman 1972:146) .

³¹⁰ South 1993:554-55.

³¹¹ Ibid.

5. The traditional identification: further objections considered

1. It is said that Paul's comment in 2 Cor 2:9 that he had written to test the obedience of the congregation is not an apt description of what he had been doing in 1 Cor 5:5.³¹² But this objection again presupposes that 1 Corinthians is to be identified with the Letter of Tears. Our reconstruction suggests, however, that the test to which the apostle refers consisted in making an appropriate response to his (now lost) Letter of Tears, in which he had announced that he did not wish to impose his will on the church, and had decided that, rather than grieve both himself and the Corinthians in this way, he would come to Corinth no more (2 Cor 1:23-2:3). The expulsion of the incestuous man would then have been an appropriate response, and the Corinthians would have passed the test.

2. It is often argued that Paul was the victim of "the offence", and that this is incompatible with our hypothesis. For example, Bruce on 2 Cor 2:10, "I also forgive": "This language suggests some injury done to Paul himself, which called for his personal forgiveness, in a way for which the situation of 1 Cor 5 makes no provision ...³¹³ But it is not certain that Paul was in fact the direct victim of the offence. The personal nature of 2 Cor 2:3-11 and 7:8-12 certainly shows that Paul had a deep personal investment in the situation; and it is clear from 2:12-13 and 7:5 that the resulting crisis cost Paul a great deal of pain and anxiety. Moreover, as Barrett points out, an attack on the gospel Paul preached and on the church he had founded could be regarded as an attack on him personally.³¹⁴ Like the Rabbis, Paul taught by example as well as by precept. To reject Paul as a teacher was to reject him as a man.³¹⁵ An offence such as the openly incestuous relationship condemned in 1 Cor 5 could have become, or at least have been perceived by the apostle as being, the focal point of the

³¹² E.g. Allo 1937:58.

³¹³ Bruce 1971:185.

³¹⁴ Barrett 1982:109.

³¹⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 4:15f, 11:1; Hall 1969:16-17.

church's rebellion against his moral teaching.³¹⁶ Paul would then certainly have felt personally offended, though the immediate victim of the offence was not Paul himself.

3. While not necessarily seeing the instruction of 1 Cor 5:5 as requiring a death sentence, many scholars feel that the severity of 1 Cor 5 is incompatible with 2 Cor 2:7-11: “

It is inconceivable that Paul, who wrote 1 Cor 6:12ff; 1 Thess 4:3ff; Rom 13:12, should have subsequently taken so lightly a grave case of sexual misbehaviour.³¹⁷

Paul might well be accused of “lightness” or lack of seriousness [ἐλαφρία]... if, after the solemn sentence of 1 Cor 5:3-5, 13, he now recommended such a lenient course for the offender.³¹⁸

However, nothing in 2 Cor 2:5-11, 7:8-12 would rule out the possibility that the punishment demanded by Paul in 1 Cor 5:3-5 had in fact been carried out. As already pointed out, the strong language of 2 Cor 7:11 seems to imply that the Corinthians took decisive action against the offender in response to Paul's Letter of Tears.³¹⁹ Prior to the Letter of Tears, it would seem, the church was actually proud of the incestuous man;³²⁰ if so, then the expulsion may well have been psychologically devastating.³²¹ Moreover, if the same person is in fact referred to in 1 Cor 5 and in 2 Cor 2, then whether the punishment is perceived by commentators as harsh or as lenient, the fact

³¹⁶ Cf. Lampe 1967:344; Hall 1969:15.

³¹⁷ Kümmel 1975:283.

³¹⁸ Bruce 1971:185; cf.:218-19.

³¹⁹ Against Baur, 1876:299-301, who identifies the Letter of Tears with 1 Corinthians, and argues that the church refused to carry out the demand of 1 Cor 5:5, but merely rebuked the offender, leaving Paul no alternative than to accept that the issue had been resolved.

³²⁰ We will argue below that the incestuous affair was promoted by Paul's opponents as a creditable manifestation of the absolute moral freedom which they claimed to enjoy; cf. the slogan πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, 1 Cor 6:12, cf. 10:23.

³²¹ “Might not some of the “strong” have regarded with something like awe a man who unashamedly paraded his freedom beyond the “ordinary” man's wildest dreams? But if this were the situation hardly anything could shatter his ego more decisively than the experience of finding himself an outcast from the whole community” (Thiselton 1973:206).

remains that it was effective: the man repented!³²² As has been observed already, Paul's gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation would require the restoration of a repentant believer to the fellowship of the church. For Paul incest is clearly a very serious sin, but no-one has demonstrated that he regarded it as unforgivable.

4. Given our identification of the offender and the offence, it seems incredible that Paul would say that he had written the Letter of Tears so that the Corinthians' zeal for the apostle might be revealed.³²³

As we have already noted, this would certainly be a weighty point if the main theme of the Letter of Tears was simply a further demand for the expulsion of the offender. A further demand for his expulsion would not in itself explain the shift of focus from the offence itself to the Corinthians' relationship with Paul. However, if Paul did indeed understand the local church as a covenantal community closely analogous with ancient Israel, it would then follow that the whole church had become in breach of covenant, and subject to divine discipline. It will be argued that Paul responded to this situation by taking upon himself the intercessory role of their corporate representative before God.³²⁴ In so doing, he became subject to the curse sanctions of the covenant, and hence in great personal danger. In the Letter of Tears he announced this decision to the Corinthians; his deliverance would be contingent upon the expulsion by the church of the offender, which would absolve the church of responsibility for his sin.

5. The passages in 2 Corinthians that refer to Paul's demand in the Letter of Tears for church discipline give no hint of sexual sin.³²⁵ But we seen already that at this stage in the crisis the apostle would have been more concerned with the fact that the offender had not been disciplined than with the offence itself.

³²² We have argued above, moreover, that Satan would have had a role in disciplining the man, just as the enemies of Israel of the Old Testament were so used by God. Whether this consisted in spiritual and psychological torment or extended to the infliction of external injury we are not in a position to judge.

³²³ 2 Cor 7:12; Kruse 1988:137.

³²⁴ See below, Chapter 8..

³²⁵ E.g. Furnish 1984:165; Carson 1984:8.

6. A further objection arises from consideration of the question, who was ὁ ἀδικηθείς, 2 Cor 7:12? Paul says that he did not write on account of the offender, nor on account of *the one offended*. The obvious answer seems to be that ὁ ἀδικηθείς must be identified with the offender's father, who was therefore still living. However, it has been argued that he must in fact have been dead: the father wielded enormous power over the son in the ancient world, and it is difficult to imagine that he would permit the son to dishonour him in this way if he were still alive.³²⁶ Moreover, one might have expected a stronger response from the church if the father were still living.³²⁷ But the situation may have been more complex than at first appears.

It is clear that at this time some in the church defended the right to dine in idol temples (1 Cor 8:1-6); and to use the services of prostitutes (1 Cor 6:12-20).³²⁸ Paul associates both activities with the slogan πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23), and he exhorts the Corinthians to flee from both (φεύγετε; 1 Cor 6:18; 10:14). That there was a doctrinal dimension to the Crisis is evident from 2 Cor 1:24. As Harvey perceptively remarks,

Paul certainly did have authority - and precisely how that authority was to be exercised in the context of a relationship between Christians is a question that propels the argument again and again in 2 Corinthians. But one thing that it was not was that of a Lord (κύριος) over what they believed (their faith) ... He had made no attempt to use authority to correct belief. The question, as so often in Paul's correspondence, was rather how to act in a particular situation in a way that would be consistent with that belief. It was here that he claimed authority.³²⁹

There is little doubt that at least some who made these claims were among the social élite in Corinth; for as Marshall points out, the use of the slogan πάντα ἔξεστιν to justify sexual activity and eating in pagan temples only makes sense "if one has the power

³²⁶ Chow 1992:138 n 2.

³²⁷ Martin 1986:237.

³²⁸ Rosner (1998) argues persuasively that the passage concerns prostitutes who offered their services in pagan temples after festive meals.

³²⁹ Harvey 1996:43.

and means to fulfil them".³³⁰ Evidently this influential group approved of, or at least tolerated, the incestuous affair (1 Cor 5:2, 6);³³¹ with many others we will refer to them as "the Strong". I propose that the desire of the élite to have the freedom to take part in a most important facet of the social life of the rich in Graeco-Roman society, dining in pagan temples, without compromising their standing in the church was the decisive factor in the support of "the Strong", and hence of the church, for the incestuous man. The same principle of the absolute moral freedom of the believer justified both incest and idolatry. A stand had to be taken, since in 1 Corinthians Paul had ruled that the pagan temples were forbidden to believers. It will have suited the convenience of "the Strong" to commend the incestuous relationship as an audacious demonstration of the new moral freedom which he too embraced;³³² or at least to suppress any moral criticism. The church's support for the incestuous man then becomes understandable. It is only necessary to assume that among "the Strong" was a patron of sufficient power and influence that he could suppress dissent in the church. Any attack on the

³³⁰ P. Marshall, 1987:215.

³³¹ Clarke points out (1993:87) that the immediate antecedent of 1 Cor 5 is not a discussion of libertarian theology, but "the way in which people have become puffed-up regarding one another" (4:6) and arrogant about Paul returning (4:18). However, this does not necessarily weigh against a doctrinal element in the affair. The words φυσιώω and καύχημα respectively introduce and conclude the rebuke of 1 Cor 5:2-6a. Of the seven occurrences of φυσιώω in the NT, six occur in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2, 8:1, 13:4). The first three occurrences are part of "a refrain which leads naturally towards the thrust of Paul's censure in 5:1ff". (Thiselton 1973:212). In 1 Cor 4:6 Paul associates being "puffed-up" with party loyalties within the divided church. In 4:19 he contrasts the λόγος of those who are puffed-up with the δύνναμις of the kingdom. In 8:1 and 13:4 becoming "puffed up" is associated with "too much gnosis and too little love" (Forkman 1972:139). It is quite possible that for Paul the issue was not that the church was "puffed-up" because of the πορνεία, but that they boasted of having among them certain members whom they believed to have achieved an exalted spiritual status which enabled them to claim absolute moral freedom. If so, then it is probable that these people were among the social élite, and may be identified with "the Strong". A discussion of the theology of "the Strong" is beyond the scope of this study; however, I venture to suggest that, perverting a certain strand of Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom speculation, perhaps under the influence of Epicurean philosophy (cf. Tomlin 1997), they based their claim to moral autonomy on a logically prior claim to having attained perfect wisdom. See Horsley 1976, 1978, who argues persuasively that in his sarcastic descriptions of the attitude of the Strong in 1 Cor 1:26-29; 3:18; 4:8-10, Paul draws upon language used by Philo to describe a spiritual élite, the "heavenly men". This group, according to Philo, had no need of the commandments of the Law, for they possessed perfect wisdom (e.g. *Leg. All.* 1:90-95).

³³² This becomes particularly credible if it is supposed that the teachers who proposed the doctrine of absolute moral freedom, having heard of the relationship, lost no time in exploiting its potential. They could have argued that the relationship was a matter of moral indifference, in which case the incestuous man's father would have been free to act against his son (presumably such an exercise of power would also have been a matter of indifference; but for the reasons outlined above, they may have seen a greater advantage in commending the relationship.

incestuous relationship would undermine his position in the church, and the freedoms which he enjoyed.

Suppose now that the father was in fact still living. The couple may have divorced.³³³ Alternatively, the woman might have been the father's concubine; Jewish tradition would not have distinguished between sexual relations with one's father's wife and with his concubine.³³⁴ The motive for their relationship may well have been simply sexual gratification.³³⁵ In any event, the church learned of the relationship, and was supportive.³³⁶ The son, I suggest, enjoyed the protection of the patron.³³⁷ "The father, being a client of this same patron, had little alternative than to accept the relationship,³³⁸ as would many in the church. For as Chow says (though he is speaking of the incestuous man himself),

Who would want to dishonour a powerful person who could provide protection and benefaction to the church? On the contrary, as faithful clients, members in the Corinthian church should perhaps support and honour such a patron.³³⁹

7. Referring to Bleek's reconstruction, Thrall objects:

This is highly improbable. Paul could not possibly have expressed himself so mildly in 2 Cor 2:5-11 if the man had taken no notice of his original censure. Nor does persistence in immoral conduct over a period of time fit the aorist participle (ἀδικήσας) in 2 Cor 7:12.³⁴⁰

³³³ E.g. Robertson and Plummer 1914:96; Barrett 1968:121.

³³⁴ De Vos 1998:113.

³³⁵ Chow (1992:135-38) and Clarke (1993:81-82) have argued that the relationship could have been in fact a marriage of stepson and stepmother after the father's death, motivated by financial considerations involving taxation, inheritance or dowry. If so, then "the one offended" might be the girl's father, or some other relative.

³³⁶ The periphrastic perfect in 1 Cor 5:2, καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ, indicates "a continuing condition" (Clarke 1993:76 n 14; BDF 352).

³³⁷ If the offender was himself a patron, as Chow and Clarke assume, then the couple's reputations would have been seriously at risk, at least outside of the church. However, if they were clients of a rich patron, so long as they enjoyed his support their social standing within his circle would have been secure.

³³⁸ To lose the favour of a key benefactor ... would have been unthinkable in Graeco-Roman society, and would invite hostility (Clarke 1993:85).

³³⁹ Chow 1992:140.

³⁴⁰ Thrall 1994:65)

But the aorist participle is perfectly appropriate, representing a completed action: the man has offended, but he has now repented, and his offence has ceased. As to the restraint of the apostle's response in 2 Cor 2:5-11,

1. It has already been suggested that the offender may have been caught up in some form of false teaching. Greater blame must lie with the false teachers, and must be shared by the whole church, who had refused initially to discipline him.
2. The judgement that Paul would have been far more severe is purely subjective. We have argued that the purpose of the punishment was twofold: the restoration of the purity of the church, and the restoration of the offender, through repentance. Both objectives had evidently been achieved. Moreover, Paul says explicitly that to punish the offender further would be play into the hands of Satan.
3. As has been argued already, the offender may well have been caught up in church politics, a pawn in someone else's game, and perhaps trapped into the relationship by the approval of his patron.

5. Conclusion

We have considered the question of the identity of the offender, and the nature of his offence, in the contexts of two quite different categories of reconstruction: those which place Plan S before Plan D; and those which place Plan D before Plan S. In the first category, it is concluded that the offender cannot, with reasonable probability, be identified with anyone known from the extant correspondence; neither has a credible reconstruction of his offence been offered. Given that Plan D preceded Plan S, however, the Principle of Parsimony suggests that the man who was to be restored to the fellowship of the church (2 Cor 2:5-11) is to be identified with "the incestuous man" who was previously to be removed from the church (1 Cor 5:1-13). This proposal is supported by a substantial set of linguistic and thematic connections between the two

brief passages 1 Cor 5:2-8 and 2 Cor 2:5-11, and the combined weight of the objections which have been considered has not proved decisive. However, our defence of this identification depends on certain as yet unsupported hypotheses concerning the interplay of politics and doctrine in Corinth. In particular, we have suggested that the incestuous relationship was tolerated, perhaps even applauded by the church because the social élite claimed the moral authority to do as they pleased - even, in principle, to commit incest, if they so desired. It has been proposed, in particular, that after 1 Corinthians the freedom of "the Strong" to dine in pagan temples became a major issue between Paul and the church. If so, we would expect to find at least allusions to this issue in 2 Corinthians. Before returning to these matters, however, we will complete our reconstruction of the development of the Corinthian Crisis.

Chapter 4

Towards a Solution

As has been noted, a satisfactory reconstruction of the Corinthian Crisis must enable a coherent account to be given of the following: the travels and travel plans of Paul, Titus and Timothy; the purpose and impact of the Letter of Tears; the identity of the offender and the nature of the offence; the administration of the Collection in Corinth; the role of the Corinthian opponents; and the literary composition of 2 Corinthians. It has been shown that these issues are ultimately inseparable; nevertheless, solutions to the first four questions have been proposed, as working hypotheses, and it has been shown that they give a good fit of the data thus far considered. The analysis will now be extended, beginning with the question of the travels of Titus, and the administration of the Collection in Corinth. This will also require further consideration of the literary-critical question of 2 Cor 10-13. It has been argued already that these chapters are not likely to be part of the Letter of Tears, and will not have been composed earlier than the so-called Letter of Reconciliation; we must now consider whether they may have been composed later, in response to new problems in Corinth. This question will lead to further consideration of the role of the intruders, Paul's opponents, in the development of the crisis.

1. The Travels of Titus

There are the following references in 2 Corinthians to the sending of Titus to Corinth:

1. A past visit in connection with the Letter of Tears (2:13; 7:6-7, 13b-15).
2. A past visit in connection with the collection, in which he had already made a beginning with the collection work in Corinth (8:6).³⁴¹
3. A past visit connected with the collection, accompanied by a certain brother (12:16-18).³⁴²
4. A visit in connection with the collection, accompanied by 'the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel', in which Titus would complete the work which he had already begun (8:6; 17-18).

In addition, Paul speaks of a second brother who would also have a role in the administration of the Collection (8:22), and there is a further reference to the sending of 'the brothers' in 9:3.

All the verbs of sending in 2 Cor 8-9 are aorists: 8:17 (ἐξῆλθεν); 8:18, 22 (συνεπέμψαμεν); 9:3 (ἔπεμψα). As McKay has recently emphasised, the question of whether these verbs refer to past or present actions must in each case be determined from the situational context.³⁴³ It is widely assumed that the second brother accompanied, or was to accompany, Titus and the first brother on the visit mentioned in 8:17-18. However, as McKay has pointed out, this is not necessarily the case; there seem to be three possibilities:

1. Titus and the two brothers had preceded the present letter to Corinth; then all four aorists would clearly be historical in reference.³⁴⁴ However, since no other courier is

³⁴¹ The complementary verbs προενήρξατο and ἐπιτελέσῃ in 8:6 are naturally taken as referring respectively to the beginning and the completion of the same object: the collection project in Corinth.

³⁴² Note the perfect ἀπέσταλκα in 12:17.

³⁴³ McKay 1995:154.

³⁴⁴ So e.g. Allo 1937:223.

referenced, it seems likely that the letter was to be carried by one or more of those commended in 8:17-22.³⁴⁵

2. Titus, accompanied by the two brothers, was to carry the present letter to Corinth; then all four aorists would be epistolary.³⁴⁶

3. Titus and the first brother had preceded the present letter to Corinth, and the letter was to be delivered by the second brother; then the aorists of 8:17-18 and 9:3 would be historical, while that of 8:22 would be epistolary. McKay argues somewhat tentatively for this last position, as follows:

the singular μετ' αὐτοῦ in 18 and the plural αὐτοῖς in 22 show a clear progression. Perhaps the explanation is that Titus did not stay long after reporting to Paul in Macedonia, but was eager to return to Corinth to follow up his recent contact and to do something about the collection (which is the subject of the whole chapter), so Paul sent one brother with him (specifically μετ' αὐτοῦ), and sent another worthy brother to join them (more ambiguously αὐτοῖς), taking the letter with him.³⁴⁷

In 8:22 συνεπέμψαμεν then has the sense "send to be with". Though this sense is rare, the meaning would be made perfectly clear by the situational context.³⁴⁸

A comparison of the language of 2 Cor 8:6, 18 with that of 12:18 provides evidence that the visit referred to as a past event in 2 Cor 12:18 is probably to be identified with the visit referred to in 8:18. In 12:18 Paul says, παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν; cf. 8:6, εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον; 8:18, συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφόν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν; and 8:22, συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν. In both cases Titus was accompanied by a brother, and the visit concerned the Collection. Barrett rightly comments, "The coincidence of language is such that the identity of this visit to Corinth with that described in Ch 8 is scarcely open to question."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ McKay 1995:156.

³⁴⁶ So most commentators.

³⁴⁷ McKay 1995:157.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Barrett 1982:127.

If both brothers are assumed to have accompanied Titus to Corinth, and it is assumed that 12:17-18 refers to this visit, then an obvious difficulty with the identification is that in 8:16-24 Titus is accompanied by two brothers, whereas in 12:18 he is accompanied by only one brother. The usual reply is that the two brothers of 8:16-24 have different roles: the first is a representative of the churches, sent to ensure financial regularity; the second is Paul's personal representative. Paul is responding to the accusation that he means to use the collection to line his own pockets; hence he has no need to mention both men in 12:16-18. "The brother" of 12:18 is then to be identified with "our brother" of 8:22. It is argued that it is Paul and his staff who are being accused of fraud; the delegate whom Paul fails to mention is the brother who was "chosen by the churches" (8:19). He was not closely associated with Paul, apart from the present collection project, and therefore was not implicated in the alleged conspiracy; hence Paul had no need to mention him in 12:16-18.³⁵⁰ However, as Watson demonstrates, both delegates were sent by Paul, and both were representatives of the churches:

In 12:18, having mentioned Titus, Paul writes, καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν. In 8:18, he writes similarly of the first "brother", συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ (i.e. Titus) τὸν ἀδελφόν, and in 8:22 he writes of the second brother, συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν. Thus, both "brothers" are sent by Paul, as was the "brother" of 12:18, and so neither can be regarded as independent of him. It is true that one is said to have been "appointed by the churches" (8:19). But the same was evidently true of the other, for in 8:23 we read: εἴτε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν, δόξα Χριστοῦ. According to 8:24, the Corinthians, in showing their love and loyalty to Paul before these men, do so εἰς πρόσωπον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, "before the churches", i.e. in the presence of their elected representatives.³⁵¹

The claimed distinction between the roles of the two delegates is therefore untenable. Bruce admits this difficulty with the theory.³⁵² But even if the proposed distinction in the roles of the two brothers is accepted, this does not appear to explain Paul's silence in

³⁵⁰ E.g. Furnish 1984:435.

³⁵¹ Watson 1984:333.

³⁵² 1971:251.

12:16-18 regarding the first brother. If this man had been present, it would seem to be natural to draw attention to his presence and his role; if the question of the integrity of the other two delegates was to arise, it would be his role to bear witness either for or against them.³⁵³ The silence of Paul concerning him must therefore weaken the case for the identification of these visits; Paul would have had good reason to mention him in 12:16-18, and it would be surprising that he deliberately excluded him from the discussion.

We may conclude that McKay's suggestion is almost certainly correct: when 2 Cor 8 was composed, Titus had already set out for Corinth with the first "brother", and the letter of which 2 Cor 8 was a part was to be carried to Corinth by the second "brother". Moreover, this visit may be identified with that referred to in 12:17-18.

Many scholars have argued that the visit of 8:17-18 is referred to as a future event, whereas the same visit is referred to in 12:17-18 as a past event; hence 2 Cor 10-13 must be a separate piece, written later than 2 Cor 8, since Titus must have visited Corinth between these two letters.³⁵⁴ Our analysis weighs heavily against the premise of this argument; the visit by Titus referred to in 8:17-18 was almost certainly in progress when Paul wrote 2 Cor 8.

We now consider the visit in which Titus made a beginning with the Collection in Corinth (2 Cor 8:6), and the likely location of this visit within our (still tentative) reconstruction of the sequence of events. There are three possibilities: Titus made this beginning before 1 Corinthians (perhaps he delivered the Previous Letter?);³⁵⁵ or after the composition of 1 Corinthians but before delivering the Letter of Tears (perhaps he delivered 1 Corinthians?); or he made this beginning during the visit when he delivered the Letter of Tears.

³⁵³ Hyldahl 1986:89.

³⁵⁴ Including Windisch 1924:405; Pherigo 1949:341; Buck 1950:6; Batey 1965:142; Bruce 1971:168; Barrett 1973:21; 1982:126f; Furnish 1984:559; Kruse 1987:212.

³⁵⁵ e.g. Hughes 1962:293.

The first possibility seems unlikely, for Titus is not mentioned by name in the greetings at the end of 1 Corinthians, nor in the discussion of the collection, which may suggest that he has not so far had personal dealings with the church.³⁵⁶ Moreover, 1 Cor 16:1-4 leaves the impression that the Corinthians had done little regarding the collection beyond expressing a desire to participate.

The second possibility is that Titus was one of those who delivered 1 Corinthians, and that despite the controversy concerning the incestuous man he managed to encourage the Corinthians to implement the instructions of 1 Cor 16:1f. For if 1 Corinthians had been well received, as Georgi argues, then we would have to agree with Barrett that

the plan Paul suggests - private savings, contributed to a common fund on Paul's arrival in Corinth - does not require or even leave room for the collaboration of Titus, or of any other of Paul's agents.³⁵⁷

But as has been shown, this was probably not the case. The church had fallen under the influence of rival teachers and was divided over the issue of the incestuous man; a serious challenge to Paul's authority threatened. In such a climate, many who might otherwise have quietly obeyed the instructions of 1 Cor 16:1-4 could easily have become discouraged or diverted. It is possible therefore that, appealing for calm, avoiding confrontations, and asking the Corinthians to await Timothy's arrival, Titus was able quietly to encourage individual members to carry on with the collection project, in the hope that the problem would be resolved. Timothy's mandate, however, "to remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus," would presumably have required him to confront the church over the issue of the incestuous man, and to bring them to a decision. In the event, the church refused to take the action demanded, and Titus would have returned to Ephesus with Timothy (1 Cor 16:11). This scenario would also

³⁵⁶ Barrett 1982:123.

³⁵⁷ Barrett 1982:123.

explain the choice of Titus, rather than Timothy, to deliver the Letter of Tears: he was known to the Corinthians; he had demonstrated his tact and powers of leadership and diplomacy; and he had been able to maintain good relations with the church despite the dispute over the incestuous man.

The third possibility is that Titus may have revived the Corinthians' interest in the collection when he delivered the Letter of Tears. Having received a favourable response to the letter, and having been empowered, subject to this response, to assure the Corinthians that Paul would now keep to his plan to visit Corinth according to plan S, he may have reminded the church of the original purpose of that visit: to arrange for the Corinthians' contribution to the collection to be conveyed to Jerusalem. If so, he would probably have reminded the church of the instructions which Paul had given concerning the Collection in his previous letter (1 Cor 16:1-4). In this case, the visit mentioned in 2 Cor 8:6 may be equated with that of 2 Cor 2:13; 7:6-7, 13b-15. 2. This option has the obvious advantage that we need postulate only two journeys by Titus to Corinth, that in which he delivered the Letter of Tears and began the Collection (2 Cor 7:6-7, 15; 8:6), and that which was in progress when Paul wrote 2 Cor 8 (8:17-18; 12:17-18); otherwise we must postulate three. Some maintain that 2 Cor 7:14 implies that Titus had not previously been to Corinth; however, the argument is weak.³⁵⁸ Moreover, we should perhaps ask whether Paul would have entrusted the delicate task of delivering the Letter of Tears to one who was a stranger in Corinth. It could be replied, of course, that he had no one else available.

It seems unlikely that Titus took the initiative on this occasion to make a beginning with the Collection. Despite the clear need, following their positive response to the Letter of Tears, for the Corinthians to complete their preparations for the handing over of their contribution to the collection on the apostle's arrival, after a crisis of the magnitude envisaged in this study it is easier to suppose that the subject was not raised, not at

³⁵⁸ Watson 1984:333-34.

least, by Titus, on that occasion. For Titus' main task was the restoration of good relations between the apostle and the church after a very serious rift and, as Barrett puts it (from a somewhat different perspective), "a collection bag is not the most tactful of instruments for such a purpose."³⁵⁹

We should also consider the possibility that the Corinthians themselves raised the matter after the Letter of Tears had done its work, and that Titus then took charge of their preparations. But then one might expect that Paul "would have highlighted the beginning of the collection when he congratulated the Corinthians for obeying Titus" (7:15).³⁶⁰

The arguments seem to be almost evenly balanced. The hypothesis that Titus delivered 1 Corinthians, and at that time started the Collection, would explain the choice of Titus rather than Timothy to deliver the Letter of Tears, whereas this choice is otherwise problematic; and it would also explain why Paul does not mention in 2 Cor 7:15 the Corinthians' initiative in beginning the Collection. But these points are not decisive. On the other hand, we have no positive evidence that Titus was ever in Corinth before he delivered the Letter of Tears, and it may be preferable to avoid postulating three journeys by Titus to Corinth in the space of only six or seven months. For the purposes of our reconstruction, however, it is sufficient that at this stage of the analysis we have an account of the travels of Titus which seems to be consistent with our reconstruction of the travels of Paul and Timothy, and of the development of the crisis in Corinth.

³⁵⁹ 1982:126; cf. Murphy O'Connor 1991:41.

³⁶⁰ Martin 1986:447.

2. The Relative Chronology of the Corinthian Crisis

We turn now to the important question of the time which elapsed between the composition of 1 Corinthians and that of 2 Cor 8-9.³⁶¹ It is likely that 1 Corinthians was composed in the spring, probably around Passover. For Paul intended to visit Corinth "soon" (ταχέως; 1 Cor 4:19), though he would stay on in Ephesus until Pentecost (16:5-9). Unless he had completely forgotten his former statement when he wrote the latter (the unity of 1 Corinthians is presupposed), it seems unlikely that a winter intervened between the writing of 1 Corinthians and the Pentecost to which Paul refers; for then "soon" would in fact mean "in rather more than a year's time." Moreover, he speaks of spending the winter in Corinth, not in Ephesus (16:6).³⁶² Therefore 1 Corinthians was dispatched after the opening of sailing, but well before Pentecost (Paul wanted to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost to take advantage of a great opportunity for mission; 1 Cor 16:8f). A date around Passover would then allow time for the letter from Corinth to reach Paul in March, and for 1 Corinthians to be dispatched in April. This conclusion may be supported by Paul's use of Passover imagery in 1 Cor 5:7.³⁶³

Though Paul speaks of Titus making a beginning for the Collection in Corinth (8:6), he also speaks of the Corinthians making a beginning "last year" (ἀπὸ πέρυσι; 8:10).

Watson argues, from the presence of the verbs προενάρχομαι and επιτελέω in both 8:6 and in 8:10f, that the beginning made by the Corinthians ἀπὸ πέρυσι must coincide with the beginning made by Titus:

The contrast between "beginning" and "completing" [in 8:10f] is identical to that of viii.6, exactly the same verbs being used. The "beginning" must therefore be the same in both cases: Titus had initiated the collection in Corinth a year ago.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ For the literary unity of 2 Cor 8-9 see Stowers 1990.

³⁶² Buck 1950:3; Lüdemann 1984:89, 93.

³⁶³ Lietzmann 1949:24, followed by many.

³⁶⁴ Watson 1984:334.

The coincidence of language does indeed demand the identification of the two beginnings; however, the expression ἀπὸ πέρυσι need not mean “a year ago”; it can also mean “since last year”, which could be as short a time as a month or two, though also as long a time as twenty three months.³⁶⁵ We need not conclude, then, that 2 Cor 8 was written a year or more after 1 Corinthians.

Hyldahl argues persuasively that Paul would have used the Macedonian calendar;³⁶⁶ then New Year would fall in Autumn.³⁶⁷ Paul, if writing in late October or November, could then be referring in 2 Cor 8:10; 9:2 to the spring or summer of the same (Roman calendar) year. Bearing in mind Paul's intention to spend the winter in Corinth (Plan S)³⁶⁸ - he had boasted to Titus of his confidence in the Corinthians, 2 Cor 7:14 - we may begin to construct an approximate timetable of the subsequent events up to the composition of 2 Cor 8-9. Timothy arrived in Corinth shortly after 1 Corinthians, and soon set sail for Ephesus. It is likely therefore that Timothy arrived in Ephesus sometime in May, in time for Pentecost and Paul's planned journey to Macedonia and Corinth (1 Cor 16:5-9). However, the news he bore necessitated a further change of travel plan, the composition of the Letter of Tears, and the dispatch of Titus to Corinth with the letter. Titus probably did not set out for Corinth until at least mid-June. Paul then travelled to Troas (a journey of about 10 days by road;³⁶⁹ rather less by ship - cf. Acts 20:13-16), with the intention of engaging in mission there (2 Cor 2:12). However, after a time, the duration of which is not yet clear, he left Troas and crossed over to Macedonia, in search of Titus.

Since Paul hoped to find Titus in Macedonia, it follows that Titus had arranged to travel from Corinth to Troas via Macedonia, following an agreed route. He could more easily have taken a ship direct to Troas; therefore it is likely that, in addition to

³⁶⁵ Furnish 1984:405; cf. BAGD:653.

³⁶⁶ Hyldahl 1986:92f.

³⁶⁷ If he was using the Jewish calendar, New Year falls in spring.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Acts 20:1-6; according to Acts, Paul did actually spend a winter in Corinth before travelling from there to Jerusalem. Cf. also Acts 19:21, where Plan S is spelled out.

³⁶⁹ Furnish 1984:171, citing Burdick.

delivering the Letter of Tears, he had some business in Macedonia. It is therefore necessary to allow rather longer for his journey than travel alone would involve. The journey from Ephesus to Corinth by ship would take perhaps a week; then a week in Corinth; Corinth to Neapolis, mainly by ship, would need perhaps three weeks; and Neapolis to Troas by ship, perhaps four days; plus a week in Macedonia, would mean a minimum of about two months. If he set out from Ephesus in late June or early July, Titus may well have been hard pressed to catch the last ship from Macedonia to Troas. It has been suggested that Titus missed the last ship from Macedonia, and hence would have been forced to use the land route to Troas via the Hellespont (the Via Egnatia). Thus Paul crossed over to Macedonia via the land route after the close of sailing.³⁷⁰ This would explain an otherwise puzzling phenomenon: if Paul had crossed over to Macedonia during the sailing season, he would have risked crossing paths with Titus on the sea. This would push back Paul's arrival in Macedonia to October.

By the time Paul wrote 2 Cor 8-9, the collection was complete in Macedonia (2 Cor 8:1-5). It is likely, therefore, that Paul had by then visited Thessalonica and perhaps the other Macedonian churches, on his way towards Corinth. Indeed, it is likely that 2 Cor 8-9 was written in Thessalonica, probably in November. The journey on foot from Thessalonica to Corinth would then probably take about four weeks (it is about 400 miles). Thus Titus would have arrived in Corinth in November (assuming that he set off shortly after meeting Paul), and 2 Cor 8-9 would have reached Corinth in December. If Paul arrived in early January, in order to spend most of the winter in Corinth, this would allow time for the Corinthians to complete their preparations for the handing over of their contribution to the Collection.

Now in 2 Cor 9:2, Paul says that he has boasted to the Macedonians that the Achaians have been prepared "since last year." Paul would have written this in November, expecting his letter to be read in December, giving the Corinthians perhaps one more

³⁷⁰ E.g. Bruce 1971:187.

month to complete their preparations before his arrival. Then, assuming he thought of New Year as falling in October, as his readers almost certainly would, this would make good sense: he had arrived in Macedonia, boasting that the Corinthians were already ready for the Collection. The Macedonians had risen to the challenge, giving generously, despite their poverty. He would not now wish to arrive in Corinth in January, accompanied by representatives of the Macedonian churches, only to find that in fact the Corinthians were not ready!

The sequence of events from the composition of 1 Corinthians to that of 2 Cor 8-9 may therefore be placed in one (Roman) calendar year; the following approximate chronological chart is suggested:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| March / April | Delegation from Corinth arrives in Ephesus with a letter from the church; Chloe's people also arrive; 1 Corinthians is written and sent to Corinth (possibly with Titus). |
| April / May | Timothy arrives in Corinth; Timothy returns to Ephesus. |
| June/July | Titus in Corinth with the "Letter of Tears". |
| July / August | Paul and Timothy travel to Troas and begin an evangelistic activity there. |
| September /October | Paul and Timothy cross to Macedonia via the Hellespont, there meeting Titus. |
| October | Titus returns to Corinth. |
| November | 2 Corinthians composed. ³⁷¹ |

The time interval from the composition of 1 Corinthians to that of 2 Cor 8-9 is therefore probably no more than six or seven months, and from the repentance of the Corinthians

³⁷¹ This chronology is close to that of Hyldahl, 1986:102, except that Hyldahl has Titus stay on in Corinth, not returning to Ephesus after delivering 1 Corinthians, but meeting the Apostle in Philippi in July / August.

following the Letter of Tears to the composition of 2 Corinthians is probably no more than four months.

3. Paul's Opponents and the literary unity of 2 Corinthians

We have now a provisional analysis of the following elements of our problem: the travels and travel plans of Paul, Timothy and Titus; the purpose and impact of the Letter of Tears; the offence; and the administration of the collection in Corinth. We have also suggested an approximate chronology, based on the assumption that after the success of the mission of Titus with the Letter of Tears, Paul reverted to his plan to spend the winter in Corinth. Though we have not yet completed our discussion of the literary composition of 2 Corinthians, our conclusions turned out to be consistent with the hypothesis of the literary unity of 2 Corinthians. We must now consider further the role of the opponents in the crisis, and the implications for the literary-critical question.

First Corinthians presented a direct challenge to the libertarian practises of the church, and we have argued that "the Strong", who wielded considerable influence, secured the rejection of Paul's demand for the expulsion of the incestuous man. We have argued that a point of principle was at stake: that to accept Paul's demand would have meant acceptance of his critique of sexual immorality in general, and of idolatry, and would have undermined the positions of those who maintained the right to visit prostitutes and to dine in pagan temples. Paul did not simply express outrage at a wholly exceptional offence, and demand that exceptional action be taken; he reminded the church of previous teaching concerning those who claim to be Christians but who are sexually immoral, or idolaters, or fall into certain other categories (1 Cor 5:9-11; cf. 6:9-10); and that his position derives from the community exclusion legislation of Deuteronomy. By rejecting his demand for action in this particular case, the church was rejecting his whole framework of thought. They were insisting upon their right to do as they pleased: πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν.

It is unclear how the libertarian teaching and practises arose in Corinth; however, there is no indication in 1 Corinthians that Paul faced rival missionaries, as he does in 2 Cor 10-13. Certainly there were teachers in Corinth whose work did not please him (1 Cor 3:10); but his critique is always directed at the church, never at outsiders. The question arises, then, when did the false apostles opposed in 2 Corinthians arrive in Corinth? We will argue in the next chapter that in the Letter of Tears Paul attacked the opponents to whom he alludes in 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2; 5:12. The nature of his attack suggests that they encouraged the church in its libertarian practises, and played no small part in the development of the crisis. It would then follow that they arrived in Corinth in the early spring, either before Timothy or during his visit, and opposed him in his efforts to have the incestuous man expelled.

We have argued that 2 Cor 8-9 preceded Paul to Corinth by only a few weeks, and our chronology allows no time for a further communication from him to Corinth before his planned visit. Now there are certain elements which one would expect to find in Paul's final letter before he comes to Corinth, but which are not found in 2 Cor 1-9. First, apart from 9:4-5, he has said nothing about his impending visit. Then, though he has gone to considerable lengths to appeal for reconciliation, one would expect him to repeat his warning once more, that should the former sins continue, he would be forced to take firm disciplinary action. The crisis had passed, not because he had backed down, but because the Corinthians had backed down. The threats which he had made on his previous visit (2 Cor 13:2), alluded to in 1 Cor 4:18-21, and which lay behind his decision to cancel his visit to Corinth, were still hanging over those who continued in disobedience. Finally, and decisively, though he alludes to opponents indirectly at various points in 2:14-7:4, the expected head-on attack is deferred to 2 Cor 10-13. Having had the incestuous man expelled from the church, then forgiven and restored, it is incredible that he should fail to condemn outright the false teachers who argued against this discipline and had almost destroyed his ministry in Corinth. It follows that 2 Cor 10-13 must belong to the same letter as 2 Cor 8-9, the last letter which Paul sent to Corinth before his visit, and that the "false apostles" of 2 Cor 10-13 were responsible in

large measure for the crisis. No doubt they saw the case of the incestuous man as an unrivalled opportunity to assume the leadership of the church. For whatever reasons, a wealthy and influential party within the church was reluctant to find fault with the offender. The rival missionaries advised the church that they should oppose Paul in this matter, and claimed apostolic status. Thus they sought to widen the gulf which already existed between the church and Paul, and to supplant his position of leadership.

Given that intruders were indeed deeply involved in the church's decision to reject Paul's demand for the expulsion of the incestuous man, our reconstruction is not only consistent with, but requires the literary unity of at least 2 Cor 1:1-12:13+7:5-13:13. We will argue below that 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 contains allusions to the Letter of Tears, and was therefore composed after Paul met Titus in Macedonia. These allusions will also confirm our proposal that the false apostles were encouraging libertarian behaviour in the church. It will follow that 2:14-7:4 is also part of the letter Paul wrote after he met Titus in Macedonia. We will also show that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is an integral part of Paul's response to the church's reception of the Letter of Tears, and we may then conclude that canonical 2 Corinthians is a literary unity.

4. A New Reconstruction

We are now in a position to outline a (still provisional) reconstruction of the Corinthian crisis. We will assume the literary unity of 2 Corinthians.

1. Some years after founding the church, Paul visited Corinth again, and found a serious decline in moral standards in the church. He warned that he would return, and would discipline severely any who continued in such behaviour.
2. Paul wrote to the church, announcing a visit on his way from Ephesus to Macedonia, and a further visit on his return from Macedonia (Plan D; the Previous Letter).

3. Timothy set out for Macedonia, planning to meet Paul in Corinth. He would arrive before Paul, and remind the church of the moral standards which the apostle expected to find when he arrived.
4. In the early Spring a delegation arrived from Corinth, bearing a letter for Paul from the church, and Chloe's people also arrived. The letter asked for advice on matters relating to marriage and sexuality, the practise of dining in pagan temples, and other matters. Paul also learned that the former disorders had worsened; indeed, the church was tolerating an openly incestuous relationship.
5. Paul decided to postpone his visit to Corinth; he would stay in Ephesus longer than originally planned, and go first to Macedonia. However, he would spend the winter in Corinth (Plan S). He wrote another letter, 1 Corinthians, in which he admonished the church for its arrogance and immaturity, demanded the expulsion of the incestuous man, and dealt with other issues, including those raised in the letter from the church. He also announced the change in his travel plans, and asked the church to send Timothy back to him in Ephesus.
6. While the Corinthian delegation was in Ephesus, rival missionaries arrived in Corinth. They were supportive of the libertarian practises of "the Strong", and claimed apostolic status. When 1 Corinthians arrived, they opposed Paul's demand for the expulsion of the incestuous man, and persuaded the church to take no action against him.
7. By the time Timothy arrived, the rival missionaries had gained acceptance in the church. Timothy was unable to persuade the church to discipline the incestuous man, and he returned to Ephesus with the news.
8. Paul wrote again to Corinth, announcing that his forthcoming visit was cancelled, in order to avoid a grievous confrontation. All those who supported the incestuous man were guilty by association of his sin, and Paul would find himself expelling many of his converts from the church.
9. The letter (the Letter of Tears) was carried to Corinth by Titus. Titus was to meet Paul in Troas towards the close of sailing, travelling via Macedonia. The church was

divided in its response to the letter, but a majority carried out Paul's wishes, expelling the incestuous man from the Church.

10. Paul and Timothy travelled to Troas, and began a mission. However, Titus did not arrive on the last ship from Macedonia, so Paul and Timothy crossed over to Macedonia via the land route, and found Titus there. Following Titus' report, Paul reverted to his plan to overwinter in Corinth (Plan S).

11. Titus returned to Corinth to prepare for Paul's arrival; in particular, to oversee the completion of the collection for the church in Jerusalem.

12. Paul composed 2 Corinthians, replying to criticism, and giving a detailed defence of his conduct, appealing for a generous response to the Collection appeal, denouncing his rivals, and warning that he meant every word of the warnings formerly given.

The advantages of this reconstruction are many. Our analysis of the travels and travel plans of Paul, Timothy and Titus has yielded a solution which seems to be free from the difficulties associated with other reconstructions, and reveals Paul as careful and clear-minded. There is no "emergency visit" to deal with some hypothetical pastoral crisis; rather, he makes effective use of letters and emissaries to deal with the disorders in Corinth, and is determined not to place himself in a position in which he is forced to use his authority to impose discipline on a rebellious church. His actions are seen to be fully consistent with his statement that he does not "lord it" over their faith, but rather works with them for their joy (2 Cor 1:24). Moreover, we are able to identify the offender who is to be expelled from the church in 1 Corinthians with the offender who is to be restored to the church in 2 Corinthians, yet without having to make the untenable identification of 1 Corinthians with the Letter of Tears. Finally, we have a reconstruction which seems to be entirely consistent with all the data we have considered, and with the literary unity of 2 Corinthians.

5. Missing Links

A number of important questions now arise:

1. Should there not be traces of the issues of sexual immorality and, probably, of idolatry in 2 Corinthians, particularly in 2 Cor 1-7, where Paul is looking back at his conduct of the crisis?
2. In 2 Cor 1-7, should there not be some allusion to the role of Paul's rivals, the false apostles, in provoking the crisis by encouraging sexual immorality, and claiming divine authority for their teaching?
3. Paul states that he wrote the Letter of Tears not to grieve the Corinthians, but τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς (2:4). The position of τὴν ἀγάπην, brought forward to precede even ἵνα, gives it particular emphasis.³⁷² But how could the cancellation of a promised visit, the theme of his letter, be expected to persuade the Corinthians of the apostle's love for them? Whatever his protestations to the contrary, would they not have concluded that he had simply abandoned them, opting to avoid an unpleasant and pointless confrontation? Certainly he did wish to spare them (1:23), but was this not as much for his own sake as for theirs (2:1-2)?
4. Does the reconstruction adequately explain Paul's remark that he wrote the Letter of Tears in order that "before God may be made manifest your ardent concern for us" (7:12)? The parting of friends is a painful business, especially if it is precipitated by an unresolved dispute; but the church had already taken a decision which they must have known would severely damage their relationship with the apostle. As Paul's delegate Timothy would have made this crystal clear. By offering to stay away, rather than carry out his threat to discipline them (1 Cor 4:18-21), was not Paul offering them an easy way out?
5. Paul states that he boasted to Titus concerning the Corinthians (7:14). The context makes clear that this boasting took place just before Titus left for Corinth.³⁷³ Does it

³⁷² Thrall 1994:170.

³⁷³ Thrall 1994:498.

not follow that whatever the problems in Corinth, Paul “did not consider his own apostolic authority to be seriously threatened”?³⁷⁴

The remainder of this study will address these questions, providing necessary exegetical support for our reconstruction.

³⁷⁴ Furnish 1984:397; cf. Barrett 1973:215.

Chapter 5

The Literary and Situational Context of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4

It is clear from our reconstruction that, in cancelling his planned visit to Corinth and composing the Letter of Tears, Paul took a considerable gamble. The church in Corinth was under the dangerous influence of rival teachers, and had chosen to defy his authority in the matter of the incestuous man. By cancelling his visit, despite earlier threats, Paul left himself open to the charge that he lacked the power to deal with the rebellion, and that he was therefore no true apostle (cf. 2 Cor 10:1, 10; 13:3).

Moreover, if our reconstruction is correct, he had announced that, should the church continue to refuse his authority, he would not use the power which he claimed to have to put the record straight. Paul was well aware of the risks, and he emphasises his extreme anxiety as he awaited the return of Titus (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-6). He interrupts his account, however, to give a remarkable *apologia* for his ministry (2:14-7:4). It will be shown that this *apologia* is not a digression, unrelated to the events described in the surrounding material, but is a careful defence of his handling of the recent crisis, combined with a subtle but powerful attack on his opponents, the false apostles. It will be shown that our reconstruction throws light on the structure and argument of this passage, and on its relationship with the surrounding material. The purpose of the present chapter is to develop a chain of literary and historical hypotheses which will play a key role in the remainder of the study.

1. The Problem of the Literary Integrity of 2 Cor 1-7

As has already been noted, many scholars doubt the unity of 2 Cor 1-7. It is claimed that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is a (possibly non-Pauline) interpolation, and that 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4 is a separate piece³⁷⁵ written by Paul to the Corinthians at an earlier stage in the crisis than the so-called Letter of Reconciliation (*Versöhnungsbrief*, 1:1-2:13 + 7:5-16).³⁷⁶ Leaving aside for the moment the question of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, the following arguments for the partition of 2 Cor 1-7 are commonly offered:

1. The apparent continuity of thought between 2:12-13 to 7:5.
2. The apparent lack of material connection between 2:14-7:4 and its canonical context.
3. The apparent inappropriateness of the thanksgiving at 2:14 after the account of the abandoned mission to Troas (2:12-13).
4. The contrast between the polemical tone of 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4 and the conciliatory tone of the surrounding material.

³⁷⁵ Some have proposed that 2 Cor 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4, together with Ch. 10-13, originally formed part of the Letter of Tears; e.g. Vielhauer 1975:150-55; Bultmann 1947:14-16; 1976:22-23.

³⁷⁶ Some take the *Versöhnungsbrief* to include also 8:1-24 or 9:1-15. Most who partition the canonical letter at 2:14 hold that 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4 was originally part of a letter subsequent to 1 Corinthians but prior to the Letter of Tears; so e.g. Schmithals 1973:286-87; Koester 1982 vol. 2:137. Taylor (1991:71) places the passage after the Letter of Tears, but before 1:1-2:13 + 7:5-8:24.

The apparent continuity of thought between 2 Cor 2:12-13 and 2 Cor 7:5

Welborn points out the following striking structural parallel between these passages:³⁷⁷

| 2:12-13 | 7:5 |
|--|---|
| Participle which describes the journey: ἐλθών | Participle which describes the journey: ἐλθόντων |
| Conjunction: δέ | Conjunction: γάρ |
| Phrase supplying destination: εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα | Phrase supplying destination: εἰς Μακεδονίαν |
| Negative: οὐκ | Negative: οὐδεμία |
| Perfect verb, describing Paul's distress: ἔσχηκα | Perfect verb, describing Paul's distress: ἔσχηκεν |
| The solace which Paul did not find: ἄνεσις | The solace which Paul did not find: ἄνεσις |
| The respect in which Paul was distressed: πνεῦμα | The respect in which Paul was distressed: σὰρξ |

Moreover, the following features suggest that 7:5 is the direct continuation of 2:12-13:

The negative pronomial adjective οὐδεμία in 7:5 is an intensification of the simple negative in 2:13 ..; the shift from the dative, τῷ πνεύματι, to the substantive, ἡ σὰρξ ... makes the suffering more conspicuous, and at the same time more tangible; the repetition of the perfect verb after the preceding aorists (1:23; 2:1, 3) prolongs the period of unrest; the shift from the singular to the plural generalizes the distress.³⁷⁸

Drawing upon a literary theory of Aristotle,³⁷⁹ Welborn argues that 2:12-13 + 7:5-6 constitutes a well-constructed narrative: it is closed and connected; that is, it is a self-

³⁷⁷ Welborn 1996:562.
³⁷⁸ Welborn 1996:565-66.
³⁷⁹ *Poetica* 450b23-24.

contained sequence of causally connected events, with a beginning (2:12-13), a middle (7:5), and an end (7:6).³⁸⁰ By Paul's day Aristotle's theory enjoyed widespread acceptance; moreover, though the theory was originally concerned with the construction of plots in epic and drama, "the canons of closure and causal connectedness were broadly applied to the literature of the period", and were not confined to the genres with which Aristotle was concerned.³⁸¹

Finally, Welborn argues that in 7:5, as in classical Greek,³⁸² and in the other instances of this expression in Paul,³⁸³ the syntactical role of γάρ in καὶ γάρ is confirmatory, rather than explanatory:

καὶ γάρ confirms what was said before by supplying the grounds, or motive, for action. A point is affirmed and its range extended. Such a relation is not apparent between the account of Paul's search for Titus (7:5) and the appeal to the Corinthians to open their hearts (7:2-4). But precisely such a relation obtains between 2:12-13 and 7:5. Paul's anxiety is confirmed and accentuated by the continuation of the account of his agitated search for Titus.³⁸⁴

This amounts to an impressive case for the literary unity of 2:12-13+7:5-6; but we must consider what exactly has been demonstrated. It is clear that 7:5-6 has been carefully constructed to follow on from 2:12-13 as a continuous narrative. This may suggest the possibility that 2:14-7:4 is an interpolation, but this does not follow of necessity. What has been demonstrated is that in 7:5 Paul picks up consciously and continues the narrative begun in 2:12-13, the repetition assisting the reader in bridging the gap.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁰ Welborn 1996:570; 572.

³⁸¹ Ibid.:570-71.

³⁸² "When a writer employs the combination καὶ γάρ in the middle of a continuous passage, the particles give the impression of a person reaffirming his own statement. Thus καὶ γάρ means 'yes and' or 'and further'." (Welborn 1996:579; citing Denniston 1950:lxviii).

³⁸³ He lists Rom 11:1; 15:3; 16:2; 1 Cor 5:7; 8:5; 12:13, 14; 14:8; 2 Cor 5:2, 4; 13:4; 1 Thess 3:4 (1996:582 n 94). The other instances are 1 Cor 11:9; 2 Cor 2:10; 3:10; Phil 2:27; 1 Thess 4:10; 2 Thess 3:10.

³⁸⁴ Welborn 1996:278.

³⁸⁵ Bieringer 1994:134.

There is an equally strong case for a connection between 2 Cor 7:4 and 7:5-16. The language and thought of 7:4 is continued in 7:5-7: παρακλήσει (7:4) = παρακαλῶν (7:6); παρακλήσει (7:7); χαρᾶ (7:4) = χαρῆναι (7:7); θλίψει (7:4) = θλιβόμενοι (7:5).³⁸⁶ There are also close verbal links between 7:4 and 7:13, 14: “7:4 πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν = 7:14 ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι ... , ἡ καύχησις ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη” and “7:4 ὑπερπερισεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ = 7:13 περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον ἐχάρημεν”.³⁸⁷ As Martin rightly says, “The connection would be extremely uncanny had it not been purposed by the author.”³⁸⁸ These links cannot be explained by amending the interpolation hypothesis, and claiming that 7:4 belongs with 7:5-16 and the interpolation ends with 7:3; for it would then be very difficult to explain why Paul should include 7:4 in his narrative, 2:12-13 + 7:5-6.³⁸⁹ It might be argued that 7:4, at least, is redactional;³⁹⁰ however, the redactor would have done a very impressive job!³⁹¹

I suggest that, having reached 7:3 or 7:4 in his dictation, Paul had 2:12-13 read back to him, and then carefully picked up his narrative at this point. This would explain the structural parallel between 2:12-13 and 7:5 and the careful construction of the narrative; καὶ γάρ at 7:5 will introduce a confirmation of 7:4cd, πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν since as will be shown, the conclusion of the narrative is presupposed in the argument of 2:14-7:4. As Webb suggests, the setting of 2:14-7:4 in the context of “not finding Titus” (2:13) ... “finding Titus” (7:5) is a literary device designed to draw the readers into the apostle’s anxiety as he awaited news of the reception of the Letter of Tears.³⁹² It should not be forgotten

³⁸⁶ Lietzmann 1949:131.

³⁸⁷ Thrall loc. cit.

³⁸⁸ Martin 1986:xlili; cf.:214-216.

³⁸⁹ DeSilva 1993:51.

³⁹⁰ Thrall notes that the verb ὑπερπερισεύομαι is rare (elsewhere in the NT only Rom 5:20), and unlikely to be due to a redactor, whereas Paul is fond of ὑπέρ-compounds (1994:484); however, if the redaction is taken to have been late, and the redactor was careful to note Pauline vocabulary from his published letters, it is not impossible.

³⁹¹ “It is highly unlikely, for example, that the assertion ὑπερπερισεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ is editorial, since the verb is rare (only in Rom 5:20 elsewhere in the NT), and is surely an example of Paul’s own fondness for ὑπέρ-compounds. Nor is it likely that a redactor would reproduce the subtle variations of singular and plural found in vv. 2-3 and, again, characteristic of Paul” (Thrall 1994:484).

³⁹² Webb 1993:73-74.

that the original cause of the extreme anxiety which Paul describes in 2:12-13 was the rebellious behaviour of his readers, for which they now feel godly sorrow (7:8-11). Our analysis of the travels of Titus suggests that he returned to Corinth shortly after meeting Paul, and well before the expected arrival of 2 Corinthians, and it may be assumed that he had already given the Corinthians a full account of his meeting with Paul. The church would therefore have been well aware of the conclusion of the broken narrative. By breaking off his account at 2:13, Paul may well have intended to leave his readers feeling uncomfortable, and anxious for the resolution of the tension created in 2:12-13. Indeed, the theme of Paul's apostolic sufferings is continued in 3:3,³⁹³ and is kept in the foreground by 4:7-5:10 and 6:4-10.³⁹⁴ It may be argued, therefore, that they could be expected to seize upon 7:4 as providing the awaited confirmation that the crisis was over, and the apostle comforted. Here at last Paul declares his confidence in his readers (πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς, πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). Moreover, he speaks of his surpassing joy, as a result of having been comforted in all his afflictions (πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν). With 7:4, therefore, he signals that he is returning to the narrative which he left at 2:13.

We must conclude, then, that 7:5-6 was composed as a very precise and careful resumption of the narrative of 2:12-13, and that Paul intended that 2:14-7:4 be read in the light of the θλίψις which he experienced between the dispatch, in Asia, of Titus with the Letter of Tears, and the reception in Macedonia of Titus' report from Corinth.

The apparent lack of material connection between 2:14-7:4 and its context, and the apparent inappropriateness of the thanksgiving at 2:14.

Arguing for a radical discontinuity of thought between 2:13 and 2:14 (while attempting to maintain the literary unity of 2 Cor 1-7), Thrall comments, "the state of anxiety

³⁹³ See below, Chapter 7.

³⁹⁴ Webb 1993:74 n 2.

described in verses 12-13 could scarcely be said to provide grounds for the expression of thanksgiving in verse 14".³⁹⁵ Many who maintain the literary unity of 2 Cor 1-7 have attempted to explain the thanksgiving at 2:14 as having been evoked by the memory of the encounter with Titus, and the report which he brought.³⁹⁶ It has been shown that well before they received 2 Corinthians, Titus would have brought the Corinthians news of Paul's joy at their response to the Letter of Tears; the Corinthians would certainly have had this in mind even as 2:12-13 was read. If Paul had in fact broken his narrative at this point in order to give thanks for the outcome, then this would probably have been perfectly comprehensible to his readers.³⁹⁷ But the happy outcome is not mentioned explicitly until 7:6;³⁹⁸ rather, 2:14-16a develops the image of Paul as an incense bearer in a triumphal procession; as he travels around, the suffering apostle makes manifest the fragrance of the knowledge of God.³⁹⁹ The apostle gives thanks not for the outcome of the recent crisis, but for the manifestation of the presence and power of God which accompanies his ministry. The connection of thought with 2:12-13 thus appears tenuous; however, it will be established below that as Paul's argument develops, it becomes clear that his sufferings during the period he refers to in 2:12-13 led to a manifestation of the divine presence and power which brought about the resolution of the crisis. Thus Paul's focus at this point is not the actual outcome, but the role of his sufferings in the bringing about of that outcome. The presence of the motifs of travel and mission in both 2:12-13 and in 2:14-16a suggests that in his thanksgiving, Paul may be interpreting his extreme distress as he awaited the return of Titus in terms of the extended metaphors of 2:14-16a.⁴⁰⁰ The two passages are also linked by the motif of suffering, though the relationship is complex.⁴⁰¹ Thus his

³⁹⁵ Thrall 1982:101,

³⁹⁶ E.g. Meyer 1879:179-80; Plummer 1915:67.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Prümm 1967:77; Barrett 1973:97.

³⁹⁸ Thrall 1982:101; following Windisch 1924:96.

³⁹⁹ See below, Chapter 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Hafemann 1986:83-86.

⁴⁰¹ The "triumphal procession" metaphor is deliberately ambiguous; Paul presents himself as a captured enemy being led in the procession; this would normally mean that he was being led in humiliation to his death. However, his role of spreading the fragrance of the divine knowledge suggests that his role in the procession is that of an incense bearer - a position of high honour, which would have been given not to a slave, but to a member of the victor's family. See below, Chapter 6.

thanksgiving is motivated not directly by the thought of the success of the Letter of Tears, but by an awareness that as he is led by God in his path of suffering, his sufferings are used by God to bring salvation to others; to be specific, by the thought that his sufferings in the Province of Asia were used by God to bring salvation (in a broad sense) to the Corinthians.⁴⁰² Though his decision to send the Letter of Tears resulted in severe suffering for Paul, it also resulted in salvation for the church (2 Cor 7:10; cf. 1:6a; 4:11-12).⁴⁰³ Thus the thanksgiving serves to link 2:14-7:4 with the narrative framework within which it is to be read and understood.⁴⁰⁴

Thrall raises a further objection to any clear connection of thought between 2:12-13 and the thanksgiving of 2:14:

it seems more than a little unlikely that he would intentionally combine the admission that he had actually abandoned a promising mission field in Troas with the declaration that God everywhere and always reveals himself through the apostolic mission.⁴⁰⁵

This juxtaposition is certainly paradoxical. However, in his triumphal procession metaphor Paul portrays himself not as a free agent, but as a prisoner, led from place to place by his conqueror, God. His consequent sufferings are subsequently portrayed as a vehicle for the manifestation, wherever he goes, of the sufferings of Christ (4:10).

⁴⁰² As we shall see, his sufferings were, in a sense, responsible for the success of the Letter of Tears; however, Paul's thought in 2:14-4:15 follows a causal chain in which his sufferings are logically prior to God's use of those sufferings to bring about the repentance of the Corinthians.

⁴⁰³ See below our exegesis of 2 Cor 2:14-16a.

⁴⁰⁴ Thrall argues cogently that the thanksgiving at 2:14 has a structural role in the letter. Noting a number of verbal and thematic connections between 2:14-17 and Ch. 3-5, she concludes that 2:14-17 functions as an epistolary thanksgiving period. According to epistolary conventions, the function of such periods is to introduce the main themes of a letter (Schubert 1939:180); however, it is possible that secondary thanksgivings in the body of a letter may be used to introduce further themes not introduced earlier, and this is the case with 2:14 (Thrall 1982:113-19). Indeed, the role of suffering in the apostle's ministry of revealing the knowledge of God is a new theme which plays a key role in the argument of 2:14-7:4. However, this structural role does not in itself rule out a connection of thought between 2:12-13 and 2:14. Similar expressions occur in 1 Cor 15:57 (τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν...), part of a conclusion, in 2 Cor 8:16 (χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ τῷ δόντι τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν...); introducing the commendation of Titus and the brothers as Paul's envoys, and in 9:15 (χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγίτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ), a conclusion (cf. Kurz 1996:54).

⁴⁰⁵ Thrall 1982:105f.

It is perfectly possible therefore to understand his decision to move on to Macedonia not as a failure, but as a necessity imposed upon him by God, through the extreme pressure of his anxiety. The same God who opened a door for the gospel in Troas drove him on to serve the gospel in Macedonia. The essential point, however, is that his abandonment of the mission field in Troas is a mere detail when set against the enormity of the threat posed by the Corinthian crisis to his whole ministry. Paul mentions it only to indicate the extreme pressure which he was under.

It has also been argued that 2:14-7:4 does not have the literary character of a digression within the apostle's narrative. Welborn cites examples to demonstrate that in the Greek literature of Paul's day "a procedure and a consistent terminology existed for digression and return".⁴⁰⁶ Moreover,

Precisely those features which characterize a true digression within a narrative are absent from 2:14-7:4. It is difficult to exaggerate the degree of discontinuity between 2:12-13 and 2:14ff. ... Nowhere in the intervening chapters is there an allusion, however fleeting, to the promised visit, or to the "letter of tears", or to the incident which provoked it, or to Paul's anxious search for Titus in Troas and Macedonia. There is nothing which suggests that Paul's defence of his apostleship in 2:14-7:4 was conceived as a digression within the account of his agitated search for Titus.⁴⁰⁷

However, there are thematic connections between 2 Cor 2:14-16a and 2:12-13 and also between 7:4 and 7:5-16, as we have seen. Linguistic and thematic links between 1:3-2:13 and 2:14-7:4 include the theme of the sufferings of the apostle resulting in salvation for his readers, (4:7-12; cf. 1:6); the apostle's sincerity / cultic purity (εἰλικρινεία, 2:17; cf. 1:12); the ἄρραβὼν of the Spirit (5:5; cf. 1:22),⁴⁰⁸ and the motifs of travel and mission (2:12-13; 2:14); connections between 2:14-7:4 and 7:5-16 include σωτηρία 7:10, cf. ἡμέρα σωτηρίας 6:2 (x2); ἰδού 7:11, cf. 5:17; 6:2 (x2); 6:9; συνίστημι 7:11, cf. 4:2; 6:4; φανερωθῆναι 7:12, cf. ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ πεφανερῶσθαι, 5:11; ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν

⁴⁰⁶ Welborn 1996:567

⁴⁰⁷ Welborn 1996:575-76

⁴⁰⁸ The only other occurrence of the term in the NT is in Eph 1:14.

κεκαύχημαι, cf. 5:12, as well as 7:4;⁴⁰⁹ and the references to Isa 49:8, 13 LXX in 6:2, 7:6 respectively. Moreover, DeSilva argues cogently that, using the rhetorical technique of *insinuatio*,⁴¹⁰ Paul subtly introduces the theme of his spiritual partnership with the Corinthians in 1:6, 11, 14; 2:2-3, 11 (Satan is their common enemy);⁴¹¹ and as Patte has shown, the theme of Paul's partnership with the Corinthians is fundamental to the argument of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4.⁴¹² Furthermore, 7:4 clearly echoes the language of 1:4 (πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει ... ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν / ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν. It will be argued below that in fact 2:14-7:4 does contain several allusions to the Letter of Tears.⁴¹³

Referring to 2 Cor 1:13f, Watson rightly comments,

Paul expresses the hope that his readers will recognise that they have cause to "boast" in him ... This hope is mentioned in connection with what Paul "writes", and unless the two things are entirely unconnected, he must mean that they have begun to realise from what he has previously written about himself that he can be their cause of boasting, and that he hopes that they will realise this more fully from what he is now writing.⁴¹⁴

Since 1:12-14 is bound together by an *inclusio* (καύχησις ἡμῶν ... καύχημα ὑμῶν),⁴¹⁵ the question of Paul's integrity is closely related to his claim that the Corinthians will be his boast on the Day of the Lord, and he theirs. His integrity has evidently been questioned in relation to the statements in his letters concerning his travel plans (1:15-2:4). Paul counters that what he says in his letters is what he means, and is readily

⁴⁰⁹ Bieringer 1994:135.

⁴¹⁰ DeSilva provides the following note on *insinuatio*: "*Rhet. ad Her.* 1.9 presents an orator's advice concerning what he calls the *insinuatio* or "subtle approach" to the introduction of a speech. There are three occasions on which an orator cannot use a direct opening, which would involve a direct presentation of the proposition and its supporting arguments: "when our case is discreditable, that is, when the subject itself alienates the hearer from us; when the hearer has apparently been won over by the previous speakers of the opposition; or when the hearer has become wearied by listening to the previous speakers (DeSilva 1993:52).

⁴¹¹ DeSilva 1993:52-53.

⁴¹² Patte 1987.

⁴¹³ See below, Chapters 7 and 8.

⁴¹⁴ Watson 1984:337-38.

⁴¹⁵ Martin 1986:19.

understood (1:13a). Then he adds, “and I hope that you will understand completely, just as indeed you have recognised us in part, that we will be your boast, just as you will be ours, in the Day of our Lord Jesus” (1:14). The apostle appears to be announcing that, having in a previous letter given the Corinthians grounds for boasting in him, “he hopes that they will realise this more fully from what he is now writing. He thus announces his intention of giving them cause for boasting in the present letter, and this must involve an account of his apostolic ministry.”⁴¹⁶ This is precisely what we find in 2:12-7:4; indeed, in 5:12 “Paul sums up the purpose of the whole section in words which must deliberately recall 1:14”⁴¹⁷ (5:12, διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν; cf. 1:14, καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν).⁴¹⁸ It is also reasonable to conclude that there is a connection between Paul’s changing travel plans and the case he proposes to build that he will be the Corinthians’ boast on the Day of the Lord.

Thrall describes the basis of Watson’s claim that 2 Cor 1-7 continues the argument of the Letter of Tears as “fragile”, for

Paul’s confidence that he has provided his readers with grounds for boasting of him *antedates* the Painful Letter, since it was “in this confidence” [1:15] that he made plans for a visit which was later cancelled and replaced by the Painful Letter.⁴¹⁹

But “in this confidence” (ταύτῃ τῇ πεποιθήσει) is likely to refer simply to the immediately preceding clause, καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, rather than to his (misplaced) confidence that through his letter(s) he has

⁴¹⁶ Watson 1984:337-38.

⁴¹⁷ Watson 1984:338.

⁴¹⁸ The variant ὑμῶν in 5:12 (ⲛ B p⁴⁶ 33 g vg^{ms}) is rightly rejected by Furnish on grounds of context and language (1984:307), but is accepted by Collange (1972:248). Barrett comments, “This reading, which has such excellent attestation, is often written off as meaningless; it could mean, ‘All that I am and do is on your account; what may look like self-commendation is truly for your benefit, and it thus provides you with something to boast about on your own account.’ It is true that one would have expected ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν or ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν; yet how is it that the error, if error it is, is found in hardly any but the oldest and best MSS?” (Barrett 1973:162 n 1). But the attestation is certainly not decisive.

⁴¹⁹ Thrall 1994:18 n 113.

established this fact in the minds of his readers. He is simply asserting that when he formed Plan D, he had every reason to expect the visit to be a success; since then, however, his relations with the church had deteriorated grievously. Since he was last in Corinth, Paul had written three letters to the church. The first probably announced Plan D; the second cancelled Plan D and replaced it by Plan S; the third cancelled Plan S and announced that Paul would not be coming to Corinth after all. He has clearly been criticised for these changes in his travel plans.⁴²⁰ In 1:12-14, he begins a defence of his dealings with the Corinthians, apparently denying that his letters were either deliberately misleading, or blatantly misrepresented his intentions. Having explained the grounds upon which he framed Plan D (1:15-16), he denies a charge of ἑλαφρία (“irresponsibility”) in his dealings with the church (1:17). In responding to this charge he emphasises the reliability of the Gospel, and the certainty of the ultimate salvation of both the Corinthians and himself (1:18-22).⁴²¹ He then explains that his decision to cancel the visit altogether was motivated by the wish to spare both the Corinthians and himself the grief that a visit would have involved (1:23-2:3). He announced this decision in the Letter of Tears (2:3), and he describes how painful the writing of that letter had been for him (2:4). This leads him to comment on the offence itself, and the need for the restoration of the offender (2:5-11), before he describes briefly the anxiety which he experienced as he awaited news of the church’s response to his letter (2:12-13). It seems quite natural that he should preface such an account with a statement of the foundation of the confidence with which he had laid his original plans (1:14), and it is significant that he returns to the theme of his confidence in his readers in 7:4, 13-16.

Thrall raises a further objection to Watson’s hypothesis: γράφομεν (1:13) is unlikely to refer to the Letter of Tears, for “as far as [Paul] was concerned, his letter had been read

⁴²⁰ Thrall (1994:134) suggests that, in addition to criticisms regarding his travel plans, Paul is alluding to criticism arising from 1 Cor 9:12-18; “He is very absolute there about refusing maintenance, but his readers may very well have known about the assistance given him by the Macedonians during his stay in Corinth (2 Cor 11:7-11).” But the issue is not mentioned until 11:7.

⁴²¹ The argument of 1:17-22 will be discussed later; see below.

and understood and had obtained the desired effect.”⁴²² But in the light of our reconstruction, this was not necessarily the case. The letter had certainly led the majority of the church to discipline the offender, and so to resolve the immediate crisis (2:6); the apostle could now visit Corinth as planned. It does not follow, however, that all opposition to the apostle in Corinth had been extinguished. We have already argued that Paul’s decision, announced in the Letter of Tears, to cancel his visit to Corinth had been criticised, and that he replies to this criticism in 2 Cor 1:15-2:4. Other aspects of the letter may also have provoked criticisms, and we may conjecture that it is to these criticisms that Paul turns in 2:14-7:4. It is clear from 5:12 that Paul has been answering points raised in the minds of his readers by τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. It is widely held that these opponents are to be identified with the intruders who had come to Corinth bearing letters of recommendation (3:1), and who “peddled the word of God” among the Corinthians (2:17). If so, then these intruders would still have been in Corinth when the Letter of Tears was delivered. It has been argued already that they had played a leading role in the crisis which led to the composition of that letter. They might have left Corinth for a time, but the simplest hypothesis is that they were in Corinth at least from the delivery of 1 Corinthians to the delivery of the Letter of Tears.

The Argument of 2 Cor 1:12-14, and of 7:13-16

It has been noted that a number of questions must be answered if our reconstruction of the Corinthian Crisis is to withstand scrutiny. Rather than discussing separately each of these issues, the approach adopted here is to discuss the overall argument of 2 Corinthians 1-7; the necessary exegetical support will then emerge as the argument

⁴²² Thrall 1994:133. Thrall suggests that Paul may have in mind 1 Cor 16:5-7; but we have shown that he also discussed his travel plans in the more recent Letter of Tears. A further possibility is that Paul’s statement about his financial independence in 1 Cor 9:12-18 does not square with his acceptance of financial support from the Macedonians during his founding visit to Corinth (Thrall 1994:134). However, this latter point is not addressed in 2 Cor 1-7.

proceeds; moreover, the resulting interpretation of these chapters will itself provide further strong evidence for the validity of the reconstruction.

The structure of 2 Cor 1-7 may be summarised as follows:

Address (1:1-2)

Opening Benediction Period (1:3-11)

Introduction (1:12-14)

A Letter of Tears / expulsion of offender (1:15-2:11)

B Anxiety as Titus is awaited (2:12-13)

C Discourse (2:14-7:4)

B' Anxiety as Titus is awaited (7:5)

A' Letter of Tears / expulsion of offender (7:6-12)

Conclusion (7:13-16)⁴²³

I claim, therefore, that 2 Cor 1:12-7:16 forms a complete literary subunit of the letter.⁴²⁴

In the Introduction Paul boasts (ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν) that he has conducted himself towards the Corinthians ἐν ἀπλότητι⁴²⁵ καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ (1:12), for (γάρ) in the Letter of Tears has said nothing but what has been read and understood. He then expresses the intention of taking up matters raised by the Letter of Tears, in order to convince the Corinthians that they will be able to boast of him, just as he of them, on

⁴²³ Against those who would end the sentence begun in 7:12 after 7:13a (Plummer 1915:226; Tasker 1958:107), or would attach 7:13a as a short sentence to 7:12 (e.g. Barnett 1998:383).

⁴²⁴ For a discussion of complete literary units, see below, p 156, on 3. Patte's Structural Exegesis of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4.

⁴²⁵ The variant ἀγιότητι, though well attested (p⁴⁶ ⲛ* A B C K:Ψ 0121a 0243 33 81 365 630 1175 1739 1881 2464 pc r co Cl; ἀπλότητι is read by ⲛ² D F G Maj lat sy Ambst Chr Th), is less well suited to the context. As will become apparent, Paul is vitally concerned in 2 Cor 1:12-7:16 with both the "openness" and the "sincere concern" (both senses of ἀπλότης; see BAGD s.v.) of his conduct towards the Corinthians. Moreover, ἀγιότης occurs nowhere else in Paul, whereas ἀπλότης occurs in 2 Corinthians (8:2, 9:11, 13; 11:3; Metzger 1971:575)..

the Day of the Lord (1:13b-14). This they have already understood in part (ἕως τέλους ; 1:13).⁴²⁶ In the context of 1:12-14, it would appear that the ground of boasting which Paul intends to provide for the Corinthians is that he has conducted himself in the matter of the Letter of Tears ἐν ἀπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. That he presents his conduct of the crisis as a basis for the Corinthians to boast of him on the Day of the Lord strongly suggests that more was involved in the matter than merely the writing of a letter, however inspired and rhetorically effective. Moreover, since he states that already they have understood in part, it is likely that he has already given in the present letter some indication of the support he proposes to offer for his claim. The testimony of his conscience is clearly not a sufficient basis; nor does it play a significant role in the argument of 1:15-7:16. Rather, this support is to be found in the introductory Benediction, which speaks of Paul suffering for the Corinthians' "comfort and salvation", and being "comforted" for their comfort (1:6), and in his disclosure that he has recently suffered an affliction which was so severe that he despaired even of life (1:8).

In 5:12, as has been noted, Paul states in language that echoes 1:14 that he has now delivered the basis for boasting (ἀφορμή καυχήματος) which he promised in 1:13b-14. Since even a cursory reading of 2:14-5:10 shows that it deals in depth with the role of suffering in the apostle's ministry, it also seems likely that there is a connection between this "Affliction in Asia" and the conduct which, Paul argues, provides the Corinthians with a basis for boasting of him both before the false apostles (5:12), and on the Day of the Lord.

Paul introduces the Conclusion with the words, διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα. The language of "comfort" echoes the opening Benediction (1:3-7),⁴²⁷ and the perfect tense of the verb clearly refers back to the arrival of Titus ("But the God who comforts the afflicted comforted us by the coming of Titus"; 7:6). Paul was and is comforted in all his

⁴²⁶ cf. Ps. 37:7 LXX (cited by Furnish 1984:128); also Allo 1937:21, 23; Lietzmann 1949:101; Hughes 1962:29. Others take the phrase to mean "to the end"; but since it clearly in contrast with ἀπὸ μέρους, 1:14, it must have the sense "completely" (Thrall 1994:135 n 47).

⁴²⁷ Martin 1986:239.

afflictions (7:4cd) by the report Titus brought him of the reception of the Letter of Tears. He says that he had boasted of the Corinthians to Titus (ὕπερ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι), and that just as he had spoken the truth in the Letter of Tears, so his boasting to Titus has proved to be true (7:14). In the context of 7:5-16, the content of his boasting to Titus can only be that as Paul's envoy he would be well received by the Corinthians, and that his mission would lead to the resolution of the crisis. Comparison of the Introduction and the Conclusion therefore reveals a contrasting parallelism:⁴²⁸ in the Introduction Paul *boasts* that his conduct in the matter of the Letter of Tears will provide the Corinthians with a basis for boasting in him (Paul) on the Day of the Lord (1:12-14); in the Conclusion, he declares that he rejoices that the conduct of the Corinthians in response to the Letter of Tears has vindicated his *boasting* of them (7:13-16). This suggests that the primary theme of 2 Cor 1:15-7:12 concerns the vindication of the apostle's handling of the recent crisis, and in particular the role of both the apostle's sufferings and the Letter of Tears in bringing about the expulsion of the incestuous man. This, then, is our hypothesis, and it will now be developed.

2. Three Paradigms for Paul's Ministry to the Corinthians

In 1982 William Lane drew the attention of New Testament scholars to a line of biblical research which has explored "the concept of the prophet as a servant of the covenant and messenger of Yahweh."⁴²⁹ When the stipulations of the covenant were breached, Yahweh would send his messengers, the prophets, to remind the people of these stipulations (detailed in the Law of Moses), and to call them to repentance, under the threat of the covenantal curses.⁴³⁰ Noting clear parallels between Gal 1:15-16a and Jer 1:5; Isa 49:1-6, Lane argues that Paul there indicates that he has been called to the prophetic vocation.⁴³¹ Now in 2 Cor 3:6, referring to Jer 31:31-34, Paul defines his ministry as διάκονος of the new covenant:

⁴²⁸ For the significance of contrasting parallelisms in the Introduction and Conclusion of a literary unit, see below on Patte's structural exegesis of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, p 156..

⁴²⁹ Lane 1982:3.

⁴³⁰ Lane 1982:3-5.

⁴³¹ Lane 1982:6-7; Paul's prophetic self-understanding has now been confirmed by Sandnes, 1991.

The ratification of the New Covenant through Jesus' death (cf. 1 Cor 11:25) implied the beginning of a new history for the people of God. It created the theological context for the appointment of new prophets committed to the administration of the covenant.⁴³²

On the basis of 2 Cor 3:6-14, in which Paul compares his own ministry with that of Moses, Lane concludes that "Paul regarded himself as the Second Moses to the New Covenant community."⁴³³ It is at least clear that Paul regarded Moses as a paradigm for his ministry to the Corinthians;⁴³⁴ just as Moses had acted as Yahweh's messenger of the old covenant to his people Israel, so to the Corinthians Paul was acting as God's messenger (διάκονος) of the new covenant. We should note, however, that Paul draws a sharp contrast between his own ministry and that of Moses: the old covenant brought only condemnation and death, whereas the new covenant brings righteousness and life (3:6, 9).

A second paradigm for Paul's ministry to the Corinthians emerges clearly in 2 Cor 10-13.⁴³⁵ As Lane points out, the distinctive imagery of Paul's having been given authority "to build up and not to tear down" (εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10) recalls the language of Jeremiah (1:10; 24:6f; 31:27-28; 42:10; 45:4).⁴³⁶ In particular, Paul's language recalls Jer 38:27-28 LXX:

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will sow Israel and Judah, seed of men and seed of cattle. And it shall come to pass that just as I watched over them to tear down (καθαίρειν) and to afflict, so will I watch over them to build (οἰκοδομεῖν) and to plant, says the Lord.

⁴³² Lane 1982:8.

⁴³³ Ibid.; citing Jones 1974.

⁴³⁴ The use of ideal figures from the OT as paradigms was common in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, see Collins and Nickleburg, 1980.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Young and Ford 1987:70-75.

⁴³⁶ Lane 1982:9.

Paul is clearly referring to the prophetic authority given to him when he was called to the apostolic ministry ("having been given authority"). If he intends to imply a direct comparison of his own call to ministry with that of Jeremiah, one might therefore expect, instead of εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, the language of Jer 1:10 LXX:

See, today I have appointed you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and tear down (κατασκάπτειν), and to destroy, and to build (ἀνοικοδομεῖν), and to plant.

However, Paul's point is that he has been given the task of building up the church, not of tearing it down. Jeremiah, on the other hand, was given the unhappy task of pronouncing condemnation, and of mediating judgement to the people (Jer 5:14), for they had broken the covenant (11:1-17; 22:9; cf. 7:1-15).⁴³⁷ Though he called for repentance (e.g. 2:1-4:4), his appeals were not heeded; indeed, the people's hearts were so hardened that they could not repent (13:20-27; 17:1-4), and Jeremiah was told by Yahweh to intercede for them no more (7:16-20; 14:11-12; 15:1). Judgement would certainly fall, and the people would go into exile (10:17-25; 13:18-19; 16:10-13; 17:1-4 etc.). Although Jeremiah does have a message of hope, it is for the post-exilic future: Yahweh promises to make a new covenant with a remnant who will return from exile (30:1-33:26). Since Paul describes himself as διάκονος of this new covenant, it is significant that Jer 31(38):28 occurs in the preamble to the new covenant itself (vv 31-34).⁴³⁸ Again, Paul draws a sharp contrast between his own ministry and that of his OT paradigm: it is not his task to mediate condemnation and judgement, but righteousness and salvation (cf. 2 Cor 3:6, 9).

Lane also points out a third paradigm for Paul's ministry, the Servant of Yahweh of Isaiah 49:

⁴³⁷ Cf. The judgement oracle of Jer LXX 51:34, "Behold, those whom I built up (ᾠκοδόμησα), I will tear down (καθαίρω), and those whom I planted I will pluck up."

⁴³⁸ There is also a parallel to Jer 31(38):28 in the earlier new covenant promise 24:6-7: "I will build them up (ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτούς), and not tear them down (οὐ μὴ καθελῶ); cf. 42(49):10.

A case can be made for affirming that Paul found in Isaiah 49:1-13 a pattern for expressing his call to mission and a paradigm for understanding his experience among the Gentiles.⁴³⁹

Lane notes that Isa 49:8 is quoted in 2 Cor 6:2: καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι.⁴⁴⁰ Paul also makes a clear allusion to Isa 49:13 in 2 Cor 7:6,⁴⁴¹ suggesting that in 6:2 the OT context of Isa 49 is already in view.⁴⁴² In this case, as we shall see, Paul accepts the paradigm almost without reservation, applying the singular pronouns σου, σοι to himself: his ministry is patterned after that of the Servant.

Each of these figures, Moses, Jeremiah, and the Servant of Yahweh, plays a key role in the argument of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4. Each experienced a crisis of vocation, and each crisis is echoed in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4.

Paul and Moses

Having introduced his ministry of making manifest “the fragrance of the knowledge of God” to those who are being saved, and to those who are perishing (2:14-16a), Paul asks, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός; His language clearly echoes LXX interpretation of Exod 4:10,⁴⁴³ which deviates significantly from the MT.⁴⁴⁴ In reply to his call at the burning bush, Moses confessed οὐχ ἱκανός εἰμι ... (“I am not competent ..”).⁴⁴⁵ It is true that this phrase had become a fixed expression (it also occurs in Matt 3:11, 8:8; 1 Cor

⁴³⁹ Lane 1982:8-9, again citing Jones 1974.

⁴⁴⁰ The citation agrees exactly with the LXX.

⁴⁴¹ ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς; LXX Isa 49:13 has ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ταπεινοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ παρεκάλεσεν.

⁴⁴² The allusion is noted in the margin of Nestle-Aland²⁶, and by, e.g., Plummer 1915:218; Windisch 1924:227; Hughes 1962:266; Martin 1986:224.

⁴⁴³ Farrer 1946:171, 173.

⁴⁴⁴ Georgi (1986:232) suggests that Paul has in mind Joel 2:11 LXX, καὶ τίς ἔσται ἱκανὸς αὐτῇ. Cf. Thrall 1994:208. Hafemann shows this to be improbable (1986:95-98).

⁴⁴⁵ The Hebrew לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אֲנִי (“I am not a man of words”) is rendered by LXX A B S(a) οὐχ ἱκανός εἰμι (“I am not sufficient / competent”). Mss. F M, have the variant οὐκ εὐλογος εἰμι; Aquila has οὐκ ἀνὴρ ῥημάτων, while Symmachus has οὐκ εὐλαλος, all of which are closer to the MT; however, οὐχ ἱκανός εἰμι is the more difficult and better attested reading (Hafemann 1995:43). It is also worth noting that Paul’s quotations from the LXX are often close to ms. A (Ellis 1957:13).

15:9);⁴⁴⁶ but there is also an exact thematic parallel. Moses goes on to specify his inadequacy (LXX Exod 4:10): he is “slow of tongue” (βραδύγλωσσος), due to a speech impediment (ἰσχνόφωνος). Thus Paul, who himself has been criticised for his lack of rhetorical skill (2 Cor 10:10), invites the deduction that he shares this characteristic with his great predecessor. Nevertheless, it is implied, just as God made Moses competent for his ministry, so God has made Paul competent for his ministry; and he goes on to claim that, unlike his opponents, he speaks the word of God in Christ, as one who is cultically pure, is sent from God, and stands in God’s presence (2:17).⁴⁴⁷ Paul returns to Exodus in 3:3,⁴⁴⁸ and in 3:6-18 he develops a detailed comparison of his own ministry with that of Moses. Just as Moses was the servant of the old covenant; so Paul is a servant (διάκονος) of the new covenant.

The ministries of Moses and Jeremiah fall at either end of the Deuteronomic History. While the Exile was the end result of a long period of apostasy, punctuated by occasional episodes of national repentance, the first breach of the covenant occurred within a few months of the Exodus. Yahweh had made a covenant with the people, and had himself declared to them a summary of its stipulations, the Decalogue (Exod 19:3-20:19). Moses then ascended Sinai to receive further instructions concerning the Law, and a copy of the Decalogue engraved on stone tablets. He was on Sinai for forty days, and the people doubted that he would return (Exod 32:1). It was during this time, while the theophany on Sinai was still clearly visible,⁴⁴⁹ that the people broke the covenant by making an idol, the golden calf (cf. Exod 20:4-6; 24:3). Yahweh commanded Moses to leave him alone so that he might totally destroy the people of Israel, and he would then make Moses into a great nation. But Moses interceded for the people (Exod 32:9-14). Moses then returned to the camp, and in the presence of the people he broke the stone tablets of the covenant, in a symbolic declaration that

⁴⁴⁶ Davies and Allison 1991:23.

⁴⁴⁷ See below, Chapter 7.

⁴⁴⁸ ἐγγεγραμμένη ... οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις is an allusion to the first set of the tablets of the covenant, Exod 31:18; see below, Chapter 7.

⁴⁴⁹ See Hafemann 1995:196, who, following Moberly and others, argues that the Calf was intended to replace Moses as the one to represent Yahweh to the people.

the covenant itself had been broken.⁴⁵⁰ He then punished the people, putting to death three thousand of them.

We have argued that despite 1 Corinthians, the church in Corinth refused to discipline the incestuous man, and continued to insist on the freedom to dine in pagan temples; moreover, that they also continued to tolerate and indulge in sexual immorality. At the time he composed the Letter of Tears, therefore, Paul's situation closely paralleled that of Moses when Yahweh informed him of the people's idolatry with the golden calf.

Some in Corinth had become arrogant, as though Paul would not return (1 Cor 4:18; cf. Exod 32:1), and in his absence the church had also become guilty of both idolatry and sexual immorality, and, having refused to discipline the incestuous offender, was in breach of the covenant. Already in 1 Corinthians Paul had alluded to the golden calf episode, quoting LXX Exod 32:6 in a warning against idolatry. Collier argues persuasively that 1 Cor 10:1-13 is a midrashic argument based upon Numbers 11.⁴⁵¹ Exodus 32:6, which is quoted in 10:7 and falls at the exact centre of the pericope, is drawn into the discussion by *gezerah shewah*⁴⁵² on the basis of the LXX, καθίζω (Num 11:4), and ἀνίστημι (Num 11:32);⁴⁵³ "Exod 32:6 is understood as Numbers 11 writ small."⁴⁵⁴ Other texts are then similarly drawn in on the basis of the phrase ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν.⁴⁵⁵ The theme of Numbers 11 is ἐπιθυμία, the evil craving of the people; the phrase ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν is then "midrashically definitive for the other sins", namely, the people's cravings for idolatry (v 7), sexual immorality (v 8), testing Christ (v 9), and grumbling (v 10). The Song of Moses (Deut 32:1-43) seems also to have influenced 1 Cor 10:3-4,

⁴⁵⁰ Hafemann 1995:202.

⁴⁵¹ Collier 1994:63-73.

⁴⁵² *Gezerah shewah* is a Rabbinic exegetical technique in which distinct texts which share both common themes and common vocabulary are taken as mutually interpretative. Exod 31:18 and Ezek 11:19; 36:26 would be linked by λίθινος / לבן; Ezek 11:19; 36:26 and Jer 38(31):33 by καρδία / לב, and Exod 31:18 and Jer 38(31):33 by γράφω / כתב.

⁴⁵³ The MT does not permit this connection; *ibid.*:65.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ Num 14:16 in v5; 11:4, 33-34 in v6; 25:1 in v8; 21:4-7 in v9; 11:1 in v10; *ibid.*

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual Rock (πέτρα) that accompanied them, and that Rock was Christ.

For in Deut 32, uniquely in the Pentateuch, the title צֹר ('Rock') is given to Yahweh (vv 4, 15, 30, 31).⁴⁵⁶ In the following passage in 1 Corinthians, 10:14-22, the Song of Moses is clearly alluded to in v 20 (Deut 32:17) and in v 22a (Deut 32:21). Indeed, Hanson argues that the passage is "a Christian midrash on Deut. 32.17-21".⁴⁵⁷ The theme of eating and drinking is continued (cf. Deut 32:14), as is opposition to idolatry. Rosner notes that the Targumim of Deuteronomy 32, which were evidently known to Paul,⁴⁵⁸ interpret the title "the Rock" as a figure of God's strength.⁴⁵⁹ The theme of God's strength is important in the Song of Moses; the people will become rich in the Promised Land, and will fall into apostasy (vv 13-18; cf. 11:16). Therefore God will become angry and will bring judgement upon them (vv 19-38). God's judgement will "impress upon the nation their lack of strength and the Lord's great power".⁴⁶⁰ Hence 1 Cor 10:22b is a most stern warning.⁴⁶¹

As Zipor has demonstrated, there is a close connection between the golden calf episode and the Song of Moses. The Song is introduced in Deut 31:14-30 (vv 19, 21, 22, 30). The account of the giving of the book of the Law (especially vv 9, 25-26) recalls the giving of the stone tablets of the Law at Mount Sinai:

There is the writing of God's words, and then their being handed over (31,25; cfr. v. 9), similar to the writing of the writing on the two tablets and then their being handed over (cfr. 9,9-11; 10,2-4, and 5,20). We are then presented with the ark of covenant (31,25-26, cfr. 10,1-3), its being carried by the children of Levi (cfr. 10,8), and the laying of the book of the Law by the side of the ark (31,26; compare laying the Tablets of Covenant into the ark, 10,2-5); but whereas the tablets and

⁴⁵⁶ The term is frequently rendered πέτρα in the LXX, though the title is translated θεός in Deut 32 LXX.

⁴⁵⁷ Hanson 1974:115.

⁴⁵⁸ Rosner 1992c:176, citing Hanson 1974 Chapter 6.

⁴⁵⁹ Rosner 1992c:176; 1994:199-201.

⁴⁶⁰ Rosner 1994:198

⁴⁶¹ 'the conviction that God's jealousy inevitably leads to stern action is also deeply rooted in the Old Testament'; Rosner 1994:202. He cites Nah 1:2; Deut 6:14-15; Josh 24:19-20; Ps 78:58-64; Zeph 1:18.

the ark are intended to be *'edût*, testimony of the alliance *with* Israel (Exod 31,18; 32,15; 34,28-29; cfr. 26,34 etc.), here the book of the Law is intended to be *'ed*, "testimony" *against* Israel (v. 26).⁴⁶²

The same term, עֵד (*'ed*), is used of the Song of Moses:

The LORD said to Moses, "Soon you will lie down with your ancestors. Then this people will begin to prostitute themselves to the foreign gods in their midst, the gods of the land into which they are going; they will forsake me, breaking my covenant that I have made with them. My anger will be kindled against them in that day. I will forsake them and hide my face from them; they will become easy prey, and many terrible troubles will come upon them. In that day they will say, 'Have not these troubles come upon us because our God is not in our midst?' On that day I will surely hide my face on account of all the evil they have done by turning to other gods. Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the Israelites; put it in their mouths, in order that this song may be a witness for me against the Israelites. (Deut 31:16-19 NRSV)

This warning, and the Song itself, recalls the earlier warnings of Deut 11:16-17, to which Paul alludes in 2 Cor 6:11,⁴⁶³ and of Deut 4:14-28; and both chapters 4 and 31 of Deuteronomy reverberate with echoes of the golden calf episode.⁴⁶⁴ For example, Yahweh gives the following reason for giving the Book of the Law (and, implicitly, also the Song) as an עֵד against the Israelites:

For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die! (Deut 31:27).

The expression "stiff-necked" in the Pentateuch is used exclusively in the context of the golden calf; moreover, "the phrase "you have been rebellious" had been employed as a chiastic frame for the golden calf incident, and it appears in the present section."⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Zipor 1996:31 (emphasis his).

⁴⁶³ See below.

⁴⁶⁴ Zipor 1996:31.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.:32.

Referring to Deut 31:29, "For I know that after my death you will surely act destructively ... and evil will befall you", Zipor rightly concludes:

There is no need to explain what that "destruction" is. As the expressions and idioms, used exclusively - or almost exclusively - in speeches dealing with the Mount Horeb episode and with the Golden Calf, are also used here, it should be clear to the addressee of the admonitions, that the allusion was to deeds of the same nature as that of the ancient transgression, the "original sin", viz. the Golden Calf.⁴⁶⁶

The Song of Moses, therefore, may be understood as a warning of the consequences for Israel of a repetition of the golden calf episode. It may be inferred that already when he composed 1 Corinthians, Paul saw a parallel between the behaviour of the church in Corinth, and in particular their insistence on the right to dine in pagan temples, and the worship of Israel before the golden calf.

It may also be inferred that Paul feared that the rebellion of the church and their refusal to discipline the incestuous man would precipitate some form of divine judgement upon the church, and that, like Moses, he interceded for them. Moreover, Paul was faced with the prospect of returning to the people as the messenger of the covenant; having already given due warning (2 Cor 13:2; 1 Cor 4:18-21), like Moses he would have to declare the covenant broken, and pronounce upon the church, or at least on a substantial part of it; the same judgement which he had demanded for the incestuous man (1 Cor 5:3-5). However, at this point there is a sharp contrast with the actions of Moses: Paul chose not to return! He declares with an oath that it was to spare the people that he did not return to Corinth. He was not prepared to "rule over" their faith, for "we are fellow-workers for your joy" (2 Cor 1:23-24). He goes on to say that, had he returned, he would have left himself without comfort (2:2).

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.:33.

After taking severe disciplinary measures, Moses returned to Sinai. Interceding again for the nation he said, "But now please forgive them - but if not, then blot me also out of the book you have written" (Exod 32:32). It will be argued below that before God Paul showed a similar solidarity with the church in Corinth, even associating himself with them in their guilt; for if we accept that, by failing to discipline the offender, the church became guilty by association of his sin, then it must follow that Paul, by maintaining his association with the church, himself became guilty by association of the same sin. It will be argued, moreover, that he interpreted his "Affliction in Asia" as a divine response to this guilt; and that his despair (1:8) coincided with a conviction that the Letter of Tears had been rejected.

Moses' continued intercession led eventually to the renewal of the covenant with Israel, and his return to the camp with the second set of the tablets of the covenant (Exod 34:29-35); a passage which Paul takes up in 2 Cor 3:7-18. It will be argued that Paul's intercession also led to the repentance of the Corinthians and the restoration of their standing in the new covenant, making possible his return to Corinth.

Paul and Jeremiah

Jeremiah also went through a crisis of vocation; his message of judgement brought upon him insults, ridicule and great personal danger; indeed, he cursed the day he was born (Jer 20:18). The rejection of his message was due in large measure to the people's acceptance of the opposing oracles of false prophets (5:30-31; 14:13-16; 23:9-40). An oracle, or a series of oracles concerning these prophets is prefaced by the following lament: "My heart is broken within me; all my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD, and his holy words" (23:9).⁴⁶⁷ The following oracles call to mind at many points the situation faced by Paul in Corinth. "The land is full of adulterers", complains Yahweh. As a result, the

⁴⁶⁷ On the "my heart is broken within me" (נִשְׁבַּר לִבִּי בִקְרָבִי), D. R. Jones comments, "To say that the heart is broken is to say more than that one is inconsolably sad; it is to say that the personality is turned upside down" (D. R. Jones 1992:304).

covenantal curses have come into operation: there is a drought. Prophet and priest alike are godless, and wickedness is found even in the Temple (vv 10-11). The prophets of Samaria prophesy by Baal, and lead God's people astray (v 13); cf. Vv 27, 32: "They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name ... [they] lead my people astray with their reckless lies." Moreover, the prophets of Jerusalem commit adultery and "walk in falsehood", strengthening the hands of evildoers so that no-one repents; from these false prophets, godlessness has spread throughout the land (vv 14-15). Despite the drought, the false prophets persuaded the people that they would enjoy peace; therefore the people ignored Jeremiah's warnings and continued in their idolatry and wickedness (vv 16-20).

When Paul composed the Letter of Tears, he must have faced the possibility that his letter and the mission of Titus would fail. If we compare the situation which he would then have faced with that of Jeremiah, the parallel is quite striking.⁴⁶⁸ The false apostles in Corinth would have strengthened the hands of evil-doers so that no-one repented, and they would have succeeded in leading the Corinthians astray (cf. 2 Cor 11:3; 13-15); the church would have become convinced that they could continue in their idolatry and sexual immorality, and that no harm would come to them. Despite Paul's warnings ((1 Cor 3:16-17; 4:21; 5:6; 10:22b; 11:29-32; 15:34), and the fact that the curses of the new covenant had already begun to fall upon them (1 Cor 11:29-32), they would have continued to follow the ψευδαπόστολοι. Paul's prediction that "the leaven of malice and wickedness" would spread throughout the church (1 Cor 5:6, 8) would have come true.

Moreover, there is a dense set of close parallels between Jer 23:9-40 and the thought of 2 Cor 2:17. Paul speaks the word of God in Christ, as a man of sincerity / cultic purity, as one sent from God, and who stands in God's presence⁴⁶⁹ (ὥς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας,

⁴⁶⁸ Many of the points made here have been anticipated by Young and Ford (1987:74).

⁴⁶⁹ Renwick (1991:61-74) argues convincingly that κατέναντι θεοῦ means here "in the literal presence of God"; He is followed by Hafemann in his important monograph on 2 Cor 3 (1995), and by Scott (1996:275). However, we postpone detailed discussion of 2:17 to the next chapter.

ὥς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ). His opponents, by contrast, peddle the word of God in the market place and, we may infer, are cultically impure, are not sent from God, and do not stand in his presence. We may compare Jer 23:21; God did not send them, yet they prophesied; cf. v 32; they have not stood in God's council, or they would have proclaimed God's word to the people, and turned them from their evil ways (v 22). The true prophet, by implication, is sent by God, and stands in God's council; so Paul speaks ὥς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ. Moreover, Yahweh says "Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully" (v 28; פֶּה דִּבֶּר יְדַבֵּר דְּבַר יְיָ);⁴⁷⁰ cf. ὥς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας ... λαλοῦμεν (2:17b), the implied object being τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:17a).

Paul again compares himself with his opponents in 4:2. Unlike his opponents, he has renounced "secret and shameful ways" (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης), "not walking in craftiness" (μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ), "nor distorting the word of God" (μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ). Again, there are close parallels in Jer 23:9-40. First, ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης echoes v 24. Having denounced the false prophets, whom he has not sent, who have not stood in his council (vv 16-22), Yahweh asks, "Am I only a God nearby, and not a God far away? *Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?*" (vv 23-24). Yahweh goes on to say that he is well aware of the lies which they prophesy, in order to lead his people astray (vv 25-27, 32). Read in context, vv 23-24 imply that the prophets imagine that, since Yahweh has withdrawn, he will not come in judgement (cf. v 17); he is unaware of their evil ways. Similarly, Paul implies, his opponents plot in secret to lead astray the Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor 11:3).

⁴⁷⁰ The LXX has διηγησάσθω τὸν λόγον μου ἐπ' ἀληθείας; however, λαλέω is a close equivalent of the Hebrew דִּבֶּר, and is common in Paul; moreover, Paul closely associates εἰλικρινεία with ἀληθεία (1 Cor 5:8).

Second, *μη περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ* echoes the phrase "and walk by lies" (בשקר והלך; v 14).⁴⁷¹ The false prophets of Jerusalem commit adultery (probably in the metaphorical sense of idolatry, though perhaps also in the literal sense), and by their words and example encourage others to follow them. We have already noted how accurately this reflects the activities of Paul's opponents in Corinth. Third, *μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ* echoes Yahweh's warning that everyone's own word has become his oracle, and so they "pervert"⁴⁷² the word of the living God":

Jer 23:36.⁴⁷³ וְהִפְכַּתְם אֶת-דְּבַר יְהוָה בְּכִלְיוֹתֵיכֶם

Finally, *ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ* recalls *κατέναντι θεοῦ* (2 Cor 2:17), and the parallels mentioned above; Paul commends himself to every person's conscience in the sight (presence) of God, openly manifesting the truth; read against the background of Jer 23:9-40, he draws a stark contrast between his own faithful ministry and the lies and plots of the "false prophets" whom he opposes.

So many points of contact between Paul's comments concerning his opponents in 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2, together with the extensive parallels between the situations contemplated by Paul at the time of his composition of the Letter of Tears and the situation faced by Jeremiah as reflected in Jer 23:9-40, amounts to a strong case for literary dependence. However, Paul does not allude to the text of the LXX; indeed, he

⁴⁷¹ The root *שקר* reappears in vv 25; 32(x2), with reference to the lies of the false prophets; cf. 5:31; 6:13; 7:4, 8; 8:10; 14:14; 20:6; 27:10, 13; 29:9, 21, 23, 31. The LXX has *πορευόμενος ἐν ψεύδει*. However, though Paul never uses *πορεύομαι* in the figurative sense of "conduct oneself", but only in the literal sense "go", "travel" (Rom 15:24, 25; 1 Cor 10:27; 16:4, 6; 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 4:10); he uses *περιπατέω* frequently (and exclusively) with this sense (e.g. Rom 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 14:15; 1 Cor 3:5; 7:17).

⁴⁷² Holladay comments, "The meaning of 'pervert' (*פִּשָּׁע*), though not quite paralleled elsewhere, is not in doubt. The verb is used of the leopard 'changing' his skin in 13:23' (1986:652).

⁴⁷³ This clause is not found in the LXX. The Hebrew of Jer 23:36b is difficult; see McKane 1980. However, the general sense of this phrase is clear enough when read in the context of 23:9-36: by prophesying the delusions of their own minds (cf. vv 16, 25-26), and repeating false prophecies (vv 27, 30), everyone has made his own word the oracle of the Lord (v 36a), and so the word of God is perverted.

echoes a clause from Jer 23:36 MT which is absent from the LXX. It seems unlikely that Paul expected his Greek-speaking readers, some of whom must have been Gentiles, to be familiar with the MT original of Jer 23:9-40. On the other hand, his allusions to Jeremiah in 2 Cor 10:8 and 13:10 do reflect the language of the LXX. A possible explanation is that already, in the Letter of Tears, he had drawn an explicit comparison between his opponents and the false prophets opposed by Jeremiah. Then his allusions to the passage in 2:17 and 4:2 may in fact be intended as echoes of the Letter of Tears.⁴⁷⁴ We may at least conclude that Paul not only saw a parallel between his own ministry and that of Jeremiah, but also between his opponents and the false apostles and the false prophets who opposed Jeremiah.

Despite these many similarities, however, as has been observed already, Paul emphasises a sharp distinction between his own ministry and that of Jeremiah: it is not his task to tear down the church by proclaiming condemnation and judgement, but to build it up, by proclaiming righteousness and salvation. It has been argued that, had Paul gone to Corinth as planned, when the church was still supporting the incestuous man, he would have been faced with imposing upon the whole congregation, or a large part of it, the discipline which he had demanded for the offender himself: he would have had to "hand them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." It has been argued that this would amount to a prophetic act, proclaiming the reversal of the new exodus which brought them into the Church, and their return to spiritual exile, to the realm of Satan. This act would closely parallel Jeremiah's prophetic task of "tearing down", of pronouncing judgement on the people, that they would shortly be taken into exile.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴ It is of course possible that Paul had Jer 23 in mind, but chose not to reveal his source. However, since he has already expressed the intention of taking up again the argument of the Letter of Tears (1:13), it is more likely that he has already cited the passage. Moreover, why should he refrain from mentioning the passage explicitly, given that he did identify with Jeremiah, and that he saw the passage as having such relevance?

⁴⁷⁵ Holladay describes Jeremiah as "an anti-Moses figure" (1989:38). Though he sees his call to be that of a prophet like Moses, Jeremiah is forbidden by Yahweh from interceding for the people, and at the end of his life he is taken by the Israelites back into Egypt!

The dilemma faced by Paul was evidently this: the church was required under the new covenant to take action against certain categories of unrepentant sinners, to remove them from fellowship. Should he return to Corinth, he would have no alternative than to lead the faithful in such action (cf. 1 Cor 5:3). But because of their support of the incestuous man, which in many cases may have been related to the obligations of patronage, this would involve action being taken against such a great number that it would amount to his tearing down the church which he had built in Corinth; and a contradiction of his basic mandate, to build, not to tear down. Unlike Jeremiah, who had been told repeatedly by God that Israel would not, indeed could not repent, Paul believed that the church could be turned around. This he attempted by means of the mission of Titus with the Letter of Tears.

Paul and the Servant of Yahweh

We have seen that one thread of Paul's argument in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 involves a comparison of his own ministry with that of Moses. He argues that his own ministry is in fact far superior in glory to that of Moses, in that he ministers a far superior covenant (3:7-11). The covenant which Moses ministered, the old covenant, could bring only condemnation and death, but Paul's ministry of the new covenant brings righteousness and life. It has been suggested that Paul saw his role in relation to the church in Corinth as comparable with that of Moses in relation to Israel, and the church as a covenantal ("neo-Levitical") community, closely analogous to Israel. This understanding governed his response to the case of the incestuous man (1 Cor 5:1-13), and the ensuing crisis. In conformity with Deuteronomic law, the church was to expel the incestuous offender by a formal act of the congregation, returning him to exile in "Babylon" in order that he might ultimately be saved, and the holiness of the church restored (1 Cor 5:3-8, 13).

Paul's portrayal of himself as a Moses-like figure suggests the possibility that he identifies with the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh, the leader of the Second Exodus.⁴⁷⁶ Indeed, Jones has argued persuasively that already in 1 Cor 3:5-16, Paul has identified his ministry with that of the Servant.⁴⁷⁷ Paul "plants" (ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, v 6), and as a master-builder (ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων) he lays a foundation (θεμέλιον ἔθηκα, v 10). This language echoes the words of Yahweh to the Servant; MT Isaiah 51:16 may be translated:

So I have put my words in your mouth,
and in the shadow of my hand I hid you,
*to plant heavens and to found earth*⁴⁷⁸
and to say to Zion:
you are my people.⁴⁷⁹

As Jones points out, the verb נָחַם, "found", is used three verses earlier, and frequently elsewhere of God's creation of the earth,⁴⁸⁰ but in 51:16 the reference is to the work of the one addressed, Yahweh's agent in a new act of creation.⁴⁸¹ Given the exilic return context of Isaiah 51:16, Paul would presumably have understood the passage in terms

⁴⁷⁶ Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah portrays the eschatological return to the Land of the faithful remnant of exiled Israel as a second Exodus; see Isaiah 11:15-16; 35:1-10; 40:3-11; 41:17-20; 42:14-16; 43:1-3, 16-21; 44:24-28; 48:20-21; 49:8-13; 51:1-13; 52:11-12 (cf. Stuhlmüller:66-73; 82-94 and Dumbrell 1985:15-18; 97, cited by Beale 1989:555; Watts 1987:81); cf. Jer 31:2; 9, 21; Ezekiel 20:33-38. The role of the Servant as a second Moses is almost explicit in Isa 49, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the survivors of Israel ... I have kept you and given you as a covenant of people (בְּרִית עַם), to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages ..." (vv 6, 8, NRSV). Cf. Jones 1973:118-37 (unfortunately I have not seen this dissertation). The expression בְּרִית עַם is difficult; see Stern 1994:226 n 8. Webb suggests that it is a metonymy of effect for cause, hence "mediator of the covenant" [to/for the nations] (Webb 1993:138 n 1. If our exegesis of 2 Cor 6:2 is correct, then there is a case for suggesting that Paul read it this way.

⁴⁷⁷ Jones 1974:221-2.

⁴⁷⁸ לִנְחֵם שָׁמַיִם וְלִיסֵד אֶרֶץ; the LXX has ἐν ἧ ἔστησα τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐθεμελίωσα τὴν γῆν.

⁴⁷⁹ Translation Watts 1987p 208.

⁴⁸⁰ E.g. Ps 24:2; 78:69; 89:12; 102:26; 104:5, 8; Prov 3:19; Isa 48:13.

⁴⁸¹ Watts comments, 'A similar phrase in the Vision has become a standard way of describing Yahweh's work of creation. It uses נָחַם "stretch out" while here the verb is נָחַם "plant". In the other instances God acts alone, using no agent. Here the one he has hidden in the shadow of his hand is his agent.' (Watts 1987:212). Watts identifies this agent as Darius, but it seems likely, given his new covenant / return theology, that Paul would have identified him simply as an eschatological figure, the *Ebed Yahweh*.

of the planting and founding of the Church, the eschatological people of God.⁴⁸² The language of "building" and "planting" also occurs in Jer 31:27-28, and in Ezek 36:36, in each case in the context of Yahweh's new covenant promise of the replanting and rebuilding of Israel.⁴⁸³ Jones rightly concludes that in 1 Cor 3:6 "Paul is affirming his eschatological role in establishing the terms and content of the *New Covenant*."⁴⁸⁴ The influence of new covenant traditions in 1 Cor 3:5-16 is confirmed by the imagery of the church as God's temple in which the Spirit dwells (v 16).⁴⁸⁵

As has been noted, Lane argues that in 2 Cor 6:2 Paul explicitly identifies himself with the Servant. On the OT context of Isa 49:8 Lane comments,

The presence of the servant among the Gentiles is the pledge that God has graciously extended the blessings of the covenant to them. If the people persist in displaying contempt for God and his messenger, however, God will vindicate his servant by dealing severely with them.⁴⁸⁶

Thus Lane takes 2 Cor 6:2b, ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας, as a warning to the Corinthians:

Paul found in this recital of the call, disparagement, and vindication of the servant in Isaiah 49 a paradigm for his relationship with the Corinthians. He is the servant of the Lord who has been 'deeply despised and abhorred' by the Gentiles, whose labours at Corinth appear to have been 'for nothing'. But he warns the Corinthians that the time of God's tolerance of insubordination is past (2 Cor 6:2b, 'now is the day of vindication'). Paul will be vindicated as God's servant among the Gentiles because his presence mediates the covenant for the Corinthians in the same measure as the servant of Isaiah 49 was the pledge of the divine

⁴⁸² Cf. Jones 1974:221.. Jones also offers cogent argument that 1 Cor 3:10 echoes the thought of Prov 3:29-30; "as Christ, the Wisdom of God ... had laid the foundations of the earth, so Paul, the apostle of Christ, with Christ's authority, was laying the foundation of the new creation understood as the people of God." (ibid.).

⁴⁸³ Ibid.; cf. The use of the verb עָבַד in 2 Sam 7:10, in the context of the Davidic covenant.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. Emphasis his.

⁴⁸⁵ See discussion of 2 Cor 6:16-18 below, Chapter 7.

⁴⁸⁶ Lane 1982:19.

covenant with Israel. Failure to recognise this would only expose the Corinthians to the experience of rejection by God.⁴⁸⁷

However, the motif of the punishment of those who reject the Servant is absent from Isaiah 49, and it is doubtful that ἡμέρα σωτηρίας has the sense "day of vindication". As Beale points out, Isa 49:8 is an explicit reference to Israel's restoration; the "favourable time" and the "day of salvation" are explained to be the time of coming restoration.⁴⁸⁸ In the context of Isa 49, the Servant will be vindicated, not by the punishment of the people, but by their restoration to the Land (that is, the restoration of the faithful remnant), and by the extension of salvation, through the Servant's ministry, to the Gentiles. Thus, Paul's appeal to the Corinthians is based not on a threat, but on God's grace. Reading the LXX aorists (ἐπήκουσά; ἐβοήθησά) as prophetic perfects,⁴⁸⁹ Paul cites Isa 49:8a as an eschatological promise of help and salvation which is now being fulfilled in his own ministry. Like the Servant, who feared that in his ministry to Israel he had laboured in vain (Isa 49:4), Paul had feared that his ministry to the Corinthians had come to nothing. But through the Letter of Tears and the mission of Titus, God had helped his servant Paul, grieving the Corinthians so that they repented (7:8-11). Thereby an opportunity had been created for reconciliation with God which the church must not be missed (5:20-6:1), for "now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation."

Paul's identification with the Servant seems to be confirmed by the language of 6:3-10, which is syntactically bound to 6:1:⁴⁹⁰ for as Renwick observes, the Suffering Servant of Isa 52:13-53:12 was also "filled with ἄτιμος, πληγή, παιδεία and the lack of visible δόξα

⁴⁸⁷ Lane 1982:19-20.

⁴⁸⁸ Beale 1989:561.

⁴⁸⁹ Webb 1993:139-40.

⁴⁹⁰ As Webb rightly says, "Syntactically, the two participial phrases in 6:3-4a, σ μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπὴν and ἐν παντὶ συνίσταντες ἑαυτούς, provide the means by which Paul continues to make his appeal - παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς (6:1). The "catalogue of sufferings" to follow (6:4b-10) ... specifies and illustrates the more general ἐν μηδενὶ / ἐν παντί in the controlling statements of 6:3-4a." (1993:145). Moreover, ἡ διακονία (6:3) and θεοῦ διάκονοι (6:4) pick up διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς (5:18; Barnett 1997:321).

(cf. LXX Isa 52:14; 53:4, 5 with 2 Cor 6:5, 8, 9).⁴⁹¹ Moreover, ὡς ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, ὡς παιδευόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι (6:9) clearly echoes LXX Ps 117:17-18:⁴⁹² οὐκ ἀποθανοῦμαι, ἀλλὰ ζήσομαι καὶ ἐκδιηγῆσομαι τὰ ἔργα κυρίου. παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέν με ὁ κύριος καὶ τῷ θανάτῳ οὐ παρέδωκέν με ("I shall not die but live, and recount the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sore, but he has not given me up to death.").⁴⁹³ There is general agreement that the Psalm

reflects the cultic experience of Israel and that its theme concerns the figure of a king who corporately represents the people undergoing affliction by the nations. In spite of the affliction Israel was not annihilated (vv 10-13) because God's strength was with them (vv 14-18). While Israel was rejected by the nations, God had chosen them to be His people and would preserve them as "the head cornerstone" to fulfil his purposes (v 22). Verses 17-18 emphasize that Israel would "not die" as a result of their affliction "but live"; God has "severely disciplined" the nation but had "not given her up to death".⁴⁹⁴

Beale suggests that Paul may have deduced that this part of the Psalm had the exile in mind and woven this reference into his argument. "If so, he was generally applying the reference to himself in analogical fashion to show that just as the Israelites persevered through the suffering of exile, so Paul's perseverance in suffering demonstrated that he was also a true Israelite and genuine partaker of restoration blessings".⁴⁹⁵ However, the analogy may be more specific than this. The identification of the King of Ps 118 with the Servant might well have been suggested to the apostle as he meditated upon Isa 49:8b, which he quotes a few verses earlier (6:2):

וביום ישועה עזרתִיךָ

"in the day of salvation I will help you"

⁴⁹¹ Renwick 1991:83-84 n 40; it is assumed, of course, that Paul identified the sufferer of Isa 52:13-53:12 with the Servant of Isa 49.

⁴⁹² Harvey 1996:25; cf. Furnish 1984:347

⁴⁹³ Tr. Brenton.

⁴⁹⁴ Beale 1989:577-78

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

Gezerah shewah may then have suggested this identification, for Ps 118:5 reads, “In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered (עָנַנִי) by setting me free,” and vv 13-14 read “I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me (עֲזָרָנִי); the LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation (יְשׁוּעָה)”. Since Paul describes his own sufferings, as well as those of the Corinthians, as a participation in τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 1:5; cf. Phil 3:10),⁴⁹⁶ it is also worth noting that in early Christian tradition Christ is frequently identified both with the king who speaks in Psalm 118 (117),⁴⁹⁷ and also with the Isaianic Servant.⁴⁹⁸

It will be argued below that in fact Paul alludes to these figures, and also to that of the righteous sufferer of Psalm 69,⁴⁹⁹ as corporate representatives of Israel; by analogy, he saw himself as suffering during the crisis as a corporate representative of the Corinthian church.

Finally, it appears that in 2 Cor 6:11a Paul alludes once more to the Servant of Yahweh, for τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κορίνθιοι seems to echo LXX Isa 53:7, καὶ αὐτὸς διὰ τὸ κεκακῶσθαι οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα. If so, then Paul would be indicating in 6:11 that he had in fact deviated even from this paradigm: the Servant had remained silent concerning his sufferings, but Paul had spoken out concerning his, to the Corinthians. He had been forced by their criticism to commend himself as a true apostle who, through his sufferings, manifests the presence and power of Christ.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. also 2:14, θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ χριστῷ (2 Cor 2:14); χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν (2:15); νέκρωσιν τοῦ ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες (4:10); as will be shown, in each of these passages Paul describes his own sufferings in terms of a participation in the sufferings of Christ.

⁴⁹⁷ Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7.

⁴⁹⁸ Matt 8:17; 12:18-21 (quoting Isa 42:1-4); Luke 22:37; Acts 8:33-35; 1 Peter 2:22

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. Paul's application of Psalm 69:10(9) to the sufferings of Christ, Rom 15:3; cf. also his application of the related text Ps 44:23(22) to the sufferings of the Church, Rom 8:36. Psalm 69, which was widely regarded in early Christian tradition as “messianic”, appears to create a metaphor in which “the suffering of the community is expressed and focused in the suffering of one individual who is more than likely to be the king” (Croft 1987:117). The same could be said of Psalm 44, which is also set in the Exile, and of the Fourth Servant Song, Isa 52:13-53:12. It will be argued below that at the time of the Corinthian Crisis Paul identified with the sufferer of Psalm 69.

⁵⁰⁰ For further discussion of 2 Cor 6:11a, see below, :218..

Conclusion

We have noted three possible paradigms for Paul's ministry to the Corinthians during the period in which he composed the Letter of Tears, each of which he draws upon in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4: Moses on Sinai, when the people made and worshipped before the golden calf (Exod 32:1-35); Jeremiah, when he was opposed by false prophets (Jer 23:9-40); and the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh. It has been noted that Paul compares his call and ministry with that of Moses (2 Cor 2:16b; 3:5, 6, 7-18), but argues that his ministry is in fact quite different in its effects. Moreover, though Moses returned to the camp and inflicted a severe punishment on the people, Paul had elected not to return to Corinth, for he did not wish to use his authority to punish the church. Evidence has also been cited that Paul saw in the description of the false prophets in Jer 23:9-40 a paradigm for the ministry of his opponents (2:17; 4:2), and it has been conjectured that in the Letter of Tears he drew upon this analogy. It has also been shown that in 2:17; 4:2 Paul presents himself, over against his opponents, as a true prophet/apostle. However, Paul also saw an important difference between his ministry and that of Jeremiah: he had been commissioned not to tear down the church, but to build it up (though he did have the prophetic authority to punish offenders). Hence his decision to stay away from Corinth was not taken on purely emotional grounds. Though he had the authority to do it, to tear down the church he had built in Corinth would have contradicted his basic mandate: he had been commissioned to build, not to tear down; to proclaim salvation, not to pronounce judgement. He was a servant not of the old covenant, but of the new.

It has also been suggested that in his role as apostle to the Corinthians Paul identifies, almost without reservation, with the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh (6:2, 3-10, 11), a Second Moses figure and the leader of the Second Exodus. He quotes LXX Isa 49:8 in 2 Cor 6:2, openly identifying himself with the Servant, and in 6:11a appears to allude to LXX Isa 53:7; the catalogue of his sufferings in 6:4-10 also contains language which recalls the Fourth Servant Song.

3. Patte's Structural Exegesis of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4

We have argued that 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 has been carefully set in the context of Paul's sufferings and extreme anxiety as he awaited the return of Titus with the Corinthians' response to the Letter of Tears. We have also argued that in this passage Paul picks up certain elements of that letter, in order to give fuller grounds for the confidence he expresses in 1:14, as well as to ground the appeals he makes in 5:14-7:4. Our hypotheses concerning the overall theme of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 are based on observations concerning the OT context of certain quotations, allusions and echoes, in the light of our reconstruction of the historical development of the Corinthian crisis. We now turn to Patte's structural exegesis of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4.⁵⁰¹ Patte uses A. J. Greimas's semiotic theory,⁵⁰² a high-level grammar which deals with the overall structure and organisation of a text. Patte defines structural exegesis as follows:

Historico-critical exegesis calls upon extra-textual data to elucidate and reconstruct the author's and the readers' points of view and their interaction in the Discourse. For the same purpose, structural exegesis seeks to reconstruct these two points of view on the basis of intra-textual relations.⁵⁰³

It will be argued that Patte's results are unconvincing; however, his methods will enable us to impose an important control on our historico-critical methods, and to elucidate the main themes of the passage.

The argument of the passage is highly metaphorical.⁵⁰⁴ In order to communicate with his readers, Patte argues, Paul must begin with images which draw upon the presumed knowledge and point of view of his readers. He must then thoroughly integrate images which express his reader's point of view with images which express his own point of

⁵⁰¹ Patte 1987.

⁵⁰² Greimas and Courtés 1982; 1985.

⁵⁰³ Patte 1987:24.

⁵⁰⁴ See Patte 1987:40 n 45.

view.⁵⁰⁵ In this way he hopes to alter his readers' perspective; Paul's point of view will ultimately contradict that of his readers.⁵⁰⁶ Patte argues that 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 is "a complete discursive unit"; its theme is found posited in the introduction, and is found again, though in "an inverted form", in the conclusion.⁵⁰⁷ The "inversion" of the theme is expressed particularly in contrasting parallelisms and, since the text deals with religious convictions, in oppositions of actions.⁵⁰⁸

Patte identifies the introduction of the passage as 2:14-3:6,⁵⁰⁹ and the conclusion as 6:11-7:4. The decisive shift in perspective occurs in 6:11-13. In 6:11 Paul deals with the ministers' responsibility in the relationship ministers-believers (cf. 2:14-3:6), whereas in 6:13 he deals with the responsibility of believers in this relationship (cf. 6:14-7:4).⁵¹⁰ In 2:14-3:6 Paul is centred upon "ministers and how they affect and are affected by this relationship"; 7:2-4 (in fact, 6:13-7:4) centres on "believers, and how they affect and are affected by this relationship."⁵¹¹

Patte claims that the theme of the passage is presented and then inverted in the following contrasting parallelisms:

1. In 2 Cor 2:17 Paul defends himself against the accusation of being a "peddler of God's word", emphasising the "sincere" character of his ministry: he is not a *bad minister*, in 7:2b he states that his ministry has had *no ill effect on the believers*.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁵ "Paul presents himself in a certain way to his readers, as 'the *enunciator*, constructed and inscribed in this specific discourse'. Similarly, Paul envisions his readers, the Corinthians, as '*enunciatee*, constructed and inscribed in this discourse'. If the discourse does have an overall coherence and unity, then Paul hopes to 'achieve some kind of effects upon the readers, and this through the overall organisation of the discourse and its figurativization" (ibid.).

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Patte 1987:25.

⁵⁰⁸ Patte 1987:32, and the literature cited there.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Furnish 1984:185, who takes 2:14-3:6 to be introductory to 3:7-5:19.

⁵¹⁰ Patte 1987:26. Patte does not assume the integrity of 6:14-7:1, however; rather, he argues that the rhetorical structure *requires* the fragment in the conclusion, in order to complete the inversion of the theme statement in the introduction.

⁵¹¹ Patte 1987:26.

⁵¹² Ibid.

2. In 3:1 Paul deals with the *assessment of the value of ministers* in the minister-believer relationship (Paul needs no letter of recommendation); in 7:3a he deals with *the value of the believers* in that relationship (Paul does not condemn his readers).
3. In 3:2-3 Paul emphasises the *beneficial effects for the ministers of the relationship* (the readers are in his heart,⁵¹³ they are his letter of recommendation, known and read by all people everywhere); in 7:3bc he emphasises *the beneficial effects for the believers* of the relationship (they are in Paul's heart, to die together and to live together).
4. In 3:4 Paul speaks of his confidence in *his own competence as a minister*, in 7:4 he speaks of his confidence in *the Corinthians as believers*.
5. In 2:14 Paul expresses euphoria in thanksgiving to God, who leads him in his ministry; in 7:4b he speaks of the joy which he derives from the results of his ministry to the believers in Corinth.

Patte suggests that

one of the main characteristics of the overall theme of 2:14-7:4 is the transformation of the readers' view of the ministry as fully centred on ministers to a view of the ministry as a reciprocal relationship between ministers and believers as partners with similar status.⁵¹⁴

He also notes a further parallelism which does not appear to fit into the same class as the other five:

6. In 2:15-16a, 3:6 death and life are presented as two contrasting outcomes of ministries; in 7:3c death and life are presented as normal parts of the shared experience of ministers and believers.⁵¹⁵ "Death" and "life" are used metaphorically in 2 Cor 2:14-3:6, referring to more than physical death and life. In 2:14-3:6 and 7:2-4

⁵¹³ Hence Patte rightly rejects the ὑμῶν reading in 3:2. This point will be discussed below.

⁵¹⁴ Patte 1987:29; cf. 2 Cor 1:13-14.

⁵¹⁵ Patte 1987:29-30.

“death” is used as a metaphor for negative effects of a ministry.⁵¹⁶ Patte notes that the phrases “from death to death” and “from life to life” in 2:16 could be taken as expressing the opposite effects of bad and of good ministries, that is, ministries that have their origins in death and in life respectively. He considers the possibility that (in Paul’s view) the Corinthians rejected Paul because they perceived themselves as suffering the death-like effects of a bad ministry.⁵¹⁷ Since in 7:2b Paul denies that his ministry has harmed the Corinthians, it would appear that part of his objective in the Discourse is to demonstrate that they were mistaken on this point. However, in the context of 2:15-16a, Paul is saying that his good ministry (cf. 2:14) does indeed bring about death (or death-like effects) for one group of people, (οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι), but life for another group (οἱ σωζόμενοι).

A single thing is clear: one of the effects of the overall discourse is to transform radically the perception of death and life as they relate to ministers and believers.⁵¹⁸

Patte suggests that Paul aims to persuade the Corinthians that the issue should be viewed in the following threefold way:⁵¹⁹

1. Death can indeed be viewed as the result of bad ministries. This is confirmed by 3:6.⁵²⁰ Paul denies that his ministry is a bad ministry (2:17-3:6).
2. Death can be viewed as one of the outcomes of a good ministry, (besides life; 2:15-16a); death is the outcome for those who do not become believers. To be more precise, death is the outcome for those who consider that the origin of Paul’s ministry is in death, and life for those who consider the origin of his ministry to be in

⁵¹⁶ Patte 1987:30 n 20.

⁵¹⁷ Patte 1987:29; cf. 1 Cor 11:30.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Patte 1987:29-30.

⁵²⁰ ‘Indeed, he affirms (with his readers) that a ministry characterised by a “bad” competence (“the letter”, γράμμα, 3:6, i.e. a competence “not from God”) brings death.’ (p 39) .

life.⁵²¹ In 7:2-4, Paul expresses his confidence that his ministry has brought life to the Corinthians.

3. Death can be viewed as a normal part of the experience of both ministers and believers (7:3c).⁵²²

7. Finally, Patte also notes that one strongly emphasised point in the introduction (2:14-3:6) is not mentioned in 7:2-4, namely, that the competence of a minister is proper only when, both in its origin⁵²³ and its orientation,⁵²⁴ it is "equal" with (ἰκανός), matches or fits the minister's vocation, that is, the fundamental character of the ministry as "cultic (εὐωδία) ministry (διάκονος) of God's word".⁵²⁵

If the pattern of contrasting parallelisms is correct, a similar point should be found in the conclusion concerning believers. This is indeed found, Patte claims, in 6:14-7:1.⁵²⁶

Patte finds that 2:14-3:6 and 6:11-7:4 are each complete discursive subunits of 2:14-7:4. The central problem raised by the introduction concerns "the Corinthians' negative evaluation of Paul's ministry as having negative effects for people (and especially for the Corinthians themselves) because it is governed by a bad competence."⁵²⁷ The central theme of the Discourse Patte summarises as follows:

From Paul's perspective, the Corinthians' hostility towards him and his ministry is based upon a fundamental misunderstanding of this relationship ultimately based upon their lack of recognition that their vocation as believers is basically identical with the vocation of the minister. As Paul is, they should be a burnt-offering (εὐωδία) through which God (or Christ, or the Spirit) manifests the knowledge of

⁵²¹ Patte 1987:32-34.

⁵²² Patte 197:49.

⁵²³ ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ἐκ θεοῦ, 2:17; 3:4; cf. ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (3:5).

⁵²⁴ The ministers are acceptable to God (εὐωδία, 2:15) 'because, as the smoke of a holocaust rises toward God, they are themselves "orientated toward God," τῷ θεῷ (p 39); κατέναντι θεοῦ, 2:17, that is, motivated not by financial gain, but by a desire to serve God (p 34); cf. πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 3:4.

⁵²⁵ Patte 1987:39.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.; '6:14-7:1 repeatedly underscores through a series of rhetorical questions that faithful believers cannot be "mismatched" with that which is not "equal" to their vocation' (pp 39-40).

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

the glory of God in the face of Christ (cf. 2:14-15 and 4:6). Consequently, together with Paul they should be ready to die, manifesting in their bodies the death of Jesus, as well as to live, manifesting in their bodies the life and glory of Jesus the Christ.⁵²⁸

However, the conclusion of the Discourse, 6:11-7:4, has little to say regarding the need for the Corinthians to be "ready to die, manifesting in their bodies the death of Jesus". Paul says that *he* is ready to die with them (7:3c), but he does not call upon them to be ready to die with him. Indeed, following 2 Cor 4:10-11, to which Patte alludes here, Paul concludes, "So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you." He does not invite the Corinthians to join him in suffering, but claims that his sufferings are producing life in them (cf. 1:5, "If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation." We must conclude that, though he has established that 6:11-7:4 does return to the themes of the Introduction, 2:14-3:6, and that a number of contrasting parallelisms may be identified, Patte has not entirely succeeded in elucidating the overall theme of the Discourse.

Patte's identification of 2:14-3:6 and 6:11-7:4 as complete discursive subunits, respectively the Introduction and Conclusion of the Discourse, suggests that a detailed analysis of these passages *in the light of our reconstruction* should in each case reveal contrasting parallelisms which in turn will reveal their respective themes; moreover, comparing the Introduction and the Conclusion of the Discourse should then reveal contrasting parallelisms which in turn will throw light on the overall theme of the Discourse.

4. Conclusion

It has been argued that, leaving aside the issue of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 is probably not an interpolation, but is integral to the argument of 2 Cor 1-7. The passage has been carefully set in the context of Paul's extreme anxiety as he awaited news from

⁵²⁸ Patte 1987:49

Corinth of the reception of the Letter of Tears, and takes up issues raised by that letter. Following William Lane, it has been argued that Paul draws upon the biblical accounts of crises of vocation in the ministries of Moses, Jeremiah and the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh as he interprets his own recent experience. It has also been argued that he saw a close parallel between the false prophets of Jer 23:9-40 and the false apostles. Finally, Patte's analysis of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 suggests that detailed exegetical studies of 2 Cor 2:14-3:6 and 6:11-7:4 may shed further light on the function and argument of the passage. To these passages we now turn.

Chapter 6

The Argument of 2 Cor 2:14-3:6

Following Patte's lead, but also making full use of our reconstruction, it will now be argued that 2:14-3:6 does indeed form a complete literary subunit, consisting of an introductory statement (2:14), followed by a chiasmic structure (2:15-3:6); it will be shown that the theme of the passage is indeed revealed clearly in contrasting parallelisms. For convenience the passage will be examined in three sections: 2:14-17; 3:1-3; 3:4-6. The chiasmic structure will be demonstrated when 3:4-6 is considered. The overall argument of the passage will then be considered.

1. The argument of 2 Cor 2:14-17

The passage opens with a thanksgiving: τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. The words θρίαμβος, θριαμβεύω, which derive from the Latin *triumphus*, *triumphare*, always refer specifically to the Roman triumphal procession (*pompa triumphalis*).⁵²⁹ A search of the TLG has revealed that in most instances the verb is used intransitively, and has the meaning "to celebrate [by means of a triumph] a prior victory".⁵³⁰ The verb is on occasion used transitively, however, as in 2 Cor 2:14,⁵³¹ and

⁵²⁹ 'In Paul's Rome-dominated world, *triumphus*, *triumphare*, *triumphator* and the Greek equivalents must have been terms as common as *World Series* or *championship bout* in our American world, and there is no need to abandon the original colouring here.' (Bartling 1951:886f; quoted by McDonald 1983:35).s

⁵³⁰ Breytenbach 1990:264, cf. LSJ s.v. θριαμβεύω II.1.

in such cases the accusative object always refers to the conquered enemy, and never to the conquering forces or their associates.⁵³² Breytenbach argues persuasively that, when the accusative object is a person, the sense is "to celebrate by means of a triumph a victory over".⁵³³ There are four known instances of the passive form of the transitive verb; in three of these the context makes clear that the sense is "to be lead in the [triumphal] procession",⁵³⁴ but in one instance, Plutarch *Vita Antonii* 84.4.7, the sense is "to be the reason for the celebration of a triumph",⁵³⁵ the accusative object of the verb being the deceased (and buried) Anthony. Although scholars have suggested other senses for θριαμβεύω in 2 Cor 2:14, the linguistic evidence is unequivocal.⁵³⁶ If Paul is drawing upon the imagery of a triumphal procession, then he is portraying God as always celebrating by means of a triumph a prior victory in which Paul himself was defeated. The complex imagery must therefore include an allusion to Paul's conversion and call on the road to Damascus.⁵³⁷

⁵³¹ The only other occurrence of the verb in the NT is in Col 2:15, ἀπεκδυσάμενος ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ, θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ. This text is notoriously difficult, since it hinges on the meaning of ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις, which in turn depends upon the polemical situation (see e.g. O'Brien 1982:129-32). Due to the lack of consensus as to its meaning, this passage cannot at present assist in the interpretation of 2 Cor 2:14.

⁵³² Hafemann 1986:34.

⁵³³ Breytenbach 1990:262; against Williamson 1968:319, who argues that in every known case the sense is "to lead as a conquered enemy in a victory procession".

⁵³⁴ Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 494.3; Strabo *Geog.* 12.3.6.12; 7.1.4.20.

⁵³⁵ Breytenbach 1990:263-64.

⁵³⁶ Barrett, for example, translates, "who goes always at our head in a triumphal progress in Christ" (cf. NJB), commenting (1973:98), "Notwithstanding the lack of supporting lexical evidence it is right to follow L.S., Allo, and Kümmel in taking Paul to represent himself as one of the victorious general's soldiers sharing in the glory of his triumph." The verb has also been translated, "causes us to triumph" (AV; BAGD s.v. 2); BAGD mistakenly cites Ctesias, *Pers.* 13; see Williamson 1968:320; Egan 1977:36; the verb is concerned with the celebration of a prior victory, not with the victory itself (O'Brien 1982:128). P. Marshall (1983) argues that Paul uses the verb as a metaphor of social shame: "the idea of shame is inseparable from the notion of the prisoners being on display and it is difficult to dissociate ideas of display from the triumphal march" (pp 307-08). But as Marshall himself admits, there is no evidence of the existence of such a metaphorical sense of the verb as early as the first century A.D. (pp 306, 316; Breytenbach 1990:259), though the verb ἐκθριαμβίζω does appear in a papyrus dated to 14 B.C. (BGU 1061) with the sense "make widely known"; perhaps even "become a public scandal" (Egan 1977:41f). It is not impossible that θριαμβεύω had developed a similar sense; but the fact remains that the evidence is lacking. Moreover, as Egan points out, several Greek verbs meaning 'display, manifest, expose, etc.' developed the pejorative sense of "shame publicly, disgrace", without ever meaning "triumph" (παραδειγματίζω, κατασχύνω, πομπεύω); (1977:54 n 51, citing Lampe and LSJ). In view of the availability of these alternatives, it is surely significant that Paul chose a verb which has strong associations with the Roman triumph.

⁵³⁷ Correctly e.g. Meyer 1879:180-81. As Hafemann says, "a triumphal procession, without a prior triumph, is inconceivable" (1986:34).

Triumphal processions culminated in the prisoners, or a representative sample of them, being put to death.⁵³⁸ The role of the prisoners in the procession was “to reveal the power and might of the victor by illustrating the strength of those conquered ... to provide an *a-fortiori* argument for the strength of the victor.”⁵³⁹ In view of Paul’s zealous pre-conversion persecution of the church (1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6), this aspect of the imagery would make good sense. Later in his argument, in 2 Cor 5:14a, Paul exclaims, ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς. The verb συνέχω probably has here the sense “to take or hold captive”;⁵⁴⁰ hence by 5:14 it is clear that Paul considers himself to have been conquered and held captive *by the love of Christ*,⁵⁴¹ and with hindsight, therefore, he sees himself as a willing participant in the divine triumphal procession. Moreover, the Roman triumphal procession was “an act of worship through which the benevolence of the deity was glorified and revealed”;⁵⁴² and Paul undoubtedly understood his defeat by God in conversion as a great act of divine benevolence. However, Hafemann stakes the imagery to its logical conclusion, arguing that “Paul pictured himself as one of God’s *previously conquered enemies*, who, as a slave of Christ (δοῦλος Χριστοῦ), was now, to take the image in its most specific meaning, *being led by God to death* in order that he might display or reveal the majesty, power and glory of his conqueror.”⁵⁴³ Egan speaks for many scholars in stating that “the concept of God defeating his apostle as if he were an enemy” is “scarcely tenable”⁵⁴⁴ This objection is not without force, despite the claim of P. Marshall that Egan fails to take account of Paul’s description of himself as having been made God’s slave (1 Cor 9:16-18; Gal 1:10);⁵⁴⁵ for Paul’s description of himself as a slave of Christ does not involve necessarily strongly negative

⁵³⁸ Hafemann 1986:33.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Duff 1991:86-87.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Hafemann 1995:40.

⁵⁴² Hafemann 1986:54; see also:22-40.

⁵⁴³ Häfemann 1986:34-35, italics his. The metaphor does assume Paul’s prior conversion, however, for as Hafemann says, ‘a triumphal procession, without a prior triumph, is inconceivable’ (ibid.).

⁵⁴⁴ Egan 1977:37.

⁵⁴⁵ P. Marshall 1983:312.

connotations. In Graeco-Roman culture a high-ranking slave of a rich and powerful master enjoyed quite high social status.⁵⁴⁶

Because of these difficulties Breytenbach rejects Hafemann's interpretation, taking 2 Cor 2:14 to have the sense that God is always celebrating by means of a triumphal procession his prior victory over Paul. Paul's role in the divine procession is not that of a prisoner in chains, but that of an incense bearer.⁵⁴⁷

It is clear that in the case of the θρίαμβος the whole procession spread the smell of burning incense and cinnamon along the route. If one looks carefully at verses 14b-16a it is clear that it is not only Paul, but Paul's missionary activity which is compared with the ὄσμή or the εὐωδία. The triumphal procession is a metaphor for Paul's apostolic activity.⁵⁴⁸

However, tensions remain, for according to Appian the incense bearers, being closest to the *triumphator*, were among the most honoured participants in the procession,⁵⁴⁹ they would be not captured prisoners, nor slaves, but high-ranking victors.

The victorious general would ride in a *quadriga*, a two-wheeled chariot drawn by four horses or, occasionally, by four elephants; moreover, Roman imperial coins frequently bore images of the Emperor riding in a triumphal chariot, so that the image was familiar throughout the Empire.⁵⁵⁰ Scott argues persuasively that the image of God leading Paul in triumphal procession would have evoked the image of God riding on his throne-chariot (מרכבה), the chariot described in Ezek 1:4-28, which was traditionally understood to be drawn by the four living creatures.⁵⁵¹ Paul therefore portrays himself

⁵⁴⁶ D. B. Martin 1990; especially:15-42; 50-85.

⁵⁴⁷ For the use of incense in triumphal processions see Breytenbach 1990:266-68, who cites Appian *Lib* 292; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *AntRom* 7.72.13; Ovid *Fasti* 3.731, and various depictions of triumphal processions in ancient art. Talbert cites Horace *Odes* 4.2.50-51; Appian *Punic Wars* 66.

⁵⁴⁸ Breytenbach 1990:269. Cf. Carr 1981:62-63; Talbert 1987:141, quoted below.

⁵⁴⁹ *Punica* 66; cited by Carr 1981:63

⁵⁵⁰ Scott 1996:264.

⁵⁵¹ Scott 1996:266-68.

(whether as prisoner or incense bearer) as constantly (πάντοτε) in the literal presence of God.

As has already been mentioned, according to semiotic theory, in order to communicate effectively with his readers Paul must begin with images which draw upon the presumed knowledge and point of view of his readers. We should therefore consider the possibility that Paul introduces the *triumphus* imagery in order to “characterise his opponents' claims about him ... a man led by God to his death.”⁵⁵² If so, then we may be sure that Paul intends to develop this initial imagery by combining it with other metaphors, in order to represent his own position. He does not deny that he suffers as he carries on his ministry; his intention would be to reinterpret his sufferings: they are not due to divine judgement, but form an integral part of his ministry. Duff argues persuasively that the “triumphal procession” imagery “functions like a riddle, whose purpose is to leave the mind ‘in sufficient doubt about the precise application to tease it into active thought’.”⁵⁵³

Paul begins immediately his clarification of his *triumphus* metaphor with a second participial clause, καὶ τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι’ ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ. According to McDonald, “the Greek mind would associate incense much more readily with religious processions in general than Roman triumphs in particular.”⁵⁵⁴ If so, then it is significant that in the Graeco-Roman world an epiphany procession of a deity could be, and often was metaphorically portrayed as a triumphal procession.⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, “the verb φανερόω (2:14b) accurately describes the primary function of the epiphany procession. This type of procession presented to onlookers the manifestation of the

⁵⁵² Duff 1991:82-83.

⁵⁵³ Duff 1993:167; the quote is from Dodd. Cf.. Patte 1987:31.

⁵⁵⁴ McDonald 1983:39; quoted by Duff 1991:88 n 39.

⁵⁵⁵ Duff 1991:83; see:83-86. The evidence is from ancient art, and Duff does not cite a literary metaphor involving the verb θριαμβεύειν. However, Paul's literary metaphor would surely have been clear enough in Roman Corinth.

deity in one form or another.”⁵⁵⁶ Thus Duff rightly maintains that Paul is here taking advantage of the “tensive” nature of the θριαμβεύω metaphor:⁵⁵⁷

Accordingly, in 2 Cor 2:14b, Paul ties the verb φανερόω with an allusion to Graeco-Roman epiphany processions. Just as those processions featured aromatic substances such as incense or scented oil whose function was to indicate to those present the epiphany of the deity, so Paul depicts his evangelising efforts as the manifestation of “the scent of [God’s] knowledge.” But Paul is not content merely to portray his role with imagery from the epiphany procession of his time. Rather, he juxtaposes the image of himself as the vehicle for the manifestation of “the scent of [God’s] knowledge” with the figure of this same God who “leads him in triumph.” By means of the proximate placement of these two images in identical structural settings, Paul urges the reader / hearer to interpret one image in terms of the other.⁵⁵⁸

The structural similarity of the two participial clauses following the thanksgiving τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις suggests that the second is intended to clarify the first.⁵⁵⁹ God always leads Paul in Christ⁵⁶⁰ in his triumphal procession, and is thereby making manifest in every place the fragrance which is⁵⁶¹ the knowledge of Christ.⁵⁶²

In 2:15, ὁσμή is paired with εὐωδία, and refers not to the fragrance of the knowledge of God *per se*, but to the apostle himself: Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν τῷ θεῷ. In the LXX the

⁵⁵⁶ Duff 1991:90, citing Plutarch *Isis et Osiris* 17 (357F); 36 (365B); Apuleius *Met.* 11.15 (177,18-18-19).

⁵⁵⁷ Duff argues (1993:167) that the epiphany procession context cannot be understood without further information, and that throughout the rest of 2:14-7:4, Paul provides other allusions to such processions which help the reader to solve the ‘riddle’ of this ‘bizarre opening passage’. However, as we have already argued, the placing of the rhetorical question, πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός, at 2:16b seems to require that the imagery of 2:14-16a has already been understood, at least in part.

⁵⁵⁸ Duff 1991:91.

⁵⁵⁹ Duff 1991:90: “each has the same subject, in each case the participles describe the action of God, and in each case the apostle has a functional role in God’s action”.

⁵⁶⁰ The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ occurs again in 2:17, in a list of Paul’s credentials as a true apostle; it seems to emphasise his standing as a believer. Paul’s suffers “in Christ,” as one called to his ministry by Christ, and united with him. The antithesis believers vs. unbelievers occurs repeatedly in various guises in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4; cf. 2:15-16a (σωζόμενοι / ἀπολλυμένοι), 3:15-16; 3:13, 18 (Moses wore a veil to keep the Israelites from gazing upon the glory of God reflected from his face, but believers “with unveiled face all behold as in a mirror the Lord’s glory”); 4:3-4 (Paul’s gospel is veiled only to ἀπολλυμένοι, who are ἄπιστοι, whose minds have been blinded by “the god of this world”); 6:14-7:1.

⁵⁶¹ The genitive τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ would appear to be appositional; Meyer 1879:182.

⁵⁶² The proximity of Χριστῷ and the following Χριστοῦ εὐωδία favour a reference to Christ, rather than God (Plummer 1915:70). This reference will be confirmed by our exegesis of 2:15.

terms εὐωδία is usually found in the phrase ὁσμὴ εὐωδίας; the sense is usually the sweet savour of the burnt offering;⁵⁶³ and when combined with the dative τῷ θεῷ or τῷ κυρίῳ, whether used individually or in combination, the terms always refer to the aroma of sacrifice,⁵⁶⁴ implying its acceptability to God. In Phil 4:18, Paul describes the gift which the church has sent him as ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, confirming the sense of a sacrificial offering acceptable to God. In the only other occurrence of the term εὐωδία in the NT, Eph 5:2, the sacrifice of Christ as described as θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. It is likely then that, in keeping with Pauline usage, the εὐωδία metaphor in 2:14-16a introduces the idea of sacrifice.⁵⁶⁵ This sacrificial imagery adds weight to the imagery of Paul suffering as a captured prisoner, for sacrifices are put to death. On the other hand, the continuation of the olfactory imagery reinforces the image of Paul as incense bearer. Talbert rightly comments,

Paul is depicted as the one in the triumphal procession who is responsible for the incense: that is, he spreads the knowledge of Christ everywhere. On the other hand in vv. 15-16a the aroma of the sacrifice offered to God is in view. Here the fragrance goes up. Paul is portrayed as the aroma arising from Christ's sacrifice to God, spreading as it ascends the knowledge of God communicated in the Cross.⁵⁶⁶

The imagery has therefore developed between 2:14a and 2:15. Now Paul is not only the one responsible for spreading the fragrance of incense along the route; he *is* that fragrance. If there is continuity with the imagery of 2:14, then it must follow that as God continually leads Paul in Christ in a triumphal procession in which his conversion is continually celebrated, the apostle by his life and ministry makes manifest the crucified Christ. This manifestation of Christ is pleasing and acceptable to God (εὐωδία τῷ θεῷ); Paul's ministry of making manifest the crucified Christ is therefore not only evangelistic,

⁵⁶³ Stumpff TDNT 2:809.

⁵⁶⁴ Webb 1993:77-78.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.; Barrett 1973:99; Hafemann 1986:41-45; cf. Patte 1987:49.

⁵⁶⁶ Talbert 1987:141.

but also *intercessory*. It is against this background that Paul wants both his decision to cancel his planned visit to Corinth and his sufferings to be understood.⁵⁶⁷

It has been suggested that, by cancelling his planned visit, Paul associated himself with the guilt of the Corinthian church, and as their corporate representative became, in his own understanding, subject to the curse sanctions of the new covenant, that is, to the attacks of Satan and his hosts. In spite of this, Paul set out for Troas and engaged in missionary activity there, and from there he crossed over into Macedonia. In 2:14-15 he presents himself as being led in his travels by God, spreading everywhere the knowledge of Christ, and also presenting to God the pleasing aroma of the sacrifice of Christ. Since this aroma is accepted by God, it must follow that despite his predicament Paul's ministry was pleasing to God, and that the sacrifice of Christ which he presented was accepted as making atonement for him - and for the Corinthians. Had he felt confident of this at the time of his great affliction (1:8-11), perhaps he would not have lost hope of divine deliverance. However, he now writes with the benefit of hindsight.

The manifestation by the apostle of the crucified Christ is apparent not only to God, but also to everyone who crosses his path: Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμέν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, οἷς μὲν ὁσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμὴ ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν.⁵⁶⁸ These two distinct groups of humanity, those who are being saved (οἱ σωζόμενοι) and those who are perishing (οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι), have already been mentioned in 1 Cor 1:18; to the latter group, the message of the cross is folly; but to the former it is "the power of God." The ἐκ ... εἰς construction occurs also in Rom 1:17, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς

⁵⁶⁷ It is possible that the apostle has in mind here LXX Ezek 20:41, ἐν ὁσμῇ εὐωδίας προσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἐξαγαγεῖν με ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ εἰσδέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν ἐν αἷς διεσκορπίσθητε ἐν αὐταῖς ("I will accept you ἐν ὁσμῇ εὐωδίας when I take you out from the nations, and receive you from among the countries among which you have been scattered"). The catena of Scriptural quotations in 2 Cor 6:16-18 includes a reference to the closely related text Ezek 20:34, and as has been noted already, new covenant / return traditions play a central role in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4.

⁵⁶⁸ ἐκ is omitted in many mss., but it is found in p⁴⁶ & A B C 0243 33 81 104 1175 1739 pc, and is certainly the preferred reading.

πίστιν; cf. 2 Cor 3:18, ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν; in both cases ἐκ is likely to refer to a cause or source of a divine revelation or manifestation, while εἰς points to the result.⁵⁶⁹ The sense here is “an odour issuing from death (life) and leading to death (life)”.⁵⁷⁰ The question then arises, is Paul speaking of the causative effects of his ministry for the two groups (life or death), or of their respective perceptions of his ministry? That is, is he perceived by one group as ὁσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον precisely because they are perishing, and by the other as ὁσμὴ ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν because they are being saved? Or, does he mean that his ministry actually brings salvation to one group, but destruction to the other?⁵⁷¹ As Paul’s argument progresses, it emerges that these two aspects are inseparable.⁵⁷² We will see below that in 3:6-4:12 Paul argues that his new covenant ministry makes manifest the presence and power (δόξα) of God; this manifestation results in righteousness and life for those who are being saved and hence welcome it, but in condemnation and death for those who are perishing, and hence reject it.⁵⁷³ The reconciliation of the images of Paul as captured prisoner and incense bearer requires of the reader the deduction that Paul, having been captured and conquered by God and enslaved; has been taken subsequently into his service and given a position of great honour. While this might reasonably be expected of his supporters, his opponents would certainly scoff at this implied claim, and would

⁵⁶⁹ For Rom 1:17 see Dunn 1988:44-46; for 2 Cor 3:18, Hafemann 1995:107-18, and below.

⁵⁷⁰ Barrett 1973:96; cf. Thrall 1994:204. Less persuasive is the suggestion of Furnish (1984:177; cf. Hughes 1962:81 n 18) that the construction might be a Semitic idiom, with superlative force: “the stench for ultimate death ... the fragrance for ultimate life.”

⁵⁷¹ Carrez (1986:79-80) argues that ὁσμὴ ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν represents the experience of οἱ σωζόμενοι, who encounter the power of the risen Christ, and ὁσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον that of οἱ ἀπολλυμένοι, who are turned by the gospel from destruction to life. However, this is unconvincing; see Thrall 1994 203.

⁵⁷² Thus we need not be detained by the question of whether the division of humanity into the two groups, those who are being saved and those who are perishing, is due to divine predestination. The distinction to which Paul draws attention here is that of the heart; those whose hearts are hardened reject both Paul and his Gospel, but those whose hearts have been renewed according to the promises of the new covenant welcome him as one who makes manifest the crucified Christ.

⁵⁷³ For the sake of brevity we will not discuss here alternative views of 2:16a; most of the options are reviewed by Thrall, 1994:202-7, and many rightly rejected. Thrall’s own view, that the imagery derives from the identification of Wisdom with Torah, and takes motifs from each of these backgrounds (1994:206-8), is not convincing. Wisdom is said to provide the ὁσμὴ imagery, while Torah, according to certain rabbinic traditions, brings life to some, but death to others. Thrall claims that Wisdom and Torah motifs predominate throughout 2:14-16a, and describes the ‘triumphal procession’ motif as “subsidiary” (p 207). Following Duff, I have argued that, on the contrary, the motif of the triumphal procession,

probably retort that the ὀσμή emanating from the apostle is in fact a foul stench. Thus Paul's metaphor subtly prepares the ground for 2:15-16a, in which he characterises those who accept his claim as σωζόμενοι, and those who reject it as ἀπολλυμένοι. His supporters will accept his complex imagery, despite the tension of a slave holding such a high office, and will appreciate that his ministry also involves him in suffering; his opponents, however, will reject his imagery, proving that they are among the perishing.

In 2 Cor 2:14b-16a, therefore, Paul depicts himself as "the fragrant substances spread in [epiphany] processions which informed the bystanders of the god's or goddess's presence (2:14-16)".⁵⁷⁴

The practise of accompanying the deity (or sacred objects) in procession with fragrantly scented substances undoubtedly stems from the ancient belief that the aromatic scent was a fragrance of a divinity and consequently, the aroma functioned to announce the approach of a god or goddess. Hence, the apostle, the "pleasing fragrance (εὐωδία)" of Christ, depicts himself as the harbinger of the deity's presence because it is through him that "the knowledge of God" is made known.⁵⁷⁵

Precisely how Paul makes manifest the crucified Christ is not yet made clear; though his reference to his extreme distress in 2:12-13, together with the imagery of the triumphal procession and the language of sacrifice suggests that suffering plays a central role. It is, however, clear that those who reject Paul and his ministry reject Christ himself; and 2:15-16a invites the deduction that Paul's opponents are unbelievers, a point to which we will return shortly.

understood as an epiphany procession, dominates 2:14-16a, whereas Wisdom traditions do not seem to play a role in 2:14-3:6. Paul returns to the imagery of the epiphany procession in 4:10 (see below).

⁵⁷⁴ Duff 1991:88.

⁵⁷⁵ Duff 1993:168-69. In support of the premise of this argument, Duff cites in particular Euripedes *Hipp.* 1391-93; Plutarch *Isis et Osiris* 15 (357A-B); Sir 24:12-15..

At 2:16b, Paul interrupts his exposition with the rhetorical question, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός. The question follows naturally from 2:16a;⁵⁷⁶ πρὸς ταῦτα clearly refers to Paul's extraordinary ministry, a ministry which causes him to be received by some as a life-giving fragrance, but rejected by others as a noxious stench. Whether Paul expects a negative or a positive answer to his question is debated;⁵⁷⁷ however, the case for a positive answer seems to me to be overwhelming.⁵⁷⁸

1. The γάρ of 2:17 introduces an οὐ ... ἀλλά construction;⁵⁷⁹ it is likely, therefore, that the whole of 2:17 provides a basis for the assumed reply. Unlike οἱ πολλοί, Paul speaks the word of God as one whose motives are pure (ὥς ἐξ εὐλκρινείας); he speaks as a believer (ἐν Χριστῷ), as one sent by God (ὥς ἐκ θεοῦ), and as one who stands in God's presence (κατέναντι θεοῦ).⁵⁸⁰
2. In 3:1 Paul denies that he is again presenting his apostolic credentials to the church; evidently what he has just said could be interpreted as an argument for his competence. This seems to require a positive answer to 2:16b.
3. As we have seen, Paul's language in 2:16b clearly echoes Moses' call to ministry, Exod 4:10 LXX. In Exod 4:10-17, Moses protests his inadequacy for the ministry to which Yahweh has called him, and Yahweh replies that he will be given all he needs to carry out the task he has been assigned. The language of 2:16b is picked up in 3:5 (ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ); like Moses, Paul's competence is not of himself, but is from God. Moreover, in 3:5 Paul does not state that he is competent for his ministry; nor does he deduce it from his previous argument. Rather, he assumes it.

⁵⁷⁶ Pace Windisch (1924:99-100), who maintains that there is a break in the flow of thought from 2:16a to 16b. Georgi (1986:232-3) reads the question against the background of 1 Cor 4:3-4; the question of Paul's competence for apostolic ministry, he concludes, will be decided only in the eschatological judgement. The point of the rhetorical question is therefore to attack his opponents, who consider themselves already competent. However, the issue in 1 Cor 4:3-4 is not whether he is competent to be an apostle, but whether he will ultimately be found faithful (πιστός) in carrying out the ministry which has been entrusted to him (cf. Hafemann 1986:96).

⁵⁷⁷ See Hafemann 1986:90-98 for a concise survey and discussion.

⁵⁷⁸ The opposing arguments are refuted by Hafemann, *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁹ Thrall 1994:209.

⁵⁸⁰ These prepositional phrases will be discussed shortly.

4. In 3:6-18 Paul compares his own ministry explicitly with that of Moses, arguing that the glory of his own ministry far surpasses that of Moses; for just as Moses was the mediator of the old covenant; so Paul is a mediator (διάκονος) of the (far superior) new covenant.

Rhetorical questions depend for their effect on the ability of the readers to supply the correct answer.⁵⁸¹ It must follow that already at 2:16b, the readers would have had a sufficient basis for supplying the proposition, "just as Moses was made competent by God for his ministry, so Paul has been made competent for his."⁵⁸² Yet this self-conception, which is central to Paul's defence in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, is not spelled out, but assumed. Nothing in 1:1-2:13 would seem to provide a sufficient basis for Paul's identification with Moses in 2:16b, nor does Paul compare his ministry with that of Moses in 1 Corinthians. However, as we have seen, he does use second exodus imagery in 1 Corinthians (5:5, 7-8; cf. 10:1-13), and his language in 1 Cor 3:5-16 suggests that he here interprets his church-planting ministry in Corinth in terms of the role of a second Moses figure, the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh, in the eschatological New Creation.⁵⁸³ In 2 Corinthians (10:8, 13:10), on the other hand, the language of building and planting (1 Cor 3:6, 10), deriving from MT Isa 51:16, has given way to the language of building up and tearing down, from LXX Jer 38:27-28. We have suggested that in the intervening period, in the Letter of Tears, Paul had compared his opponents to the false prophets who faced Jeremiah and, by implication, that he had compared himself with Jeremiah. We have also argued that in 2 Cor 1:13 Paul announces his intention of picking up elements of the Letter of Tears, in order that the Corinthians might have a full understanding of the eschatological significance of their spiritual partnership with him. Indeed, in 2 Cor 10:8, 13:10 Paul contrasts his new covenant, Servant ministry of "building up" with Jeremiah's old covenant ministry of "tearing down". Moreover in the key passage 2 Cor 3:7-18 Paul contrasts his new covenant,

⁵⁸¹ Patte 1987:45.

⁵⁸² The readers need not necessarily agree with this proposition; it is necessary only that they are aware that this is the answer which Paul expects.

⁵⁸³ Jones 1974:221-2; see above,:150..

Servant ministry with the old covenant ministry of (the first) Moses. We suggest therefore that in the Letter of Tears the figure of Moses also played a significant role as a paradigm for Paul's ministry to the Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians, Paul clarifies the nature of his ministry, as he promises in 2 Cor 1:13, by developing explicitly his role as διάκονος καινῆς διαθήκης, the role of the second Moses, the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh.

As we have noted, 2:17 is linked to 2:16b by the conjunction γάρ, and in 2:17 Paul begins his defence of his competence for his ministry. He does so by means of a comparison between himself and his opponents, who "peddle the word of God in the market place" (καπηλεύοντες). Hafemann's study of the use of καπηλεύω in anti-sophistic rhetoric shows that the verb carries a (non-specific) negative nuance when used of the selling of knowledge or wisdom. Paul is criticising οἱ πολλοί, not just reporting that they make their living from the Gospel.⁵⁸⁴ His reference to his opponents' practise of "hawking" the word of God brings to mind his own practise of preaching the Gospel free of charge, and the controversy which this had generated (11:7-15; 12:13-19). In fact, Paul's refusal of financial support from the church in Corinth caused him considerable hardship (1 Cor 4:11-12; 2 Cor 6:4-5; 11:26-27).⁵⁸⁵ However, as Fee points out, "in offering the 'free' gospel 'free of charge' his own ministry becomes a living paradigm of the gospel itself."⁵⁸⁶ His competence for his apostolic ministry follows from the purity of his motivation, which in turn is evidenced by his decision to preach the Gospel free of charge.⁵⁸⁷

The content of the negative nuance of καπηλεύοντες is spelled out in the contrasts Paul draws between his own ministry and that of his opponents: his ministry is conducted ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας and he speaks the word of God ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ.

⁵⁸⁴ Hafemann:109-24. The connotation of "adulterating" (e.g. NJB) or "watering down" (e.g. Barrett 1973:92) what is sold is not carried by the verb itself (p 124).

⁵⁸⁵ Hafemann 1986:174-75.

⁵⁸⁶ Fee 1987:421.

⁵⁸⁷ Hafemann 1986:164-67.

These qualities or qualifications evidently distinguish Paul from his opponents. Renwick argues persuasively that all four prepositional phrases are to be understood within a cultic framework. Though εἰλικρινεΐα can mean simply “sincerity”, Paul’s use of the term elsewhere points to its use in the sense of “purity”;⁵⁸⁸ indeed, the contrast with “peddling the word of God” suggests the nuance, “the sincerity of one who is cultically pure.” Paul then expands upon ὥς ἐξ εἰλικρινεΐας with a second ὥς-clause:⁵⁸⁹ he is one who is sent by God (ἐκ θεοῦ),⁵⁹⁰ and speaks in the presence of God (κατέναντι θεοῦ),⁵⁹¹ and “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ). This last phrase, whatever else it signifies, emphasises that Paul speaks as a believer. Paul’s status as one ἐν Χριστῷ grounds his claim that he speaks ὥς ἐξ εἰλικρινεΐας and ὥς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ.⁵⁹² Renwick argues that “in Christ” is parallel to “in the Temple”, describing not only the means by which Paul is made pure, and thus able to stand in the presence of God, but also “the ‘holy space’ created by the new covenant, in which Paul dwells and speaks.”⁵⁹³ This consistently cultic interpretation of 2:17 coheres very well with the image of Paul being led in a triumphal / epiphany procession by God from his throne-chariot, ministering God’s presence and constantly offering up to God the sacrifice of Christ. As Renwick correctly observes,

⁵⁸⁸ Renwick 1991:63-67. εἰλικρινεΐα does not occur in the LXX, and only three times in Paul (1 Cor 5:8; 2 Cor 1:12; 2:17); the adjective εἰλικρινής occurs in the LXX only in Wis 7:25, of Wisdom, and in Paul in Phil 1:10, where it clearly means not merely “sincere” but morally pure (Renwick 1991:64; Hawthorne 1983:28); moreover, in the cultic context of 1 Cor 5:8, the sense of “purity” is more appropriate than “sincerity”.

⁵⁸⁹ There is no intervening co-ordinating conjunction, and / or new verbal idea (Hafemann 1986:163); ὥς ... is probably in each case elliptical for ὥς οἱ .. (Windisch 1924:101).

⁵⁹⁰ ἐκ indicates external origin (BAGD s.v. ἐκ 3c; Thrall 1994:215).

⁵⁹¹ The notion that Paul speaks before the *judgement* of God, and may not therefore be judged by the Corinthians, is foreign to the passage. The point is that Paul sees his apostolic vocation as prophetic in nature (as Sandnes has demonstrated, 1991), and a true prophet must stand in the presence of God in order to receive the revelation which he then communicates. Similarly, in 12:19 (κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν), Paul emphasises that he has been speaking as a prophet, a messenger of the covenant; for (γάρ), when he comes, he may have to take disciplinary action against continuing offenders (12:20-13:10).

⁵⁹² Cf. Rom 9:1, ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ. On this Cranfield rightly comments, “Paul claims that he is speaking in Christ, i.e., in accordance with the standards which obtain for one who is in Christ, with a due sense of his accountability to Christ. The phrase ἐν χριστῷ thus strengthens ἀλήθειαν λέγω: one who speaks in a way that is worthy of union with Christ cannot but speak truth or, at any rate, attempt to do so. The use of the phrase here is thus an implicit appeal to Christ as the ultimate guarantor of the truth of what Paul is about to say.” (Cranfield 1979:451-52).

in portraying the apostolic life as sacrificial service, Paul was providing a Biblical paradigm for a way of life that could be lived in the presence of God and which, at the same time, positively embraced suffering; sacrifices, by definition, suffered, and such sufferings, when acceptable to God (as the effectiveness of Paul's ministry proved his suffering to be), were necessarily cultically pure and were offered in one place only - on the altar, in the tabernacle or temple, in the presence of God (κατέναντι θεοῦ, 2:17). From such a location as this, in God's presence, Paul claimed to exercise his ministry.⁵⁹⁴

It has been suggested already that Paul is insinuating here that his opponents do not have these qualifications to speak τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ: that is, that they are impure and insincere; they have not been sent by God, and do not stand in God's presence:⁵⁹⁵ indeed, they are unbelievers.⁵⁹⁶ He insinuates, in short, that they are false prophets. His own ministry, on the other hand, is patterned after that of Moses (2:16b), and he is therefore a true prophet.⁵⁹⁷ It has already been shown that in these remarks concerning his opponents, Paul evokes Jer 23:9-40, returning to this passage in 4:2, and again portraying his opponents as false prophets, bent on leading God's people astray (cf. 2 Cor 11:3). If his gospel is veiled,⁵⁹⁸ he says, it is veiled to οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι, among whom (ἐν οἷς) the minds of "those unbelievers" (τῶν ἀπίστων)⁵⁹⁹ have been blinded to "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ" by ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (4:3-4).⁶⁰⁰ We shall argue shortly that in 3:3 Paul alludes to Ezek 11:19; 36:26, inviting the deduction that while his own heart has been renewed by the Spirit and is obedient

⁵⁹³ e.g. LXX, Exod 33:8; Renwick 1991:90-91; the holy space is compared with, as examples, at Sinai, or in the σκηνή of the old covenant.

⁵⁹⁴ Renwick 1991:50.

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. Ps 5:6 LXX, "neither shall transgressors continue in your sight" (κατέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σου).

⁵⁹⁶ Berger (1980:376) has rightly criticised the indiscriminate use of mirror exegesis, as any given assertion may have many opposites. However, our suggestions are confirmed not only by the literary context, as we shall see (3:3; 6, 7, 14-16; 4:2-4; 6:14-7:1), but also by the allusions to Jer 23:9-40.

⁵⁹⁷ On the call and sufficiency of Moses see Hafemann 1995:39-91.

⁵⁹⁸ εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν; here καὶ probably emphasises what follows: "But if our gospel is veiled, ..." (Thrall 1994:303 n 792).

⁵⁹⁹ A reference to his opponents; see below.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Rensberger 1978:30: "It is therefore these people, Christians, who, Paul insinuates, have the unseeing minds of "unbelievers". Those who reject the Gospel of Christ and the Apostle of Christ belong in the category of "unbelievers" whether nominally Christians or not."

to the Law, his opponents' hearts are of stone; here again he insinuates that they are unbelievers.

The imagery of 2:14-17 is thus very rich and complex, but it is perfectly coherent. Paul describes himself as God's incense bearer, a conquered enemy and a slave, but one given a place of the highest honour in a procession which celebrates his own conversion (conquest). God is to be understood as leading the procession from his throne-chariot (Merkabah), and Paul ministers constantly in his presence, making manifest in his own person and ministry the sacrifice of Christ. As a result of his association with the Merkabah, Paul receives revelation,⁶⁰¹ and constantly reveals "the fragrance of the knowledge of God", as he is revealed in Christ; moreover, his own sufferings as he carries out his ministry provide a living paradigm for the message he preaches. God's triumphal procession is therefore, in a very real sense, an epiphany procession. To God, the suffering apostle is a living sacrifice, the pleasing savour of the crucified Christ. Those who are being saved welcome Paul and his ministry as "a life-giving fragrance"; but those who are perishing reject Paul and his ministry, perceiving him as "a noxious fume." Not surprisingly, he asks, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But his language echoes the call of Moses, and evokes the reply "You are, Paul, by the grace of God!" For, unlike his opponents, Paul is neither a false prophet nor a sophist; he does not peddle the word of God in the market place. Rather, he is one who is pure in motive, who speaks in Christ as one sent by God, and who stands constantly in the presence of God. Thus he is a true prophet, like Moses before him, and truly declares the word of God.

⁶⁰¹ Against Hafemann 1995:96 n 17, who comments in relation to 2:17, "What takes place in God's presence fundamentally is the judgement and/or vindication of God's creation." Paul is not concerned here with the divine judgement of his ministry, but with the source of the true revelation which his ministry reveals.

2. The argument of 2 Cor 3:1-3

The rhetorical question, ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν; (3:1a; "Are we beginning all over again to produce our credentials?"; NEB),⁶⁰² flows from 2:17, and expects a negative answer.⁶⁰³ Self-commendation was a widespread custom in Graeco-Roman society,⁶⁰⁴ and P. Marshall proposes that Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, like that of his rivals, was initiated by a formal act of self-commendation in which Paul (in person) committed himself to a relationship of trust with his first converts in Corinth.⁶⁰⁵ Clearly that relationship had recently been stretched to the limit; nevertheless, Paul insists that he is not attempting to make a fresh start with the church by commending himself to them again (πάλιν). Nor, unlike his rivals, does he need letters of recommendation (ἐπιστολαί συστατικάι)⁶⁰⁶ either to or from the Corinthians (3:1b).⁶⁰⁷ We have already seen that 2:17 has a strong polemical edge, and it seems likely that Paul's purpose here is also in part polemical: he shows that the letters his opponents have brought do not in any way legitimise their challenge to his authority. This will be confirmed when we examine 3:2-3. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that it is he who founded the church; his rivals may have brought letters of recommendation from other churches, but he has no need of such letters. The church in Corinth is itself his letter of recommendation, both to them and from them.

The "letter of recommendation" imagery continues in 3:2-3, as Paul gives grounds for the anticipated answers to his rhetorical questions:

⁶⁰² It is doubtful that συνίστημι is ever used for "praise", though praise is commonly an element of commendation. For "praise" Paul uses ἔπαινος / ἐπαινέω (e.g. 1 Cor 4:5; 11:17) (Marshall 1987:268 n 31).

⁶⁰³ 3:1a is linked by ἢ to a second rhetorical question, 3:1b, which requires a negative answer; therefore 3:1a also requires a negative answer (Thrall 1994:217 n 210).

⁶⁰⁴ Patte's conclusion that Paul has been accused of self-commendation (1987:34-35) seems to be based on the confusion of self-commendation with self-praise. Cf. Marshall 1987:265.

⁶⁰⁵ Marshall 1987:271-72.

⁶⁰⁶ συστατική ἐπιστολή is a technical term for a definite letter type in the ancient manuals on letter writing (Thrall 1994:218; Keyes 1935; C.-H. Kim 1972).

⁶⁰⁷ Marshall believes that the rival apostles were still in Corinth when 2 Corinthians was written (cf. Barrett 1973:267), and that "it is entirely possible that πρὸς ὑμᾶς and ἐξ ὑμῶν refer to an exchange of correspondence between the hybrists and the rival apostles prior to the latter's arrival, in which they were invited by the hybrists to Corinth" (Marshall 1987:276). Cf. Furnish 1984:193.

2 ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν,⁶⁰⁸ γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 3 φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις.

We will attempt to follow through the argument from 3:1. Paul's opponents commend themselves by means of letters written by human beings; Paul, however, has no need of such letters, whether from the Corinthians, or to them; he is commended by the very existence of the Corinthian church, which functions as his letter of recommendation.⁶⁰⁹

This "letter", which was engraved in the hearts of Paul and Timothy⁶¹⁰ when they founded the church (cf. 1:19),

is known and read by everyone. Evidently Paul makes known to all that which has been written on his heart;⁶¹¹ he proudly makes known to all that he is the apostle who founded the church in Corinth.⁶¹² It is being made known (φανερούμενοι)⁶¹³ that the

⁶⁰⁸ There is a variant reading, ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, attested only by \aleph 33 1175 1881 pc, whereas ἡμῶν is very strongly attested (p⁴⁶ A B C D G K:Y 614 1739 Byz Lect it vg sy^{p,h} co). It cannot be demonstrated that either reading is the more likely to have given rise to the other (Thrall 1994:223). Moreover, letters of recommendation were customarily carried by the person recommended (Baird 1961:170).

Nevertheless, Thrall (1994:223) accepts the ὑμῶν reading on the grounds that it was important to the Corinthians that they should have a letter of recommendation from Paul (3:1b; πρὸς ὑμᾶς); Paul replies that they have such a letter, "an inward experience of the blessings of the gospel which they owe to Paul himself as its preacher." However, we shall argue below that the participial phrase ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν adds a thought secondary to that of the clause ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε. The objective reality of the church in Corinth acts as a letter of recommendation for Paul, both to the Corinthians themselves and to the wider world. The thought of Paul's letter being known and read ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων seems to require that his letter take a visible, objective form. Following Hays we will argue, moreover, that as he develops the secondary thought of the letter as engraved in his heart, Paul presents two arguments for his legitimacy as apostle to the Corinthians: he founded the church (his letter was διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν: "mediated by us"); and he has cared for the church at great personal cost (διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν: "cared for by us"). Cf. 1 Cor 4:15; 9:2.

⁶⁰⁹ For a sample of similar metaphors from ancient literature, see Danker 1989:51.

⁶¹⁰ Note the plural καρδίαις in 3:2, 3. It has been argued that Timothy's authority as Paul's delegate was rejected in Corinth when he demanded the expulsion of the incestuous man. Paul may well have intended to draw attention to Timothy's love for the church which he helped to found, and to the significance of the church for his ministry.

⁶¹¹ Cf. Furnish 1984:194. Murphy O'Connor (1987:123) argues for the ὑμῶν reading, on the grounds that Paul would be saying that he went about boasting of his successful evangelisation of Corinth, when in 3:1 he is concerned to deny that he indulges in self-commendation. He is rebutted by Thrall (1994:224).

⁶¹² Paul does not need letters of recommendation, for, "All he has to say is, 'Have you heard about the Christians at Corinth?' And people will respond, 'You mean to say that they are your converts? Why, everyone has heard of them!'" (Danker 1989:50-51).

Corinthians are a letter from Christ (ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ),⁶¹⁴ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν. The sense of the latter phrase is disputed.⁶¹⁵ Within the "letter of recommendation" imagery, Paul could be portraying himself as the letter's courier. However, though the imagery of 3:2 implies that Paul carries the letter around with him (the letter is in his heart), the aorist tense of the participle rules out the sense "carried around by us."⁶¹⁶ Moreover, the sense "delivered by us"⁶¹⁷ would imply that Paul "delivered" Christ's letter to Corinth when he founded the church.⁶¹⁸ Thrall points out that the Corinthians themselves would then be portrayed as the original recipients of the letter, and the image would seem to involve "the nonsensical idea that the unconverted Corinthians constituted Christ's letter, delivered to them by Paul and resulting in their acceptance of his credentials and so of his message."⁶¹⁹ On the other hand, Paul might have in mind his role as the divine amenuensis, in bringing the letter into existence: "drawn up by us."⁶²⁰ This seems more tenable, but there is also another possibility: Furnish suggests that Paul refers to his careful handling of the letter which has been "entrusted to our care."⁶²¹

The διακονέω word group is not common, but is widely used to describe the act of mediation between the gods and people, and hence of the work of prophets, priests and diviners.⁶²² Of particular interest is the following passage in Epictetus, in which he

⁶¹³ Some take the participle to be a middle, "showing yourselves to be"; so e.g. Windisch 1924:105; Furnish 1984:173; 181-82; Héring 1958:35; Martin 1986:44, 51; see below. We will argue that it is in fact a passive.

⁶¹⁴ Ablative of origin; cf. Furnish 1984:182. A contrast is implied with the opponents' letters, which were from lower authorities.

⁶¹⁵ The διακον- word group has been studied extensively by J. N. Collins (1990; 1992). He concludes that "the words show no signs of having developed in meaning over the course of changing literary eras", and that "the idea expressed by the words is that of the go-between"; the words speak of "an action done in the name of another". (J. N. Collins 1990:194). The sense of "serving at table", which has been held to be the basic meaning (e.g. Schweizer 1961:173-78), is in fact a particular application of this more comprehensive sense (ibid.).

⁶¹⁶ Thrall 1994:225. Thrall attributes the interpretation "carried around by us" to Baird 1961:170; however, Baird suggests for the verb διακονέω the sense "deliver", not "carry around" (p 169).

⁶¹⁷ E.g. Lietzmann 1949:110; J. N. Collins 1992:41; RSV; REB.

⁶¹⁸ E.g. Räisänen 1987:243: "The Corinthians, as a letter, are written by Christ and delivered by Paul".

⁶¹⁹ Thrall 1994:225.

⁶²⁰ JB; cf. NIV; Strachan 1935:80; Martin 1986:44.

⁶²¹ NJB; cf. "cared for by us", Furnish 1984; "serviced by us"; cf. Thrall 1994:190.

⁶²² J. N. Collins, 1982.

defines the διακονία of the true Cynic as being the messenger, scout and herald of the gods:

If the Cynic ought not to be free from distraction, wholly devoted to the διακονία τοῦ θεοῦ, free to go about among men, not tied down by the private duties of men, nor involved in relationships which he cannot violate and still maintain his role as a good and excellent man, whereas, on the other hand, if he observes them, he will destroy the messenger (ἄγγελος), the scout (κατάσκοπος), the herald (κῆρυξ) of the gods, that he is.⁶²³

Clearly Paul's use of the word group relates to his task of proclaiming Christ's message, the Gospel (2:17). However, in view of his continued emphasis on the apostolic διακονία (3:6; cf. 3:8-9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3), the possibility should be considered that Paul chose the term in order to refer in a general way to his ministry to the Corinthians as Christ's envoy, deliberately leaving ambiguous its exact application within his metaphor; hence, "ministered by us",⁶²⁴ or perhaps, "mediated by us." Hays suggests that the phrase in fact combines the senses of both "mediation" and "care", working simultaneously on metaphorical and non-metaphorical levels: "it images the courier's careful handling of the letter and, at the same time, reminds the Corinthians of Paul's ministry among them."⁶²⁵ The last suggestion is strongly supported by the context for, as we shall see, the final antitheses of 3:3, οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις, also operate on both metaphorical and non-metaphorical levels, and these levels correspond to the two levels which Hays proposes for the phrase διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν.⁶²⁶

At first glance, the imagery remains consistent throughout 3:2-3, which is bound together by the key words ἐπιστολή, ἐγγεγραμμένη and καρδία. Evidently οὐ μέλανι refers to the opponents' letters of recommendation; their letters are from mere humans, and

⁶²³ Diss. 3.22.69j as quoted by Georgi 1986:28.

⁶²⁴ Sloan 1995:136-37.

⁶²⁵ Hays 1989:127.

⁶²⁶ Thus I am inclined to favour the translation "ministered by us", which suggests both connotations.

written with mere ink; whereas Paul's letter is from the divine Christ, and written with "the Spirit of the living God."⁶²⁷ The sense of the final antithesis is not immediately obvious, however. The antitheses clearly evoke certain OT traditions. The phrase "fleshly heart" (καρδίαν σαρκίνην) occurs in the LXX only in the new covenant traditions of Ezek 11:19 and 36:26; in these passages it is opposed to τὴν καρδίαν τὴν λιθίνην.⁶²⁸ On the basis of an allusion to Ezekiel, we might therefore have expected that the antitheses would run something like this:

engraved not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,
not in hearts of stone, but in hearts of flesh.

However, πλαξὶν λιθίναις is a clear allusion to the stone tablets of the Law.⁶²⁹ Martin comments, "Paul has innovated in a remarkable way: he has assimilated 'heart of stone' to 'tablets of stone', with the latter phrase used to connect with Moses' law."⁶³⁰ Räisänen explains the substitution by reference to "a well-known Rabbinic association to establish a connection between the stone heart of Ezekiel and the stone tablets of Exodus: it is proper that stone should watch over stone (the law over the stone heart,

⁶²⁷ The first antitheses seem to be best understood as a comparison of writing materials; see below.

⁶²⁸ NA²⁶ lists Ezek 11:19; 36:26 and Prov 7:3 for 2 Cor 3:3, but not Jer 31. The linguistic link between Jer 31 and 2 Cor 3:2-3 is admittedly tenuous (Räisänen 1987:244 n 87); however, as Räisänen concedes, an allusion to Jer 31 becomes quite probable on the assumption that "Ezek 11:19 (36:26) and Jer 31:31ff belonged, in Paul's mind inseparably together, so that the 'fleshly heart' (Ezek) without further ado brought to his mind the 'law written on hearts' of Jeremiah as well" (1987:244). As we have seen, this assumption is almost certainly correct. Moreover, the return to the ἱκανός motif of 2:16b in 3:4-5 suggests that already Paul has in mind his competence as a minister of the new covenant (cf. Thrall 1994:226 n 265, against Hafemann).

⁶²⁹ Cf. Exod 31:18; 34:1; Richard 1981:347-48. Stockhausen (1989:52-53) suggests that ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις does not refer to the tablets of the law, but to the breastplate of the high priest, in which were set twelve precious stones inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and which was worn upon the heart of Aaron and his successors whenever they entered the holy place (Exod 36:14-25 LXX; v 21 has ἐγγεγραμμένα εἰς σφραγίδας). Thus the Apostle wore their names inscribed on his heart and brought them continually before God in prayer; at the same time the image of the twelve stones, bearing the names of the tribes, would explain the image of an epistle "known and read by all people". However, (1) if he wished to allude to the stones of the breastplate, why speak of stone *tablets*, a term which is certain to evoke the tablets of the law? (2) the verb ἐγγράφω was widely used for the writing of letters, whether they were inscribed on stone or written with ink on papyrus (Danker 1989:52), and would not necessarily bring to mind Exod 36:21.

⁶³⁰ Martin 1986:52. He reads ὑμῶν in 3:2, on the grounds that in 3:3 καρδία must refer to the Corinthians' hearts (p 51); but see above, :180 n 608.

identified with the evil inclination).⁶³¹ He claims that, in addition to their letters of recommendation, Paul's opponents had also appealed to the Decalogue as an introductory letter.⁶³² Thus he interprets:

His thought flies from the stone heart to its opposite number, the heart of flesh; this he mentions as a contrast to the stone tablets, omitting to mention the heart of stone altogether. The reference is thus to the new life created by Christ with his Spirit in the hearts of the Corinthian believers - by Christ with his Spirit, and not by the law for which the tablets of stone here stand.⁶³³

Thus, though he reads ἡμῶν in 3:2, Räisänen assumes a shift of imagery in 3:3, so that καρδιά now refers to the Corinthians' hearts.⁶³⁴ Though claimed by many, the syntax of 3:2-3 weighs against such a change of imagery. As Hafemann himself points out, the basic assertion, ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, is supported by means of a series of participial phrases; the feminine singular participles ἐγγεγραμμένη, γνωσκομένη and ἀναγνωσκομένη (3:2b,c) modify the subject nominative ἐπιστολή (3:2a), whereas the masculine plural participle φανερούμενοι with its subordinate proposition ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ (3:3a) links to the predicate nominative ὑμεῖς (3:2a). The feminine singular participles of 3:3bc relate to the predicate nominative ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ. Therefore Paul intends to make two distinct statements concerning the Corinthians: i) ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε; and ii) (ὑμεῖς) ἐστε ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ, with the second assertion being *syntactically dependent on the first*.⁶³⁵ Hafemann argues that this syntactical structure indicates a change in the reference of καρδιά. On the contrary, however, together with the repetition of the terms ἐπιστολή and καρδιά and of the participle ἐγγεγραμμένη, the syntax indicates continuity of imagery throughout 3:2-3; the second proposition is epexegetic of the first. It would seem to be a very clumsy use of language to claim,

⁶³¹ Räisänen 1987:244; he cites Leviticus Rabba 35.5.

⁶³² So also Georgi 1986:136-37; cf. Belleville 1991:148-49; Jervell 1960:179. However, there seems to be no evidence that the Decalogue was regarded as a letter, still less as Moses' συστατική ἐπιστολή (cf. Thrall 1994:228), and the letter of recommendation imagery drops out after 3:3.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ So also many others, e.g. Hughes 1962:88; Carrez 1986:181; JB.

⁶³⁵ Hafemann 1986:185.

within a single sentence, that the Corinthians are both Paul's letter of recommendation, written on *his* own heart, and a letter from Christ, written in *the Corinthians'* own hearts. We have already seen how carefully Paul has constructed 2:14-17; we should not assume, unless we are driven to it, that in 3:3, at a climactic point in his argument, he fails to pay the same attention to detail.

Once allusions to Exod 31:18 and Ezek 11:19; 36:26 are recognised in the final antithesis, it becomes very probable that an echo of Jer 31:31-34 is also intended, and that Paul deliberately evokes a comparison of the old and new covenants:

1. The antithesis, tablets of stone vs. tablets of fleshly hearts, evokes a contrast of the old and new covenants; according to the new covenant tradition of Jer 31:31-34, the Law is to be written not on stone tablets, as in the old covenant, but on human hearts.⁶³⁶

2. Exod 31:18; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-27 and Jer 31:31-34 are linked by the theme of the old and new covenants, a theme which the apostle develops in detail in 3:6-18; it is quite likely, therefore, that these texts have been deliberately associated, by *gezerah shewah*.

Patte argues that the Corinthians, as the end-results of Paul's ministry, are made the semantic equivalent of the motivation of his ministry by means of a double metonymy: metonymy of the end results with the ministry itself, and metonymy of the motivation of the ministry, the paradigm of which is the Law, with the ministry itself.⁶³⁷ Hence the

⁶³⁶ The tablets of the Law were engraved on stone tablets "by the finger of God" (Exod 31:18; cf. Deut 9:10-11); while the Law was to be engraved in human hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that Luke seems to have altered a source by replacing "Spirit of God" by "finger of God" (Lk 11:20; cf. Matt 12:28; Nolland 1993:639-40). Probably "the finger of God" and "the Spirit of God" were interchangeable in the thought of the apostle and of his readers. Then the parallel between the writing of the law on stone tablets and on "tablets of fleshly hearts" is especially striking.

⁶³⁷ Patte 1987:37. Both the end-results and the motivation of Paul's ministry are for him metonyms for his entire ministry. The Corinthians, the end-results of Paul's ministry (διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν), are also his letter of recommendation. The juxtaposition of 2:17, 3:1 shows that, for Paul, the minister's "letter of recommendation" is closely associated with his motivation. "The many" are motivated by the purely human motivation of financial gain, and they are recommended by letters of purely human origin. Paul, on the other hand, is motivated by a sincerity which has its origin in God, and his letter of recommendation is also of divine origin (ibid.:35, 37). Moreover, the seat of motivation is the heart, and

prophecy of Jer 31:33 is fulfilled in Paul; the motivation of his ministry is written in his heart.⁶³⁸ This seems to make good sense, since for Paul, the motivation for his ministry to the Corinthians is love, and hence that ministry is a fulfilment of the Law (Rom 13:8-9);j. It is now apparent why Paul might prefer the antithesis “tablets of stone” vs. “tablets of fleshly hearts,” as opposed to “hearts of stone” vs. “hearts of flesh.” However, Patte does not consider the implications of Paul’s clear allusion to Ezek 11:19; 36:26 LXX.

In the light of these echoes of OT covenantal traditions, the statements describing Paul’s letter of recommendation, ἐγγεγραμμένη πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος ... ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις, are bound together by the image of the Spirit writing on Paul’s heart. According to the traditions, the Spirit of God will write the Law on the “fleshly hearts” of God’s people. This same Spirit has also engraved Paul’s letter of recommendation, the church in Corinth, in his fleshly heart, thus arousing in him a love for the church which motivates his ministry to them, in fulfilment of the law, and of Jer 31:33. Now the new covenant promise of obedience to the Law (Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:20; 36:27; cf. Deut 30:5-6) is associated in the OT, and in later Jewish tradition, with the gift of the Spirit (Ezek 36:27; Jub 1:23-24; Test Jud 24:1-3).⁶³⁹ The language of the antitheses therefore associates Paul’s ministry and letter of recommendation with the fulfilment in him of the new covenant promises: a renewed, “fleshly” heart, obedient to the Law, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Given the polemical edge of 2:17, 3:1, the readers are clearly being invited to consider carefully what is being said and implied concerning the opponents. Their ministries and letters are associated with the inferior conditions of the old covenant: their hearts are of stone, incapable of obedience to the Law, and defiled by idols (cf. Ezek 11:18-19; 36:25-26); it is clearly implied that they

Paul’s letter of recommendation (the Corinthians) is written in his heart. Hence both the motivation and the end-results of Paul’s ministry are in Paul’s heart, and both are from God. Hence motivation and end-results are “equal” to each other.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Scott 1992:115; see also Hafemann 1995:141-45, who shows that in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, “the heart is consistently viewed as the focus of true obedience [to the Law], and [in the few instances] when the Spirit is mentioned in connection with the Law and the heart it is portrayed as the agent of empowerment which makes obedience to the Law from the heart possible”.

are idolaters and unbelievers.⁶⁴⁰ This, in turn, seems to send a clear signal to the reader that the antitheses are to be read in parallel: just as Paul's letter is ἐγγεγραμμένη ... πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος ... ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις, so his opponents letters are ἐγγεγραμμένη ... μέλανι ... ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίνοις! Hooker comments:

Paul has jumped from one image to another; put them together, and is clearly in a mess, for while it is possible to speak metaphorically of the Spirit of God writing on people's hearts, it really is not much use trying to write on stone with ink!⁶⁴¹

Our response to the antitheses depends upon the questions which we address to them. If we ask, "What is Paul saying about the motivation of his ministry, and that of his opponents?", then we find a forceful and convincing answer. But if we ask, "What is Paul saying about the *letters* of his opponents?", we seem to be driven to the conclusion that they are written with ink on the stone tablets of the Law! Yet the image of "letter" is still very much in play in 3:3, for Paul introduces the final antitheses by φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν. If we presuppose that Paul was fully in control of his imagery, that he was well aware of the complex of OT traditions evoked by his allusions to the LXX, and that he intended his argument to be rhetorically effective, then we must concede that the OT traditions alone do not provide an adequate background for the apostle's thought. As we have seen, the antitheses do produce a powerful metaphor, sharply contrasting the motivation of Paul's ministry with that of his opponents; but the effect is spoiled, on the face of it, by the ludicrous implication that his opponents' letters must be written with ink on stone! Yet, as we have noted, the apostle's choice of the phrase πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις certainly implies an allusion to Ezek 11:19; 36:26, and the complex OT background that we have discussed above must be intentional. There must be, in the shared symbolic universe of Paul and his readers, a direct connection between the stone tablets of the Law and

⁶⁴⁰ So confirming our conclusions from the allusions to Jer 23:9-40 in 2:17; 4:2. The question of how supposedly Christian missionaries, whether sincere or insincere, could be regarded as subject to the *old* covenant will be addressed below, Chapter 8.

⁶⁴¹ Hooker 1981:296; cf. Danker, "Paul's rivers of imagery flood their banks" (1989:52); Heiny 1987:20, 'The ἐπιστολή metaphor in 3:2-3 is more than contrived: it is tortured.'

the apostle's own heart (πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις) which plays no part in the "letter of recommendation" metaphor, but which carries the argument forward, causing the reader to leave behind the question of the precise characterisation of the opponents' letters.

We must conclude, then, that like the phrase διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, the final antithesis operates on two levels: on the metaphorical level, contrasting the motivation of Paul's ministry with that of his opponents; and on a non-metaphorical level, evoking some connection between the stone tablets of the covenant and the heart of the apostle himself. Moreover, this hypothetical connection must in some way further the apostle's purpose of contrasting his ministry with that of his opponents. Yet there is nothing in 1 Corinthians, nor in the Pauline Corpus as whole, which would explain the proposed connection. How could such a background have arisen? It will be argued that, in the particular circumstances in which Paul wrote the Letter of Tears, such a background of thought might well have arisen, and have been expressed in that letter. The contrast between the stone tablets and Paul's heart, I suggest, is intended to evoke a certain statement in the Letter of Tears.

In the context of LXX Ezek 36:26-27, "the word λίθινος requires a figurative, and a pejorative connotation, i.e., 'lacking feeling', whilst the 'fleshly heart' is the sensitive, feeling heart."⁶⁴² Hence, the expression καρδίαις σαρκίνοις evokes Paul's fatherly love and concern for the church which he has founded in Corinth,⁶⁴³ as well as locating the origin of this love in the fulfilment in his own heart of the new covenant promises of Ezek 11:19; 36:26. Now for Paul, parental love expresses itself in suffering and self-sacrifice on behalf of the children (2 Cor 12:14b-15; cf. 1 Thess 2:6b-9).⁶⁴⁴ I propose therefore that in the final antithesis, Paul alludes to a recent example of his readiness to suffer on behalf of the church in Corinth. Since 2:14-7:4 is set in the context of the

⁶⁴² Thrall 1994:226; BAGD s.v. λίθινος 2; s.v. σάρκινος 1.

⁶⁴³ Cf. 1 Cor 4:14-15; 2 Cor 6:13; 12:14.

⁶⁴⁴ See Hafemann 1986:189-92.

sufferings which he endured for the sake of his readers as he awaited news of their reception of the Letter of Tears (2:12-13; 7:5), we might anticipate an allusion to this recent manifestation of his love; for the letter, though written “in anguish of heart and with many tears”, was intended to show the church the depth of his love for them (2:4).

It has already been noted that Moses’ experience on Sinai when he received the first set of stone tablets, which he subsequently broke as the Israelites worshipped before the golden calf (Exod 32:19), closely parallels Paul’s situation when he wrote the Letter of Tears. We have also seen that, unlike Moses, Paul chose to stay away from his rebellious congregation, in order to spare them the disciplinary action which, had he returned, he would have had to take. Moses broke the stone tablets of the covenant, symbolising the breaking of the covenant itself; and had Paul returned to Corinth, he would have had to take the lead in a prophetic act proclaiming that the church had broken the new covenant, and imposing disciplinary action. Moreover, it has been shown that in attacking his opponents in 2:17, and in 4:2, Paul alludes to the description of the false prophets faced by Jeremiah in 23:9-40,⁶⁴⁵ and it has been argued that he probably made reference to this passage in the Letter of Tears. We now note that Jer 23:9 is linked in the MT to Moses’ breaking of the stone tablets, Exod 32:19, by the hook-word שבר (“break”, “shatter”),⁶⁴⁶ which in both texts is rendered in the LXX by συντρίβω. Faced with a quite similar predicament, Paul had evidently reflected on the respective experiences of Moses and Jeremiah, and had remarked upon these parallels in the Letter of Tears. The following hypothesis is now proposed: in the Letter of Tears, Paul compared the Corinthians with the Israelites worshipping before the golden calf in the desert, and his own situation with that of Moses on Mount Sinai after he had received the first set of stone tablets (Exodus 32). Stimulated by Jer 23:9, and the שבר / συντρίβω connection with Exod 32:19, he made a remark to this effect:

⁶⁴⁵ See above, *Paul and Jeremiah*,:144..

⁶⁴⁶ The verb is in the Qal in Jer 23:9 and in the Piel in Exod 32:19; the Piel may indicate an intensified sense, “shatter”.

Moses broke the tablets of the Law, but if I come to Corinth now, I will break my own heart!

We will designate this proposal the Golden Calf hypothesis.⁶⁴⁷ The point of the remark, in its original setting in the Letter of Tears, would have been this: that the Israelites had broken the (old) covenant, indulging in idolatry and sexual immorality, and Moses had responded to this by breaking the stone tablets of the covenant; thus he had pronounced judgement upon the people. In the same way, Paul feared that he would have to pronounce judgement upon the church in Corinth, in response to their breach of the (new) covenant. But to do so would be to break his own heart.⁶⁴⁸ Thus Paul's allusion to this remark in 2 Cor 3:3 would evoke his great love for the Corinthians, and recall the great danger which he endured as a result of his decision to stay away from Corinth, and the anguish of heart to which he refers in 2:4, 12-13. By contrast, Paul's opponents are the very ones who have led the Corinthians into error, and the allusion to Ezek 11:19; 36:26 would imply that their hearts were of stone, incapable of love. They had no love for the Corinthians; they were motivated only by the evil inclinations of their stony hearts. This, then, I suggest, is the substance of the non-metaphorical sense of the final antithesis, and corresponds to the non-metaphorical sense of διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, "cared for by us."

If our hypothesis is granted, then this additional level of meaning in the second antithesis, which is absent from the first, would focus the readers' attention on the allusion to the Letter of Tears, negating or overwhelming the signal that the antitheses are to be read in parallel.⁶⁴⁹ At the same time, the allusion would bring the argument of 3:1-3 to an effective climax. The imagery of the Corinthians as Paul's letter of

⁶⁴⁷ In view of Paul's description of himself in 7:6 as ταπεινός, it is worth noting that συντετριμένος and ταπεινός are synonymous in the LXX (Bertram TDNT 7:922).

⁶⁴⁸ This might explain the clumsy phrase πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις; it portrays Paul (and Timothy's) hearts as tablets, comparable to the stone tablets of the law, and therefore capable of being shattered.

⁶⁴⁹ There is no parallel in the first antithesis to the echo of the Letter of Tears.

recommendation does continue into 3:3. It is being revealed⁶⁵⁰ that the church in Corinth is a letter from Christ, brought into existence through Paul's ministry, and cared for by him (διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν). This letter has not been written by human hands, but by "the Spirit of the living God." The final antithesis is concerned with the material on which the respective letters of recommendation are written. The apostle's letter is written on his fleshly heart, a heart renewed by the same Spirit in fulfilment of the new covenant promises of Ezek 11:19; 36:26.⁶⁵¹ His ministry is motivated by a love for the church which was engraved in his heart by the Spirit when he founded the church. He cares deeply for his readers and is prepared to suffer for them. His ministry is a fulfilment of the Law, as promised in Jer 31:33, the outworking of love. His opponents' ministry, on the other hand, is motivated by the evil inclinations of their stony hearts; they are unbelievers and idolaters, and incapable of love. The antithesis πλαξὶν λιθίναις vs. πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις signals an allusion to the Letter of Tears, and brings to mind the evidence of Paul's handling of the recent crisis, proof of his fatherly love for the church. Moreover, attention is drawn once more to the opponents' role in leading the church almost into disaster.

Thus, though the antitheses do unquestionably evoke a contrast between the old and new covenants, Jer 31(38):33 does not in fact evoke a link between "ink" and "stone tablets", since the non-metaphorical level of meaning in the second antithesis carries the thought forward:

a letter written not with ink, but with the Holy Spirit,
not on stone tablets [which Moses broke],

⁶⁵⁰ The participle φανερούμενοι is taken to be passive; so also BDF 397(4); cf. Thrall 1994:224 n 247. Throughout 2:14-3:6 Paul's active role in founding and caring for the church is emphasised; the role of the church is simply to be known.

⁶⁵¹ Paul made no distinction between his conversion and his call to be an apostle; see Hafemann 1986:139 n 134, and the literature cited there. If his conversion was genuine (if he possessed a "heart of flesh"), then his apostolic ministry must also be genuine. Conversely, his opponents were unbelievers (possessing only "hearts of stone"), and could not therefore be apostles.

but on tablets of fleshly hearts [which could not have withstood the trauma of pronouncing judgement upon you].

It is important to stress at this point that the antitheses do not imply or presuppose that Paul characterises his opponents as ministers of the old covenant. The point of the antitheses, very clearly, is to contrast *motivations* of ministry. The apostle's ministry to the Corinthians, which derives from the fulfilment in his own heart of the promises of the new covenant, is motivated by his love for the church, which was engraved in his heart by the Spirit when he founded it. His opponents, however, being unbelievers, are incapable of such motivation; their hearts are of stone. Their condition is that of Israel under the old covenant; their hearts are hardened, and incapable of obedience to the Law, that is, of love.

So far as I am aware, no other interpretation has been able to give due weight to the allusions to OT traditions in 3:3, while at the same time avoiding the conclusion that by the end of 3:3 Paul has lost control of his imagery. Indeed, we have been driven to the Golden Calf hypothesis. This solution is perfectly feasible, given our reconstruction of the development of the crisis, Paul's rejection of Moses and of Jeremiah as paradigms for his ministry in favour of the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh, and allusions to Jer 23:9-40 in the Letter of Tears. The antitheses of 3:3, with their allusion to the Letter of Tears, make a vivid connection between Paul's recent sufferings on behalf of his readers and the new covenant / restoration traditions of the OT, a connection which, as we shall see, is central to the argument of 2:14-7:4.

Paul has asserted that he is sufficient for his ministry, evoking the tradition of the call of Moses (πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός; - 2:16b), and implying that, like Moses before him, he has been called and made sufficient for his ministry by the grace of God. He has gone on to claim that his motives spring from his moral and cultic purity; that he speaks in Christ as a true prophet/apostle, in the literal presence of God (κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ). Having cited as evidence in support of this claim his founding of the church in Corinth,

and his self-sacrificial love for the church (3:1-3), Paul recapitulates his claim to sufficiency for his ministry, recalling 2:17: "Such confidence as this we have through Christ, before God" (διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν; 3:4). Returning to the ἱκανός motif of 2:16b, he adds, "Not that of ourselves we are competent (ἱκανοί) to reckon anything as deriving from ourselves; rather, our competence (ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν) is from God". The opening discourse concludes (3:6) with a contrast of two ministries: Paul has been made by God a competent minister / mediator (διάκονος) of the new covenant, not of the ministry of the letter (γράμμα), which kills, but of the Spirit (πνεῦμα), which makes alive. Thus he now defines his ministry explicitly in terms of Jer 31:31-34. The letter of recommendation imagery, 3:1-3, therefore, appears to form the centre of a chiasmic structure:

Introductory thanksgiving (2:14)

A: Paul ministers as an εἰκὼν of the crucified Christ
(2:15-16a)

B: he speaks as a true prophet-apostle (2:16b-17)

C: the Corinthians themselves commend his
ministry to everyone (3:1-3)

B': his competence is from God (3:4-5)

A': he has been made competent as διάκονος of the new covenant (3:6)

Note the following correspondences of syntax, terms and motifs:

1. In 2:15-16a Paul uses an olfactory metaphor to describe the effects of his ministry of making manifest the crucified Christ: 'Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις'; this ministry has contrasting effects upon the two groups; these he describes in terms of death and life, carefully balancing the opposing elements and employing a s μὲν ... δέ construction: οἷς μὲν ὁσμή ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμή ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν (A). In 3:6 he describes his ministry as follows: God has made him

competent as διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος. The outcome of his new covenant ministry he contrasts with that of the (old covenant) διακονία γράμματος. These contrasting outcomes he also describes in terms of life and death, again balancing opposing elements, and employing the particle δέ: τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ (A').

2. In 2:16b-17 and 3:4-5, Paul discusses his competence for his apostolic ministry (B ἱκανός; B' ἱκανός; ἱκανότης); and the following three pairs of prepositional phrases correspond in chiastic order: sent from God (ἐκ θεοῦ / ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ); in God's presence / before God (κατέναντι θεοῦ / πρὸς τὸν θεόν); in Christ / through Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ / διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). We note also the parallel constructions ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ (2:17) / ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν (3:5). Moreover, in B, Paul asks, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός. We have seen that he assumes that his readers will see that he assumes that he is in fact competent (ἱκανός) for his extraordinary ministry. In B' he reveals that he does not consider himself competent (ἱκανός) in any way because of any intrinsic merit in himself; rather, his competence (ἱκανότης) is from God: οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοί ἐσμεν λογίσασθαι τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

The triumphal / epiphany procession imagery of 2:14 and its associated olfactory imagery is clarified and extended in 2:15-16a, the first element of the chiasm; 2:14-3:6 is therefore marked out as a literary subunit.⁶⁵² It will be useful to compare the introduction with the centre of the chiasm:

2:14 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ.

3:1-3 ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν· ἢ μὴ χρῆζομεν ὡς τινες συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν· ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων· φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις.

⁶⁵² For the role of chiasmus in differentiating a unit of text, see Thomson 1995:35; Parunak 1981:156.

In his introduction Paul declares that he is always being led by God, in Christ (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ) in a divine triumphal procession which celebrates his conversion; or rather, he is being led in an epiphany procession, in which is being made manifest (φανερῶνται) everywhere through him the fragrance of the knowledge of God as he is revealed in Christ. In the chiastic centre, Paul says that he is commended to everyone by a letter of recommendation (γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων); that letter, the Corinthian church, is being shown to be (φανερούμενοι) a letter from Christ, brought into existence through Paul's ministry and cared by him; this letter has been engraved by the Spirit on his "fleshly heart". The echo of the Letter of Tears in the final antithesis of 3:3 reminds the readers that the church has such a place in Paul's heart that he was prepared to endure suffering in order that they might be brought to repentance and thereby restored to the path that leads to salvation (cf. 7:3). Thus Paul begins in 2:14 with his own role of *making manifest*, always and everywhere, "the fragrance of his knowledge", and concludes with the Corinthians being *made manifest* to everyone as a "letter" from Christ, commending the apostles' ministry, as it is made known that it is he who has founded and cares for the church in Corinth. So by the will of God the Corinthians participate in Paul's ministry, confirming his apostolic legitimacy wherever he goes (cf. 1 Thess 1:7-10). It would appear, then, that a major concern of the introduction is the Corinthians' partnership in ministry with the apostle. This theme of partnership in a ministry characterised by suffering is already present in the epistolary introduction, 1:5-7, in which Paul says that the Corinthians share in the same sufferings which he suffers. In this way he sets out, in embryo, the argument announced in 1:13-14, in which he will persuade his readers that "you can boast in us, just as we will boast in you, in the Day of the Lord Jesus." He will begin with his own role in making manifest the divine presence, and conclude with his confidence in the Corinthians as his partners in ministry.

We have also seen that the letter of recommendation imagery opposes Paul's "letter from Christ" to letters produced by his opponents, which are of merely human origin;

unlike them, Paul has no need to produce again his credentials in Corinth, nor to provide letters of recommendation. Moreover his “fleshly heart”, which in obedience to Christ loves and cares for the church, is contrasted with the stony hearts of his opponents, which are incapable of such love. The centre of the chiasm is therefore concerned with the Corinthians’ partnership with Paul *in opposition to their partnership with his opponents*.

3. The argument of 2 Cor 3:4-6

Having declared that, unlike his opponents, he has no need of letters of recommendation “either to you or from you”, for the Corinthians themselves are his letter, known and read by everyone, Paul continues, *πεποίθησιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*. As has been noted, the prepositional phrases echo 2:17, *κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ*. The confidence to which Paul refers is evidently his confidence that he is competent (*ἰκανός*) for the extraordinary ministry which he describes in 2:14-16a; 2:17, and in particular his confidence in the effectiveness of his ministry to the Corinthians (3:1-3). The prepositional phrases indicate that he is referring to his confidence in Christ, before God. It is clear from our analysis of 3:1-3 that Paul attributes his competence for the ministry to which he has been called to the actions of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling in his own heart the promises of the new covenant. The Spirit created in him a heart capable of fulfilling the Law, and formed in him a commitment of love to the church in Corinth which enabled him, at great personal cost, to bring the recent crisis to a successful conclusion.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵³ Following Zimmerli and subsequent scholarship Hafemann, in his recent discussion of the *ἰκανός* motif in 2 Cor 2:16b; 3:5-6a (1995:49-188, esp.:47-62), draws attention to the “Prophetic Call Narrative” form of the OT: “(1) the theophany / divine encounter; (2) the word of YHWH/ commission; (3) the obstacle to be overcome in the prophets’ situation; (4) the act of God’s grace / and/or promise of his presence (sometimes with a sign to overcome the obstacle)” (p 49). Having examined the call narratives of Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he calls attention to “the central role which the objection/obstacle motif plays both structurally and theologically” in each case (p 59). The call narratives are apologetic in function: “The *negative* emphasis in the obstacle motif on the *insufficiency* of the prophet implies and further underscores a *positive* emphasis on the *sufficiency* of the prophet as a result of God’s grace” (p 60; emphasis his). In the antitheses of 3:3, Paul implies that his sufficiency is due to

The use of the term *πεποίθησις* in 3:4 is closely related to that in 1:14, where Paul speaks of his confidence in the ultimate outcome of his spiritual partnership with the Corinthians: that they will be his boast, and he theirs, before the eschatological Judge on the Day of the Lord. Indeed, in 1:13-14 Paul claims that, through the Letter of Tears, his readers have already understood this partially, and he expresses the hope that, through the current letter, they will come to understand this fully. It is reasonable to infer that he finds support for this eschatological hope in the quality of his current spiritual relationship with the Corinthians. In 3:4 he speaks of his confidence before God (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*) of the fruitfulness of that partnership in his present, earthly ministry.

Paul's confidence before God is *διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. His confidence in the Corinthians is not grounded in his own accomplishments, but in the work that Christ has accomplished through his agency in founding and caring for the church (*διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν* 3:3): the Corinthians are a letter *from Christ*. Barrett rightly comments, "if he has confidence *before God*, it is at the same time confidence in God".⁶⁵⁴ So he continues, "Not that we are of ourselves competent to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God". It is clear from the chiasmic structure that *ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν* refers back to *ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας* in 2 Cor 2:17, and hence also to *ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ*.⁶⁵⁵ His competence, like that of Moses, derives from his call, which for Paul is inseparable from his conversion; he has been sent by God, and equipped by God for his task. Moreover 3:5 continues the polemical edge of 2:17; for the opposing phrase, *λογίσασθαί τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν* contrasts with *ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ ... λαλοῦμεν* (2:17): "It is what those do who peddle God's word as if it were a commodity at their own disposal".⁶⁵⁶

the action of the Spirit in renewing his heart and giving him a great love for the Corinthians; but rather than spell out his natural insufficiency for his task, and God's action in overcoming the obstacle of his hardened heart, he makes the point subtly by pointing to the insufficiency of his unbelieving opponents.

⁶⁵⁴ Barrett 1973:110, citing his use in 1:9 of the cognate verb *πεποιθότες ὡμεν*.

⁶⁵⁵ Cf. Georgi 1986:232.

⁶⁵⁶ Furnish 1984:184, following Georgi.

It has been argued that in the Letter of Tears Paul compared himself with Moses on Sinai, receiving revelation in the presence of God (κατέναντι θεοῦ), and the Corinthians with the Israelites, worshipping before the golden calf. In 2:16b, and again in 3:5 and 6a, he echoes the call narrative of Moses when discussing his own competence (ἰκανότης) for his ministry. Moreover, it has been argued that the Letter of Tears itself is echoed in 3:3: though Moses returned to the camp and broke the stone tablets of the covenant, signifying that the covenant itself had been broken, Paul could not bring himself to travel to Corinth to pronounce judgement upon the church, for this would have broken his own heart. The love for the Corinthians which so constrained Paul in this decision was due to the work of the Spirit, who had engraved the church in his fleshly heart. But, we have proposed, Paul took this decision in the belief that, in consequence of his failure to discipline the church, he himself would become in breach of covenant, and subject to its curse sanctions. His competence for his apostolic ministry had been confirmed, however, by the outcome. Hence Georgi is correct in asserting against Windisch that

Paul can speak of the ἰκανότης ἐκ θεοῦ only because of the πεποίθις πρὸς τὸν θεόν (cf. κατέναντι θεοῦ, 2:17). The οὐχ ἰκανός is thus not an “expression of the religious language of humility” ... instead the following shows that it is the attitude in face of the eschatological judge.⁶⁵⁷

Having shown that his competence for his ministry is grounded in God's actions in fulfilling in his own heart the promises of the new covenant, Paul returns the question of the effects of his ministry on others. He now spells out that he has been made competent as διακόνος καινῆς διαθήκης. The phrase καινῆς διαθήκης occurs elsewhere in Paul only in the eucharistic tradition of 1 Cor 11:23-26, and it is clear that Paul regarded the Lord's Supper as celebrating the inauguration, in the death of Christ, of the new covenant promised in Jer 31:31-34.⁶⁵⁸ The relationship between 2 Cor 3:3 and 3:6a is therefore evident: in fulfilment of the new covenant promises of Jer 31:31-34,

⁶⁵⁷ Georgi 1986:285 n 19; Windisch 1924:108.

⁶⁵⁸ Hafemann 1995:119-21.

Paul has been made competent as διακόνος of this same new covenant. There follows, however, an exegetical crux which has generated a considerable volume of literature: he has been made competent as a minister οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ.⁶⁵⁹ Until recently there was a consensus as to the meaning of the Letter/Spirit contrast:

According to the prevailing opinion, γράμμα represented the Mosaic Law which “kills” because of its demand for an obedience impossible to render, and/or because it makes demands *per se* and thus produces, by its very nature, a legalistic works-righteousness. In contrast πνεῦμα stood for the Gospel which, due to its promise of life and the power of the Spirit, “makes alive.” Thus with little serious regard for its own context, 2 Cor. 3:6 could simply and quickly be interpreted in line with Paul’s other contrasts between “the works of the Law”, “the Law”, or simply “works” on the one hand, and “faith” or “grace” on the other (cf. Gal. 2:16; 3:2,5; 10-12, 21-25, 5:4; Rom. 3:20-22, 28; 4:1-4; 6:14f; 9:30-32; 11:6). As such it was read as a distinction between two contrary principles of salvation or two theologically distinct dispensations.⁶⁶⁰

However, in light of Sander’s *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*⁶⁶¹ and the subsequent and continuing discussion of Paul’s understanding of the Law, this consensus has collapsed.⁶⁶²

It has been argued that, in the Letter of Tears, Paul both compared and contrasted his own new covenant ministry to the Corinthians with the old covenant ministry of Moses to the Israelites. In 2:16b and 3:5-6a he again compares himself to Moses, alluding to the call narrative of Exodus 4. It seems natural to suppose, therefore, that in 3:6bc he is qualifying this comparison, pointing out a vital difference between his own ministry and that of Moses. The Mosaic ministry “kills”, but Paul’s ministry of the Spirit “makes alive”. That is, τὸ γράμμα, a reference to the Law engraved on the stone tablets, is a metonym for the old covenant; and τὸ πνεῦμα, the Holy Spirit, who engraves the Law on

⁶⁵⁹ For a historical overview and discussion of the current exegetical debate see Hafemann 1995:1-35.

⁶⁶⁰ Hafemann 1995:2.

⁶⁶¹ Sanders 1977.

⁶⁶² Hafemann 1995:7-16.

fleshly hearts is a metonym for the new covenant. This interpretation of τὸ γράμμα is confirmed by 3:7, which speaks of the Mosaic ministry as ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις (cf. e.g. Deut 28:58-68; Ezek 20:1-26). The ministry of the old covenant is a ministry of death - hence τὸ γράμμα "kills". That τὸ πνεῦμα is to be understood as the Holy Spirit is strongly suggested by the antitheses of 3:3, in which the stone tablets of the old covenant are associated with the stony hearts of the people of that covenant (Paul's opponents in particular), and contrasted with the fleshly hearts of the people of the new covenant (Paul in particular), which are associated with the Spirit of the *living* God. Hence τὸ πνεῦμα "makes alive" (cf. esp. Ezek 37:1-12).

"Works" are required under the new covenant, just as "faith" was required under the old covenant. As Hafemann has demonstrated,

Since the work of the Spirit distinguishes the Sinai covenant from the new covenant, it is the Spirit's work on the "tablets of the human hearts" (3:3b) of "making alive" (3:6bc) which provides the ground for why Paul's ministry does not focus directly on mediating the Law, but on the Spirit; it is the Spirit which makes obedience to God possible as the sign of the beginning of the eschatological restoration.⁶⁶³

4. The themes of 2 Cor 2:14-3:6

In 2:14-3:6 Paul underscores the following oppositions:

- Those who are perishing experience his ministry as originating in death, and leading to death; but those who are being saved as originating in life, and leading to life (2:15-16a).
- His competence for his ministry derives not from himself but from God (2:16b; 3:4-5).
- His motivations for ministry are not self-centred (as are his opponents'), but God-centred (2:17).

⁶⁶³ Hafemann 1995:182-83.

- His ministry is commended by divine testimony; his opponents' ministry is commended only by human testimony (3:1-3).
- He is motivated in his ministry to the Corinthians by a love for them which has been inscribed in his heart by the Spirit; his opponents have hearts which are incapable of such love (3:2-3).
- His ministry is not of the old covenant, but of the new (3:6a).
- His ministry brings not death, but life (3:6b).
- Through Paul's ministry the knowledge of God/Christ is being made manifest everywhere; the Corinthians themselves are being made manifest everywhere, as a "letter of recommendation" from Christ, commending Paul's ministry (2:14; 3:3).

Paul introduces his argument with imagery which portrays him as suffering in the execution of his ministry, indeed, at first glance, as being led to his death (2:14); and ends with the claim that his ministry produces in his converts not death, but in life (3:6b). In addition, he begins by comparing his ministry with that of Moses (2:16b; cf. 3:4-5), but goes on to insist that his ministry is not of the old covenant, but of the new, the covenant of the Spirit (3:3, 6). His ministry is commended by its results in the lives of his Corinthian converts, who are engraved in his heart by the Spirit of the *living* God. For them his ministry has resulted not in death but in life. Alongside these points regarding his own ministry, Paul also attacks his opponents; they are false prophets who for financial gain seek to lead the Corinthians into idolatry; they are unbelievers, incapable of obeying the divine law.

It is possible therefore to reconstruct the assumed perspective of his opponents, and hence of the criticism which he seeks to rebut, as follows:

1. Paul is being punished by God.
2. He lacks letters of accreditation.
3. His ministry is of the old covenant.
4. His ministry brings death to his converts.

He transforms this perspective as follows:

1. His sufferings are accepted by God as Χριστοῦ εὐωδία, and as he suffers he makes manifest to all the presence and power of the crucified Christ.
2. His ministry is commended by God by means of its results: the church in Corinth.
3. His ministry is of the new covenant.
4. His ministry brings life to his converts.

The centre of the chiastic structure emphasises Paul's partnership with the Corinthians; they commend his ministry to everyone. It also reminds the readers of the sufferings which he has recently endured in the execution of pastoral ministry to the Corinthians, and of his love for them.

The principal, overt theme of the Introduction is apparent: Paul, who is a true apostle, is motivated in his ministry to the Corinthians by a love for them which has been engraved in his heart by the Spirit. His ministry of the new covenant has brought them spiritual life, and they commend his ministry to others. In addition there is a secondary, subtle theme: his opponents are false prophets and unbelievers whose letters of accreditation are worthless, and who are motivated merely by financial gain. The allusions in 2:17 to Jer 23:9 suggest that they are attempting to lead the Corinthians into idolatry.

It should be noted that 2:14, though it plays an important role in setting up the metaphorical framework of the whole discourse, is not part of the chiastic structure which forms the bulk of the Introduction. Its role is transitional, linking the motifs of travel, suffering and mission from 2:12-13 with the argument of the Discourse. The role of the apostle's sufferings in his ministry only becomes clear, however, in 4:7.

Chapter 7

The Argument of 2 Cor 6:11-7:4

1. The structure, theology and authenticity of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1

As already noted, many scholars maintain that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is an interpolation into the text.⁶⁶⁴ It is alleged that the fragment was not written by Paul, and that it breaks the flow of his thought from 6:13 to 7:2. We will argue to the contrary, that 6:14-7:1 in fact forms the centre of the argument of 6:11-7:4, and is the climax of the polemical thread in 2:14-7:4. But before considering the flow of thought in 6:11-7:4 as a whole, we will consider briefly the question of the authorship of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.

⁶⁶⁴ At one extreme of opinion, Betz has argued (1973) that the passage is not only an interpolation into the text, but is the work of Paul's opponents; it exhorts believers to have nothing to do with Gentile Christians who reject the 'yoke of the Torah'. Gunther (1973:308-13) reaches a similar conclusion. Gnilka (1968) and Fitzmyer (1971) maintain that the passage is a non-Pauline interpolation, a Christian reworking of a passage of Essene origin. Gnilka (1968:57), notes that the opposition between believer and unbeliever, and the opposition between Christ and Belial, do not occur in the Qumran scrolls, but are Christian themes. He proposes therefore that the passage was composed, not by Paul, but by a Christian 'whose frame of reference is close to the traditions prevalent in the Qumran community' (ibid.). The addition of 'καὶ θυγατέρας' to the quote from 2 Sam 7:14 in 2 Cor 6:18 is also 'most un-Qumranian' (Rensberger 1978:37). Rensberger (1978), Martin (1986:193-94) and Carrez (1986:168-69) maintain that Paul reworked a piece of tradition created by a Christian of Essene origin; Furnish cautiously adopts a similar view. The once popular view that the passage belongs to the Previous Letter (1 Cor. 5:9) still finds occasional support (e.g. Taylor 1991). But support for the view that the passage is both Pauline and in its original setting is now substantial (e.g. Barrett 1973; Fee 1977; Lambrecht 1978; Beale 1989; Duff 1993; Sass 1993; Zeilinger 1993; Scott 1993; and the recent major commentaries of Thrall 1994 and Barnett 1997). Webb (1993:16-30) gives a useful history of the history of interpretation of the passage up to 1989.

The main arguments against the authenticity of the fragment are the large number of *hapax legomena* in the passage; the apparently “un-Pauline” theology of separation from the world, with its cultic imagery, and the demand for the cleansing of σάρξ and πνεῦμα (7:1); and alleged thematic parallels with the literature of Qumran.

The hapax legomena

The *hapax legomena* contribute little to the case against Pauline authorship. Excluding those which occur in quotations from the LXX, the Pauline hapaxes in the passage are ἑτεροζυγέω, μετοχή, συμφώνησις, Βελιάρ, συγκατάθεσις and μολυσμός. But cognates of μετοχή, συμφώνησις and μολυσμός occur in 1 Corinthians (μετέχω, 10:17; σύμφωνος, 7:5; μολύνω, 8:7). This leaves three hapaxes in five verses, which is certainly not unusual in Paul's rhetorical compositions.⁶⁶⁵

It has been argued that, while Paul uses a number of functional names for the Devil, as a proper name he uses only Σατανᾶς.⁶⁶⁶ If this can be sustained,⁶⁶⁷ then the choice of Beliar does demand an explanation. It will be argued shortly that in fact Paul is deliberately echoing the language of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

The theology of the passage

The theology of the passage requires careful examination. The passage seems to be structured as follows:⁶⁶⁸

Opening exhortation:

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Allo 1937:190; Hughes 1962:242.

⁶⁶⁶ E.g. ὁ πειράζων, 1 Thess. 3:5; ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, 2 Cor. 4:4; ὁ διάβολος (Eph. 4:27, 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:26, 3:3; Titus 2:3). ὁ πονηρός, Eph. 6:16; Rensberger 1978:32

⁶⁶⁷ It seems questionable whether the distinction between functional name and proper name can be sustained in the case of ὁ διάβολος; already in 1 Chron 21:1 LXX the term is used for the Heb. *Satan*, where ὁ πειράζων would seem contextually more appropriate, if the name was intended to reflect the role which is directly in view.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. Scott 1992:193; Webb 1993:32.

μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις

supported by five rhetorical questions:

τίς γὰρ μετοχὴ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία·
ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος·
τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ,
ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου.⁶⁶⁹

τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων· (climax)⁶⁷⁰

The assumed negative answer to the climactic rhetorical question justified:

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος·

Complex supporting citation combination ("catena"):

καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι (Opening quotation formula)

First promise of presence and relationship:⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁹ H. D. Betz (1973:91) points out that the pair of couplets which form the first four antitheses have an ABBA structure by synonymous parallelism: "The first and fourth are parallels and co-ordinate the concepts of δικαιοσύνη / πιστός and ἀνομία / ἄπιστος. The terms μετοχή and μερίς are synonyms. The second and third questions form another parallelism. They co-ordinate φῶς with Χριστός and σκότος with Βελιάρ; again, the terms κοινωνία and συμφώνησις are synonyms. The fifth question stands by itself."
⁶⁷⁰ Rensberger (1978:31) points out that the first couplet deals with impersonal principles, the second with personal beings. Moreover, the term ἄπιστος forms an inclusion with 6:14a. He therefore maintains that this word is the climax of the set of antitheses, "at least as they are used in this context". The final antithesis therefore provides further backing for the prohibition and does not determine its content. However it is the final antithesis, ναὸς θεοῦ vs. εἰδωλα, which is developed in the catena; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος applies the final antithesis to the Corinthian congregation, and this identification of the ναὸς θεοῦ with the congregation of believers is justified by promises of divine presence and covenantal relationship (6:16b, 18). The temple of God is holy, and hence there is a strong demand (διό) for separation from what is unclean (6:17, 7:1; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19); cf. Fee 1977:158.
⁶⁷¹ Ezek 37:27 combined with Lev 26:11-12 LXX.

ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω, (Presence)

καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός, (Relationship;
καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός. Covenant Formula)

Central exhortation, supporting opening exhortation: ⁶⁷²

διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν
καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος,
καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε·

Second promise of presence and relationship: ⁶⁷³

ἐγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς, (Presence)

καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα (Relationship;
καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς Adoption Formula)
καὶ θυγατέρας,

λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. (Closing quotation
Formula)

Concluding exhortation:

ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί,
καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος,

⁶⁷² A modification of Isa 52:11 LXX.

⁶⁷³ 2 Sam 7:14, probably with Isa 43:6, or possibly 49:22 or 60:4 LXX (see below); ἐγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς is probably taken from Ezek 20:34 (but cf. 20:41; 11:17) LXX; Zeph 3:20 is also a possibility (see Webb 1993:43-52). Each of these texts belongs to the new covenant / return traditions. Webb rightly cautions (p 47) that we should also acknowledge the much broader use of εἰσδέχομαι in OT return language (cf. Rensberger 1978:37).

ἐπιτελοῦντες ἁγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

H. D. Betz correctly observes that the changes in LXX Isa 52:11 as it is quoted in 2 Cor 6:17 are

undoubtedly the result of a particular understanding of the Isaiah text. They express a cultic concern. The Christians are called to separate from the ἄπιστοι because of the “holiness” which the Christian community as the “temple of God” and the “people of God” must achieve (2 Cor. 7:1).⁶⁷⁴

Citing 1 Cor 6:11, however, Betz concludes that the passage differs from Paul in that for him the church is already holy, whereas the Christians responsible for this passage see it as their specific Christian responsibility to achieve “holiness”.⁶⁷⁵ But this proposed distinction is not as sharp as at first appears. For Paul, as throughout Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism, there is no sharp division between ethical and cultic purity.⁶⁷⁶ Paul does call the church to maintain its holiness; moreover, it is the pattern of Pauline parenesis to exhort believers to become what they already are.⁶⁷⁷ As has been noted already, Paul uses cultic language in his parenesis; for example, the holiness motif in 1 Cor 5:6-8⁶⁷⁸ is also a call to maintain, or rather to restore the purity of the church: “Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are” (v7 NRSV). In 1 Thess 4:7-8 Paul expresses an appeal for chastity in the language of cultic purity: “For God did not call us on the basis of uncleanness (ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ), but of sanctification (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ). Therefore he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” To reject Paul’s call for separation from ἀκαθαρσία is to reject “God who gives you the Holy Spirit”.⁶⁷⁹ This will make very good sense if we may assume that the Holy Spirit is to be understood as the agent of sanctification in the believer. Then the thought is, “God did not call us on the

⁶⁷⁴ Betz 1973:95-6.

⁶⁷⁵ Betz:96.

⁶⁷⁶ Newton 1985:81.

⁶⁷⁷ See Parsons 1988.

⁶⁷⁸ See also Rosner 1991.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf.. I. H. Marshall 1983:113.

basis of our uncleanness, as if this was something to be maintained ... but he called us in a way that involves sanctification.”⁶⁸⁰ Therefore believers must co-operate with the sanctifying work of God’s Spirit, and not return to the uncleanness of their old life. That the Spirit is the divine agent of sanctification is in fact spelled out by the apostle in 1 Cor 6:11: “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God”. Here again there is an implied imperative, “Live out this new life in Christ and stop being like the wicked.”⁶⁸¹ Though in neither place does the apostle make explicit use of new covenant / second exodus traditions, he does argue from the benefits of the new covenant to the need for a response of separation from ἀκαθαρσία. The ethical and cultic purity of the church, the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16-17), must be maintained. Having stated that the Corinthians have been washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor 6:11; ἀπελούσασθε; ἡγιασθητε; ἐδικαιώθητε), Paul goes on to exhort them to flee from sexual immorality, reminding them that their individual bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (6:12-20). In 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, using strikingly similar language and imagery,⁶⁸² the church, “the temple of the living God”, is also called to holiness.

Until recently, discussion of the theology of the fragment has largely neglected the OT contexts of the passages quoted in 6:16-18. However, our understanding has now been greatly advanced by the work of Beale (1989), Scott (1992; 1994), and Webb (1993). Beale points out that “almost without exception, the six generally agreed upon OT references refer in their respective contexts to God's promise to restore exiled Israel to their land”.⁶⁸³ The restoration is also called “cleansing” and “sanctification”

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Fee 1987:245.

⁶⁸² See Webb 1993:210, quoted below; cf. Fee 1977:148-50.

⁶⁸³ Beale 1989:569; the majority find the following texts cited from the LXX: Lev 26:11-12; Ezek 37:27; Isa 52:11; Ezek 20:34 (or possibly 20:41); 2 Sam 7:14; Isa 43:6; see the discussion in Webb 1993:31-58. On the context of Lev 26:11-12, Beale rightly comments (1989:570): “Lev 26:14-39 explains that the Israelites will be exiled from their land and experience divine ‘hostility’ if they break the covenant ... But if they repent while in exile, God promises to remember his covenant and to restore them to the land (26:40-45), so that the nation would again enjoy a peaceful relationship with God in the land, as initially explained in 26:11-12.”

(Ezek 37:23; 28; cf. 36:24-25).⁶⁸⁴ The apparent exception is 2 Sam 7:14, but as has been noted already, restoration and the eschatological rule of the Davidic Messiah belong to the set of motifs associated in the prophets with the promised new covenant.⁶⁸⁵ Beale notes the following important thematic connection between 2 Sam 7:1-16 and the OT context of Ezek 37:27, cited in the first promise of the catena: the future Davidic king will build a temple for God to dwell in forever (2 Sam 7:2; 5-7; 13; cf. Lev 26:11-12).⁶⁸⁶ Moreover, in both passages Yahweh confirms with an oath that a Davidic king will reign over restored Israel forever (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ezek 37:22-25).

The divine adoption formula of 2 Sam 7:14 is quoted in 2 Cor 6:18 in the form καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, whereas the LXX reads ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν, and follows closely the MT. Thus the tradition is extended to promise the divine adoption of the restored Israel. The second exodus context of the divine adoption is emphasised in the catena by the addition to the adoption formula of καὶ θυγατέρας, derived, almost certainly, from Isa 43:6, which belongs to the second exodus tradition.⁶⁸⁷ In later Jewish tradition, the promise of divine adoption (2 Sam 7:14) is applied to the Messiah (4QFlor 1:11), to the restored people of God (Jub 1:24), and to both the Messiah and the people (Test Jud 24:3).⁶⁸⁸ In the latter two texts, as in the "fragment", these traditions are combined with return / new covenant traditions. Barrett rightly comments: "The promise of 2 Sam 7:14 was originally addressed to the king: the king is Jesus, and in him men and women participate in his status before God".⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁴ Beale 1989:570.

⁶⁸⁵ See e.g. Jer 23:3-6; 30:3-9; 33:14-15; Ezek 34:20-31; Isa 11:1-10; 55:3-4.

⁶⁸⁶ Beale 1989:572.

⁶⁸⁷ Webb (1993:56-58) suggests as alternative sources Isa 49:22, 60:4. However, only Isa 43:6 refers to the restoration of the sons and daughters of Yahweh ("my sons", "my daughters"); the other texts refer to the sons and daughters of Israel ("your sons", "your daughters"). Nevertheless, Isa 49:22; 60:4 do belong to the Second Exodus tradition. Olley (1998) maintains that the source is Deut 32:19; "The Lord saw it and was jealous, he spurned his sons and daughters (LXX: υἱῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ θυγατέρων)", citing the use of Deut 32 in 1 Cor 10:14-22. However, the catena is not concerned with judgement, but with restoration; cf. 7:1, "Since we have these promises ..."; Beale 1989:569.

⁶⁸⁸ Scott 1992:104-117. Scott argues convincingly that Test Jud 24:1-3 is not a later interpolation, but is fully integrated into its context.

⁶⁸⁹ Barrett 1973:201.

The two covenantal promises flank, and therefore provide the basis for, a central exhortation. As has already been noted, the LXX wording of the source, Isa 52:11, has been modified to correlate with the reference to ἄπιστοι in 6:14a:

ἀπόστητε ἀπόστητε ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς ἀφορίσθητε οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου (Isa 52:11 LXX)

has been carefully altered to produce

διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε (2 Cor 6:17).

Apart from abbreviation and rearrangement, ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς is changed to ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν, aligning the altered αὐτῶν with the ἄπιστοις of 6:14: “come out of the midst of her (Babylon)” has been changed to “come out of the midst of them” (masc. plural), the ἄπιστοι. Hence the exhortation of 6:17 continues that of 6:14a. The final exhortation, 7:1, then follows from 6:17 (continuing the language of cultic purity). The meaning of the passage is therefore clear in broad outline, if not in its precise application: the readers are God’s temple, and have received the covenantal promises of God’s presence among them, and of divine adoption. Yet, though they have these promises, they are portrayed as having returned to exile among the idolatrous unbelievers in “Babylon”, the realm of iniquity, spiritual darkness, and Beliar. They must separate themselves from all impurity, as God’s holy people. They must come out of Babylon, and return to the realm of righteousness, light and Christ. They must purify themselves from all moral pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (7:1).

It has been argued that in Pauline usage, σὰρξ cannot be cleansed, for it is the seat of sin (Rom 8:3, 7), but must be put to death (Gal 5:24), whereas the divine spirit in the

believer cannot be polluted.⁶⁹⁰ In 2 Cor 7:1 the expression σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος is almost certainly a reference simply to the whole person. In 2 Cor 4:10-11 σῶμα and σὰρξ are used interchangeably, and σὰρξ is used as a synonym for σῶμα in 1 Cor 6:16; 15:39; hence 1 Cor 7:34, ἵνα ἡ ἁγία καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι provides “something of a parallel to the present verse”.⁶⁹¹ In 2 Cor 2:13; 7:5, Paul uses σὰρξ and πνεῦμα interchangeably to refer simply to the self.

Unlike the incestuous offender, Paul’s readers have not been formally handed over into the power of Satan; indeed, they are still “the temple of God”, a new covenant community. Nevertheless, they have chosen to enter into some kind of inappropriate partnership with ἄπιστοι (6:14a-16a) and, by implication, with iniquity, darkness, and Beliar. They must end their spiritual partnership with the ἄπιστοι and return to covenantal obedience, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If our assessment of the conceptual background of 1 Cor 5:5 is correct,⁶⁹² then such an argument would, in general terms, appear to be consistent with the apostle’s thought in that passage.

Significantly, 2 Cor 2:14-6:13 also draws upon new covenant traditions. Having alluded to Ezek 11:19; 36:26 and Jer 31(38):33 in 3:3,⁶⁹³ Paul describes himself, without further introduction, as διακόνος καινῆς διαθήκης (3:6). Since he introduces the term in the context of a comparison of his own ministry with that of Moses, a theme which he develops at length (3:6-18), it is clear that he contrasts the new covenant with the Sinai Covenant, as does Jer 31(38):32. This would seem to confirm that he refers to the promised new covenant of Jer 38(31):31-34.⁶⁹⁴ Moreover, the new covenant is the covenant of the Spirit (3:6; cf. v. 8), and brings righteousness and not condemnation (3:9); cf. Jer 31(38):33-34; Ezek 36:26-27.⁶⁹⁵ The new covenant was inaugurated by

⁶⁹⁰ Windisch 1924:218.

⁶⁹¹ Thrall 1994:31.

⁶⁹² See above, pp 86-93.

⁶⁹³ See below.

⁶⁹⁴ Jer 38:31 is the only occurrence of the term καινή διαθήκη in the OT.

⁶⁹⁵ For many other connections between the OT New Covenant / Second Exodus traditions and 2 Cor 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4, see Webb 1993:72-111; see also below.

the sacrificial death of Christ (1 Cor 11:23-26), the Davidic Messiah (Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8), who now reigns as king (1 Cor 15:24; cf. Col 1:13). Moreover, we have already argued that in 2 Cor 6:2, Paul identifies his ministry with that of the Isaianic *'Ebed Yahweh*, the covenant mediator (διάκονος) and leader of the Second Exodus, and that in this capacity he exhorts the Corinthians, "Be reconciled with God" (5:20), and "we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain" (6:1); it may reasonably be concluded that 6:14-7:1 continues this line of thought, and that in this passage also the apostle as the *'Ebed* addresses his readers, reminding them of their call to leave idolatrous "Babylon" and journey through the desert towards Canaan. The theology of the fragment is Pauline, and its themes and argument are closely connected with those of 2:14-6:13 + 7:2-4.

Alleged thematic parallels with the literature of Qumran

Fitzmyer lists five main points of similarity between the fragment and the Qumran texts:⁶⁹⁶

1. The triple dualism of righteousness and iniquity, light and darkness, Christ and Beliar, together with the underlying notion of the 'lot'.
2. The opposition to idols.
3. The concept of the temple of God.
4. The separation from impurity
5. The concatenation of Old Testament texts.

He concludes that the passage is a 'Christianized' version of a fragment which originated in Qumran.

The division of humankind into large groups, 'the sons of light' and 'the sons of darkness', says Fitzmyer, is found only at Qumran and in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.⁶⁹⁷ However,

⁶⁹⁶ Fitzmyer 1971:208.

the antitheses believers-light vs. unbelievers-darkness have already been set up in 4:3-4, 6; humankind is divided into two groups, those who being saved, and those who are perishing. In the hearts of the former group God has caused to shine 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ', but 'the God of this world' has blinded the minds of the latter group, so that they dwell in spiritual darkness. The imagery is certainly not foreign to Paul's thought.⁶⁹⁸

Fitzmyer also maintains that the term *μερίς* (6:15b) suggests that the Qumranian notion of 'lot' underlies the passage. However, he goes on to quote Col 1:12, *εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί*. Even if this reflects pre-Pauline liturgical tradition we have here, in a Pauline passage, the term *μερίς* in association with *φῶς*.

Derrett⁶⁹⁹ points out a striking parallel to the set of antitheses in Sir 13:16-18:

All living beings associate with their own kind,
and people stick close to those like themselves.
What does a wolf have in common with a lamb?
No more has a sinner with the devout.
What peace is there between a hyena and a dog?
And what peace between the rich and the poor? (NRSV)

The rhetorical form of the antitheses may therefore owe more to the LXX than to Qumran.

Opposition to idols is not only Pauline, but pastorally significant in Paul's relations with Corinth. The concept of the church as the temple of God is found in 1 Cor 3:16f, and in

⁶⁹⁷ Fitzmyer 1971:208-9.

⁶⁹⁸ Fitzmyer himself provides the following note: "The expression 'sons of darkness' does not appear in the New Testament, but 'sons of light' appears in 1 Thess 5:5 and Eph 5:8 .. Moreover, the fuller context of 1 Thess 5:4-8 and Eph 5:8-13 exploits the contrast of light and darkness in ways reminiscent of several Qumran passages. See also Rom 13:12-13." (Fitzmyer 1971:208 n 7). He also notes that the opposition of light and darkness is found as "a symbolic representation of the forces of good and evil" in many literatures, including the OT (Isa 45:7; Mic 7:8; Job 29:3).

⁶⁹⁹ Derrett 1978:249.

Eph 2:21-22, as Fitzmyer notes.⁷⁰⁰ Moreover, separation from impurity is a natural implication of the concept of the community as God's temple. As Newton observes,

For Jews in the days of the Temple, the purity laws served to maintain a suitable dwelling place for the divine in the sanctuary. For Paul the same language of purity was to describe the conditions that were required to keep God's spirit active in the church.⁷⁰¹

God's temple is ἅγιος (1 Cor 3:17), and must not be defiled (φθείρω); Davies maintains, therefore, that Paul's mind "was influenced by Levitical concepts ... for Paul the church was in a sense a neo-Levitical community."⁷⁰² Holiness carries a demand for purity.⁷⁰³ Paul frequently interprets purity, not in a ritual, but in an ethical sense;⁷⁰⁴ for example, in 2 Cor 12:21 ἀκαθαρσία is parallel with πορνεία and ἀσέλγεια; cf. Gal 5:19. In Rom 6:19, ἀκαθαρσία is connected with ἄνομία,⁷⁰⁵ and in 1 Thess 4:7, ἀκαθαρσία is opposed to ἁγιασμός in a discussion of sexual immorality. A similar use of purity language is found in relation to conversion in 1 Cor 6:9-11, where the sexually immoral and idolaters (unbelievers, who are "unclean") are contrasted with the Corinthians (believers, "washed", ἀπελούσασθε, and therefore "clean").⁷⁰⁶ The theme of separation from impurity is as much Pauline as it is Qumranian.

Scott argues that the concatenation of OT texts in 2 Cor 6:16c-18 is in fact quite different from the citation combinations⁷⁰⁷ so far found in the literature of Qumran, but is structurally very similar to that found in Rom 3:10-18, which also contains six

⁷⁰⁰ Fitzmyer 1971:214.

⁷⁰¹ Newton 1985:52; cf.:110-14.

⁷⁰² Davies 1965:232.

⁷⁰³ Rosner 1991:140.

⁷⁰⁴ A notable exception seems to be 1 Cor 7:14.

⁷⁰⁵ 'Paul expresses sexual immorality in terms of uncleanness in Romans 6:19 and uses the concept of purity to help him describe the move one makes from the realm of flesh to that of spirit on becoming a believer ... The convert passes from uncleanness to sanctification. This is a process of purification.' Newton 1985:103.

⁷⁰⁶ Newton 1985:82-83.

⁷⁰⁷ The description 'citation combination' is due to Koch (1986:172; cf. Scott 1994:76), the six citations are introduced 'as a single quotation by an introductory formula and concluded by a closing formula, rather than by separate formulas' (Scott 1994:78).

citations.⁷⁰⁸ Only two such citation combinations have so far been found at Qumran,⁷⁰⁹ whereas, according to Koch, there are seven in Paul.⁷¹⁰

Fitzmyer also mentions the introductory formula *καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι*, which is unique in the NT, and has a close parallel in CD 6:13; 8:9,⁷¹¹ where it introduces scriptural support for the ordinances of the community. There is, however, a partial parallel to the formula *καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι* in 2 Cor 4:6, namely, *ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπών*; cf. also Rom 9:15, 25; 2 Cor 6:2. The evidence does not justify the claim that the formula is 'un-Pauline'. As Barrett says,⁷¹² Paul could have chosen to use it, especially since it introduces the direct speech of God himself.

Fitzmyer also points to the frequent appearance of *Belial* in the Qumran literature as 'the leader of the hostile lot', "a demon or a personified force."⁷¹³ But he also notes the appearance of *Beliar* in the pseudepigraphal literature. It is significant that the term occurs no less than 25 times in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, which have a number of other features in common with the "fragment";⁷¹⁴ elsewhere in the Pseudepigrapha the term is in fact rare.⁷¹⁵ The Sin-Exile-Return (SER) pattern of Israel's history plays a prominent role in the Testaments.⁷¹⁶ The Return is associated with the rise of the messianic kingdom,⁷¹⁷ and the Messiah is opposed by Beliar.⁷¹⁸ This material provides the context for parenesis which resembles that of the "fragment":

⁷⁰⁸ Scott 1994:78-80.

⁷⁰⁹ CD 8.14-15 = 19.27-28; 4QTestim 1-8; each consists of just two citations, the latter 'under the influence of tradition!' (Scott 1994:77 n 16). Scott dismisses the theory that Paul uses preformed citation combinations, citing Koch: "Koch [1986:247-55] dismantles the florilegium hypothesis for the rest of the 'Zitatkombinationen' in Paul, showing that 4QTestim does not make the possibility more probable (contra [Fitzmyer 1971:59-89])" (1994:78 n 18).

⁷¹⁰ Koch 1986:172; cited by Scott, 1994:77 n 16.

⁷¹¹ Fitzmyer 1971:216.

⁷¹² Barrett 1973:200.

⁷¹³ Fitzmyer 1971:211.

⁷¹⁴ Some of these relationships have been noted by Gnilka (1968), and Gunther (1973:308-13), but both argue against the Pauline authorship of the passage, and for dependence on the Qumran theology.

⁷¹⁵ There are only eight other instances in the known OT Pseudepigrapha: five in the *Prophetarum vitae Fabulosae*; two in the *Sibylline Oracles* (3:63, 73), and one in a fragment of *The Martyrdom of Isaiah*.

⁷¹⁶ Test Levi 14-16; Test Jud 18:1; 22-23; Test Iss 6; Test Zeb 9:5-7; Test Dan 5:7-9; Test Nap 4

⁷¹⁷ Test Levi 18; Test Jud 24; Test Zeb 9:8; Test Dan 5:8-13.

⁷¹⁸ Test Levi 18:12; Test Dan 5:12; Test Zeb 9:8.

cf. Test Levi 19:1, “Choose for yourselves light or darkness (ἢ τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς), the Law of the Lord or the works of Beliar”. Moreover, the citation of 2 Sam 7:14 in 2 Cor 6:18 resembles that in Test Jud 24:3⁷¹⁹ more closely than it does the LXX, which follows closely the MT.⁷²⁰ This promise of divine adoption occurs in the Testament of Judah in a context of the return from exile, and the coming of the Messiah, who will receive God’s Spirit, and will himself “pour the spirit of grace upon you” (Test Jud 24:2; καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκχεεῖ πνεῦμα χάριτος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς). This will result in their obedience to God: “you will walk in his first and final decrees” (24:5). Parenesis against idolatry and sexual immorality is a prominent theme in the Testaments, and both are associated with Beliar (e.g. Test Reub 4:6-7).

In view of the central role of the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5 in the Corinthian crisis, it is of considerable interest that the Testament of Reuben contains an account of his affair with his step-mother Bilhah (Gen 35:22), Jacob’s concubine, an offence which he describes as τὴν ἀνομίαν τὴν μεγάλην (Test Reub 3:11; cf. 2 Cor 6:14b), followed by exhortations against πορνεία. Rosner notes that the phrase φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν occurs in the ancient Greek literature only in Test Reub 5:5 and in 1 Cor 6:18a, apart from Patristic citations of 1 Cor 6:18.⁷²¹ Moreover, the expression in 1 Cor. 6:18 is concerned with the same issue as Test Reub 5:5: avoiding women “with a harlot’s manner” (5:4). Even though the verb φεύγω was “a characteristic watchword in parenesis”,⁷²² and the term πορνεία is commonly used by Paul for sexual immorality, the possibility of literary dependence should be taken seriously. But it is unlikely that Test Reub 5:5 is dependent on Paul, i.e., that the expression is a later interpolation; for the

⁷¹⁹ Scott argues convincingly that Test Jud 24:1-3 is not a later, Christian interpolation, but is authentic and thoroughly integrated into its context (1992:109-12).

⁷²⁰ Scott 1992:208. 2 Cor 6:18: καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱούς; Test Jud 24:3: καὶ ἔσεσθε αὐτῷ εἰς υἱούς; LXX 2 Sam 7:14: καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν.

⁷²¹ Rosner 1992a.

⁷²² Conzelmann 1975:112; quoted by Rosner 1992:123.

bulk of accepted Christian interpolations in the Testaments are Christological and/or anti-Jewish.⁷²³

In denouncing sexual immorality in 1 Cor 6:12-20, Paul may well have in mind the example of Joseph's flight from Potiphar's wife.⁷²⁴ This episode is described in Test Reub 4:8-11, and the exhortation *φεύγετε οὖν τὴν πορνείαν* follows five verses later.

There is also a striking similarity between the *peristasis* catalogues of Test Jos 1:3-7 and 2 Cor 6:4-10.⁷²⁵ The verb *φεύγω* is used to describe Joseph's flight in the LXX (Gen. 39:13, 14, 18, and on three more occasions recalling the flight). Apart from 3 Kgdms 2:29, where Joab flees to the tent of the Lord, these are the only uses of the verb in a moral context in the LXX.⁷²⁶

If Paul knew the Testaments, then the Corinthian crisis would certainly have reminded him of Reuben's death-bed testimonial concerning this affair with Bilhah, and his extended parenesis against fornication, Test Reub 3:11-6:4. Given the central role of the incestuous affair in the recent crisis, and given a quotation from the Testament of Reuben in 1 Cor 6:18, it is likely that Paul intentionally echoes the Testaments in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, his key exhortation to a return to covenantal obedience.⁷²⁷

⁷²³ Rosner 1992:124 n 14. Rosner clearly sides with those who date the Testaments to the second century B.C. (e.g. Kee 1983:777-78). Others, e.g. Hollander and De Jonge 1985, date the Testaments to the second century A.D.

⁷²⁴ Gen. 39:7-12; so Bruce 1971:65.

⁷²⁵ Fitzgerald 1988:198-99, who notes also Test Jos 2:4, "The Lord does not forsake them that fear him, neither in darkness, nor in bonds, nor in tribulations (*θλίψιν*), nor in necessities (*ἀνάγκαις*)".

⁷²⁶ Rosner 1992:125 n 17. Rosner also argues, though less cogently, that two additional pieces of paraenetical reflection upon Joseph's example in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs have affinities with 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

⁷²⁷ Scott argues convincingly that the adoption formula of 2 Sam 7:14 is also quoted in Jub 1:24, in the context of the SER tradition, and in association with the promises of the new covenant (1992:107-09). The theology of Test Jud 22-24 was therefore current in the second century B.C. when, according to Kee, the Testaments were composed. The following remarkable set of features is common to 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 and Jub 1:15-29 (Scott 1992:211 n 104): God's "sanctuary" in their midst (Jub 1:17, 27, 29); the Covenant Formula as given in Lev 26:12 (Jub 1:17); the pluralised Adoption Formula of 2 Sam 7:14 (Jub 1:24); Exodus typology (Jub 1 as a whole); "Beliar" opposed to "righteousness" (Jub 1:20); purification (Jub 1:23); "the living God" (Jub 1:25); idolatry (Jub 1:8, 9, 11)). It might be argued, therefore, that the apostle is not dependent directly upon the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, but upon a common paraenetic tradition. However, if the presence of a quotation from the Testaments in 1 Corinthians is not to be dismissed as simply accidental, then our hypothesis is to be preferred; moreover, it will be argued

All the points of contact with the Qumran literature are also points of contact with the writings of Paul, and as Thrall rightly comments,

one might argue that the concentrated accumulation, within so short a passage, of so many points of comparison with Qumran does suggest an author more obviously under the influence of Qumran than Paul himself was. This is not a logically rigorous proof, however. The similar terms and ideas are found as widely scattered in the Dead Sea Scrolls as they are in the Pauline epistles.⁷²⁸

On the other hand, the parallels between the Testaments and 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, both thematic and verbal, amount to a case for literary dependency.

In conclusion, though the question of the precise function of the fragment in its context has not yet been resolved, we may conclude that 6:14-7:1 is in fact Pauline, with some dependency on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and an integral part of the argument of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4. The theology of the passage is certainly Pauline, and its new covenant / second exodus concerns provide strong thematic links with 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 as a whole. The alleged parallels with the Qumran literature are too weak to cast doubt on Pauline authorship.

2. The Argument of 2 Cor 6:11-7:4

The conclusion of the Discourse, 6:11-7:4, will be divided for convenience into three subunits, 6:11-13; 6:14-7:1; and 7:2-4.

The argument of 2 Cor 6:11-13

There is a clear structural parallel between the two clauses of 2 Cor 6;11:

below (p 277) that in 2 Cor 3:12-13 Paul is probably dependent on Test Reub 4:2-3. Most of the parallels with Jubilees stem from a particular view of covenant theology, and simply indicate that, in these aspects, Paul's thinking has much in common with that of the author(s), or the redactor(s), though also with the author of the Testaments.

⁷²⁸ Thrall 1977:138.

| | | | | |
|------|----------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|
| v11a | τὸ στόμα | ἡμῶν | ἀνέωγεν | πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κορίνθιοι |
| v11b | ἡ καρδία | ἡμῶν [or ὑμῶν] | πεπλάτυνται | |

In each case we have a noun with a possessive adjective in the first person plural, followed by an intransitive verb in the perfect active.⁷²⁹ The phrase πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κορίνθιοι, which breaks into the structure, is therefore given particular emphasis. The variant reading ὑμῶν in 6:11 has (so far as I know) been universally rejected even though it has significant attestation (ⲛ B 0243 1881 2464 pc),⁷³⁰ and is without question the more difficult reading. The reason for this consensus is simply that 6:11-13 does not seem to make sense if we read ὑμῶν, whereas the ἡμῶν reading appears, at least at first glance,⁷³¹ to give perfectly good sense; for example,

Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return - I speak as to children - open wide your hearts also. (NRSV)

An interpretation along these lines has recently been defended by Bieringer.⁷³² However, though he recognises the structural parallel between vv 11a and 11b, he is driven to the conclusion that ἀνέωγεν is a “real” perfect, looking back to a specific event, whereas πεπλάτυνται is a present perfect, not referring to any particular event, but only to the present state of the apostle’s heart. He therefore dismisses the structural parallel as having no real significance, but fails to explain why the apostle should have chosen a perfect in 11b, rather than a present. It will be argued that he the ὑμῶν variant is to be preferred; he now begins to address the root cause of the Crisis, and of the sufferings which both he and they have recently endured. Though some preliminary

⁷²⁹ Bieringer 1998:203.

⁷³⁰ Of the “constant witnesses” of NA²⁶ ἡμῶν is supported by p⁴⁶ D F G Ψ 0209.

⁷³¹ Bieringer points out that, lying in the shadow of 5:14-21 and 6:14-7:1, 6:11-13 has received comparatively little serious scholarly attention (1998:193)..

⁷³² Bieringer 1998.

arguments will be offered here, the strength of the resulting interpretation will become more fully apparent when the argument of 2 Cor 1-7 as a whole is considered.⁷³³

It has been suggested that in 6:11a, Paul alludes to LXX Isa 53:7, indicating that he has deviated from his paradigm, the Isaianic Servant, in that he has spoken out concerning his own sufferings. He has done so, evidently, because he has had to defend his conduct against accusations brought by his opponents in response to the Letter of Tears. If this is right, then 6:11a may be regarded as a sort of veiled complaint; he has been driven by the Corinthians to speak of his sufferings, though he would have preferred to follow the Servant and remain silent. How, then, does his thought develop in 6:11b? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider the connection of thought between 6:10 and 6:11.

Murphy-O'Connor has pointed out that the final phrase of Paul's summary of his apostolate in 6:3-10, ὥς ... πάντα κατέχοντες, is in fact "a summary of the reward promised for perfect obedience to God in Deut 11:13-15."⁷³⁴ That is, the phrase "possessing everything" summarises the blessings of the covenant. Paul is "poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing everything."⁷³⁵ The blessings of the covenant are his, yet he has not yet received them in full; similarly, as διακόνος καινῆς διαθήκης he has made the Corinthians rich, though they too have not yet received in full (2 Cor 1:19-22). But the Corinthians, behaving as though they have already entered Canaan and possess in full the blessings of the covenant,⁷³⁶ have allowed their hearts

⁷³³ See below, Chapter 8.

⁷³⁴ Murphy O'Connor 1989:273-74.

⁷³⁵ As is frequently noted, there are numerous Stoic/Cynic parallels for the idea that one who is impoverished in respect of material possessions may nevertheless be rich, in some sense possessing everything (e.g. Philo *Plant.* 69; see e.g. Furnish 1984:348; Thrall 1994:467-68 for other sources). However, a Cynic/Stoic background to the apostle's thought and expression does not rule out a covenantal framework of thought. The explanation for Paul's claim is covenantal: his status as a σοφός and his wealth are both blessings of the new covenant; cf. 1 Cor 2:6-16; 3:21-23.

⁷³⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 4:8 Paul speaks ironically of the Corinthians as being already "filled", "rich", "reigning". Barrett says (1968:109), "The Corinthians were behaving as if the age to come were already consummated, as if the saints had already taken over the kingdom (Dan. 7:18); for them there is no 'not yet' to qualify the 'already' of realized eschatology." I am not suggesting that the Corinthians actually believed that their resurrection had already occurred; merely that Paul's language suggests that they

to become puffed-up; they have become arrogant on account of their riches (cf. 1 Cor 4:7-10), and as a result they have turned to idols. This is essentially the situation envisaged in Deut 11:16.

I have argued that the central issue in the Corinthian Crisis was the insistence of the social élite on the right to dine in pagan temples. It is surely no coincidence, then, that the passive of the verb πλατύνω occurs with the noun καρδία just twice in the LXX: in a variant reading of Deut 6:12 (A), and in Deut 11:16, in each case in warnings against idolatry. Given our reconstruction of the situational context, it is worth considering whether in 2 Cor 6:11b Paul intentionally echoes Deut 11:16 LXX:⁷³⁷ πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ μὴ πλατυνθῇ ἡ καρδία σου καὶ παραβῇτε καὶ λατρεύσητε θεοῖς ἑτέροις καὶ προσκυνήσητε αὐτοῖς - "Take care lest your heart become enlarged and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them."⁷³⁸

The warning of Deut 11:16 continues: if they do allow their hearts to become enlarged so that they go after idols, then drought, one of the covenantal curse sanctions,⁷³⁹ will fall upon them:

were behaving as though it had. In 1 Cor 4:6-13 Paul draws upon the *hubris* tradition, insinuating that the Corinthians are behaving like ὑβρίσται (Marshall 1987:194-217; Fitzgerald 1988:133). The accusation of *hubris* is introduced by φυσιοῦσθε (4:6), and confirmed by the unjustified boasting of 4:7, and the ironic remarks of 4:8. However, the pride that the Corinthians apparently felt in the incestuous man cannot be adequately explained purely in terms of the arrogance of a rich and powerful social élite. His act was more than a mere expression of *social* superiority, and would normally have attracted strong disapproval, even from pagans (1 Cor 5:1). His behaviour would have appeared as an act of social superiority over his own father. In Roman Corinth this would normally have been impossible. However, his behaviour was applauded within the Corinthian church, though not in pagan society in general. His hybristic behaviour was possible only because it suited the convenience of "the Strong". It has been argued already that the same teaching which supported this incestuous behaviour was also used to justify dining in pagan temples.

⁷³⁷ So already Thrall 1977:146; but she has now dropped the suggestion (1994:469).

⁷³⁸ The verb πλατύνω translates in LXX Deut 11:16 the Hebrew פתח, 'to be open, ingenuous; easily persuaded, enticed; simple' (BDB s.v.). It may be significant that in LXX Isa 53:7, ἀνοίγω translates the similar sounding פתח, "open".

⁷³⁹ Deut 28:23-24.

Then the LORD's anger will burn against you and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the land the LORD is giving you. (Deut 11:17)

In 1 Cor 10:1-22, Paul had already warned the Corinthians that under the new covenant they too may experience the divine displeasure, should they persist in the same sins which the Israelites indulged in during their wilderness sojourn. Indeed, they had already experienced judgement as a result of inappropriate behaviour at the covenantal meal (1 Cor 11:27-32): many were sick, and some had died.⁷⁴⁰ But the church had disregarded the apostle's warning, and had refused to discipline the incestuous man. I suggest that the church had continued to suffer in some way, and that they had blamed the apostle for this misfortune, an experience which in 6:12 he describes by means of the verb στενοχωρεῖσθαι ("be restricted, cramped, crushed").⁷⁴¹ In the following chapter it will be argued that the church had accused Paul of behaving irresponsibly: had he come to Corinth as he had originally planned, and restored order, he would have saved them much suffering.⁷⁴²

In the NT the only other occurrence of the verb στενοχωρέω is in 2 Cor 4:8, in a catalogue of the apostle's own sufferings: ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι; there it must express a form of suffering worse than anything the apostle has actually suffered, even in his affliction in Asia; presumably therefore it is a metaphor for death. Thus BAGD translates "hard pressed but not crushed".⁷⁴³ The cognate noun στενοχωρία appears only in 2 Cor 6:4, 12:10; Rom 2:9, 8:35, in each case in parallel with θλίψις; in 2 Corinthians, in each case, the term describes the apostle's own sufferings. In the LXX the verb occurs only five times; in Isa 28:20 the people of God, suffering the

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. Hafemann 1995:120-21.

⁷⁴¹ The cognate term στενός has the sense "narrow"; in the NT, only Matt 7:13, 14; Luke 13:24.

⁷⁴² It has been suggested that the false apostles, by contrast, had accused him of staying away because he lacked the power he claimed, and he would not have been able to restore order. He has already addressed this point in 1:23-2:2.

⁷⁴³ BAGD s.v. στενοχωρέω.

covenantal curses because of their apostasy, are addressed as στενοχωρούμενοι.⁷⁴⁴ The noun στενοχωρία occurs 13 times in the LXX; in Deut 28:53, 55, 57 and Isa 8:22, 23 it occurs in the context of divine judgement, and in association with θλίψις.⁷⁴⁵

It is commonly suggested that behind 6:12 lies the charge that Paul does not love the Corinthians (cf. 11:11).⁷⁴⁶ Rather, he seems to be responding to the charge that the Corinthians are being harmed by him (cf. 7:2b). Paul's opponents had undoubtedly complained that the Corinthians were being *restricted* by Paul in the matter of dining in pagan temples,⁷⁴⁷ and emotionally *pressured* by him in the Letter of Tears,⁷⁴⁸ but by ignoring his warnings, they had invited divine retribution. The term ἀντιμισθία occurs only in Christian literature; it is generally used in the sense of "recompense", whether reward or penalty., "with emphasis on the reciprocal nature of the transaction".⁷⁴⁹ It occurs only twice in the NT; the other occurrence is in Rom 1:27, where it has the sense of the penalty appropriate to the offence. Thus in response to the charge that he is harming the Corinthians, Paul replies that it is not he who is causing their suffering; they are being "crushed" by their swollen inward parts. Moving from καρδία, to the functionally equivalent⁷⁵⁰ but more comprehensive and probably more forceful term σπλάγχνα,⁷⁵¹ he uses a simple anatomical metaphor to explain their στενοχωρία, commenting, "I am speaking as though to children". Their σπλάγχνα, the seat of their emotions, have become distended with lust for idol-meat; the result is that they suffer the corresponding penalty (τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν): they are being crushed from within! He may be suggesting that, like foolish children, they are paying the price of

⁷⁴⁴ In Josh 17:15; Isa 49:19 the context is of a people being cramped because they need more land; in Judg 16:16 Samson is being so severely pressured by his wife to reveal the secret of his strength that "his spirit failed almost to death"; and in 4 Macc11:11 the verb describes the confinement of the breath of one bound for torture.

⁷⁴⁵ στενοχωρία occurs with θλίψις also in Isa 30:6; Es 1:1 (but not Codex A).

⁷⁴⁶ Windisch 1924:210-11; Furnish 1984:368; Thrall 1994:470; Barnett 1997:336.

⁷⁴⁷ Fee 1977:155.

⁷⁴⁸ Cf. LXX Judg 16:16.

⁷⁴⁹ BAGD s.v.

⁷⁵⁰ The term σπλάγχνα can refer to a specific internal organ, in particular, to the heart; LSJ s.v.

⁷⁵¹ In its transferred sense σπλάγχνα is distinguished from καρδία in that the former is "is more the seat of nobler affections like love and hate, courage and fear, joy and sorrow", whereas the latter is "either more comprehensive or it is a more blunt, forceful and unequivocal term." Köster TDNT 7:549.

eating too much idol meat. In early Greek literature the noun σπλάγχνα denoted the inward parts of a sacrifice. Though its date of origin is uncertain, the following jest is suggestive: a boy who has eaten too much of the σπλάγχνα and drunk too much wine at the sacrificial feast says to his mother, ὦ μήτερ, ἐμῶ τὰ σπλάγχνα ("Oh mother, my σπλάγχνα"). She replies, οὐχι τὰ σὰ, τέκνον, ἃ δὲ κατέφαγες ("Not yours, child, but those you have devoured!").⁷⁵² He then signals that he is finished with his anatomical metaphor, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, and returns to the appeal of 6:1: πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς. His use of asyndeton not only reinforces the point that he has left behind his anatomical metaphor, but also signals emotional intensity. I therefore propose that, rather than beginning a new sentence after 6:12 with τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν,⁷⁵³ this phrase should be read in apposition with στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν, giving

Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians! Your heart has become enlarged. You are not being crushed by us; you are being crushed by your inward parts,⁷⁵⁴ the corresponding penalty! - I am speaking as though to children. Be indeed enlarged!⁷⁵⁵

In 6:11a Paul alludes to the Letter of Tears, in which he spoke out concerning his sufferings, and also to the continuation of this account in the present letter. In 6:11b he refers to the root cause of the crisis to which he responded in the Letter of Tears, and continues to respond in the present letter: the Corinthians have permitted their hearts to become enticed by idolatry. Thus the structural parallel between 6:11a and 6:11b is intentional. The emphatic πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κορίνθιοι underscores that this openness was called forth by a very special situation in Corinth, and was not entered upon lightly.

⁷⁵² Corpus Fabularum Aesopiarum 47, I; quoted by Köster, TDNT 7:548.

⁷⁵³ Moule (1953:35-36) offers several explanations of the phrase; his preference is for the simplest; it is in apposition with the following sentence, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω, ... Alternatively, it might just be an accusative of respect; or "an instance of adverbial accusative made up upon a basis other than a neuter noun: it looks like a subtle blend of τὸ δὲ αὐτό... and κατ' ἀντιμισθίαν" (p 160). Plummer (1915:240) suggests that the construction is broken; BDF (154) that it is equivalent to τὸν αὐτὸν πλατυσμόν ὡς ἀντιμισθίαν.

⁷⁵⁴ For the instrumental use of ἐν in the NT see Turner 1963:252-53.

⁷⁵⁵ καὶ emphasises the whole clause; cf., e.g., 2 Cor 3:6a, and Thrall's note (1994:230 n 288)..

There are other references in the letter to the suffering of the Corinthians. For a time they suffered λύπη, due to the Letter of Tears (7:8-11); they have been abused by the false apostles (11:20); they have been wronged, morally corrupted and defrauded (7:2b); but it is not clear that these misfortunes can properly be characterised as the effects of the curse sanctions of the covenant. However, in the introduction of his letter, Paul says that he has been afflicted in order that he might be able to comfort the Corinthians, who are suffering *the same afflictions* (τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων) as he himself has suffered (1:5-6). It will be argued in the following Chapter that Paul's "Affliction in Asia" (1:8-11) was a severe illness which he interpreted as being due to his spiritual solidarity with the rebellious Corinthians. It has already been noted that the church in Corinth had experienced illness and some deaths due to breach of covenant at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:27-32), and that Paul had warned them of worse to come if they persisted in idolatry (1 Cor 10:22). I suggest that there had been further illness in the church, and that it is to these sufferings that Paul alludes: στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν. Given an echo of Deut 11:16 in 2 Cor 6:11b and the strong warning of 1 Cor 10:1-22, it is clear that Paul regards their στενοχωρία as a further manifestation of the divine displeasure brought about by their impure and idolatrous appetites.⁷⁵⁶ They have brought these troubles upon themselves.

Murphy O'Connor attempts to explain the link between 6:10 and 6:11 in terms of "a type of associative jump":

His mind moved forward [from Deut 11:13-15] to the next verse in Dt (11.16), and by dropping the negative particle (μή) the 'heart swollen with pride' becomes a 'heart wide open.'⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶ Cf. Paul's warning of the incompatibility of eating in pagan temples, and also at the Lord's table, and the associated warning of divine retribution (1 Cor 10:19-22). Moreover, inappropriate behaviour at the Lord's table has resulted in many becoming sick and some dying (11:27-39).

⁷⁵⁷ Murphy O'Connor 1987:274.

Our account, however, has Paul consciously using Deut 11:13-17 as a paradigm for the Corinthians' own situation.

Deut 11:17 is followed by an appeal: "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds ..." In the same way, the apostle appeals to the Corinthians to take to heart his words: πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς, "Be indeed enlarged!" Their hearts have become "enlarged"; they have opened themselves wide to the enticement of idolatry; they must now open themselves wide to receive his call to covenantal obedience. The exhortation "Do not receive the grace of God in vain" (6:1) is therefore picked up and clarified in 6:11b-13.

Apart from the variant reading Deut 6:12(A), the only other occurrence in the LXX of πλατύνω in combination with καρδία is in Ps 118:32, ὁδὸν ἐντολῶν σου ἔδραμον ὅταν ἐπλάτυνας τὴν καρδίαν μου ("I ran in the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart"). Thus while Deut 11:16 links an enlarged heart with the inclination to idolatry, Ps 118:32 LXX links the image with covenantal obedience. Moreover, as Beale points out,⁷⁵⁸ ἐπλάτυνας τὴν καρδίαν μου translates the Hebrew תרחיב לבי; an almost identical expression occurs in Isa 60:5 MT: "Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart will swell (ורחב לבבך) and rejoice because the abundance of the sea will be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you." Here an enlarged heart is associated with the blessings of the new covenant and the return to the Land of the remnant of Israel.⁷⁵⁹ It is quite possible that Paul had in mind both texts; he is calling upon the Corinthians to receive that enlargement of the heart which is associated with the blessings of the new covenant. The means of receiving these blessings is spelled out in 6:14-7:1.

⁷⁵⁸ Beale 1989:576.

⁷⁵⁹ The reference to sons and daughters in the previous verse may be echoed in 2 Cor 6:18.

The argument of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1

As we have seen, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 consists of an exhortation, *μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις*, supported by a set of five rhetorical questions and a catena of biblical quotations, and concluded by a further exhortation, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from every defilement (*μολυσμός*) of flesh and spirit, bringing to completion (*ἐπιτελοῦντες*) [our] holiness in the fear of God". We note in passing that the term *μολυσμός* is used in LXX Jer 23:15 of the defilement brought about by the false prophets in Jerusalem.⁷⁶⁰ The catena itself consists of a further exhortation, calling upon the Corinthians to "come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing", flanked by and grounded upon covenantal promises. The rhetorical questions clearly require the response that the Corinthians, as believers, should be in partnership with righteousness, light, and Christ, and that as the Temple of God they should have no partnership with iniquity, darkness, Beliar and idols. The catena amounts to a call to leave "Babylon", the realm of iniquity, darkness, Beliar and idols, and head off into the desert in a new Exodus, on the highway to Zion. The final exhortation to cleansing, holiness and the fear of God is also grounded on the covenantal promises of presence and relationship. The Corinthians are God's people; if they will leave behind the idols and immorality of Babylon, he will receive them and dwell among them, for they are his adopted children. This much may be deduced from the passage in isolation, and there are strong thematic ties with many other passages in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4. Though phrased in a general way, these exhortations clearly form the climax of Paul's argument in 2:14-7:4, and therefore have a key function in relation to the pastoral situation in Corinth. Indeed, it is clear that Paul fears that the Corinthians are involved in some form of covenant-breaking relationship with a group of wicked and idolatrous unbelievers. I maintain, with many others, that these unbelievers are the false apostles.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁶⁰ ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐξῆλθεν μολυσμός πάσῃ τῇ γῇ; Kaye 1993:122.

⁷⁶¹ So e.g. Collange 1972:134; Rensberger 1978:30.

The term ἄπιστοι is used consistently in 1 Corinthians of unbelievers;⁷⁶² and also in the Pastorals (1 Tim 5:8, Tit 1:15). The only other occurrences of the term in the Pauline Corpus are in 2 Corinthians (4:4; 6:14, 15). As we have seen, echoing Jeremiah's descriptions of the false prophets he faced, Paul has insinuated repeatedly that his opponents are unbelievers (2:17; 4:2; cf. 3:3; 5:12). Unlike them, he has renounced "the shameful things that one hides"; *he* does not practise deceit or falsify God's word (4:2). He continues,

(4:3) εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον, (4:4) ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων ...

The initial relative clause of 4:4 suggests that within the larger group referred to in 4:3, οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι, there exists a smaller group, οἱ ἄπιστοι, whose minds have been blinded to the gospel by "the god"⁷⁶³ of this age". This would not make sense if, as is commonly assumed, οἱ ἄπιστοι and οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι refer to precisely the same group, unbelievers in general;⁷⁶⁴ and if the two groups are identical, it is difficult to explain the syntactical function of ἐν οἷς.⁷⁶⁵ If, on the other hand, we take τῶν ἀπίστων to be anaphoric, referring to the false apostles just alluded to in 4:2, then the sentence makes good sense.⁷⁶⁶

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those unbelievers ...

⁷⁶² 1 Cor 6:6 (opposed to ἀδελφοί), 7:12-15; 10:27; 14:22-24 (opposed to τοῖς πιστεύουσιν).

⁷⁶³ Or possibly "the God of this age"; cf. Isa 6:10; Mark 4:12; John 12:40; Rom 11:8-10; Young and Ford 1987:115-117. This question is of considerable interest, but is not central to our discussion here.

⁷⁶⁴ E.g. Thrall 1994:305-06 and n 805; Barnett 1997:217, 220.

⁷⁶⁵ Furnish (1984:220-21) comments, "The irregular construction here, in which "the minds of the unbelievers" stands where one might had simply "their minds" (with reference to the *perishing*), is best attributed to Paul's "dictation style" (Windisch, 135); the grammatical structure is forgotten as a new but synonymous term is introduced."

⁷⁶⁶ *Pace* Thrall 1994:306.

The false apostles are then portrayed as belonging to a wider group, οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι. In 2:15-16a, Paul has defined οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι as unbelievers who choose to reject his ministry and his Gospel; to them, his message of the cross is foolishness (1 Cor 1:18). As we have seen, Paul's "triumphal procession" imagery at first seems to support his opponents in their contempt for the suffering apostle, but it is then revealed that Paul's suffering in fact makes manifest the presence of the crucified Christ.⁷⁶⁷ To those ἀπολλύμενοι for whom the message of the Cross is foolishness, Paul himself is ὁσμή ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον (2 Cor 2:15-16a). This invites the deduction that his opponents are ἀπολλύμενοι and hence ἄπιστοι, as does 2:17. Their rejection not only of Paul but also of his Gospel is confirmed by 2 Cor 11:4, and their status as ἀπολλύμενοι is spelled out in 11:15: ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, "their end will accord with their deeds". That their minds have been blinded to the light of the Gospel coheres well with 2 Cor 11:14-15; they are Satan's servants (διάκονοι). It is therefore natural to conclude that when Paul warns the Corinthians μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις (6:14) he has the false apostles in his sights.⁷⁶⁸

As we have seen, the exhortation of 2 Cor 6:14a is taken up in 6:17, in a modified quote from LXX Isa 52:11: ἀπόστητε ἀπόστητε ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε, ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς ἀφορίσθητε. Here the αὐτῆς of the original, signifying Babylon, has been changed to αὐτῶν, a reference to the ἄπιστοι of 6:14. As Webb correctly observes,

ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν is ill-suited to the idea of the Corinthians 'coming out' from among a handful of false apostles. For one, the use of μέσου portrays the church in the midst of another entity which is surrounding it ... Also the directional flow of ἐξέλθατε requires the church to 'come out from' the false apostles, rather than the more conceptually appropriate call for the church to 'expel' these individuals from their midst ... On the other hand, ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν is naturally suited to the

⁷⁶⁷ See below.

⁷⁶⁸ See further the discussion below of 2 Cor 3:12-15.

idea of 'coming out' from a larger entity surrounding the Corinthian church, namely, paganism.⁷⁶⁹

The exhortation of 6:14a must therefore have, in principle, a more general application: the Corinthians must not become ἑτεροζυγοῦντες with the idolatrous, unbelieving residents of "Babylon". Nevertheless the false apostles are clearly in view. As in 2 Cor 4:4, Paul portrays them as among and belonging to a larger group, the pagan world.⁷⁷⁰ As unbelieving Jews they are, from the perspective of Paul's covenant theology, in spiritual exile in "Babylon", under the curse sanctions of the old covenant.⁷⁷¹ Paul portrays the Corinthians as believers in (presumably voluntary) exile among these same idolatrous pagans in "Babylon". Thus Paul continues with his "subtle" approach, avoiding direct reference to his opponents, but nevertheless attacking them as unbelievers and servants of Beliar, and calling upon the Corinthians to sever their links with them.⁷⁷²

The language and thought of the five antitheses has much in common with 1 Cor 10:14-22:

in 1 Cor 10:14-22 idols are viewed as the locus of demonic activity; in [6:14-7:1] idols are similarly linked to Beliar (the prince of demons). Also, in 1 Cor 10:14-22 the violation of the covenant meal in 1 Cor 10:14-22 (by joining with pagans / demons / idols) parallels in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 the violation of the two covenant formulas (by joining with pagans / Beliar / idols). Again, at least two of the key quasi-covenant terms, κοινωνία and μερίς / μερίζω are found in both texts. The church also functions as the new temple in both (implicitly in one, explicitly in the other). Moreover, the abrupt rhetorical questions in both convey the painful level of emotional involvement and the extreme intensity of the issue.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁹ Webb 1993:196.

⁷⁷⁰ It should not be forgotten that it was because of apostasy that the Jews were exiled in Babylon, and only a remnant returned. Paul portrays his opponents as among those who chose to remain in Babylon and worship idols.

⁷⁷¹ As we have seen, in 2 Cor 3:3 Paul clearly associates his opponents with the old covenant. He does not regard them as faithless Christians (exiled under the provisions of the new covenant), but as unbelievers; contra e.g. Goulder 1994a:54.

⁷⁷² He postpones head-on confrontation until after he has made his Collection appeal in Ch. 8-9.

⁷⁷³ Webb 1993:210; cf. Fee 1977:148-50.

Fee maintains that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, like 1 Cor 10:14-22, is simply a prohibition against dining in pagan temples. He suggests that the following thought unites the two passages:

Those who have a share (μερίς) in the meal in the temple of God cannot also participate (μετοχή) or have fellowship (κοινωνία) at the table of idols, because they would thereby sacrifice to demons, and Christ has no συμφώνησις with Belial, the prince of demons.⁷⁷⁴

However, as Fee admits,⁷⁷⁵ the practise of dining in pagan temples is not mentioned explicitly in the immediate context, nor indeed anywhere in 2 Corinthians. When Paul composed 2 Corinthians, it would appear, dining in pagan temples was no longer an immediate issue; rather, the apostle is concerned that on his return to Corinth he will encounter divisions, quarrelling and sexual immorality (12:20-21). The connection between the two passages is better explained by a close association between the false apostles and the issue of idol meats. We have argued already that, at the time of the Corinthian crisis, the issue of dining in pagan temples was the source of a serious disagreement between Paul and the Corinthian social élite, which was used by the false apostles to drive a wedge between the apostle and the church.⁷⁷⁶ We have also argued that, in the Letter of Tears, which is echoed in the present letter, the false apostles were portrayed as false prophets, intent on leading the church into idolatry and sexual immorality.⁷⁷⁷ This helps explain the force of the rhetorical questions which follow the exhortation of 2 Cor 6:14a: the Corinthians should not become “unequally yoked” with these people for, like the pagans, they are associated with ἀνομία

⁷⁷⁴ Fee 1977:158-9.

⁷⁷⁵ Fee 1977:200.

⁷⁷⁶ Webb objects that “The Jewish opponents, who took a great pride in their heritage, would have abhorred idols” (1993:194). His valuable study of the referents of 2 Cor 6:14a (1993:183-215) is marred by his unsupported assumption that the opponents were “Judaizers” (1993:192) and “worshippers of Yahweh” (1993:194). We maintain, on the contrary, that they were Jewish apostates.

⁷⁷⁷ Idolatry and sexual immorality are closely related in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Gunther (1973:309) cites Test. Reuben 6:4, where fornication is said to separate the soul from God, “bringing it near to idols”. Likewise fornication brings one near to Beliar (Test. Simeon 5:3).

("iniquity"), σκότος ("darkness"), Βελιάρ (= Satan), and εἰδωλα (idols). Indeed, the echoes of 1 Cor 10:14-22 may well be intended to evoke the argument of the earlier letter. The false apostles had rejected this stern warning, and the church had been led astray.

Winter,⁷⁷⁸ who dates 1 Corinthians to AD 55, the year of the major quadrennial Caesarean Games and the Imperial Contests, argues persuasively that the (Roman) citizens of Corinth were invited by the President of the Games to a series of dinners in the Temple of Poseidon. Some of these meals will have been associated with the worship of the Imperial Cult. While the ruling of Gallio (Acts 18:14-15) will have had the effect that Christians could not be compelled to take part in such worship, the social élite of the church will have been subjected to enormous social pressure to exercise this "right" (ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη; 1 Cor 8:9). This will have been the occasion of the church's query concerning dining in pagan temples (1 Cor 8:1).⁷⁷⁹ This hypothesis would explain not only the intensity of the issue, which enabled the false apostles to exploit it so effectively, but also the silence of 2 Corinthians concerning dining in pagan temples (2 Cor 12:20-21); for the Games would have been over by the time 2 Corinthians was composed (probably early Winter),⁷⁸⁰ and would not have posed a threat for at least another four years.

The argument of 2 Cor 7:2-4

The identification of the primary reference of ἄπιστοι with the false apostles gives a good connection of thought between 6:11-13 and 6:14, as we have seen. It also gives a good connection between 7:1 and 7:2.⁷⁸¹ The apostle, in the role of the Servant of Yahweh, is calling the Corinthians to leave "Babylon", thereby cutting off their

⁷⁷⁸ Winter 1995:170-76.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ See above,:111.

⁷⁸¹ Contra Webb 1993:189.

partnership with the false apostles.⁷⁸² In 7:2 Paul again appeals to the church to respond to his call (cf. 6:13b), and he again denies causing any harm to them (cf. 6:11b-13a). We have argued that Paul's opponents encouraged the Corinthians in their participation in the pagan cults. It would follow, therefore, that they were in no small measure responsible for whatever afflictions Paul is referring to. In 7:2b, Paul again denies that *he* has harmed the Corinthians in any way: οὐδένα ἡδίκησαμεν, οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν, οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν. While his remarks are primarily apologetic (as is 6:12),⁷⁸³ despite the absence of a first person pronoun, the context implies that a polemical edge is also present: Paul has wronged no one, corrupted no one, taken advantage of no one; if the Corinthians are looking for someone to blame for their troubles, they should look to the false apostles. Indeed, just as the Babylonians had acted as God's agents in punishing the Jews so, it could be argued, the false apostles were acting as God's agents in the punishment of the Corinthians. In the SER paradigm, the false apostles play the role of the Corinthians' tormentors in "Babylon".

Paul continues (7:3), "I do not say this to condemn you." He is qualifying clearly not only 7:2b,⁷⁸⁴ but 6:11b-13a, in which he has accused the Corinthians of idolatry, and has insisted that the στενοχωρία which they are currently experiencing is not due to any failing in his ministry, but to their own love of idol meats. Now he hastens to add, πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω, προείρηκα γὰρ ὅτι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν. What he has said is not meant to condemn his readers; for he has said already

⁷⁸² The call to cleansing in 7:1 follows from the catena: "The prophets were concerned that those making the pilgrimage back to the new Jerusalem did so in holiness (particularly in light of Yahweh's promise to dwell in the midst of his people) [Ezek 20:40; 28:25; Isa 48:2; 62:12; cf. Isa 23:18]. Again, this concern for cleansing [Jer 33:8; Ezek 36:25, 29, 33; 37:23; Mal 3:3], holiness [Ezek 20:39; 36:20-36; 37:28; cf. Jer 31:23], and the fear of the Lord (within the heart) [Isa 59:19, 21; Jer 32:39-40; 33:9] develops those things which the new covenant intended to produce." (Webb 1993:66).

⁷⁸³ Chrysostom (NPNF XII:347; cited by Thrall 1994:481) maintains that 7:2b is an attack on the false apostles (φθείρω, 11:3); but as Thrall points out, if the intent was primarily polemical, we might expect an emphatic ἡμεῖς. Nevertheless, there is no emphatic pronoun in 4:2, in which we have demonstrated a clear polemical intent.

⁷⁸⁴ Contra e.g. Barnett 1997:361.

(προείρηκα γὰρ), “you are in our hearts εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν.” The latter phrase has been described as an exegetical *crux interpretum*.⁷⁸⁵

According to Turner, in Paul, εἰς τὸ + infin. “expresses hardly anything but purpose”;⁷⁸⁶ he may overstate the case,⁷⁸⁷ but certainly either purpose or consequence is intended here. The implied subject of the infinitives, strictly, should be the same as the subject of the main clause, “you”; but most translators and exegetes rightly conclude that the context requires “we”.⁷⁸⁸ The implied object of the preposition σύν within the infinitives, if there is an implied object, would then most naturally be “you”. Hence, “thus we die or live with you”.⁷⁸⁹ Alternatively, the infinitives could be used absolutely, the subject including both Paul and the Corinthians: “to die together and live together.”⁷⁹⁰

However, the phrase has also been understood Christologically. Lenski translates, “so that you died and are living together with us”. The aorist infinitive would then presumably refer to their experience of dying with Christ in baptism, and the present infinitive to their ongoing life in Christ.⁷⁹¹ But it is not clear how the Corinthians having died with Christ can be understood as a consequence of their being in Paul’s heart; rather, one might expect a causal connection to work the other way. Stählin, on the other hand, dismisses the contrast between the tenses of the infinitives, and takes both in a durative sense, as a reference to the ongoing experience shared by Paul and the Corinthians of simultaneously dying and living in Christ.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁵ Lambrecht 1994:574. Furnish describes it as “highly problematic” (1984:370).

⁷⁸⁶ Turner 1963:143.

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. Moulton 1908:219. Cf. the discussion in Lambrecht 1994:574 n 11, and the literature cited there.

⁷⁸⁸ Lambrecht 1994:573.

⁷⁸⁹ Martin 1986 :212.

⁷⁹⁰ Furnish 1984:360.

⁷⁹¹ Lenski 1937:1097-98. He interprets, “The meaning is not that *we* are joined to *you* in this experience, but that *you* are joined to *us*, in whose hearts you are. By expressing this in regard to the *Corinthians*, Paul recalls all their blessed experience to them and thereby draws them into his heart” (p 1098, emphasis his). But this thought is not to be found in 4:10-15, as Lenski seems to suggest (p 1097), nor anywhere else in 2 Corinthians. Nor is it clear that appeal to their “blessed experience” of life in Christ would further Paul’s argument at this point; he has just explained that their experience of στενοχωρία is not his fault, but an expression of the divine displeasure at their idolatry!

⁷⁹² Stählin (1973:513-16) argues, on the basis of 2 Tim 2:11-12, that the phrase is a confessional formula (“eine Formel der Glaubessprache”); it would therefore have been natural to take the subject of the infinitives as including both the Corinthians and the apostle, and to supply the object Χριστῷ (cf. Rom

A satisfactory interpretation must explain, first, the role of the phrase in its immediate context, 6:11-7:4; second, the reference to an earlier statement (προείρηκα γάρ). These issues are interdependent, but the latter is determinative for the former. The identification of the precise antecedent is complicated by textual issues. Our reading of ὑμῶν in 6:11 and our exegesis of 6:11-13 rules out a reference to 6:11-12;⁷⁹³ for the topic of 6:11-13 is not "the reality of pastoral affection",⁷⁹⁴ but the Corinthians' idolatry, and its painful consequences. Other proposals include 1:4-7,⁷⁹⁵ 4:10-15,⁷⁹⁶ and 5:14-15.⁷⁹⁷ But given the reading ἡμῶν in 3:2, the language ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε points to a primary reference to that passage. The apostle is evidently quoting his own words: ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν. It will be argued that such a reference makes good sense, and is therefore to be accepted.

A parallel to the motif of dying together and living together is found in 2 Sam 15:21, where Gittai states that he will remain with the king whether it means death or life (LXX καὶ ἐὰν εἰς θάνατον καὶ ἐὰν εἰς ζωὴν).⁷⁹⁸ There is a difference between this text and the apostle's phrase: Gittai speaks explicitly of death and life as *contrasting alternatives*; the apostle does not.⁷⁹⁹ However, this does not rule out the possibility that the apostle's language was influenced by the LXX, nor that it expresses his personal commitment to the Corinthians. We have argued that διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν (3:3) alludes to Paul's self-sacrificial handling of the recent crisis; moreover, that ἐγγεγραμμένη ... ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίναις is intended to evoke an image from the Letter of Tears: Paul had decided not to travel to Corinth because the inevitable

6:8). Apostle and church share the ongoing experience of dying and of living in Christ. But he is not entirely persuasive; cf. Lambrecht 1994:576-79, 583-84.

⁷⁹³ Contra e.g. Hughes 1962:261-62; Thrall 1994:482-84, following Windisch 1924:222; Barrett 1973:204; Furnish 1984:370.

⁷⁹⁴ Furnish 1984:370.

⁷⁹⁵ Tannehill 1967:94.

⁷⁹⁶ Lenski 1937:1097-98.

⁷⁹⁷ Bachmann 1918:296-97; cited by Thrall 1994:482.

⁷⁹⁸ Thrall 1994:483.

⁷⁹⁹ Lambrecht 1994:581.

confrontation would have resulted in him “breaking” his own heart. Thus the phrase εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν recalls and gives expression to a thought implicit in 3:3, the apostle’s absolute commitment in love to the church in Corinth. Moreover, a reference to 3:3 makes good sense of the purpose nuance: the Corinthians were engraved in Paul’s heart by “the Spirit of the living God”, *in order that* they should die and live together. That is, Paul’s pastoral commitment to the Corinthians, like every other aspect of his competence as a minister of the new covenant, has its origin in God (3:5-6). He has been given a great and unshakeable love for the Corinthians in order that their fate be should be inseparable from his own (cf. 2 Cor 1:14). Therefore it is impossible that his words should be intended to condemn them. Moreover, in 3:2-3 Paul’s fatherly love for the church and his genuine commitment (his “heart of flesh”) is contrasted with the false apostles’ inability to love (their “hearts of stone”). Thus his reference to his earlier remarks implies a contrast between his heart commitment to his readers εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν and the self-interest of the false apostles. Given our textual decisions in 3:2 and 6:11, and our exegesis of 3:2-3, 7:3b is seen to be a straightforward reference to 3:2-3. Its purpose is to support the point that the stern words of 6:11-7:2 are not intended to condemn the Corinthians - though the subtle condemnation of the false apostles continues. There is no need to import Christological content into the phrase. The notion of dying and living with Christ as an ongoing experience is not present in 3:2-3, and is not required in 7:3.⁸⁰⁰

Like 2:15-3:6, the argument of 6:11-7:4ab is structured as an arch, this time centred on 6:14-7:1; 7:4cd, πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει

⁸⁰⁰ Tannehill argues that Paul is referring to 1:4-7; “it would be strange in the light of Paul’s usage if there were no connection here with Christ’s death and resurrection” (1967:93); he supports this from word order (to die ... to live), “which indicates that Paul is thinking of a participation in resurrection life, rather than human companionship in the ordinary life of the world” (ibid.). However, this word order is not incompatible with the language of friendship (besides LXX 2 Kgdms 15:21, already quoted, cf. Eur., *Orest.* 307, σὺν σοὶ καὶ θανεῖν αἰρήσομαι καὶ ζῆν (“with thee will I make choice of death or life”; LCL); cited by Bultmann 1976:179; cf. Furnish 1984:370; Thrall 1994:483-84. Nevertheless, Tannehill is right to point to a connection with 1:4-7; indeed, as we shall see in the next chapter, there is a clear link with 1:3-11.

ἡμῶν, like 2:14, is transitional, bridging to 7:5, while also looking back to 6:4-10, and indeed to 1:3-11.

A: Paul has spoken boldly of his sufferings, to the Corinthians. (6:11a)

B: he has not caused their στενοχωρία; they have brought it upon themselves (6:11b-13ab).

C: Appeal, "Be wide open [to our message]!"

(πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς) (6:13c)

D: The Corinthians must end their covenant-breaking relationship with ἄπιστοι and return to God (6:14-7:1)

C': "Make room for us [as God's messengers]!"

(χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς) (7:2a)

B': he has not harmed them in any way. (7:2b-3)

A': he is bold towards the Corinthians, and boasts greatly concerning them. (7:4ab)

In all his sufferings he is filled with comfort and his joy overflows (7:4cd).⁸⁰¹

The transitional nature of 7:4cd seems to be confirmed by the alternation in these clauses between singular and plural forms, which is common in the surrounding material, but in 2:15-7:4ab occurs only in a brief remark in 5:11.

It is instructive to compare Paul's pattern of thought in 2 Cor 6:4-7:2 with that of 2 Cor 11:21b-12:21. It has been suggested that in 6:11a, τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, κορίνθιοι, alludes to LXX Isa 53:7, and functions as a veiled complaint that the apostle has been driven by the Corinthians to break with his paradigm, the Isaianic Servant, and speak to them of his sufferings. Though 7:4ab has not yet been discussed (this

⁸⁰¹ The parenthetical remarks ὡς τέκνοις λέγω (6:13) and the whole of 7:3 are omitted.

will have to be postponed until we have examined the argument of 3:12-13),⁸⁰² the following close parallel may be observed in the structure of the apostle's thought:

| | 6:4-7:4ab | 11:23-12:21 |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| Self-commendation as a true apostle by means of a catalogue of sufferings. | 6:4-10 | 11:23-33 |
| Apology for his self-commendation; he has been driven to it. | 6:11a; 7:4ab (A-A') | 12:11 |
| Denial of having offended against his readers, addressing them as his children. | 6:11b-13ab; 7:2b-3 (B-B') | 12:12-18 |
| Appeal to be heard as God's messenger. | 6:13c; 7:2a (C-C') | 12:19 |
| Appeal for holiness. | 6:14-7:1 (D) | 12:20-21 |

⁸⁰² See below.

The Theme of 2 Cor 6:11-7:4

The chiastic structure of 6:11-7:4ab permits the division of the Conclusion of the Discourse into three parts: a statement of its theme (6:11-13), a development of the argument (6:14-7:1), and a restatement of its theme in a different form (7:2-4); the passage is therefore, a complete discursive subunit.⁸⁰³

In his opening statement, in language that intentionally echoes Isa 53, Paul remarks that he has spoken boldly to the Corinthians (concerning his sufferings on their behalf); he goes on to say that he has not "confined" them; rather, they are being "confined" or "crushed" as a consequence of their own idolatrous lusts. He then appeals to them to "be enlarged", that is, to open their hearts to his message.

The development section ("body") of the argument is, as Patte points out, is itself a complete discursive subunit.⁸⁰⁴ Its theme is revealed in a contrasting parallelism: "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (6:14a) becomes, "let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (7:1). The development section, 6:14b-18, draws upon new covenant / second exodus traditions to demonstrate that the Corinthians' spiritual partnership with the false apostles puts them in breach of covenant, and it exhorts them to leave unclean and idolatrous "Babylon" and sanctify themselves as the covenant demands. The theme of 6:14-7:1 is that the Corinthians' must sanctify themselves by ending their fellowship with the false apostles.

By condemning the false apostles, associating them as unbelievers with lawlessness, darkness, idolatry and Beliar, calling for separation from them and yet, despite their implied state of defilement and spiritual exile, identifying himself with the Corinthians in Christian fellowship (note the first person plurals of 7:1), Paul has prepared well the

⁸⁰³ Cf. Patte 1987:40. Patte, however, takes the ἡμῶν reading in 6:11, so that there are significant differences in his interpretation.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.:44.

ground for a restatement of the points made in the opening: the Corinthians must make room for him in their hearts (as God's messenger); *he* has not harmed, corrupted or defrauded them - this charge is clearly laid upon the false apostles; he has been very bold towards them, and he has boasted greatly concerning (his sufferings for) them. He also adds that what he has said was not meant to condemn them, for they are in his heart, to die and to live together.

The role of 6:14-7:1 in 6:11-7:4, therefore, is to persuade the Corinthians that their relationship with the false apostles has resulted in spiritual defilement and breach of covenant; they must therefore cut off their association with those unbelievers. This enables the apostle to establish that the blame for the στενοχωρία of which the Corinthians have evidently been complaining is not due to any fault in his own ministry, but to their spiritual partnership with the false apostles. Moreover, having made clear that he remains in fellowship with the Corinthians despite their breach of covenant, and despite the consequences for himself, Paul is able to argue convincingly that in stating that the Corinthians have broken the new covenant and are suffering accordingly, he does not intend to condemn them; for he is bound to them in Christian fellowship, whether this means death or life.

The theme of the Conclusion of the Discourse, therefore, is that Paul has spoken boldly and boasted of his sufferings on behalf of the Corinthians. His ministry has not in any way harmed them; rather, they have been harmed by the ministry of the false apostles, and must dissociate themselves from them. It is also implied that the Corinthians have become in breach of covenant due to their spiritual partnership with those idolatrous unbelievers. Paul emphasises his spiritual communion with the Corinthians as he appeals to them to sanctify themselves.

Finally, in a transitional passage which connects the Discourse with 7:5-16, and also recalls 1:4, Paul declares that in all his sufferings he is greatly comforted, and his joy overflows. The cause of his rejoicing is clear: despite the recent crisis and the

continuing threat posed by the false of apostles, by their response to the Letter of Tears the Corinthians have shown that they are among οἱ σωζόμενοι, and heirs to the promises of the new covenant.

Chapter 8

The Letter of Tears and 2 Corinthians 1-7

Having examined the Introduction and the Conclusion of the Discourse, we are now in a position to consider the argument of the Discourse as a whole, and to determine its role in the argument of 2 Cor 1-7. However, as has already been indicated, there is a close connection between the argument of the Discourse and the sufferings to which the apostle refers in 1:3-11. We begin therefore with the opening Benediction and the “Affliction in Asia”.

1. The Affliction in Asia

The opening Benediction, 2 Cor 1:3-4, is unique in the undisputed Pauline Corpus, replacing his customary Thanksgiving. In the introductions of Paul’s letters,⁸⁰⁵ the verb παρακαλέω is used “consistently of *Fürdank* for God’s work in the lives of his addressees”: in 2 Corinthians, however, he uses ἐυλογητός for “blessings in which he himself participated”.⁸⁰⁶ As Artz has shown, in his introductory thanksgivings, which are sometimes combined with a remembrance-motif, Paul follows “a frequently found convention expressed through the epistolary formulas of a report of a prayer and the

⁸⁰⁵ Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; cf. Col 1:3; Eph. 1:16; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Tim 1:3.

⁸⁰⁶ O’Brien 1977:239. Cf. Eph 1:3, 15f.

μνημεία-motif.”⁸⁰⁷ These thanksgivings are intended to convey “Paul’s keen interest in his addressees’ life and situation”.⁸⁰⁸ In 2 Cor 1:3-7, however,

the focus ... is not, as in Paul’s other letters, on the church, but on Paul himself. Moreover, the subject matter concerns not what God is doing in the Corinthian congregation, but how he is acting in Paul’s ministry. Furthermore, the major theme is not that of faith or maturity, as is customary in Paul’s other letters, but that of divine comfort.⁸⁰⁹

The subject of the Benediction is the God who comforts the afflicted:

εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν, εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

The key terms παρακαλέω / παράκλησις occur no fewer than ten times in 2 Cor 1:3-7 with the sense “comfort”, a sense common in the translation Greek of the LXX but rare in ordinary Greek usage, and then usually confined to “exhortation or encouragement to those who sorrow”.⁸¹⁰ the same is true of the word group in the LXX when there is no Hebrew original, and in Hellenistic Judaism.⁸¹¹ On the other hand, “the use of παρακαλέω = ‘to exhort’ is common in the Greek of the Hellenistic world, but is almost absent from the translation Greek of the LXX.”⁸¹² O’Brien rightly concludes, and it is widely recognised, that Paul’s language has its origin in the LXX translation of the Psalter and Second Isaiah:

Human comfort is spoken of in the Old Testament, where relatives, friends and those more distant are called upon to give it. Ultimately, though, true consolation (παράκλησις αληθινή, Isa . 57:18) comes from God, while by comparison all else is

⁸⁰⁷ Arzt 1994:46.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ Belleville 1991:112.

⁸¹⁰ O’Brien 1977:242f; citing Schnitz TDNT 5:776, 799.

⁸¹¹ Schnitz TDNT 5:778-9.

⁸¹² O’Brien 1977:243, citing Schnitz TDNT 5:776ff, 799.

vain (ματαιία, Isa. 28:29). Comforting is his proper work, for he turns earlier desolation into perfect consolation for individuals (esp. In the Psalter), and for the people of God (particularly in Deutero-Isaiah, where God's great consoling promise to Israel appears. Isa. 40:1ff).⁸¹³

In Isaiah the "comfort" promised by Yahweh to the exiled people of Israel⁸¹⁴ is to be understood in terms of the deliverance of God's people from oppression and death in exile (Isa 51:12-14), and the restoration of Jerusalem (54:11-14: cf. Bar 4:21-30).⁸¹⁵ In the Psalms, divine comfort is explained in verbs of "help" and "rescue" from affliction and death.⁸¹⁶ Clearly this theme of divine rescue from death is echoed in Paul's account of his recent deliverance from great danger in 1:8-11. The disclosure formula at 1:8 is connected to 1:3-7 by γάρ (οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί ...). Thrall rightly comments, "The γάρ is loosely connective: 'I talk about suffering *for* we have just experienced an almost fatal affliction ...'"⁸¹⁷

Barnett argues that the Benediction of 1:3-4 is "Paul's Christianized adaptation of the first of the Nineteen Benedictions":⁸¹⁸

Blessed art thou O Lord our God and God of our fathers ... who bestowest abundant grace and createst all things and rememberest the promises of grace to the fathers and bringest a Redeemer ...⁸¹⁹

⁸¹³ O'Brien 1977:243.

⁸¹⁴ παρακαλέω translates Piel / Pual of קנַן ("console") Isa 40:1(×2); 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; (52:9); 54:11; also in 61:2; 66:13(×2); the verb is used of other divine actions of comfort and deliverance in Is. 49:10 (Qal קנַן, for Yahweh "driving" his people in the Second Exodus, like a flock of sheep); 57:18 (Hiphil of קנַן; for Yahweh "guiding" his people; 66:12 (Palpal of יי, for Jerusalem "dandling" the people of Yahweh on her knee). LXX Isa 41:27 reads, "I will comfort Jerusalem by the way" (Ἱερουσαλημ παρακαλέσω εἰς ὁδόν); the MT has "I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings".

⁸¹⁵ Hofius 1983:220-22.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.:224, with reference to the "entscheidenden Texte" ("crucial texts") Pss. 71(70):20-24; 86(85):1f, 7, 12-17; 94(93):16-22; together with 23(22):4-6.

⁸¹⁷ Thrall 1994:114 n 222.

⁸¹⁸ Barnett 1997:82.

⁸¹⁹ As quoted in Schürer 2:456.

He finds the following points of contact: "In the hands of the now converted Paul", "the God of *our fathers*" is identified as "the God and Father of *our Lord Jesus Christ*." The "promises to the fathers" have been kept (1:20), and the hoped-for "redeemer" has been proclaimed in Corinth (1:19).⁸²⁰ Moreover, the motif of "[the God] who raises the dead" is found in the second of the Nineteen Benedictions:⁸²¹

Thou art mighty, strong, that livest forever, that raisest the dead, that sustainest the living, that quickenest the dead. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that quickenest the dead.⁸²²

The expression "Father of mercies" is also found in synagogue prayers contemporary with Paul:⁸²³ and the expression "the God of all comfort" is also paralleled in synagogue prayers which probably date back to Paul's time.⁸²⁴ The form of Paul's Benediction, εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, therefore, has probably been influenced by the synagogue prayers which were so much a part of his life and worship. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Paul's use of the language of divine comfort (παρακαλέω / παράκλησις) points to the direct influence of the LXX. Of particular interest is Ps 68(69):17-21:

Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is good: according to the multitude of thy compassions (οἰκτιρμῶν) look upon me. And turn not away thy face from thy servant, for I am afflicted (θλίβομαι): hear me speedily. Draw nigh to my soul and redeem it: deliver me (ῥῦσαί με) because of mine enemies. For thou knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my confusion: all that afflict me (πάντες οἱ θλίβοντές με) are before thee. My soul has waited for reproach and misery: and I waited for one to grieve with me, but there was none: and one to comfort me (παρακαλοῦντας), but I found none.

⁸²⁰ Barnett 1997:67-68.

⁸²¹ Barnett 1997:82. The description "God who raises the dead" is also traced to the Second Benediction by Windisch 1924:47; Barrett 1973:65; Furnish 1984:114; Martin 1986:15.

⁸²² As quoted in Förster 1964:228.

⁸²³ Barnett 1997:69, citing Marmorstein.

⁸²⁴ Barnett cites *P. Ketubot* 8b, 27 (Str-B 3:494).

Here, uniquely in the LXX version of the Psalter, the language of comfort (παρακαλέω), compassion (οἰκτιρμός) in affliction (θλίψις / θλίβω), and of the divine rescue (ρύομαι) of the righteous sufferer from danger of death, is all found in a single psalm - indeed, in a few verses of a single psalm. Moreover, the closing line of the preceding psalm, LXX Ps 67, reads, εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός.⁸²⁵

Paul's experience of suffering and divine comfort has the purpose⁸²⁶ of enabling him to comfort others (τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει) with the comfort which he himself has received from God (1:4). He continues (2 Cor 1:5),

ὅτι καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς, οὕτως διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν.

Paul is able to comfort those in any kind of affliction with the comfort which he himself has received from God *because* (ὅτι), just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to him, so⁸²⁷ through Christ his comfort overflows. Both in his sufferings and in his ministry of comforting others with the comfort he himself has received, Paul acts as Christ's agent. The exact sense in which Paul identifies his sufferings as τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ is debated.⁸²⁸ In Phil 3:10 Paul speaks of his ambition "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings (κοινωνίαν τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ)": and in Rom 8:17 he speaks of believers suffering with Christ in order also to be glorified with him (εἵπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν). In view of these parallels it is unlikely that the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ expresses origin or agency, as though Paul's sufferings were in some sense "due to the activity of Christ".⁸²⁹ Rather, as Thrall rightly comments, "it is the apostle's inward conformation to Christ which brings [τὰ παθήματα

⁸²⁵ The phrase also occurs in Pss 17:47; 65:20; 67:36.

⁸²⁶ εἰς τὸ + infin.

⁸²⁷ καθὼς ... οὕτως.

⁸²⁸ For an overview see Thrall 1994:107-10.

⁸²⁹ Contra Rissi 1969:54-55; so correctly Thrall 1994:107 n 193.

τοῦ Χριστοῦ] upon him, as he stands on the same side as Christ in the battle against the powers hostile to God".⁸³⁰

The principle he set out in 1:5 is immediately applied to his ministry to the Corinthians (1:6):

εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας· εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως τῆς ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων ὧν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν.

Paul has been afflicted in order that he might be able to comfort the Corinthians, who are suffering the same afflictions (τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων), as he himself has suffered. The Corinthians too have been, and are suffering τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The precise nature of the afflictions which the Corinthians were suffering is also debated. The only other references to the suffering of the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians are in 6:12 (they are experiencing στενοχωρία); 7:8-11 (for a time they suffered λύπη, due to the Letter of Tears); and 11:20 (an ironic reference to their voluntary suffering at the hands of the false apostles). The last of these they suffered willingly enough, not because of their stand with Christ in the spiritual struggle, but as a result of their rebellion. The λύπη resulting from the Letter of Tears, on the other hand, they experienced as a result of their commitment to Christ. They suffered this pain in the heat of their battle with the forces of evil that would lead them astray. If Paul intends, as Hofius argues, that the language of divine comfort evoke images from the Psalms and from Isaiah of rescue from danger of death, then it would appear that the Corinthians were also passing through, or had passed through, a dangerous trial, just as had the apostle. The danger for the apostle was of physical death, but for the Corinthians the danger was of spiritual death, since their repentance was evidently necessary for their salvation (2 Cor 7:10: cf. Rom 8:13). It will be argued that, in the mind of Paul, these two dangers, the danger to the apostle himself and the danger to

⁸³⁰ Thrall 1994:110.

the Corinthians, were two sides of a single coin: the danger which he so greatly feared was not the loss of his life *per se* (cf. 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21), but the destruction of the church he had founded in Corinth.

Σώζω is parallel with ῥύομαι in LXX Ps 68:15,

Save me (σῶσόν με) from the mire, that I stick not in it:

let me be delivered (ῥυθείην) from them that hate me.

Moreover, there is a link between 2 Cor 6:2 and MT Ps 69:14(68:13):

But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favour (עת רצון):

in your great love, O God, answer me (ענני) with your sure salvation.

The only other occurrence of the phrase עת רצון in the Hebrew canon is in Isa 49:8, which Paul quotes in the LXX translation in 2 Cor 6:2. It has been argued that in 6:2 Paul applies Isa 49:8 to his own experience: like the Servant, he had feared that he had laboured in vain: but God (ὁ ῥυσάμενός σε, LXX Isa 49:7) had intervened, as had been promised to his Servant:

בעת רצון עניתיך

וביום ישועה עזרתך

in the time of my favour I will answer you:

in the day of salvation I will help you.

The apostle could well have interpreted Isa 49:8 as a response to the prayer of Ps 69:14, identifying the righteous sufferer of the psalm with the Servant. Conversely, it is not unlikely that he applied not only Isa 49:8 but also Ps 69:14 to his own recent experience. It would follow that he identified not only with the plight and the prayers of

the Isaianic Servant, but also of the psalmist, or rather, of the individual portrayed in the psalm.

There is also a link between Psalm 69, Jer 23:9 and 2 Cor 2:2. It has been argued that in the Letter of Tears Paul referred to Jer 23:9-40, comparing himself with Jeremiah and the false apostles with the false prophets denounced in that passage. Moreover, it has been argued that, referring or alluding to Exod 32:19 and Jer 23:9, he made a remark to this effect: "Moses broke the tablets of the Law, but if I come to Corinth now, I will break my own heart!" MT Jer 23:9 reads as follows:

My heart is crushed within me (נִשְׁבַּר לִבִּי בִקְרָבִי): all my bones shake. I have become like a drunkard, like one overcome by wine, because of the LORD, and because of his holy words. (NRSV)

The "holy words" to which Jeremiah alludes clearly refer to the words of judgement which he has been called upon to pronounce over Israel. Israel is to be condemned because of its indulgence, under the influence of false prophets, in idolatry and sexual immorality. Faced with the pronouncement of Yahweh's judgement on the people, the prophet cries out that his heart is broken. It was precisely in order to avoid finding himself in a similar position that Paul cancelled his visit to Corinth. Paul feared that, if he returned to Corinth and confronted the sin of the church, his anger would burn, and he would carry out the threat he had made when he was last with them (2 Cor 13:2): instead of building up, he would have to tear down the church he had built in Corinth (cf. 2 Cor 13:10). Paul's enemies would certainly have poured scorn upon him, and it is not unlikely that, contemplating Jer 23:9, he thought also of Ps 69:21(20), and applied it to his own situation:

Insults have broken my heart (שְׁבַרָה לִבִּי) so that I am in despair: I looked for pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none (NRSV).⁸³¹

The “broken heart” motif, expressed in terms of the verb שְׁבַר, occurs in the MT in Pss 69:21(20); 147:3; Jer 23:9 (Qal); and in Pss 34:19(18); 51:19; Isa 61:1 (Niphal). In Pss 34:19; 51:19(17); 147:3 and Isa 61:1, the context is of promise: Yahweh is close to the broken-hearted, and will help them. In Ps 69:21 and Jer 23:9, by contrast, the context is of lament.

Had Paul come to Corinth and disciplined the church, he would have left himself without comforters: “For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but the one I have grieved?” (2 Cor 2:2). Compare again Ps 69:21, “I looked for pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none.” I maintain, therefore, that Paul had in mind Psalm 69 as he composed 2 Corinthians, and that he identified closely with the individual portrayed in the psalm. As has been noted already, elsewhere he identifies this individual with Christ. Given his self-understanding as one who makes manifest in his own sufferings the dying of Christ, it is not surprising that he should turn to this psalm. However, given the apostle’s interest at this time in Jer 23:9-40 and in Isa 49:1-13, it must be assumed that he was well aware of the linguistic and thematic connections noted above. The possibility must be considered, therefore, that Ps 69, Isa 49:1-13 and Jer 23:9-40 at this time functioned together in the mind of the apostle as mutually interpreting texts. If so, then although each passage would have made its own contribution to his interpretation of his situation in terms of OT paradigms, the Psalmist, the Servant and Jeremiah may to some degree have fused into one corporate personality, enabling the apostle to interpret his own situation in terms of a composite of their joint experiences. In particular, it has been suggested that Paul interpreted Isa

⁸³¹ The LXX has “My soul has waited for reproach and misery; and I waited for one to grieve with me, but there was none; and for one to comfort me (καὶ παρακαλοῦντας), but I found none”. Cf. Lam 1:21; here too the sufferer has been struck by God.

49:8 as a divine response to the prayer of Ps 69:14(13), and that he applied both passages to his own experience of answered prayer.

Thematic and linguistic connections have also been noted between Isa 49 and Ps 118,⁸³² and between Jer 23:9 and the golden calf narrative of Exod 32.⁸³³ Indeed, it has been argued that in the Letter of Tears Paul compared his own situation with the situations of Moses as he faced the golden calf rebellion, and Jeremiah as he faced the false prophets, taking elements from each paradigm to explain his own predicament. It has been argued that he stated his intention of avoiding the fate of Jeremiah, a broken heart, and that he had therefore decided that, unlike Moses, he would not personally confront the rebellion. In 2 Corinthians, he contrasts not his situation, but his ministry with those of Moses and Jeremiah, identifying rather with the ministry of the Isaianic Servant. This latter identification, we have argued, was vindicated in the mind of the apostle by the positive response of the Corinthians to the Letter of Tears. But at some point in his θλίψις Paul had lost hope of such a response: like the Servant, he feared that his labours had been in vain (cf. Isa 49:4). He writes,

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we had the answer (ἀπόκριμα),⁸³⁴ 'Death'.

The term ἀπόκριμα is rare in the literary sources, but is found in inscriptions: it means "official report, decision",⁸³⁵ and was used as "a technical term for an official decision in answer to the petition of an embassy."⁸³⁶ The expression ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου "has usually been translated "sentence of death";⁸³⁷ however, the term may refer to a favourable as well as an unfavourable decision.⁸³⁸ Hemer suggests that during his

⁸³² See:153.

⁸³³ See:189.

⁸³⁴ The genitive τοῦ θανάτου is appositional; Furnish 1984:114.

⁸³⁵ BAGD s.v.

⁸³⁶ Hemer 1972:104.

⁸³⁷ e.g. AV, RSV, NEB, NIV.

⁸³⁸ Hemer 1972:106.

θαῖψις Paul, who had until this point expected to survive until the Parousia, petitioned God regarding the outcome and received the “verdict”, “Death” - he would die before the Parousia. But as Martin points out, “this reconstruction lifts the verse out of its immediate context since Paul did not die in Asia but lived to tell the tale and to write 2 Corinthians!”⁸³⁹ A more probable explanation is that Paul had petitioned God regarding his situation, and had become convinced (mistakenly) that the answer would be his death. It may be significant that the Hebrew אָנָּו, “answer” (cf. Pss 69:21: 118:5: Isa 49:8) is very frequently translated in the LXX by the verb ἀποκρίνομαι,⁸⁴⁰ which is cognate to ἀπόκριμα. It has been suggested already that Paul interpreted his deliverance in terms of Ps 69:21 and Isa 49:8: in his prayer for deliverance he identified with the Psalmist; in his consolation, having received the answer, he identified with the Servant. Just as he identified the Psalmist of Ps 118 with the Servant, so also he identified the Psalmist of Ps 69 with the Servant, and he drew upon the experience of all three in interpreting his own experience. It is worth emphasising again that each of these proposed identifications, as well the connections with Moses and Jeremiah, can be explained on the basis of *gezerah shewah*, as the apostle meditated upon (the Hebrew original of) texts which he echoes, alludes to, or quotes in 2 Corinthians.

Comparing Psalm 69 with the situation of the apostle during the crisis, as we have reconstructed it, we find the following points of contact:

1. For whatever reason the apostle, like the psalmist, was near to death (vv 1-3, 14-18).⁸⁴¹
2. His untimely death would have brought shame and disgrace upon many faithful believers, as his enemies triumphed over him (v 6: cf. v 18).
3. He was suffering because of his zeal for God and for God’s house (vv 7, 9-12).

⁸³⁹ Martin 1986:15.

⁸⁴⁰ E.g. Gen. 5:3; 18:27; 23:5, 10, 14; 27:37.

⁸⁴¹ References are to the English verse numbering.

4. His sufferings were aggravated by the scorn of his godless enemies (vv 4, 7, 10-12, 18-21; 26).

Another possible point of contact is that the sufferer of Ps 69 was falsely accused of theft (cf. v 5(4)), "I am forced to restore what I did not steal"; cf. 2 Cor 7:2b (οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν); 12:16-18.

A further feature of the Psalm requires close attention: though his sufferings are increased by the activities of his enemies, the Psalmist regards himself as having been smitten *by God*: "For they persecute those whom you have struck down, and those you have wounded they attack still more" (v26 NRSV). Indeed, the psalmist acknowledges his guilt before God: "O God you know my folly: the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you" (v 5: NRSV). It has already been suggested that Paul understood his own θλίψις as brought upon him by God in response to his solidarity with the rebellious Corinthians. Already in 1 Corinthians Paul had indicated his solidarity with the Corinthians in the face of divine judgement: for as Rosner has persuasively argued,⁸⁴² in 1 Cor 10:22b the rhetorical question μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν is

a frightening threat of judgement upon those Corinthian Christians who provoke God to jealousy ... Paul states, not just, do not defy God (for he is supreme), but do not tempt God, he is ready to judge powerfully. Paul is convinced that the God of the Jewish Scriptures is unchanged in his attitude to idolatry.⁸⁴³

Moreover, Paul's use of the first person plural suggests that he regarded the threat as involving the whole church, and that he included himself among them.⁸⁴⁴ But if at this time he saw the threat as extending to himself, the perceived danger would presumably have increased dramatically in consequence of first, the Corinthians' rejection of the demands of 1 Cor 5, and then his own decision to cancel his visit to Corinth, but remain

⁸⁴² Rosner 1992c; 1994:195-203.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.,:202.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

in fellowship with the church. It has already been argued that the church in Corinth, as a covenantal community, had become guilty of both sexual immorality and idolatry, and in particular had become guilty by association of the sin of incest. The penalty demanded by the apostle for the incestuous man, on the basis of Deuteronomic tradition, was that he be handed over into the power of Satan. Under the old covenant, by failing to discipline the offender according to the Law, the whole community would have become guilty and subject to the covenantal curses. If, as Rosner has argued, Paul carried over this notion of corporate responsibility into his understanding of the new covenant, then by supporting the incestuous man the whole church would have become liable to the same penalties. Now Paul claimed the authority to impose discipline on the church (1 Cor 4:18-21; 2 Cor 1:23; 10:6, 9-11; 12:20-13:10), and with authority comes responsibility. The way in which Paul (quite properly, in his view), chose to exercise this responsibility was to cancel his visit to Corinth, instead sending a further letter. But he did not mean simply to abandon the church to its fate, for he says that he wrote the Letter of Tears in order that the church might know the depth of his love for them (2 Cor 2:4), and that before God their zeal for himself might be made manifest (7:12). I maintain that, like Moses before him, he chose to stand with them in the face of impending judgement. In Exod 32:32 Moses expresses his solidarity with the people of Israel: "But now, if you will, forgive their sin - but if not, blot me out of the book which you have written" God then addresses Moses not as an individual, but as a corporate representative of the people:

The LORD said to Moses, "Depart, go up hence, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey: but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you in the way, for you are a stiff-necked people." (Exod 33:1-3 RSV)

As already noted, in 1 Cor 10:22 Paul seems to count himself among the members of the Corinthian church when he warns of the danger of divine judgement: I propose,

therefore, that rather than act as one set apart in authority over them and impose discipline by tearing down the church he had built, Paul associated himself with the Corinthians in their guilt and confessed their sin as their corporate representative (cf. Ps 69:5). Unlike Moses, however, he decided not to return to the congregation and lead them in an act of purification. If the analogy of the OT holds good, because of the sin of the community which he represented, Paul had thereby placed himself in a dangerous situation: since the community had refused to purify itself, it could expect judgement at the hands of its spiritual enemies, Satan and his hosts: and as their corporate representative, Paul himself would be particularly vulnerable. It will be argued that, though he took this decision in the confidence that the Corinthians would repent, thus delivering both himself and them from the impending judgement (cf. 2 Cor 7:14), he did not escape unscathed.

Paul follows up his allusion to the Servant in 6:2 with a further catalogue of his ongoing sufferings (6:4-10). As Renwick points out, the language Paul uses here to describe his own sufferings is used in the LXX to describe the effects of the curse sanctions of the covenant: θλίψις (6:4), πληγή (6:5) and παιδεύω (6:9) occur in Lev 26:21-29, while στενοχωρία (6:4) occurs in association with θλίψις in Deut 28:53, 55, 57 in the refrain ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου;⁸⁴⁵ Isa 28:10-26 has θλίψις (v 10, x2), θλίβω (v 14), στενοχωρέω (v 20), and παιδεύω (v 26), while in Isa 8:21-22 στενοχωρία, θλίψις and λυπέω (6:10) occur together.⁸⁴⁶ The occurrence of the terms ἄτιμος, πληγή, παιδεία in Isa 52:13-53:12 has already been noted. Renwick suggests that such Scriptures were used by Paul's opponents to "to demonstrate that Paul was a man under God's curse, and thus not an apostle".⁸⁴⁷ However, if Paul followed the Isaianic tradition in identifying the Servant with Israel as a corporate entity (cf. Isa 49:3), then it is likely that he is simply applying the language of the sufferings of Israel to himself. As has already been noted, in 6:9 Paul alludes to LXX Ps 117:17-18, and it is likely that he identified

⁸⁴⁵ Renwick 1991:83-84 n 40.

⁸⁴⁶ λυπέω occurs in the context of the punishment of Israel in Isa 32:11, 57:17 (x2); λυπή in association with πληγή in Isa 1:5; cf. Isa 35:10; 51:11; παιδεύω and ἄτιμός are found in Jer 38:18-22.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

the speaker in the psalm with the Isaianic Servant. In the exceptional situation of the “Affliction in Asia”, the assaults of his spiritual enemies were so severe that, for a time, he felt that utter defeat was upon him. But having been divinely rescued even from this calamity, he is now once more confident of his Servant-like ministry, and he describes his everyday experiences of suffering in the same terms. The same evil forces opposed him, whether he was subject to the curse sanctions or not. For Paul the exceptional stress and danger of the “Affliction in Asia” lay not so much in the nature of the affliction, severe as it was, but in the possibility that on this occasion Satan would be permitted to press his attack to the point of death, and the battle for Corinth would be lost. Nevertheless, the affliction was, with hindsight, simply another episode in a ministry that involved constant suffering. It fell to Paul not only to suffer in his evangelistic ministry of founding the church in Corinth, but also in his pastoral ministry, as he strove to secure the repentance of the church from serious doctrinal and moral error. Both tasks were necessary for their salvation, but it is particularly his sufferings in the execution of his pastoral ministry which are in view in 2 Cor 1:3-11; cf. 2:4, 12-13: 4:10-12, 14: 6:4-10; 7:4-6.

This conclusion is confirmed by a close examination of 2 Cor 1:6. Concerning his suffering, Paul says, εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας, “if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation”. As Thrall points out, “salvation”, for Paul, is “an eschatological concept, consisting in the deliverance from God’s wrath, and the restoration to man of his lost divine glory”; a process “set in motion by the power of the gospel (Rom 1:16)”;⁸⁴⁸ however, though the restoration of the divine glory is to be brought to completion at the Parousia (Phil 3:20-21), for Paul salvation is a process that begins in the present life with the progressive transformation of the “inner person” through the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16-18; Phil 2:12-13). It will be argued that it was in order that the Corinthians should experience a necessary step in the process of their salvation that God brought upon Paul his “Affliction in Asia”.

⁸⁴⁸ Thrall 1994:110-11; citing Cranfield.

In 1:6 Paul is applying the general principle set out in 1:4 to the particular circumstances of his ministry to the Corinthians: for in the phrase ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας, the pronoun ὑμῶν is in emphatic position.⁸⁴⁹ The sufferings which he has in mind must therefore be of salvific significance not for the churches in general, nor for his mission in general, but specifically for the Corinthians. He continues, εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως ..., and there is no doubt that the subject of the passive παρακαλούμεθα is God. It is probable therefore that the subject of θλιβόμεθα in the preceding parallel clause is also divine: God intended Paul's affliction "for the sake of your comfort and salvation". Since the disclosure formula of 1:8 is connected closely to 1:3-7 by the conjunction γάρ,⁸⁵⁰ it follows that Paul means this particular affliction to be understood by the Corinthians as ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας: for In 1:8-11 he specifies the particular sufferings which he has in mind in the preceding statements (cf. the role of καὶ γάρ in 7:4-6, and the repetition in 7:4 of the phrase from 1:4, ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν).

This reconstruction also makes good sense of the thematic connection between 1:3-11 and 7:4-16, and explains the connection between the themes of the apostle's sufferings and his travel plans. In 1:3-7 Paul introduces the general theme of God's comfort (παράκλησις / παρακαλέω) in affliction (θλίψις / θλίβω), and leads into the specific case of his affliction in Asia (1:8-11). Having discussed his travel plans and the cancellation of his visit, he speaks again of affliction in 2:4 (ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως ...), referring to his situation as he composed (in Asia) the Letter of Tears. He again speaks of his deep anxiety over the situation in Corinth in 2:12-13, and after developing at length the central role of suffering in his apostolic ministry he finally returns in 7:4 to the theme of comfort in afflictions. The language of 7:4, πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει ... ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν, strikingly recalls 1:4: ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν. The subject of the relative clause in 1:4, ὁ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως, who is also "God who

⁸⁴⁹ Thrall 1994:110 n 210; BDR 284(2).

⁸⁵⁰ O'Brien 1977:235.

raises the dead” (1:9), now reappears as the one who has recently comforted Paul: ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ... (7:6).⁸⁵¹ Paul had left Asia in great distress and crossed over to Macedonia (2:12-13: 7:5). He describes his situation as follows: ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι· ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, “we were afflicted in every way: battles without, terrors within!”, a clear echo of MT Deut 32:25a,

מחוי תשכל-חרב
ומחדרים אימה

(“in the street the sword shall bereave,
and in the chambers terror”: NRSV).⁸⁵²

For מחדרים is the poetic equivalent of מבית, “within”,⁸⁵³ = ἔσωθεν, and parallels מחוי, “without”,⁸⁵⁴ = ἔξωθεν. The choice of μάχαι for תשכל-חרב, which balances beautifully φόβοι = אימה, may have been suggested by a play on μάχαιρα, “sword”: the LXX has, ἔξωθεν ἀτεκνώσει αὐτοὺς μάχαιρα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ταμείων φόβος (‘Without, the sword shall bereave them of children, and terror shall issue out of the secret chambers’).⁸⁵⁵ The key role of the Song of Moses in 1 Cor 10:1-22 and its relationship with the golden calf have already been discussed. The context of this echo is God’s rejection and punishment of his people and their ejection from the Land: they have broken the covenant, and the promised judgement will come upon them. They will be overrun by their enemies, and taken into exile.⁸⁵⁶ The apostle, though he had survived the crisis of

⁸⁵¹ But the language is that of Isa 49:13 LXX, a text closely related to the argument of 2:14-7:4, as we shall see.
⁸⁵² LXX: ἔξωθεν ἀτεκνώσει αὐτοὺς μάχαιρα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ταμείων φόβος (‘Without, the sword shall bereave them of children, and terror shall issue out of the secret chambers’).
⁸⁵³ BDB s.v. חדר.
⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.
⁸⁵⁵ Suggested perhaps by a play on μάχαιρα.
⁸⁵⁶ The significance of the Song of Moses for the apostle at this time, and the allusions to Deut 32:17-21 in 1 Cor 10:14-22, will be discussed below.

the affliction in Asia, knew no rest until he heard from Corinth. He feared that divine judgement would fall on Corinth, and he would be bereaved of his spiritual children.

God had comforted Paul by the coming of Titus (7:6-7: παράκλησις / παρακαλέω, 4 times). Here, as has already been noted, the expression ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς echoes LXX Isa 49:13, which belongs to the same pericope as 49:8 and concerns Israel's future restoration. Beale rightly comments,

49:13 is an exclamation of joy because the restoration is none other than the coming time when God will comfort his people. Indeed, the restoration is divine comfort. Likewise, the Corinthians' beginning signs of reconciliation with Paul (vv 6-7) provide him with joyous comfort that they together with him really are God's latter day Israel who are fulfilling the restoration promises.⁸⁵⁷

The news which Titus carried convinced Paul that his trial had ended. Whatever his external circumstances in Macedonia, when Paul heard of the Corinthians' longing (ἐπιπόθησις), their lamentation (ὄδυρμός), and their zeal (ζήλος) for him, he rejoiced (7:7). It may be significant that the term ὄδυρμός occurs only once in the translation Greek of the LXX, in Jer 38:15,⁸⁵⁸

A voice is heard in Rama, of weeping and wailing and lamentation (θρήνου καὶ κλαυθμοῦ καὶ ὄδυρμου): Rachel would not cease weeping for her children, for they are not.

The context is the preamble of the new covenant. In the MT, the passage continues:

This is what the LORD says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears (וַעֲיִן יָךְ מִדְּמָעָה), for your work will be rewarded," declares the LORD. "They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future," declares the LORD. "Your children will return to their own land."

⁸⁵⁷ Beale 1989:576.

⁸⁵⁸ In the LXX the term occurs also in 2 Macc 11:6; elsewhere in the NT the term occurs only in Matt 2:18, in a quotation of LXX Jer 38:15.

In 2 Cor 4:13, Paul quotes LXX Ps 115:1 (MT 116:10). It will be argued below that here, in the context of the aftermath of the “Affliction in Asia”, Paul identifies with the psalmist, who also suffered a near-death experience, and also attributes his survival to divine intervention. Psalm 116:7-8 reads

Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears (עֵינַי מִן-דְּמְעָה), my feet from stumbling

Two observations may be made. First, though the term ἄνεσις is very rare in the LXX version of the Hebrew OT,⁸⁵⁹ Paul’s comment in 2 Cor 2:13, οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου, which is echoed in 7:5, could very well have been evoked by Ps 116:7. Second, it has been argued already that in 2 Cor 6:17 Paul addresses the Corinthians as though they were in exile in Babylon, calling upon them to “come out”. since the expression “my / your eyes from tears” occurs in the MT only in Ps 116:8 and Jer 31:16, and since Jeremiah 31 played such an important role in the apostle’s theology, it is quite possible that, having identified with the psalmist, *gezerah shewah* would have led Paul to interpret Ps 116:8 in terms of Jer 31:16, and hence to identify with Rachel, who in Jeremiah 31 is promised the return from exile of her spiritual children.⁸⁶⁰ Finally, it is significant that Deut 32:19 deals with Yahweh’s rejection of his “sons and daughters” because of their breach of the covenant, while Isa 43:6, which is cited in 2 Cor 6:18, deals with Yahweh’s acceptance of his “sons and daughters” when they return from exile.⁸⁶¹ As has been noted already, Deut 32:17-22 plays a key role in 1 Cor 10:14-22, which itself is echoed in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁹ Only 2 Chron 23:15; Ezra 4:28.

⁸⁶⁰ Perhaps this line of thought could explain the plural form in 1:10, ἐκ τηλικούτων θανάτων (p⁴⁶, 630 1739^{v.1}. pc d (lat) sy^{p. h} goth Ambst), which is the more difficult reading and could well be original. Paul feared not only his own death, but the deaths of his converts in Corinth.

⁸⁶¹ The only other reference to the *sons and daughters* of Yahweh in the MT is in Ezek 16:20, an accusation that the people have sacrificed to idols the sons and daughters which they bore to Yahweh.

⁸⁶² Thus Olley (1998) is right to call attention to a connection between 2 Cor 6:18 and Deut 32:19; however, Deut 32:19 is not a source for the catena; see above, 209 n 687.

Excursus: the Nature of the Affliction

The nature of the *θλίψις* is debated. Suggestions have included the following:

1. The danger described in 1 Cor 15:32a, "if I fought with wild beasts".⁸⁶³
2. The shipwreck followed by a night and a day in the sea mentioned in 2 Cor 11:25.⁸⁶⁴
3. An experience of the thirty-nine lashes, imposed by Jewish authorities (2 Cor 11:24).⁸⁶⁵
4. Mob violence during a period of civil disorder in Ephesus or elsewhere in Asia.⁸⁶⁶
5. A period of imprisonment and a death sentence passed on him by the civil courts.⁸⁶⁷
6. The psychological anguish caused by the Corinthian rebellion.⁸⁶⁸
7. The onset of a severe illness.⁸⁶⁹

The first suggestion is untenable, whether it is interpreted literally or figuratively.⁸⁷⁰

The second may also be ruled out, since it is hard to see how the experience of shipwreck and being adrift in the open sea could be described as taking place in Asia.⁸⁷¹ Suggestions 3, 4 and 5 may probably be ruled out also, for it seems most unlikely that Paul would have interpreted persecution arising from opposition to his evangelistic ministry, however severe, as a manifestation of the curse sanctions of the covenant. Option 6 is also unlikely, for anxiety alone would not have endangered Paul's life.⁸⁷² This leaves only one suggestion: a severe illness. This would cohere

⁸⁶³ First proposed by Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis* 48.12; cited by Harris 1970:409.

⁸⁶⁴ Hofmann 1866; cited by Hudson McLean 1996:189.

⁸⁶⁵ Duncan 1957:215.

⁸⁶⁶ E.g. Georgi 1986:18; Gnllka 1968b:22-23; Thrall 1994:116-17; Barnett 1997:83-84.

⁸⁶⁷ E.g. Deissmann 1903:257.

⁸⁶⁸ Stanley 1955:19 (cited by Hudson McLean 1996:189); Rendall 1909:49; Lane 1982:20-21; Talbert 1987:135.

⁸⁶⁹ Allo 1937:18; Barrett 1973:64; Harvey 1996:21.

⁸⁷⁰ See Harris 1970:409-13; one of his arguments depends upon a reconstruction of Paul's travels which is opposed in this work; nevertheless, the remaining points are sufficient.

⁸⁷¹ Hudson McLean 1996:189.

⁸⁷² Allo 1937:16. Manson thinks it "possible - not more" that the affliction was a serious illness induced by the strain of this period (Manson 1962:217 n 1).

well with a possible allusion in 1:10 to LXX Job 33:30, ἐρρύσατο τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου.⁸⁷³ Psalm 69 also points to an illness: Kraus comments,

It becomes apparent that the petitioner is near death. The statements of vv. 26 and 29 clearly indicate that he must be suffering from a severe affliction, a sickness. Thus the slander and the accusations of the enemies (cf. vv 19ff.) must be attributed to the fact that the adversaries of the petitioner have trumped up a cause for his suffering. Why is the deathly sick person smitten by God? ... In the synthetic understanding of life in the ancient world, the causal connection between guilt and suffering operates as a primal religious dogma that conjures up incalculable distresses and conflicts.⁸⁷⁴

If the apostle did indeed suffer a severe illness as he awaited the return of Titus with news of the reception of the Letter of Tears, then it would have been inevitable that he would have interpreted this turn of events as the fulfilment of his fears: the curse sanctions of the covenant had fallen upon him. Paul would have understood himself as guilty, by association, of the sin of Reuben. It has been argued that the Testament Of Reuben was known to Paul, and was very much in his thoughts at this time; Test Reub 1:6-8 reads:

And, see, I admonish you solemnly to-day by the God of heaven not to walk in the ignorance of youth and impurity, to which I gave myself up and defiled my father Jacob's bed. I tell you that he (=God) struck me with a great stroke in my loins for seven months, and if our father Jacob had not prayed for me to the Lord (I would have died) because the Lord wanted to kill me. For I was thirty years old when I wrought the evil thing before the Lord, and for seven months I was ill unto death.⁸⁷⁵

The Testament of Gad also speaks of Gad being divinely punished with a sickness for his hatred of Joseph.⁸⁷⁶ In such circumstances it would be hardly surprising if, for a time, the sick apostle lost all hope, concluding that his letter had failed, that the

⁸⁷³ Harris 1970:418 n 2; ῥύομαι occurs in the LXX with θάνατος also in Ps 32:19; Prov 10:2; 23:14 (Windisch 1924:48), but the language of Job 33:30 is closer. .

⁸⁷⁴ Kraus 1989:60.

⁸⁷⁵ Tr. Hollander and De Jonge:88.

⁸⁷⁶ Test Gad 5:10. For a discussion of the Jewish notion of divine chastisement see Moore 1927:248-56.

Corinthians would not repent, and that he would die. Indeed, it can be asserted with some confidence that the “Affliction in Asia” was in fact an illness.

Despite the textual complexities of 2 Cor 1:10,⁸⁷⁷ the phrase καὶ ἔτι ῥύσεται shows that Paul faced a possible recurrence of the illness,⁸⁷⁸ and he appeals to the Corinthians to support him through their prayers (1:11). Paul returns to this theme at the end of the letter, in 12:21. There he reveals that he is afraid μὴ πάλιν ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώσῃ με ὁ θεός μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς,⁸⁷⁹ and he mourns (πενθήσω) over many who have sinned before and have not repented of the sexual sins which they have practised (12:21). Scholars are divided as to whether πάλιν is to be taken with the genitive absolute, ἐλθόντος,⁸⁸⁰ or with the main verb, ταπεινώσῃ.⁸⁸¹ however, the case for the latter alternative is stronger.⁸⁸²

1. The genitive absolute construction shows that ἐλθόντος μου is parenthetical:⁸⁸³
2. As Plummer notes, “St. Paul often uses ἔρχομαι without πάλιν “when speaking of ‘coming back’ (1:15, 23: 2:3: 8:17: 12:20: 1 Cor 4:18, 19: 11:34: 14:6: 16:2, 5, 10, 11, 12 etc.)”.⁸⁸⁴
3. Πάλιν is emphatic by position, and carries emphasis only if taken with ταπεινώσῃ.⁸⁸⁵ Paul has already emphasised that he is coming again (12:20), and to further emphasise his coming again in 12:21 seems superfluous.⁸⁸⁶

The linguistic arguments are not decisive, but in view of his use of ταπεινός in 7:6, it is likely that Paul here expresses the fear of a recurrence of the experience of divine

⁸⁷⁷ For a discussion of the variants see Thrall 1994:120-22.

⁸⁷⁸ Harris 1970:405 n 1.

⁸⁷⁹ μὴ almost certainly depends on σ φοβοῦμαι, 12:20; μὴ does not begin a question, for this would imply a negative answer, which would be inappropriate in view of the apprehension expressed in 12:20.

Moreover, the parallels μὴ πως... μὴ πως ... μὴ adds emphasis to the passage.(Meyer 1879:492-93.

⁸⁸⁰ Meyer 1879:493; RSV, NEB, NIV.

⁸⁸¹ Plummer 1915:369; Barrett 1973:330; Furnish 1984:562; Martin 1986:464-65.

⁸⁸² Cf. Martin 1986:464-65.

⁸⁸³ Barrett 1973:330.

⁸⁸⁴ Plummer ibid.

⁸⁸⁵ Plummer ibid.

⁸⁸⁶ Bachmann 1918:411, 412.

chastisement to which he refers in 1:8-9 and 7:5. He is preparing the ground for a final and unambiguous warning that on his return to Corinth, he will not hesitate to discipline continuing offenders. He fears that the urgency of such action might be impressed upon him, and on the Corinthians, by a demonstration of the divine displeasure in the presence of the church. This he clearly could not afford to risk: the Corinthian delinquents should therefore be in no doubt that he would act against them without delay.

The verb *πενθέω* is also used in 1 Cor 5:2: the Corinthians should have mourned over the incestuous man, so that (*ἵνα*) the offender would have been expelled from the congregation. Here, in 13:1-10, Paul goes on to make clear that when he is present this will be the fate of any he finds continuing in divisive or sexually immoral behaviour. With the support of the majority (cf. 2:6; 10:6), he will mourn over those who had sinned before and had not repented, and will have them expelled from the fellowship of the church.

2. The Argument of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4

Following Watson, it has been argued that 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 takes up matters raised in the Letter of Tears; Paul aims to convince the Corinthians that he will be their boast, just as they will be his, on the Day of the Lord (2 Cor 1:13). Indeed, it has been proposed that in 3:3 Paul alludes to the Letter of Tears. Even a cursory reading of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 makes clear that Paul is dealing with certain criticisms of his ministry; it will now be argued that the Discourse can be well understood as a reply to certain criticisms made in response to the Letter of Tears. Following the method of Patte, we begin by comparing the themes of the Introduction, 2:14-3:6, and its Conclusion, 6:11-7:4;⁸⁸⁷ the following contrasting parallelisms emerge:

⁸⁸⁷ For a summary of the themes of the Introduction, see above, :202; for the Conclusion, :241.

2:14-3:6

1. Paul's ministry to the Corinthians is motivated by a love for them which has been engraved in his heart by the Spirit. (3:2-3)
2. Paul speaks the word of God in God's presence; he is a true prophet / apostle. (2:17; 3:4)
3. Paul's opponents are false prophets and idolatrous unbelievers who are motivated by financial gain. They seek to lead the Corinthians into idolatry. (2:17; 3:1-3)
4. Paul has been called and equipped by God. His ministry, which is not of the old covenant but of the new, brings life to those who are being saved, though death to those who are perishing. (2:15-16a, 16b; 3:1-3, 5-6)
5. Paul is a true apostle, who makes manifest through his sufferings the presence and power of the crucified Christ. His ministry

6:11-7:4

1. Paul does not condemn the Corinthians, for he is bound to them in Christian fellowship, to die and to live together. (7:3)
2. The Corinthians must listen to Paul's appeal. (6:13bc; 7:2a)
3. The Corinthians' spiritual partnership with the false apostles has harmed them morally, financially, and by involving them in a breach of covenant. (6:12b-13a; 7:2b).
4. Paul's ministry does not "confine" the Corinthians, nor has he harmed them in any way. (6:12a; 7:2b)
5. Paul has spoken boldly to the Corinthians concerning his sufferings; he has great *παρησία* towards them, and has boasted

results in life for those who are
being saved. (2:15-16a; 3:6b)

greatly concerning them. (6:11a;
7:4ab)

6. Paul gives thanks to God, who
leads him as a captive in Christ in
his triumphal procession, making
manifest through him the fragrance
of his knowledge. (2:14)

6. Paul is greatly comforted; in all his
afflictions, his joy abounds.
(7:4cd)

The appeal begun in 5:20-6:2 and supported by the *peristasis* catalogue of 6:4-10 is brought to a conclusion in the Conclusion in 6:14-7:1 in a piece that does not clearly correspond to any particular statements in the Introduction, but which spells out the implications of its second, subtle theme.

This comparison suggests that the theme of 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 is twofold: it concerns Paul's own ministry, and also the ministries of the false apostles. Paul argues that his legitimate new covenant ministry, which is motivated by love, neither "confines" nor harms the Corinthians; indeed, his ministry, which involves both suffering and speaking (or writing), makes manifest to them the crucified Christ, bringing them life. Paul's opponents, however, whose ministries are motivated by greed, are false prophets and unbelievers who have consciously led the Corinthians into idolatry. They must listen to the apostle, God's messenger, and cut off their fellowship with the false apostles, turning away from idolatry and all that is unclean. In making this appeal, the apostle underscores his solidarity with the Corinthians (7:1, 3); indeed, he is ready to die with them, and to live with them.

The first parallelism stands out in that it relates the climax of the Introduction to a parenthesis in the argument of the Conclusion, which itself carries emphasis. The thought of Paul's solidarity with the Corinthians, driven by a love for them which has been engraved in his heart by the Spirit when he founded the church, undergirds the

whole argument of 2:14-7:4. The second parallelism is developed in 5:19-20: Paul makes his appeal as God's ambassador. It will be shown that the argument of the third parallelism is developed particularly in 3:12-15; 4:2-4 and 5:12. The fourth and fifth parallelisms, which are interrelated, draw upon considerable argumentation in the body of the Discourse, as will be shown.

The sixth contrasting parallelism begins with the opening statement of the Discourse, 2:14, which is related to 2:12-13, and concludes with the closing statements of the Discourse, 7:4cd, which is related to 7:6-16. The immediate cause of the apostle's thanksgiving in 2:14, it has been argued, is that through his sufferings, the presence and power of God is made manifest. This thanksgiving is paired with a statement of comfort and joy which, we have argued, is then explained in terms of the good news brought by Titus of the Corinthians' reception of the Letter of Tears. It seems reasonable to suppose that the manifestation through the suffering apostle's ministry of the presence and the power of God, and the comfort and joy afforded him by the success of the Letter of Tears are not unconnected. The sequence of his thought, then, is: Paul's anxiety as he awaits the return of Titus - thanksgiving for the manifestation of the divine presence and power which accompanies his suffering - the argument of the Discourse - expression of comfort and joy - his comfort and joy explained; the Letter of Tears was successful. It will be argued that the Letter of Tears was successful, bringing about the repentance of the Corinthians, precisely because *its reading was accompanied by a manifestation of the divine presence and power.*

The Argument of 2 Cor 3:7-4:15

Hafemann's massive "Paul, Moses and the History of Israel"⁸⁸⁸ has now demonstrated conclusively that 2 Cor 3:7-18 takes up the Exodus narrative, focusing on Exod 34:29-35 and commenting upon this passage *in the light of its context, the literary unit Exodus 32-34*, which begins with the golden calf narrative, and concludes with the second

⁸⁸⁸ Hafemann 1995.

giving of the Law. It is impossible, and unnecessary, within the scope of this study to do justice to every detail of the passage, and to the considerable literature which it has generated.⁸⁸⁹ Our discussion of 2 Cor 3:7-18 will be heavily dependent on Hafemann's thorough and largely convincing analysis, though some significant points of disagreement will be highlighted; of course, our understanding of the rhetorical situation differs radically from his.

Paul argues first that, like the ministry of Moses, his own ministry is in fact accompanied by glory (3:7-11). This point is established in vv 7-8 by means of a *qal wahomer*⁸⁹⁰ argument, and is then supported by further *qal wahomer* arguments in vv 9-11. As Stockhausen points out, "the function of the exegetical arguments present in verses 7, 8, 9 and 11 is to predicate δόξα of the superior member of the pair on the basis of its presence in the inferior."⁸⁹¹ Thus the main point of 3:7-11, as Hafemann has now demonstrated, is stated in 3:8: if the Mosaic ministry of death was accompanied by glory, then even more certainly is the apostle's ministry of the Spirit accompanied by glory.⁸⁹²

Second, continuing his commentary on Exodus 34:29-35, Paul argues that, unlike Moses, he has no need to veil the manifestation of the divine glory which accompanies his own ministry. For as a result of the ministry of the Spirit, far from being "confined" by the Gospel, believers under the new covenant enjoy a freedom (ἐλευθερία; 3:17) denied to the people of the old covenant: they behold (as in a mirror) "with unveiled face" the divine glory, and as a result are being transformed "from glory into glory" (3:12-18). It will be argued, moreover, that in vv 12-15 Paul continues his polemic against the false apostles, insinuating that, like the apostate Israelites of Moses' day,

⁸⁸⁹ Apart from the commentaries, see e.g. Belleville 1991; Dumbrell 1986; Hays 1989; Hofius 1989; Renwick 1991; Stockhausen 1989; Theobald 1982.

⁸⁹⁰ "From the lesser to the greater" (= *a minore ad maius*).

⁸⁹¹ Stockhausen 1989:111.

⁸⁹² Hafemann 1995:255-334.

their hearts are hardened so that they are incapable of recognising and responding appropriately to the divine authority of the Law.

As Thrall points out,

[the argument of 2 Cor 3:7-11] depends for its cogency on the presupposition that what is stated in the protasis is agreed to be true, both by the person advancing the argument and by the one to whom it is directed. Paul, therefore, presupposes the agreement of his readers on two points: first that they knew an exegetical tradition that magnified the glory of Moses; secondly, that the Mosaic covenant was an agency of death and condemnation, by contrast with the Gospel, which brings righteousness and life.⁸⁹³

There are here, in fact, three presuppositions; it has been suggested that Paul shared the first two with his opponents.⁸⁹⁴ The third, that the Gospel Paul preaches brings righteousness and life, he evidently feels able to assume is shared by the Corinthians, though not by the false apostles. For the false apostles, Paul's version of the Gospel was defective, bringing not life but death; for his preaching included the demand for moral purity, and thus restricted the freedom of his converts.

In addition to the presuppositions noted above, the argument of 2 Cor 3:7-11 hinges on the further presupposition that both Paul and his readers were agreed that the glory of Moses face could properly be described as τὴν δόξαν ... τὴν καταργουμένην (3:7). Thrall, who takes this to mean that the glory of Moses' face was "in process of effacement",

⁸⁹³ Thrall 1994:240, citing Theobald 1982:179-80.

⁸⁹⁴ Hafemann argues that Paul's description of Moses' ministry as a "ministry of death" is clearly in tension with his further claim that the Mosaic ministry was accompanied with glory: "If left undefended, those who would resist Paul's letter/Spirit contrast in 3:6c would certainly find in v.7 itself all the ammunition they needed to demonstrate the inconsistency of Paul's position concerning the Law. Either the 'letter kills', in which case its glory must seemingly be denied, or its glorious nature as the very writing of God himself, given within the context of the great Sinai theophany, makes it equally impossible to describe it as a 'ministry of death'" (Hafemann 1995:273-4). But as has been shown, the polemical situation actually enabled Paul to make both assertions without fear of contradiction, for both assertions had been made by his opponents in their critique of the apostle.

nevertheless points out that this cannot be read out of the Exodus narrative;⁸⁹⁵ and that Targums Neofiti and Onkelos, and the Fragment Targum all comment at Deut 34:7 that the splendour of Moses' face was unchanged; moreover, that this was the usual Jewish tradition.⁸⁹⁶ It is conceivable, of course, that Paul, the Corinthians and the false apostles all followed some contrary tradition; but despite the arguments of Belleville,⁸⁹⁷ the evidence for the existence of such traditions is at best weak.⁸⁹⁸

The καταργ- word group is rare outside the NT and its circle of influence:⁸⁹⁹ Within the NT, of the 27 instances of the verb, 25 occur in Paul. The primary source for the meaning of the verb in 2 Cor 3:7-14 is therefore the Pauline Corpus itself. In Paul, as elsewhere, the active form of the verb has the basic sense of "render (something) inactive, ineffectual, powerless, idle; to abolish, set aside (something); bring (something) to an end."⁹⁰⁰ In Paul (aside from 2 Cor 3), as elsewhere, the passive form of the verb has the corresponding senses "to be made ineffective, powerless, idle; to be nullified; to be abolished, brought to an end";⁹⁰¹ but it never has the sense of "the gradual 'fading away' or some aspect of reality."⁹⁰² Hafemann rightly concludes that the divine glory on Moses' face is described in 2 Cor 3:7 not as fading, but as *being rendered ineffectual*, and indeed that this is the basic sense of the verb καταργέω

⁸⁹⁵ "With some degree of ingenuity it is just possible to detect the idea in Exod. 34.34-35: Moses removed the veil when he entered to speak with the Lord, his face shone when he emerged from the tent, and he then put on the veil until he entered the tent once more; hence, it would seem that contact with Yahweh renews the radiance, and one might deduce that it fades when the contact is broken. But the thought is implicit in the narrative only for those determined to see some disparaging element in it"; Thrall 1994:243.

⁸⁹⁶ Thrall 1994:244 n 365, citing McNamara and Kümmel.

⁸⁹⁷ Belleville 1991:24-79.

⁸⁹⁸ See Hafemann 1995:287-301.

⁸⁹⁹ A search in the TLG, restricted to literature which may be dated with certainty to the period second century B.C. to second century A.D., produced only 6 such instances, 4 of which were in the LXX (Hafemann 1995:301-2); the verb occurs in 2 Esdras 4:21, 23; 5:5 (active); 6:8 (passive), in each case of the stopping of the work of rebuilding Jerusalem.

⁹⁰⁰ See Hafemann 1995:301-5; cf. Hanson 1980:14; Hays 1989:134; BAGD. A clear example is Luke 13:7 of the unproductive fig tree, ἵνατί καὶ τὴν γῆν καταργεῖ ("Why should it even *render ineffectual* the soil?")

⁹⁰¹ Hafemann 1995:305-9; he discusses all the Pauline instances of καταργέω in the passive: 1 Cor 2:6; 13:8 (x2), 8; 15:26 (cf. 15:24); Rom 4:14 (cf. 4:16); 6:16; Gal 5:11, and also cites (p 305 n 157) 2 Esdras 6:8; *Anonymis in Aristotelis* 163.17 (f.51v.29); Athenaeus *De Machinis* 4.6.

⁹⁰² Hafemann 1995:309.

throughout 2 Cor 3:7-14. The Israelites were unable to gaze on Moses' face when he descended from the mountain because of the glory of his face, "*which was being rendered inoperative (with special regard to the effects of such an action)*"⁹⁰³ (τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην). From this tradition Paul makes a deduction: if the Mosaic ministry of death was accompanied by glory, how much more certainly (πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον) is his own ministry of the Spirit accompanied by glory (3:8).

This point is reinforced by further *qal wahomer* arguments in vv 9-10 and v 11.⁹⁰⁴ As Hafemann points out, the structural parallel between 3:7, 9 and 11 is disrupted by two clauses intruded into the argument of 3:7; their location is indicated by asterisks (*):⁹⁰⁵

The basis of the comparison:

| | | | | |
|------|------------------|--------------------|---------|-------------|
| v.7 | εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία | τοῦ θανάτου ἐν (*) | ἐγενήθη | ἐν δόξῃ (*) |
| v.9 | εἰ τῇ διακονίᾳ | τῆς κατακρίσεως | | δόξα |
| v.11 | εἰ τὸ ... | καταργούμενον | | διὰ δόξης |

The comparison itself:

| | | | | | |
|------|----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|---------|
| v.8 | πῶς ... μᾶλλον | ἡ διακονία | τοῦ πνεύματος | ἔσται | ἐν δόξῃ |
| v.9 | πολλῷ μᾶλλον | ἡ διακονία | τῆς δικαιοσύνης | περισσεύει | δόξῃ |
| v.11 | πολλῷ μᾶλλον | τὸ ... | μένον | | ἐν δόξῃ |

Hafemann rightly emphasises that the intruding clauses, ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις and ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως διὰ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην, "call attention to themselves as the crux upon which the rest of the argument rests."⁹⁰⁶ However, his mis-reading of the

⁹⁰³ Ibid.:310.
⁹⁰⁴ Ibid. :313-34.
⁹⁰⁵ The following arrangement of the text is taken from Hafemann 1995:275.
⁹⁰⁶ Ibid.

rhetorical situation leads to some unnecessary complications in his reading of 3:7-11.⁹⁰⁷ As Hafemann himself demonstrates, the arguments of 3:7-11 all depend on the presupposition of the inauguration in Christ of the new age of the new covenant: "Throughout 3:7-11 this perspective is simply repeated without further development in [Paul's] description of his ministry as a 'ministry of the Spirit' (3:8), 'of righteousness' (3:9), 'of surpassing glory' (3:10), and as 'that which remains' (3:11)." ⁹⁰⁸ The point Paul is emphasising here is that under the old covenant the Law was engraved not in "hearts of flesh", but on stone tablets (cf. 3:3, 6), with the result that the Israelites were unable to gaze upon the accompanying manifestation of the divine glory which was being rendered ineffectual, due to the hardness of their "hearts of stone". The inability of the Israelites to gaze upon the glory of Moses' face was due, not to the radiance being too brilliant to look upon,⁹⁰⁹ but to their spiritual condition. Within the context of LXX Exod 32-34 the glory of Moses' face "can be nothing less than the mediation of the glory of God as the manifestation of YHWH's presence".⁹¹⁰ Following the great Sinai theophany (Exod 19:16-24:17), their sin with the golden calf, and Yahweh's statement that if present among the people he might destroy them (33:3), they were afraid of his presence (Exod 34:30), and hence they were unable to gaze continually (ἀτενίσσαι) on the divine glory. Indeed, the result of the Mosaic ministry of mediating God's presence among his stiff-necked people was ultimately their death; hence, Paul's description, ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου.⁹¹¹

⁹⁰⁷ Hafemann argues that Paul must defend his seemingly contradictory presuppositions that the Mosaic ministry was both accompanied by glory *and* a ministry of death. His solution is to argue that though the Mosaic ministry was accompanied by the manifestation of the glory of God, the purpose of that ministry was the condemnation and destruction of Israel. In the context of Exodus 32-34, continuous exposure to even the mediated divine glory of Moses' face would have destroyed stiff-necked Israel. As an act of mercy, Moses therefore wore the veil (except when he was addressing the people as covenant mediator); hence the implied subject of the passive participle in 3:7 is Moses' veil (1995:310-3.). Once it is realised that Paul has no need to defend the juxtaposition of these presuppositions, however, it becomes much simpler to assume that Paul understood the purpose of the manifestation of the divine glory in the Mosaic ministry, as in the ministry of the new covenant, to be the salvation of Israel, that is, their transformation into the divine image. The implied subject of καταργουμένην 3:7), that which was rendering the manifestation of the divine glory ineffectual, is then the hardness of the people's hearts. This made explicit in 3:13.

⁹⁰⁸ Hafemann 1995:334.

⁹⁰⁹ Against e.g. Stockhausen 1989:126 n 66.

⁹¹⁰ Hafemann 1995:279; see especially:246-49; 279-81.

⁹¹¹ Hafemann 1995.:284-83; cf. 1 Cor 10:5.

In 3:9, Paul argues simply that if the ministry of Moses, which results in condemnation, is glorious, then much more certainly is the ministry of the new covenant, which results in righteousness, accompanied by glory.⁹¹² The meaning of 3:10 is well brought out in the following paraphrase:

10b: *Because* of the “surpassing glory” of the new covenant ministry ... (i.e. because God’s purpose and its results in the new covenant are a fulfilment of his ultimate purpose in redemptive history and in that sense greater than what has been accomplished thus far in the old covenant),

10a: *therefore* that which was *formerly* the vehicle of the revelation of God’s glory (τὸ δεδοξασμένον, i.e. the old covenant) is indeed (καί) in this respect (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει) no longer the means through which God is revealing his glory.⁹¹³

The neuter participle τὸ δεδοξασμένον, like those of 3:11 (τὸ καταργούμενον, τὸ μένον) and 3:13 (τοῦ καταργουμένου), is “abstract” or “collective”, indicating a reference to the ministry of the old covenant as a whole.⁹¹⁴ The Mosaic ministry, which is being rendered ineffectual (τὸ καταργούμενον), is contrasted in v 11 with the ministry of the new covenant, which remains (τὸ μένον), that is, has superseded the old covenant as the locus of the manifestation of God’s glory to his people.⁹¹⁵

⁹¹² Hafemann comments, “Paul’s point in 2 Cor 3:9a in the genitive of reference τῆς κατακρίσεως is ... that Moses’ ministry as pictured in Exod. 34:29-35 embodied the declaration of YHWH’s sentence of judgement upon Israel as manifested in the fact that Moses veiled himself” (Hafemann 1995:318). Hence, he maintains, Paul argues on the basis of the respective theological purposes of the two ministries: “If the ministry the purpose of which is to bring condemnation is accompanied by glory, how much more is the ministry the purpose of which is to bring righteousness accompanied by glory”. However, the genitive is much more likely to be objective: “a ministry that produces condemnation” (Thrall 1994:249 n 200), for as Hafemann himself recognises, 2 Cor 3:7-11 as a whole is concerned not with the purpose of ministries, but with their results. “Whereas in 3:7-11 Paul based his comparison between the ministries of the old and new covenants upon their different *results*, in 3:13 he bases his comparison on the corresponding difference in the *goals* of the two ministries.” (Hafemann 1995:353, emphasis his). He also notes the result clause in 3:7b (ὥστε + infin.), and the corresponding purpose clause in 3:13b (πρὸς τὸ + infin.); for the latter, see Belleville 1991:200 (ibid.).

⁹¹³ Ibid. :325.

⁹¹⁴ Hafemann 1995:323; similarly Hays 1989:134-5.

⁹¹⁵ Cf. Jer 23:7-8; Gal 3:25-27.

Thus, the point of 3:7-11 is not simply that, like the ministry of Moses, Paul's ministry is accompanied by glory; rather, the point is that the glory which accompanies Paul's ministry surpasses that of Moses, in that the manifestation of the divine glory which accompanies Paul's new covenant ministry is effectual, producing in believers righteousness and life, whereas the manifestation of the same glory in Moses' old covenant ministry was being rendered ineffectual, and produced only condemnation and death. Paul then makes a deduction (3:12, οὖν): "Therefore having this hope, we are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing upon τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου."⁹¹⁶ Hafemann points out the following structural parallel between 3:7b and 3:13b:

| | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 3:7ba | ὥστε | μὴ δύνασθαι | ἀτενίσαι | τοὺς υἱοὺς ἰσραὴλ |
| 3:13ba | πρὸς τὸ | μὴ | ἀτενίσαι | τοὺς υἱοὺς ἰσραὴλ |
| 3:7bb | εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως ... | | τὴν καταργουμένην | |
| 3:13bb | εἰς τὸ τέλος | | τοῦ καταργουμένου | |

As he correctly observes, "the parallel between 3:7b and 13b makes it clear that here too the passive meaning of καταργέω conveys the action of being rendered inoperative or ineffective."⁹¹⁷ Moreover, the parallel between τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως and τὸ τέλος justifies the conclusion that

the specific denotation of τὸ τέλος in v. 13 is "the end" in the sense of "the outcome", "consequence", or "result" of a prior action, and its referent is not to Christ, but to the function of the old covenant in reference to the glory on the face of Moses.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁶ The precise meaning of the phrase τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου has been debated extensively; see e.g. Thrall 1994:256-61, and the literature cited there.
⁹¹⁷ Hafemann 1995:355.
⁹¹⁸ Hafemann 1995:357-8.

In Hafemann's view, "the function of the old covenant in reference to the glory on the face of Moses" is, ultimately, to bring about the condemnation and destruction of Israel. Thus Moses wore the veil to prevent the Israelites from gazing upon their own destruction. However, as has been mentioned already and as Hafemann himself points out, the original intent of the Sinai covenant was "that God would dwell in the midst of his people (Exod. 19:5f; 24:9f; 25:8; 29:45f; cf. Lev. 26:9, 11-13)." ⁹¹⁹ This purpose was in fact fulfilled, despite the sin with the golden calf, first through the glory on Moses' face, and later in the divine occupation of the Tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38). In the context of Exod 32-34, the presence of God among the people, made manifest in the glory of Moses' face was itself the τέλος of the old covenant, in the sense of its *culmination*. ⁹²⁰

The sense of 2 Cor 3:12-13 now begins to emerge. Unlike Moses, Paul does not veil the divine glory which accompanies his own ministry, but is very bold (πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ χρώμεθα). The reason for this boldness follows from the argument of 3:7-11: "Having this hope" (ἔχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα) he conducts his ministry with much παρρησία. The glory which accompanies his ministry brings to believers not condemnation and death, but righteousness and life. *Therefore he does need to wear a veil, as Moses did.*

Though in secular Greek the term παρρησία and the cognate verb παρρησιάζομαι expressed freedom of speech, in LXX Ps 93:1 παρρησιάζεσθαι renders עֲפֹץ Hiphil, "to shine forth", "to appear in brightness", of Yahweh's self-manifestation. ⁹²¹ Of the use of the verb in the LXX, Schlier concludes that in some circumstances the verb

⁹¹⁹ Hafemann 1995:226.

⁹²⁰ The sense "summit", "culmination", "climax" is very common in the Hellenistic literature of Paul's day, and has been proposed by Badenas (1985:75) as the sense in 2 Cor 3:13. However, Badenas assumes that the Moses' glory was "fading".

⁹²¹ The sense of עֲפֹץ is clear from Ps 50:1-3, where it is "a term for the radiant epiphany of the God who speaks out of His silence" (Schlier TDNT 5:877).

παρρησιάζεσθαι could be chosen because “it contains within it the two aspects of appearing or manifestation ... and speech or word.”⁹²² In view of 2:17 and 3:4, the παρρησία Paul speaks of in 3:12, though before men, is the παρρησία of one who stands in God’s presence. The παρρησία of the righteous who stand before God at the final judgement is described in Wis 5:1: “Then shall the righteous man (ὁ δίκαιος) stand in great boldness (ἐν παρρησίᾳ πολλῇ) before the face of such as have afflicted him, and them that make his labours of no account.” As Schlier points out, “this free standing before God is manifested in the δόξα of him who stands therein.”⁹²³ Hafemann rightly remarks,

In the same way, since Paul is confident that the righteousness of God is being revealed in his Gospel, he is *already* exercising the boldness that characterizes the righteous at the final judgement in proleptic anticipation of the eschatological consummation. Moreover, for Paul, as in Wis. 4:20-5:7, the evidence of this righteousness is the fulfilment of the Law, now brought about, however, by the power of the Spirit inaugurated by Christ ...⁹²⁴

It has been argued that in contrasting his opponents’ “hearts of stone” with his own “heart of flesh” in 2 Cor 3:3, Paul alludes to his love for the Corinthians which led him, in fulfilment of the Law of love, to suffer on their behalf in his handling of the recent crisis. As Schlier points out, in the LXX, “the presupposition of παρρησία is “righteousness”. The δίκαιος, not the ἀσεβής [“godless”], has it.”⁹²⁵ But if παρρησία is the lot of the righteous, the lot of the ungodly is αἰσχύνη, “shame”. For example, LXX Prov 13:5.

λόγον ἄδικον μισεῖ δίκαιος
ἀσεβής δὲ ἰσχύνεται καὶ οὐχ ἔξει παρρησίαν

A righteous man hates an unjust word:

⁹²² Schlier *ibid.*

⁹²³ Schlier TDNT 5:876.

⁹²⁴ Hafemann 1995:342.

⁹²⁵ Schlier TDNT 5:876.

but an ungodly man is ashamed and will have no παρρησία.⁹²⁶

This is of particular interest, since as Van Unnik points out,

In the Eastern world of the N.T. time there was a widespread tendency to go about bare-headed ... That a certain symbolic value was attached to this is evident in a question to R. Joshua (Gen. Rabbah 17): "Why does a man go bare-headed while a woman goes out with her head covered?" The answer is, "Because she is as someone who has done evil, and is ashamed before people."⁹²⁷

I suggest that in 3:12-13, Paul subtly attacks his opponents, contrasting his own παρρησία with their shame. As Hafemann points out, in vv 12-13, Paul compares his ministry with that of Moses in terms which bear a striking resemblance to the language of Test Reub 4:2-3.⁹²⁸ Following his sin with Bilhah, Reuben says,

Until my father's death I had no boldness to look Jacob in the face (οὐχ εἶχον παρρησίαν ἀτενίσαι εἰς πρόσωπον Ἰακώβ) or to speak to any of my brothers because of the reproach. Even until now my conscience (ἡ συνειδησίς μου) presses me hard on account of my sin.⁹²⁹

Given his dependence elsewhere on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and in particular on the Testament of Reuben, it is not unlikely that Paul here intentionally

⁹²⁶ Hafemann points out 4 Ezra 7:75-101, which throws considerable light on the development of the tradition:

Here too the wicked and righteous are characterized by their respective attitudes and actions with regard to the Law (cf. 7:79, 81, 89, 94). Moreover, the worst of the seven judgements to befall the wicked is that they will "be consumed with shame" and "wither with fear at seeing the glory of the Most High before whom they sinned while they were alive, and before whom they are to be judged in the last times" (4 Ezra 7:87). In contrast the righteous "shall see with great joy the glory of him who receives them" as a result of having kept "the Law of the Lawgiver perfectly" (7:89, 91; cf. v. 94f. and 4 Ezra 3:20; 9:32). Hence instead of shame and fear, the seventh and greatest reward for the righteous is that "they shall rejoice with boldness, and be confident without confusion, and shall be glad without fear, for they hasten to behold the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified. (Hafemann 1995:342-343)

⁹²⁷ Van Unnik 1980:301.

⁹²⁸ Hafemann 1995:340 n 19.

⁹²⁹ Tr. Hollander and De Jonge 1985:97.

echoes Test Reub 4:2-3. It has been proposed already that in the Letter of Tears, Paul identified metaphorically the sin of the incestuous man, with which the false apostles had become associated, with the worship of the golden calf, and that this discussion is echoed in 2 Cor 3:3. In the present context, a commentary upon Exod 34:29-35, the identification of the sin with the golden calf with the sin of Reuben would then be entirely natural. The following comparison may therefore be implied: Just as Reuben could not gaze on the face of his father because of his sin with Bilhah, so the apostate Israelites, whom Paul takes as a paradigm for the false apostles, could not gaze upon the glory of Moses' face because of their sin with the golden calf. Paul, on the other hand, behaves towards the Corinthians with πολλή παρρησία, not veiling his face as Moses was forced to do. Thus Paul's παρρησία, which follows from his righteousness and the transforming power of his ministry of the Spirit, is contrasted with his opponents' shame, which follows from their wickedness as manifested in their sin with the golden calf (= their participation in the sin of Reuben).⁹³⁰

Furnish points out that the verb χράομαι appears also in 2 Cor 1:17,⁹³¹ and rightly suggests that in 3:12-13 Paul still has in mind his defence of his changing travel plans.⁹³² Here Paul is still defending the Letter of Tears. In cancelling the planned visit, he did not act with ἐλαφρία (1:17), but with παρρησία. Through the Letter of Tears he made manifest to the Corinthians the glory of God. His boldness in dealing with the crisis was justified because his ministry does not kill, but makes alive. In dealing with

⁹³⁰ It is also worth noting that Paul begins the body of his letter with the claim that *his* conscience is clear (1:12); Hafemann draws attention to the presence of the term συνειδησίς 2 Cor 1:12 and in Test Reub 4:4; loc. cit., remarking that the text is of "special interest". Παρρησία is a synonym of ἀπλότης, and in Test Reub 4:1 Reuben exhorts his children to walk ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας, ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου, suggesting a further link between 2 Cor 1:12, 4:2, and Test Reub 4:1-3. In an apparently widespread Jewish tradition, the theme of the ἀπλότης of Adam before the Fall is contrasted with his πανουργία after the Fall (Amstutz 1968:49-50; cited by Thrall 1976:371). Paul emphasises that he speaks in Christ (the Last Adam; cf. 2:17), whereas his opponents are unbelievers (they are in the first Adam; cf. 2 Cor 4:3-4), who pervert the word of God (4:2); and in 2 Cor 4:2 Paul describes his opponents' shameful behaviour in terms of πανουργία: ἀλλὰ ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ .. Since Adam Christology is present in 1 Cor 15:45 (Thrall *ibid.*), and perhaps in 4:4, 6 (Scroggs 1966:96-102), it is quite possible that Paul is dependent here on this tradition.

⁹³¹ The only other occurrence of the verb in 2 Corinthians is in 13:10.

⁹³² Furnish 1984:230.

the Corinthians, he is able openly to manifest the glory of God, and this manifestation results in righteousness and life.

A connection in the apostle's mind between his *παρρησία* towards the Corinthians and the Letter of Tears is confirmed by his use of the term in 7:4a; for, as has already been noted, his comfort and joy in 7:4cd, which he links with his *παρρησία* towards the Corinthians, is the result of the Corinthians' positive response to the Letter of Tears.⁹³³ He was able, in the Letter of Tears, to manifest "with unveiled face", that is, with *παρρησία*, the glory of God, in the confidence that the outcome for the Corinthians would be not death, but life (cf. 2 Cor 7:9-10, 14). He has spoken boldly to the Corinthians concerning his sufferings (6:11a, the chiasmic partner of 7:4ab); thus 7:4b is epexegetic of 7:4a; he has boasted greatly concerning his sufferings for the Corinthians (7:4b), through which, by means of the Letter, he has made manifest to them the glory of God.

In an attempt to explain the connection of thought between 2 Cor 3:13 and 3:14-15, it has been postulated that Paul is responding to discussion in Corinth of the rejection of his gospel by the majority of the Jews. Thrall, for example, comments:

Paul turns here to the phenomenon of unbelief, on the part of the Israelites in the past and of his Jewish contemporaries in the present. This is still related to the defence of his own *διακονία*, however. Jewish failure to respond to the Christian gospel, and particularly in Corinth, to Paul's preaching of it, may have begun to worry some of the Corinthian Christians.⁹³⁴

But it is more likely that in vv 14-15 Paul is continuing his subtle polemic against his Jewish opponents, the false apostles. Having stated that, unlike Moses, he does not need to "veil" the manifestation in his ministry of the glory of God, Paul adds, *ἀλλὰ ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν* ("But their minds were hardened"). The contrast is between

⁹³³ The term *παρρησία* occurs in 2 Corinthians only in 3:12 and 7:4.

⁹³⁴ Thrall 1994:261. Hafemann goes further: "Israel's rejection of his Gospel is no argument against the validity of Paul's message, or the legitimacy of his ministry as a revelation of the glory of God, as his opponents apparently maintained." (Hafemann 1995:367-8; he cites Hickling 1975:393).

Paul's boldness and the fact that the minds of the Israelites were hardened.⁹³⁵ Because their minds were hardened; the τέλος of the old covenant, the glory of God made manifest among his people, was being rendered ineffectual, and Moses had to wear a veil. Paul continues, ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον, ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται. "For until this present day the same veil remains unlifted when the old covenant is read,⁹³⁶ for it is abolished in Christ."⁹³⁷ Hafemann rightly argues that "this same veil" is a metonymy of effect for cause:

Paul's point is that, although "the old covenant" is read weekly in the synagogue, "until this very day" Israel remains cut off from the revelation of the glory of God ... because of her 'stiff-necked' rebellion. Just as the revelation of the Law within the Sinai covenant did not bring about Israel's redemption in Moses' day, so too it continues to "kill" rather than make alive in Paul's. For then, as now, the revelation of the glory / presence of God in the Law encounters a people who have been hardened to its salvific power.⁹³⁸

By means of this metonymy, a rhetorical master stroke, Paul achieves the key move in his argument. Under the old covenant the veil of hard-heartedness remains, because "the letter" has no power to remove the "heart of stone". The contrast μένει / καταργεῖται recalls the contrast τὸ καταργούμενον / τὸ μένον of 3:11, suggesting that the old covenant ministry is now (and forever) being rendered ineffectual (hence, in effect, "abolished"; 3:11) by the veil which "remains" unlifted (3:13). But in Christ the veil is removed by the power of the Spirit;⁹³⁹ the new covenant ministry "remains" (3:11), for in Christ the veil of hard-heartedness is (forever) "rendered ineffectual" (hence, "abolished"). In Christ, in effect, "the abolisher is abolished."

⁹³⁵ Hafemann 1995:365.

⁹³⁶ As the close parallel between 3:14b and 3:15 shows, here ἐπὶ + dat.; not spatial (the position of the veil - it is not "over" the old covenant), but temporal; cf. Phil 1:3, ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνηίᾳ ὑμῶν; BDF 235(2); Hafemann 1995:370-71; 382.

⁹³⁷ For a discussion of the syntactical and exegetical options, see Thrall 1994:264-66.

⁹³⁸ Hafemann 1995:372-3.

⁹³⁹ Ibid.:381.

With some repetition of 3:14b, in 3:15 Paul again underscores that whenever Moses (= the Law) is read, a veil remains to this day over "their hearts". Given 3:3, in which he associated the false apostles with Israel of the old covenant, contrasting their hearts of stone with his own heart of flesh, and the polemic of 3:12-13, it is clear that in 3:14-15 they are again in Paul's sights. Because of the hardness of their hearts they are blind to the manifestation of the glory of God which accompanies the reading of the Law, whether it is read in the synagogue or the church. It is for this reason that they fail to see the gravity of the commandments.

According to Exod 34:34, whenever (ἡνίκα δ' ἄν; cf. 2 Cor 3:15)⁹⁴⁰ Moses entered the Tent of Meeting, he removed his veil. Hence in 3:16, "whenever (ἡνίκα δὲ ἐάν) he turns to the Lord, the veil is removed", Paul "establishes a contrast between Israel's old covenant experience (vv. 14-15), and Moses' experience in the tent of meeting as a *type* of the one whose heart has been changed by the power of the Spirit under the ministry of the new covenant".⁹⁴¹ The typological connection is spelled out in 3:17a, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν: "The Lord is the Spirit."⁹⁴² "The Lord" in 3:16 and in 3:17 is therefore not Christ, but Yahweh.⁹⁴³ In terms of the new covenant, to "turn to the Lord" is to enter into the κοινωνία of the Spirit, which is the privilege of those who are in Christ. For the Spirit "is the essential characteristic and the transforming power of the new covenant."⁹⁴⁴ In the next sentence Paul answers the criticism of his opponents that his Gospel restricts the freedom of believers: οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία; "And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Here ἐλευθερία has a positive sense of freedom *from* the veil (= hard-heartedness), *for* obedience to the Law.⁹⁴⁵ Having

⁹⁴⁰ As Hafemann rightly comments, "since ἡνίκα appears nowhere else in Paul's writings as an adverb of time (or in the NT), and is rare in Hellenistic literature as a whole, it is probable that Paul introduced it in v. 15 in conscious anticipation of the transition to be made in v. 16 on the basis of this OT text." (1995:388).

⁹⁴¹ Hafemann 1995:388.

⁹⁴² The definite article of ὁ κύριος is anaphoric, referring back to 3:16; Hafemann 1995:397-98; cf. Thrall 1994:274. For a discussion of the exegetical possibilities, see Thrall 1994:278-82.

⁹⁴³ For Paul, κύριος means Christ "except when the apostle is quoting Scripture or working closely with a scriptural text" (Furnish 1984:211).

⁹⁴⁴ Thrall 1994:274.

⁹⁴⁵ Hafemann 1995:403-7.

argued that while his opponents, because of the hardness of their hearts, are blind to the manifestation of the glory of God which accompanies the reading of the Law, believers see it, since in Christ the veil is removed through the transforming power of the Spirit (3:14-17a), Paul now declares that in fact believers do enjoy freedom: freedom to obey the Law.⁹⁴⁶

The thought of 3:18 may be summarised in the following paraphrase:

Since the Lord is the Spirit, as demonstrated by the freedom (from the veil) for obedience created by the Spirit (v. 17), "we all", that is, all members of the new covenant community, both Jews and Gentiles, "are being transformed into the same image" (μεταμορφούμεθα τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα), that is to say, we are experiencing in a progressive sense this freedom to obey God in Christ in the power of the Spirit, and as a result are being changed into God's own image.⁹⁴⁷

Far from harming or "confining" believers (cf. 2 Cor 6:12a; 7:2b, 9), Paul's new covenant ministry results in their freedom to obey the Law, and hence in their gradual transformation into God's glorious image. This transformation is brought about by "the Lord, who is the Spirit" (καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος).⁹⁴⁸

The function of 3:7-18 in Paul's defence of the Letter of Tears is now clear. Through their reading of the Letter of Tears (cf. the reading of the Law, 3:14-15), Paul had made manifest among the Corinthians the glory of God. The effect of such a manifestation among believers would be their transformation, so that they would become increasingly able and willing to obey the Law. Hence in writing the Letter of Tears Paul could confidently anticipate that they would not be harmed (they would not stubbornly resist the transforming power of Spirit, bringing condemnation upon themselves), but (given

⁹⁴⁶ Gal 4:21-31 is of particular interest; Paul argues that believers are children not of Hagar, the slave-woman (ἡ παιδίσκη) but of Sarah the free-woman (ἡ ἐλευτήρα); the inheritance promised to Abraham's Seed cannot be obtained by means of the Mosaic covenant, but only by the new covenant (though Paul does not mention the term). Those under the old covenant are by implication subject to slavery, but those under the new covenant are free (Gal 5:1a; cf. 5:16); cf. Thrall 1994:275-76.

⁹⁴⁷ Hafemann 1995:407-8.

⁹⁴⁸ For the exegetical options for this phrase see Furnish 1984:216.

their rebellious condition) they would be brought to repentance. Paul's bold decision to send the letter (3:12), though it would cost him severe suffering, was therefore perfectly rational.

Hence in 4:1 he justifies his decision: *διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, καθὼς ἡλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν*. The reference of *διὰ τοῦτο* is backwards, to the whole argument of 3:7-18, and in particular to the transforming power of the Spirit at work among the Corinthians.⁹⁴⁹ The phrase *ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην* parallels the similar phrase in 3:12, *ἔχοντες τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα*, which in turn is grounded upon the argument that Paul's ministry of the Spirit is accompanied by the manifestation of the divine glory, and produces in believers righteousness and life (3:7-11). Paul has "this ministry" as a result of himself "having received mercy"; therefore, though his ministry involves him in suffering (the context of the Discourse as a whole), he does not turn aside from his duty: *οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν*.⁹⁵⁰ In sending the Letter of Tears he acted properly, in the execution of the ministry with which he had been charged. Having himself received mercy (a reference to his conversion),⁹⁵¹ and having been granted a ministry which brings about the moral transformation of believers, he does not turn aside from his duty. With his own faithfulness, Paul contrasts the deceitfulness of the false apostles, who "pervert the word of God", again echoing Jer 23:9-40, as has been shown (4:2; cf. 2:17). If his Gospel is veiled (so that the transforming power of the manifestation of divine glory which accompanies it is rendered ineffectual), it is veiled among those who are perishing (4:3; cf. 2:15-16a), "among whom the god of this age (*ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*) has blinded the minds of those unbelievers", the false apostles, "so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (4:4).

⁹⁴⁹ Contra Thrall 1994:298, who takes the reference as forwards, to *ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην*.

⁹⁵⁰ The verb is rare; there is a comprehensive note in Baumert 1973:318-46. Baumert suggests the sense "resist something", "be reluctant", "be unwilling"; in 4:1, "rebel against a moral obligation" (p 340). The accepted sense "lose heart" (RSV NRSV REB Martin 1986:74) is an assimilation to *ἐκκακέω*, read by C Ψ 0243 Maj (and in 4:16 by C D² 0243 Maj). Cf. Nolland 1993:867: "The verb expresses centrally the idea of coming to a point of failure, but may secondarily take on a coloring from the implied cause of such a failing: despair, weariness, etc." Cf. Spicq 1994:398-99.

⁹⁵¹ Thrall 1994:298; the aorist *ἡλεήθημεν* points to a particular point in the past.

Having so sharply contrasted his own righteousness and faithfulness with the wickedness of the false apostles, Paul wisely remarks that he does not preach himself, but “Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves (δούλους ὑμῶν) because of Jesus.” Though Paul elsewhere describes himself as a slave of Christ,⁹⁵² his description of himself as a slave of the Corinthians is without parallel. Furnish provides the following helpful note:

In Paul’s view, those whom Christ has “set free” are free to “be slaves of one another” through love (Gal. 5:1, 13-14). This is the kind of “slavery” about which he writes in v. 5. It is the kind of apostolic service he will later describe as “spending and being expended” for the Corinthians (12:15 ... It is in fact the opposite of what he will later accuse the false apostles of doing - turning the Corinthians into *their* slaves by exploiting them for their own self-serving goals.⁹⁵³

Once again Paul is alluding to his willingness, in the service of Christ, to suffer for the sake of the Corinthians, in fulfilment of the Law of love. The reason for his enslavement is now given (ὅτι, 4:6): God has “shone in Paul’s heart “with a view to (πρός) that illumination that consists in the knowledge of the glory of God seen in the face of Christ.”⁹⁵⁴ The illumination of Paul’s heart, produced by God, is clearly contrasted with the blindness, produced by “the god of this world”, of the minds of his opponents So Paul completes his devastating comparison of his own ministry with that of the false apostles.⁹⁵⁵

Paul now concedes that he lacks outward splendour; he has “this treasure” (τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον) in an earthen vessel (4:7), a fragile and worthless container, “to show that this surpassing power (ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως) might be from God, and not from us”. “This treasure” is evidently “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the

⁹⁵² Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 4:1, 7:22; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1.

⁹⁵³ Furnish 1984:250.

⁹⁵⁴ Tr. Barrett 1973:134.

⁹⁵⁵ There is an obvious structural parallel between 2 Cor 4:4 and 4:6.

face of Christ” (4:6), which shines forth from the apostle with “surpassing power”, resulting in the transformation of believers “from glory to glory”, though it also brings condemnation upon those who are perishing. Duff argues cogently that in 4:7 Paul takes up once more the epiphany procession imagery introduced in 2:14-15, describing himself as “the vessel holding the sacred objects of the cult, which are, in turn, the bearers of the deity’s power”.⁹⁵⁶

Paul’s ministry involves him in suffering. As an “earthen vessel”, he is constantly in danger of destruction. In all things he is

θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ’ οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,
ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,
διωκόμενοι ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι,
καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι

As is frequently observed, ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι (“being abandoned”) echoes the language of the LXX and is clearly a divine passive;⁹⁵⁷ it is likely therefore that στενοχωρούμενοι, ἐξαπορούμενοι, and ἀπολλύμενοι are also divine passives.⁹⁵⁸ Paul is *not* being crushed, driven to despair, abandoned or destroyed by God. Moreover, as already been shown, θλιβόμεθα in 1:6, like παρακαλούμεθα, is also a divine passive. The terms θλίψις, θλίβω dominate Paul’s language of affliction in 2 Corinthians, occurring a total of twelve times.⁹⁵⁹ Therefore in all likelihood θλιβόμενοι, the first and most important of the participles in this *peristasis* catalogue,⁹⁶⁰ is also a divine passive, and hence also ἀπορούμενοι, διωκόμενοι, καταβαλλόμενοι. Paul’s point is that God is indeed causing him to suffer, but not as an act of judgement intended to bring about his destruction (ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι).

⁹⁵⁶ Duff 1991:88; for examples of this practise see:88 n 40.

⁹⁵⁷ E.g. Thrall 1994:328; Hafemann 1998:250 cites Gen 28:15; Deut 31:6, 8; 1 Chron 28:20; Pss 15:20; 36:25, 28; Sir 2:10.

⁹⁵⁸ Fitzgerald 1988:174.

⁹⁵⁹ Fitzgerald 1988:173.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid.

The verb περιφέρω (4:10) is often found in descriptions of epiphany processions.⁹⁶¹ As Duff points out, the resumption of the processional imagery of 2:14 seems to be confirmed by the following striking structural parallel: (a) a time element: πάντοτε / πάντοτε (b) processional term: θριαμβεύοντι / τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ περιφέροντες (c) processional language related to the apostle: ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ / ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν (d) conjunction: καί / ἵνα (e) theological phrase: the content of the gospel: τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ / ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (f) reference to the manifestation of the gospel through the agency of the apostle: φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν / ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ.⁹⁶² In 4:10

Paul portrays his public sufferings metaphorically with an allusion to an epiphany procession of the ancient world. In such a procession an image of the deity, a cult object, or even a scene from the life of the deity was paraded in front of the worshippers. In such a way the epiphany procession mediated "the power of God" (2 Cor 4:7) to the believer. In this verse Paul describes that which is being carried about as "the dying of Jesus." In other words, the "dying of Jesus" represents the cult object which mediates the epiphany.⁹⁶³

Thus the manifestation of the presence and power of God (the divine δόξα, "the life of Jesus")⁹⁶⁴ which accompanies Paul's ministry is effected by his portrayal through his sufferings of "the putting to death of Jesus". Paul is being handed over to death by God (εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα) for Jesus' sake (διὰ Ἰησοῦν) in order that "the life of Jesus" might be made manifest (φανερωθῇ) in his mortal body (4:11). As he has said already, he is afflicted for the Corinthians' comfort and salvation (ὕπερ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας; 1:6). The point is this: Paul's sufferings bring about a manifestation of the "putting to death of Jesus", and therefore of the glory of God; this

⁹⁶¹ Duff 1991:89 n 42; 1993:169-70 n 44.

⁹⁶² Duff 1991:89.

⁹⁶³ Duff 1991:89.

⁹⁶⁴ "As the resurrected "Lord" (4:5) encountered by believers with "unveiled faces", Christ is not merely reflecting the glory of God as Moses did, he *is* the glory of God. Conversely, it is not Christ, but Paul who mediates God's glory in the new covenant. The comparison throughout 2 Cor. 3:7-18 is not between Moses and Christ as mediators of the glory of God, but between Moses and Paul, with Christ equated with YHWH himself as the glory of God." (Hafemann 1995:415-6).

manifestation of the divine glory results in the moral transformation of the Corinthian believers, which in turn is necessary for their comfort (deliverance from the power of sin), and salvation (transformation into the glorious image of God). So Paul sums up: "So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you" (4:12).

Paul now compares his experience of suffering with that of the Psalmist, quoting LXX Ps 115:1(116:10), ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα ("I believed, therefore I spoke"). Having "the same Spirit of faith"⁹⁶⁵ (τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως) as the Psalmist, Paul also speaks (καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν), a reference to what he has just written.⁹⁶⁶ As has been noted, though his quotation is from the LXX, the apostle almost certainly had in mind the context of the Hebrew Psalm 116 as a whole.⁹⁶⁷ As Hafemann rightly comments,

Paul stands in the long line of the suffering righteous from the past ... The psalmist finds himself in a situation of "death," only to be rescued by the Lord in response to his desperate cry for help (116:1-9). The psalmist's response to God's rescue of him is to fulfil a "vow" of thanksgiving as his "sacrifice of praise." An essential aspect of this praise is the psalmist's conclusion from his experience of suffering and divine rescue that he is indeed God's servant (116:16). Paul's own experience of God's rescuing him from death leads to this same response of praise (2 Cor 1:3, 11; 2:14; 4:8-9, 15) and to the same conviction of his status as God's servant (3:1-6; 4:1-7).⁹⁶⁸

It has been argued already that in 2 Cor 1:3-7 Paul identifies with the psalmist of Psalm 69, and that he interprets his deliverance from death in response to his desperate prayer as a confirmation that his ministry is patterned after that of the Servant of Yahweh of Isa 49:1-13.

⁹⁶⁵ Thrall 1994:338-9. It is possible that the sense is "the Holy Spirit who produces faith"; so e.g. Barrett 1973:142; Hafemann 1995:251.

⁹⁶⁶ Paul uses λαλέω in 1 Cor 9:8; 15:34; 2 Cor 11:17, 23 to refer to something he has just written in, and this is the likely sense here; Murphy O'Connor 1988:546-47.

⁹⁶⁷ Cf. Thrall 1994:340.

⁹⁶⁸ Hafemann 1998:251.

The confidence expressed in 4:13 is grounded in the knowledge that the one who raised Jesus from the dead καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν (4:14). The parallel with the experience of the psalmist, an experience not of actual resurrection from the dead, but of rescue from what seemed to be certain death, suggests that the future ἐγερεῖ is used metaphorically. Nothing is said in 4:14 about the resurrection of the Corinthians;⁹⁶⁹ the point is that “Paul needs to be ‘raised’ because death’ is at work in him, but the Corinthians do not, since ‘life’ is already at work in them.”⁹⁷⁰ The sense of παραστήσει could then be “will make us stand”,⁹⁷¹ with the implied complement “in his presence”.⁹⁷² There is no compelling reason why the sense should be eschatological; cf. 1 Cor 8:8, “Food does not bring us into God’s presence (παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ).”⁹⁷³ Epiphany processions usually ended in the temple of the deity, where the image of the deity or the sacred objects were stored.⁹⁷⁴ Given the processional imagery of 4:10-12, the sense is probably that Paul will stand with the Corinthians in the presence of Christ when he joins them in the assembly, the “temple of God”; cf. 6:16; 1 Cor 3:16-17. A striking parallel is found in 2 Cor 13:4.⁹⁷⁵ As he has just emphasised (12:14; 13:1), “this third time” Paul will certainly come to Corinth. When he comes, though he is weak in Christ, yet the life of Christ will be manifest powerfully among the Corinthians: καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς. It is likely that in 4:14 Paul is also looking ahead to his forthcoming visit: “Given the pressures that were wearing him down and the mortal

⁹⁶⁹ Barnett takes the first person plural ἐγερεῖ to refer to Paul as “representative” of all believers (1997:242-3); but this is unlikely, since in the following clause the first person plural is distinguished from “you”, the Corinthians: καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. He comments (p 241), “It is ‘knowing that’ the God who raised Jesus will raise Paul and other believers.” But significantly, he continues:

As Paul stated earlier, God is the “God who comforts ... who raises the dead” (1:4, 9). Like the psalmist, Paul speaks because he believes in God, and the God in whom he believes rescued Paul from “deadly peril” (1:8-10) ... and delivers him from the sufferings sustained in ministry. (1997:241)

⁹⁷⁰ Murphy O’Connor 1988:548.

⁹⁷¹ Barrett 1973:143.

⁹⁷² Baumert (1973:95) and Murphy O’Connor (1988:549-50) argue that the verb is here equivalent to φανερωθῇ in 4:10, 11.

⁹⁷³ Cited by Martin 1986:90.

⁹⁷⁴ Duff 1993:178-79.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.:548-9.

dangers that he had to survive (4:12a), it is easy to see why he should depict his arrival in Corinth as a 'resurrection'.⁹⁷⁶ This interpretation appears to be confirmed by 4:15:

τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

The ἵνα clause can be constructed in several ways; since each of the verbs can be either transitive or intransitive;⁹⁷⁷ however, word order strongly favours taking περισσεύσῃ with εὐχαριστίαν.⁹⁷⁸ Elsewhere in Paul οἱ πλείονες, when it refers to people, refers to "the majority", or to the main body of a congregation (2 Cor 2:6; 9:2; 1 Cor 10:5; 15:6; Phil 1:14),⁹⁷⁹ and διὰ τῶν πλειόνων probably has the sense "through the agency of the majority."⁹⁸⁰ It is likely therefore that διὰ τῶν πλειόνων belongs to περισσεύσῃ rather than to πλεονάσασα; the concern of the passage is that grace has increased to the Corinthians as a result of τὰ πάντα, "all this", the action of God associated with the Letter of Tears and the "Affliction in Asia", and that this will in due course cause thanksgiving to God. We may therefore translate, "For all this is for you, so that grace having increased, may cause thanksgiving to abound by the agency of the majority, to the glory of God."⁹⁸¹ The apostle is looking ahead to his arrival in Corinth, when thanksgiving for his deliverance will be given by the faithful majority. Thrall objects, following Bachmann, that this construction "leaves πλεονάσασα rather weak in content";⁹⁸² however, in 1:15 Paul states that the purpose of his original travel plan, Plan D, was that δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε. He then begins a defence of his decision

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid.:549.

⁹⁷⁷ The options are clearly set out and discussed by Thrall 1994:345-7; see also Plummer 1915:134-5; Furnish 1984:259-60.

⁹⁷⁸ Windisch 1924:150-1; Furnish 1984:260.

⁹⁷⁹ Barrett 1973:144.

⁹⁸⁰ This sense is paralleled in 2 Cor 2:6, where the offender was disciplined ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων. Moule takes διὰ in a spatial sense, and suggests the translation, "through the increasing numbers" (1953:108); but διὰ + gen. of the person usually indicates agency (BAGD s.v. διὰ A.III.2a; Baumert 1973:108-9; Thrall 1994:346); and as Barrett points out, this would go against the Pauline usage of οἱ πλείονες (1973:144). Thrall objects, "It would be odd, in the present context, to distinguish between the majority of church believers and the rest" (1994:345). On the contrary, as will be shown, it was through the agency of the majority, those disciplined the offender (2:6), that grace has increased.

⁹⁸¹ This construction is adopted by Allo 1937:117; Collange 1972:167-8.

⁹⁸² 1994:345.

to cancel this planned visit, instead sending the Letter of Tears. In this decision he acted not with ἐλαφρία (1:17) but with παρρησία (3:12). The result of this decision is that grace has now increased: ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα. The article will refer to the grace which is operative in the Corinthian community through the agency of the apostle. The purpose of the original travel plan has now been accomplished by means of the Letter of Tears: grace has indeed increased to the Corinthians.

I suggest that underlying the argument of 2 Cor 2:14-4:15 is a causal chain beginning with the apostle's "Affliction in Asia", and ending in thanksgiving to the glory of God: In response to Paul's spiritual solidarity with the Corinthians, expressed in prayer and in the Letter of Tears, God severely afflicted Paul; his suffering resulted in the manifestation of the divine glory as the Letter of Tears was read in Corinth; this manifestation in turn brought about the moral transformation of the Corinthians, and their decision to expel the incestuous man; thus grace increased. The expulsion of the offender cleared both the church and the apostle from guilt by association, and the apostle was granted the χάρισμα of deliverance (cf. 1:11). All this, finally, will result in abundant thanksgiving to the glory of God when Paul arrives in Corinth.

The Argument of 2 Cor 4:16-6:10

For the argument of 4:16-5:10, a few remarks will suffice. In 2 Cor 4:16 Paul repeats the confidence expression of 4:1, with a strong inference from what has just been said: διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν. The preceding argument has shown that he has good reasons for accepting the sufferings that his ministry involves; therefore he does not turn aside. He now argues that, not only do his sufferings bring benefit to others, but also to himself. His argument is grounded upon the tradition that the lost glory of Adam will be restored to the righteous through suffering.⁹⁸³ Though the "outer person" is being destroyed, his "inner person" is being renewed day by day. He goes on to explain that the sufferings of his earthly ministry are a light burden compared with the glory that awaits him at the

⁹⁸³ See Pate 1991. Cf. Rom 8:17.

eschatological consummation, and he discusses his hope of the resurrection body. He even states that he would prefer to be “away from the body and with the Lord” (5:8), underscoring his confidence in the face of death (θαρροῦντες, 5:6; θαρροῦμεν, 5:8). With this hope before him, and in view of the coming judgement, he makes it his aim to please Christ (5:1-10).

From this he makes a further inference: ἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν. The verb πείθω is, according to P. Marshall, “synonymous with rhetoric”;⁹⁸⁴ and “enjoyed a literary and cultural heritage in the Graeco-Roman world which few other words could rival.”⁹⁸⁵ Elsewhere in Paul it occurs only in Gal 1:10 in a similar phrase, “Am I now trying to win the approval of men (ἀνθρώπους πείθω), or of God?” However, in 1 Cor 2:4, he denies preaching ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]; moreover, in 2 Cor 10:10, his weak personal presence is contrasted by his opponents with the strength of his letters. I suggest that, dismayed by the success of the Letter of Tears, Paul’s opponents have accused him of using rhetoric in order to persuade and mislead the Corinthians. He does not deny using his considerable powers of persuasion, but he denies having mislead his readers: “we have been (and are) made manifest before God, and I hope that we have been (and are) made manifest to your consciences” (θεῷ δὲ πεφανερῶμεθα· ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι). Paul has insisted that his ministry is carried out in God’s presence (2:17; 4:2), and that he is mindful that he must appear (φανερωθῆναι) before Christ’s Judgement seat. He expresses the hope that his integrity and apostolic legitimacy have been made manifest to the Corinthians by means of their consciences. He is still defending what he has written in the Letter of Tears, as a comparison with 1:12-13a demonstrates:

For this is our boast, the witness of our conscience, that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially towards you, in the purity and sincerity that

⁹⁸⁴ P. Marshall 1987:331; quoted by Hubbard 1998:50.

⁹⁸⁵ Hubbard *ibid.*

is from God, not by fleshly wisdom (ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ), but by the grace of God. For we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand.⁹⁸⁶

It has been argued that in 1:12-14 Paul begins his defence of the Letter of Tears, and declares his intention to take up issues raised by that letter and complete what he began there. The content of his argument of 2:14-5:10 has now been shown to be a defence of the role of his own suffering in the successful resolution of the recent crisis; it will follow, then, that he made some reference to this in the Letter of Tears. From the outset he denies that what he has written has been "by fleshly wisdom", which is evidently the antithesis of "in the purity and sincerity that is from God", and of "by the grace of God." Given Paul's claim in 2:17 that what he "speaks" (and by implication, writes) derives from his sincerity and moral purity, and his contrast with the evil motivations of his opponents (cf. 4:2), it may be inferred that in 1:12 "by fleshly wisdom" carries the connotation of "with insincere and impure intent". Having concluded his defence, Paul expresses the hope that he has now "been made manifest" to the Corinthians' consciences: that they have now arrived at a true evaluation of his moral and spiritual status, as one who speaks ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ.

Paul then states that the purpose of his argument is not to commend himself again, but "to give you a basis (ἀφορμή) for boasting in us, in order that you might have something to say⁹⁸⁷ to those who boast ἐν προσώπῳ and not in the heart" (5:12). It is widely agreed that τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ is a reference to the same opponents who are alluded to in 2:17; 4:2. As has already been noted, the phrase διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 5:12, recalls καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν, 1:14. Paul is

⁹⁸⁶ A possible connection has already been suggested between 2 Cor 1:12 and Test Reub 4:1 (see above, n 930); Reuben exhorts his children to walk ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας, ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου. It should be noted therefore that the expression φόβος κυρίου occurs in the Pauline Corpus only in 2 Cor 5:11, apart from a citation in Rom 3:18 of LXX Ps 36:2. The expression ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ occurs in 2 Cor 7:1, but it has been argued that 6:14-7:1 is itself dependent upon the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. As the apostle's thought returns to 1:12-14, it is suggested, he also returns to his source, Test Reub 4:1-3. Cf. also on 3:12-13, where Paul again refers to his conduct of the recent crisis; above:277..

⁹⁸⁷ Supplying λέγειν.

indicating that he has now delivered the promise he made there, of enabling the Corinthians to understand in full what they had already understood in part from the Letter of Tears, "that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus."

It has been argued that in the Letter of Tears Paul compared himself with Moses, and his opponents with apostate Jews, worshipping the golden calf. It is to be anticipated, then, that his opponents would not have missed the opportunity presented by this comparison of ridiculing the apostle. For as Furnish points out,

When taken together [1 Cor 4:14; 5:9-11 and 9:15] in and of themselves already begin to suggest that someone or some group in Corinth was trying deliberately to turn Paul's letters to the apostle's own disadvantage. This is confirmed by 2 Cor 10:10-11, where Paul refers to certain persons in Corinth ... who have charged that the letters are not truly representative of his real intentions and capabilities.⁹⁸⁸

I suggest that in 5:12 Paul alludes to the following accusation: "Paul's own poor and feeble appearance contrasts sharply with Moses' fine appearance;⁹⁸⁹ in particular, Paul's comparison of his return to Corinth with Moses' return from Sinai is ridiculous, in view of the glory of Moses' face." The false apostles evidently took the opportunity also to contrast Paul with themselves, boasting of their own fine appearance; Paul has replied by showing that his ministry is indeed accompanied by glory (3:7-11), and by contrasting his opponents "hearts of stone" with his own "heart of flesh", renewed by the power of the Spirit in fulfilment of the promises of the new covenant. He has contrasted the motivation of his own ministry to the Corinthians, a love engraved in his heart by the Spirit, with the selfish and wicked motivations of his opponents (2:16b-3:3:6a; 4:1-2, 15; 5:11). This love has been expressed in his willing endurance of extreme suffering, and the resulting manifestation of the glory of God has transformed the hearts of the Corinthians, producing in them righteousness and life (3:6-13; 16-18;

⁹⁸⁸ Furnish 1984 130.

⁹⁸⁹ E.g. Philo *Vit. Mos.* 1.9, 27, 59; Belleville 1991:31-32. Cf. Thrall 1994:313: "as Jewish critics may have pointed out, [Paul] made a poor showing by comparison with the traditional picture of Moses."

4:7-12). The false apostles are unmoved by his ministry because they are unbelievers, and are on the path to destruction (3:3, 12-15; 4:3-4). Thus in 5:12 Paul is summarising the argument of 2:14-4:15.

In 4:16-5:10 Paul argues that his sufferings are well worth enduring because of the eternal reward that they are producing; and he states unequivocally that he would welcome death (5:7). He carries out his ministry in the knowledge that he must appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ (5:8-10). Since it is introduced by the expression διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν,⁹⁹⁰ it is clear that 2 Cor 4:16-5:10 is not a digression, but functions as part of his defence. He is continuing to give reasons why, despite the suffering involved in his ministry, he does not turn aside from his duty (cf. 4:1). He now defends the rationality of his choice to endure suffering and risk death in the conduct of his ministry. He argues that the ultimate motivation of his ministry is “the fear of God”, (5:8-10), and he takes up this theme in 5:11. It is likely that in the Letter of Tears, Paul stated his intention to stand with the rebellious Corinthians in the face of divine judgement, even if that meant his death; for this would be no more than an open declaration of his true position. Indeed, as will be shown below, this hypothesis is required, if we are adequately to explain his statements that he wrote the letter “in order that you might know the overflowing love which I have for you” (2:4), and that “before God your ardent concern for us might be made manifest” (7:12). I suggest, therefore, that his opponents responded that if Paul really believed that he would suffer severely or even die as a result of his decision to stay away from Corinth, then he must be mad. However, the accusation probably took a more subtle form: “If Paul really believes that he will suffer as he says he will, then he is out of his mind. But in fact he is perfectly rational (σωφροσύνη); he is attempting to persuade you (πείθω) in order to defraud you, and reap a large profit from the Collection.” To this, Paul replies, εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῷ· εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν (5:13).

⁹⁹⁰ The variant reading ἐκκακοῦμεν (C D² Ψ 0243 Maj) is unlikely to be original; see Thrall 1994:348 n 1090.

As is indicated by the connective γάρ, 5:13 explains further the basis for boasting that has been summarised in 5:12. The term ἐξίστημι is interpreted in various ways. Many take the verb to refer to states of religious ecstasy;⁹⁹¹ others to an allusion to the opponents' description of Paul's unpolished and exaggerated style of speaking,⁹⁹² or to his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, regarded as "madness".⁹⁹³ However, the preceding argument has been concerned primarily with the role of the apostle's sufferings in his ministry to the Corinthians. Thus a more persuasive suggestion is that the verb refers to what was perceived by some in Corinth as Paul's religious fanaticism: his willingness to suffer and put his health and safety at risk in the service of God.⁹⁹⁴ However, the verb which Paul chooses to express this perception, ἐξίστημι, may not be the language of his opponents. For though the verb can refer to madness,⁹⁹⁵ as Hubbard points out, "the usual antithesis to σωφρονέω (and cognates) is μαίνομαι (and cognates)."⁹⁹⁶ But in 4:13, in reference to his sufferings, Paul has quoted Ps 116:10; and it has been shown that, looking back at the θλίψεις he describes in 1:8-11, he identifies closely with the experience of the Psalmist. In the LXX version the Psalmist describes his own near-death experience in terms of ἔκστασις: ἐγὼ εἶπα ἐν τῇ ἐκστάσει μου ..." (115:2; "And I said in my ἔκστασις ..."). Here ἔκστασις translates the Hebrew יָפַח, which has the sense "to be in a state of alarm";⁹⁹⁷ hence, "in my fear". It is therefore quite possible that Paul is alluding to LXX Psalm 115:2.⁹⁹⁸ The aorist tense of

⁹⁹¹ E.g. Barrett 1973:166-7; Martin 1986:126-7. A few suggest that Paul was criticised on the grounds that his use of the public display of religious ecstasy to commend himself was offensive (Windisch 1924:179-80), or a sign of madness (Denney 1894:191; cited by Thrall 1994:407 n 1504); others that he had failed to produce such signs (e.g. Furnish 1984:324, Thrall 1994:407, and the majority of recent commentators). Cf. Hubbard's weighty critique of these interpretations, 1998:41-43, 46.

⁹⁹² Prümm 1967:314; Hubbard 1998. Hubbard argues from Paul's use of πείθω in 5:11 that he is concerned in 5:13; in the context of rhetoric, σωφροσύνη has the sense "moderation, good taste and avoidance of excess", so e)/stasis as its antithesis must have in 5:13 the sense of "unpolished and excessive" (p 61). However, though the theme of Paul's spoken (or written) ministry is important in 2 Cor 2:14-5:10, his focus is not on the style of his preaching, but on his motivation, and the content of his message (2:17; 4:2, 5, 13).

⁹⁹³ But (contra Hubbard),

⁹⁹⁴ Plummer 1915:172; Kim 1997:371.

⁹⁹⁵ Schlatter 1987:279-80; Hughes 1962:191-2; Strachan 1935:106.

⁹⁹⁶ BAGD s.v. 2a.

⁹⁹⁷ Hubbard 1998:43.

⁹⁹⁸ BDB s.v.

⁹⁹⁹ So Young and Ford 1987:65.

ἐξέστημεν suggests then a specific reference to this recent affliction in Asia: if he was beside himself with anxiety (cf. 1:8), it was for God (θεῷ); for the endurance of extreme suffering was a necessary part of his service to God. The antithesis of ἔκστασις, understood as extreme anxiety resulting in confusion of mind, is σωφροσύνη, “rationality”.⁹⁹⁹ If Paul is calm and rational in choosing to endure such sufferings (σωφρονοῦμεν), it is for the benefit of the Corinthians (ὑμῖν). He has properly discharged his duty both in enduring suffering and in proclaiming the truth with persuasive argument (cf. v 11).

The next sentence is again strongly bound to the last (γάρ):¹⁰⁰⁰

ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν· ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον·

Paul faithfully carries out his ministry because the love of Christ holds him captive (5:14; συνέχει).¹⁰⁰¹ Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, he is under an obligation to live not for himself, but for the one who died for him (5:14-15). We need not consider in detail the argument of 5:14-21; it is sufficient to note that Paul moves from apologetic to appeal: as Christ’s ambassador (πρεσβεύομεν), he is making an appeal to the Corinthians: “Be reconciled to God” (5:20). The verb πρεσβεύομεν is in the present tense because “the embassy, with its appeal, was in the course of being undertaken through the letter”.¹⁰⁰² As has been shown already, he continues his appeal, identifying himself openly with the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh, and supports his appeal with a further and climactic catalogue of sufferings (6:1-10). This then leads into the Conclusion, 6:11-7:4.

⁹⁹⁹ The antithesis is rare in the extant literature; Hubbard cites Aristotle *Hist An* 6.22.577a; Test Job 35-39.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Contra Thrall 1994:407-8.

¹⁰⁰¹ In the papyrii συνέχω frequently has the meaning “to take or hold captive”; “in most of these cases the verb refers to the arrest and/or subsequent imprisonment of an individual by civil authorities” (Duff 1991:86 n 33; MM s.v.). But Lucian uses the verb of the taking of prisoners of war (*Toxaris* 3; Duff, *ibid.*).

¹⁰⁰² Bash 1997:88.

Conclusion

The Discourse has two principle goals: first, to vindicate the Letter of Tears, and to answer certain accusations which arose in Corinth in response to that letter; second, to persuade the Corinthians to follow through the expulsion of the incestuous man by ending their relationship with the false apostles, and turning aside from the idolatry and sexual immorality which they had encouraged.

The accusations to which the apostle responds in the Discourse may be reconstructed as follows:

1. Paul's own poor and feeble appearance contrasts sharply with Moses' fine appearance, and in particular, Paul's comparison of his return to Corinth with Moses' return from Sinai is ridiculous, in view of the glory of Moses' face.
2. Paul does have this in common with Moses: that he "restricts" or "confines" the Corinthians, depriving them of the freedom (ἐλευθερία) to live to the full.
3. If Paul really believes that he will suffer as he says he will as a result of sending the Letter of Tears, then he is out of his mind.
4. Paul is in fact perfectly rational (σωφροσύνη). He does not believe what he says; rather, he is attempting to deceive the Corinthians in order to defraud them by means of the Collection.

The first point is answered fully in 3:7-11; the second in 3:12-4:15; it is also denied emphatically in 6:12. The third and fourth points surface in 5:13, the third is refuted in 4:16-5:10, and the fourth is explicitly denied in 7:2b.

Paul begins his polemic against the false apostles in 2:15-16a, insinuating that they are ἀπολλύμενοι, and continues this theme in 2:17; 3:3, 12-15; 4:2-4. In 5:14 he begins to prepare the ground for the appeal he makes first in 5:20, "Be reconciled to God", then

in 6:1, “Do not receive the grace of God in vain”, finally, in 6:13c-7:2a he appeals openly to the Corinthians to end their relationship with his rivals.

3. The Argument of 2 Cor 1:12-7:16

As has been noted already, 2 Cor 1:12-7:16 is structured as an arch, with 1:12-14 serving as its Introduction, and 7:13-16 as its Conclusion. There follows material concerning Paul’s travel plans, the Letter of Tears and the offender (A; 1:15-2:11); his anxiety as he awaited the report of Titus and his journey to Macedonia (B; 2:12-13); the central Discourse (C); again his anxiety as he awaited the report of Titus, and his arrival in Macedonia (B’; 7:5); and the resolution of his anxiety: the Letter of Tears has brought about the repentance of the /Corinthians, and the expulsion of the offender (A’: 7:6-12). A comparison of the Introduction and the Conclusion has suggested that the overall theme of the argument concerns the apostle’s handling of the recent crisis: he has acted in such a way that the Corinthians will be able to boast of him, as he will boast of them, on the Day of Lord. As a result of his actions, his boast to Titus that the Corinthians would be obedient in response to the Letter of Tears has proved to be true, just as everything he said in the letter was true.

It has been argued, moreover, that in the Letter of Tears Paul compared himself with Moses on Sinai, and the Corinthians with the Israelites, worshipping the golden calf. Unlike Moses, he was not prepared to return to “the camp” and impose discipline by force. However, it has been argued that, like Moses, he interceded for the Corinthians as their corporate representative (cf. Exod 32:32-33:3). Since he had chosen to stand with the Corinthians in their state of rebellion, rather than first bringing them to order, he was prepared to suffer the effects of the covenantal curses. Paul writes that he wrote the Letter of Tears ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως (2:4), and it is now suggested that the illness which constituted his “Affliction in Asia” had already begun to manifest itself as he was composing the letter, and that he mentioned this. In 1:8-11, he informs them of the extraordinary severity of the affliction as it subsequently developed.

In the Discourse, Paul explains how the afflictions which he suffers in the course of his ministry are accepted by God as a presentation of the pleasing aroma of the crucified Christ (2:15). Thus, in his suffering as a corporate representative of the Corinthians, it may be inferred that his affliction itself had an intercessory role. He goes on to explain that his sufferings also make manifest the crucified Christ to those who are being saved, and to those who are perishing. The effect of this manifestation on those who are being saved is to bring about their gradual transformation into the (moral) image of God. It has been argued, then, that as a result of the apostle's sufferings, the glory of God was made manifest to the Corinthian believers as the Letter of Tears was read, resulting in their repentance and the expulsion of the incestuous man. In the Discourse Paul also attacks the false apostles, who as unbelievers are among those who are perishing. They were unmoved by his letter, and the divine manifestation which accompanied its reading. The Corinthians must dissociate themselves from these wicked people. It remains to consider briefly the argument of A (1:15-2:11), and A' (7:6-12).

The Argument of 2 Cor 1:15-2:11

Having described his original plan to visit Corinth, Plan D (1:15-16), Paul asks (1:17a), τοῦτο οὖν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ ἐχρησάμην; A negative response is anticipated (μήτι). It may be inferred that he is responding to critics who maintain that he should have carried through Plan D. The anaphoric article with ἐλαφρία suggests that they have accused him of behaving irresponsibly in cancelling this plan. He continues (1:17b), ἢ ἃ βουλευόμεαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευόμεαι, ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ;¹⁰⁰³ Exegetically, there is a strong case for giving weight in the ἵνα clause to παρ' ἐμοὶ, and treating the second ναὶ and οὐ as predicates:¹⁰⁰⁴ "so that 'yes' being 'yes' and 'no' being

¹⁰⁰³ The shorter form is read by p⁴⁶ 0243 6 pc Lat. The textual decision is not easy, but it is of little significance for the present purpose.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Young 1986; against Welborn 1995:34 n 2, who describes this construction of the syntax as "forced." On the contrary, since Chrysostom read the text in this way, it would seem to be quite natural (Young

‘no’ rests with me.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Chrysostom interprets Paul’s change of plan as a response to the prompting of the Spirit; Paul is like a slave who has made a promise to his fellow-slaves, but then is unable to carry out his promise, because his master has called him to another task.¹⁰⁰⁶ But as Welborn correctly observes,

is it not improbable that Paul would seek to excuse his change of plan by an appeal to divine over-ruling when a few verses later, in 1:23 and 2:1, he insists that his change of plan was his own considered decision (ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ), and adduces the decision as evidence of his love for the Corinthians?¹⁰⁰⁷

Rather, Paul changed his plan in considered response to a change in circumstances.¹⁰⁰⁸ Ambrosiaster comments:

For the sort of occasion when a spiritual man does not carry out his plan is when he has in mind something more providential for the salvation of someone’s soul. In just this way the apostle did not fulfil what he had intended, in order that the Corinthians would thereby be made better men and women, knowing that he had delayed specifically because he knew that there were some amongst them who had not purified themselves of their sins. He says, ‘So that the decision ‘yes, ‘yes’, ‘no, no’ rests with me.” This means that he has not done anything other than what he knew had to be done, because a beneficial outcome has to be preferred over what is wished for.¹⁰⁰⁹

Paul cancelled his plan to visit Corinth because circumstances had changed. While a worldly man might have kept to his plan, and gone to Corinth to confront the church, enforcing discipline by force, Paul was guided in his decision-making by the Spirit (he acted κατὰ πνεῦμα).¹⁰¹⁰ But in case his critics should reply that if “yes” can become

1986:408, 413-14). The definite articles (τὸ ναὶ, τὸ οὐ) will indicate a specific reference to his changing travel plans, a topic introduced explicitly in 1:15.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Or “so that ‘yes’ and ‘no’ rest with me”, if the shorter reading is accepted.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Text in E. Field 1845:37-8; Young provides a translation, 1986:413-4.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Hence in 1:17 we have an example of ἵνα ‘after unfulfilled wishes’ (LSJ s.v. ἵνα B2a); J. Fairweather, private communication.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Tr. J. Fairweather, as yet unpublished.

¹⁰¹⁰ Young 1986:411-12. For a discussion (and effective demolition) of other interpretations of 1:17, see Welborn 1995:35-40.

“no” in the case of his travel plans, the same could happen in the case of the promises of his Gospel, Paul replies, “God is faithful, for our word to you is not ‘yes’ and ‘no’ (1:18).”¹⁰¹¹ The decision to visit Corinth was the decision of Paul, a mere human; but the Gospel is from God, and so cannot prove false.¹⁰¹² In 1:19-20 Paul develops the absolute reliability of the promises of the Gospel, which are all fulfilled in Christ; and in 1:21-22, he applies these principles to the Corinthian believers and to himself, using a legal metaphor. The underlying thought appears to be that both Paul and the Corinthians have been purchased by God (cf. 1 Cor 6:20), for Christ; therefore the Gospel promises will certainly be fulfilled in them. The one who confirms (βεβαιῶν) both Paul and the Corinthians for Christ (ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστόν) as his property,¹⁰¹³ and has anointed them, is God. He has sealed them (ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς), providing a binding guarantee of purchase, having given a deposit (ἀρραβῶν), the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

The point of 1:19-22 is not simply a continuation of the argument of 1:18, the refutation of any suggestion that Paul’s Gospel, like his travel plans, is unreliable. Paul has just been accused of behaving irresponsibly in cancelling his planned visit to Corinth. His point is that he did not jeopardise thereby his salvation and theirs, for he and they together are guaranteed for Christ by God. Paul goes on to explain the motivation of his cancellation of the planned visit, and the purpose of the Letter of Tears (1:23-2:4). He then alludes to the successful outcome of the Letter, expressing concern that the offender not be punished over-severely, and expressing his forgiveness (2:5-11). His concern not to exaggerate the pain caused by the offender (ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ), reflects the fact that he was, in reality, a pawn in the game; the real power-brokers had been certain members of the Corinthian social élite.

¹⁰¹¹ Cf. Young 1986:414. Note the adversative conjunction (δέ) which introduces v 18.

¹⁰¹² “What he says is this: ‘The promise to come is mine, and I made that promise off my own bat. The Gospel is not mine, it isn’t even human, it’s God’s, and it is impossible for anything from God to be false’ (Young, *ibid.*). Cf. Welborn 1995:37.

¹⁰¹³ Here εἰς + acc. seems to be equivalent to a simple dative (see Moule 1953:69); so e.g. Barrett 1973:78.

The Argument of 2 Cor 7:6-12

As has been shown, Paul sets carefully the central Discourse in the context of his anxiety as he awaited news from Corinth. His anxiety did not cease with the passing of his illness. He travelled to Troas and began a mission there, but could not find peace of mind. He was comforted only when Titus returned with good news (2:12-13; 7:5-6). In the context of this extreme anxiety, Paul explains how his sufferings led to a powerful divine intervention in the hearts of the Corinthians; grace has increased to the Corinthians (4:15); they must not receive this grace in vain (6:1). This divine intervention convinced Paul that his ministry was indeed patterned after that of the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh (6:2).

The Letter of Tears produced in the Corinthians longing, lamentation, and zeal for the apostle (7:7), as they came to understand, if only partially, his solidarity with them in the face of the covenantal discipline brought about by their aberrant behaviour. Paul goes on to say that he does not regret having sent the Letter of Tears - though he did regret it (7:8-9a):

ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι· εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην βλέπω γὰρ ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, νῦν χαίρω, οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν

This passage is syntactically complex, and there are significant textual variants, as follows:

1. p^{46*} vg. omit γάρ and replace βλέπω by βλέπων.
2. p^{46c} B D* it sa Ambst omit γάρ.
3. B has εἰ δέ καὶ μετεμελόμην, βλέπω ὅτι ...

The first variant gives "... even though I did regret it, seeing that the letter in question caused you sorrow, though only for the time being, yet now I rejoice ...".¹⁰¹⁴ But the reason Paul regretted sending the letter was not that he knew that it would grieve the Corinthians; for despite his denial of such an intent in 2:4, he certainly hoped to bring about their repentance, and it is to be expected that such a process would involve them in grief over their sin. He would hardly have regretted grieving them, if this was the only way that he could secure their repentance.¹⁰¹⁵ Hence the βλέπων variant, which is not well attested, may be ruled out.¹⁰¹⁶

The main syntactical issue, then, is the point of attachment of the clause εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην.¹⁰¹⁷ It is unlikely that this clause begins a new sentence; for again, whether or not γάρ is retained, the βλέπω clause, which then forms "an awkward parenthesis" in the middle of a conditional sentence (εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην ... νῦν χαίρω),¹⁰¹⁸ explains that the cause of Paul's past regret was that the letter had grieved the Corinthians, if only for a time.¹⁰¹⁹ The remaining option is to take εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην with what precedes as a second protasis corresponding to the apodosis οὐ μεταμέλομαι, so that a new sentence begins with βλέπω:¹⁰²⁰

Although I grieved you I do not regret it, though I did regret it: for I see that the letter did grieve you, though only briefly. Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief brought about repentance.

¹⁰¹⁴ Hughes 1962:269 n 6; cf. NEB.

¹⁰¹⁵ Against e.g. Barnett 1997:374. Paul's point in 2:4 is that the purpose of his letter was not revenge, but to express his intense love the church.

¹⁰¹⁶ Hughes *ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁷ Cf. The helpful analysis of Thrall 1994:490-91.

¹⁰¹⁸ Thrall *ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁹ Barrett, whose analysis is cited with approval by Furnish (1984:387), comments: "This quite impossible sentence is perhaps best regarded as a compound of a number of sentences, each of which represents part of what Paul wished to say: (a) Though I did regret sending it, I see that it was only for a moment that the letter hurt you. (b) Though I did regret sending it, I see that the letter hurt you in a way that led to repentance. (c) Though I did regret sending it, I now rejoice, because you were hurt only for a moment. (d) Though I did regret sending it, I now rejoice, not because you were hurt, but because you were hurt in a way that led to repentance." (Barrett 1973:209).

¹⁰²⁰ Cf. Thrall 1994:491.

Thrall comments:

The difficulty with [this construction] is, first, the complex conditional sentence in v.8, and secondly, the fact that χαίρω in v. 9a would be asyndetic ... Nevertheless these awkwardnesses are far outweighed by the advantage that we no longer have an odd parenthesis interrupting what ought to be a syntactical unity.¹⁰²¹

Indeed, the asyndeton may well be deliberate, conveying the force of Paul's emotion (cf. 1 Cor 5:7, 10, 13). The particle γάρ, which is evidently original,¹⁰²² introduces the explanation not of εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, which is parenthetical, but of οὐ μεταμέλομαι. He does not now regret sending the letter because it has achieved its purpose: the Corinthians have been grieved. Now he rejoices, not because they were grieved (he does not seek revenge), but because they were grieved εἰς μετάνοιαν. The purpose of the letter was to bring about their repentance.

Why did the apostle regret, though only for a time, the sending of the Letter of Tears? The stakes were enormous: false apostles threatened to destroy his work in Corinth, and he had pinned his hopes entirely on the success of the letter. The simplest and most obvious explanation is that, for a time, he feared that the letter would fail. It has been argued that, through the reading of the Letter of Tears, the glory of God was made manifest to the Corinthians. Paul has emphasised that such a manifestation results in life to those who are being saved, but in death for those who are perishing. The obvious reason for Paul's regret, therefore, is that for a time he feared that the Corinthians, or at least the powerful social élite who had so vigorously resisted him, and many of their clients, were still among "the perishing"; the letter, therefore, far from bringing them to repentance, would result for them in death. This interpretation is confirmed in 7:9b-11. The letter grieved the Corinthians κατὰ θεόν, so that they were

¹⁰²¹ Ibid.

¹⁰²² The textual variants may be explained if it is assumed that εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην was taken as the beginning a fresh conditional sentence. If χαίρω is taken as the beginning of the apodosis, then the βλέπων variant simplifies the sentence, turning the awkward βλέπω parenthesis into a participial clause attached to the protasis. On the other hand, γάρ could have been deleted by a scribe who took βλέπω as the beginning of the apodosis. The δέ of B is an obvious scribal addition. (Thrall *ibid.*).

not harmed in any way by Paul (ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν). The letter had the potential of causing them harm, had it resulted in ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη, “worldly sorrow which leads to death”: but in the event it actually resulted in repentance which leads to salvation (7:10).¹⁰²³ The effect of the manifestation in Corinth of the crucified Christ which resulted from the Letter of Tears was to lead the Corinthians not towards death, but towards life.

The result of the repentance brought about by the Letter of Tears, as we have seen, was that the church was stirred to discipline the incestuous offender (7:11), thereby establishing their innocence in the matter. The suffering which Paul had endured as their corporate representative was necessary for the Corinthians’ salvation (7:9-10), for the manifestation of the divine glory which resulted from those sufferings brought about their repentance. So in 7:10 he returns to another of the themes of 1:3-11: “if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation” (1:6). The letter stirred the Corinthians to action, and they acted decisively to end the crisis, by disciplining the offender. The purpose clause of 7:12 now comes into sharp focus: Paul wrote the Letter of Tears ἕνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ: “in order that *in the presence of God* your σπουδή for us might be made manifest.” That is, the purpose of the letter was that in the presence of God, the Corinthians’ σπουδή for the apostle might be made visible as they took action in the assembly. It is significant that the same term, σπουδή, “ardent concern”, heads the list which describes their motivation in dealing with the offender (7:11). Paul wrote in order to motivate the action which they took. No doubt the anticipated action included prayers of corporate repentance, and of intercession for Paul himself (cf. 2 Cor 1:11). All this was to be motivated by their σπουδή for the apostle, who had placed himself “in the line of fire”, corporately representing them before God. But in acting to save the apostle from further suffering, they would also be saving themselves, in that their repentance was necessary to their eternal salvation.

¹⁰²³ Cf. Thrall 1994:492.

4. Conclusion

It is now clear that 2 Cor 1:12-7:16, read in the light of 2 Cor 1:3-11, may be read as unified and coherent response to the report of Titus concerning the reception of the Letter of Tears. In particular, the series of questions raised earlier¹⁰²⁴ no longer represent valid objections to our reconstruction. Evidence has been offered that in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 Paul does indeed allude to the role of the false apostles in promoting idolatry and sexual immorality in Corinth, and the apostle's statements in 2:4 and 7:12 concerning the purpose of the Letter of Tears have been explained.

¹⁰²⁴ See above, :118.

1. Chapter 9

Conclusion

1. The Corinthian Crisis

This study set out to reconstruct and explain the sequence of events leading up to the composition of 2 Corinthians. Early in the study, in the analysis of the travels and travel plans of Paul and his colleagues, it had already become apparent that the exchange of information between Paul and the church is of first importance. As the study proceeded, it became clear that the apostle's handling of the crisis must be understood in the context of an exchange not only of information, but of *rhetoric*; for Paul conducted his struggle with his opponents for the hearts and minds of the Corinthians principally by means of his letters. A vital part of this study, therefore, has been devoted to an attempt to reconstruct key aspects of the exchange of rhetoric between Paul and his opponents. The main conclusion of this study may be summarised in the statement that the reconstruction of F. Bleek (1830) is, at least in its broad outlines, historically credible, and to be preferred over other reconstructions. In detail, the study has led to the following reconstruction, which is an expanded form of that offered in Chapter 4:

1. Some years after founding the church, Paul visited Corinth again, and found a serious decline in moral standards in the church. He warned that he would return, and would discipline severely any who continued in such behaviour.
2. Paul wrote to the church, announcing a visit on his way from Ephesus to Macedonia, and a further visit on his return from Macedonia (Plan D; the Previous Letter).
3. Timothy set out for Macedonia, planning to meet Paul in Corinth. He would arrive before Paul, and remind the church of the moral standards which the apostle expected to find when he arrived.
4. In the early Spring a delegation arrived from Ephesus, bearing a letter for Paul from the church, and Chloe's people also arrived. The letter asked for advice on matters relating to marriage and sexuality, the practise of dining in pagan temples, and other matters. Paul also learned that the former disorders had worsened; indeed, the church was tolerating an openly incestuous relationship.
5. Paul decided to postpone his visit to Corinth; he would stay in Ephesus longer than originally planned, and go first to Macedonia. However, he would spend the winter in Corinth (Plan S). He wrote another letter, 1 Corinthians, in which he admonished the church for its arrogance and immaturity, demanded the expulsion of the incestuous man, and dealt with other issues, including those raised in the letter from the church. He also announced the change in his travel plans, and asked the church to send Timothy back to him in Ephesus.
6. While the Corinthian delegation was in Ephesus, rival missionaries arrived in Corinth. They were supportive of the libertarian practises of "the Strong", and claimed apostolic status. When 1 Corinthians arrived, they opposed Paul's demand for the expulsion of the incestuous man, and persuaded the church to take no action against him.
7. By the time Timothy arrived, the rival missionaries had gained acceptance in the church. Timothy was unable to persuade the church to discipline the incestuous man, and he returned to Ephesus with the news.
8. Paul believed that the church in Corinth was in breach of the new covenant, due to their support for the incestuous man, and their rejection of his prophetic call to

repentance. They were in imminent danger of divine judgement, and he himself was faced with a difficult decision: should he travel immediately to Corinth and restore order? He wrote again to Corinth; the following is an imaginative reconstruction of his letter, incorporating a number of reconstructed elements:

It grieves me to hear that you have been deceived by those charlatans, who dare to call themselves apostles of Christ! Like the Israelites *in the desert*, they worship the golden calf, and you have joined them! Like their ancestors, they are under a curse, and they are perishing. Do you not know that your refusal to discipline the offender makes you partners in his sin? Do you not know that "fornication is a destruction to the soul, separating it from God and bringing it close to the idols?"¹⁰²⁵ As it is written, "Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"¹⁰²⁶ You have become fat with your idol meats; you have deserted the Rock, who fathered you; and forgotten the God who gave you birth.¹⁰²⁷

What shall I do? Shall I abandon you? Never! Or shall I return to you with a rod, as Moses returned from Sinai? The land is full of adulterers; the prophets follow an evil course.¹⁰²⁸ Shall I consign you into exile, to learn obedience? Moses broke the stone tablets of the Law, but if I were to return to you now I would break my fleshly heart!

Moses interceded for Israel, and the Lord glorified him. So I have interceded for you, representing you before him. But understand this: because I have not abandoned you, your guilt has fallen also upon me. And because I represent you, the chastisement that is due to you is falling upon me. Already the hand of the Lord is heavy upon me. Cleanse the Temple! Do not delay! On your behalf I am sharing

¹⁰²⁵ Test Reub 4:6.

¹⁰²⁶ Deut 32:6 NIV.

¹⁰²⁷ Deut 32:18.

¹⁰²⁸ Jer 23:10.

in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. I am sinking into the miry depths, where there is no foothold!¹⁰²⁹ Act quickly, so that I might also experience the power of his resurrection!

9. This letter (the Letter of Tears) was carried to Corinth by Titus. He was to meet Paul in Troas towards the close of sailing, travelling via Macedonia. The church was divided in its response to the letter, but a majority carried out Paul's wishes, expelling the incestuous man from the Church.

10. Paul and Timothy travelled to Troas, and began a mission. However, Titus did not arrive on the last ship from Macedonia, so Paul and Timothy crossed over to Macedonia via the land route, and found Titus there. Titus reported, and informed Paul of the following accusations levelled against him by his opponents in response to the Letter of Tears:

1. Paul's own poor and feeble appearance contrasts sharply with Moses' fine appearance, and in particular, Paul's comparison of his return to Corinth Moses' return from Sinai is ridiculous, in view of the glory of Moses' face.
2. Paul does have this in common with Moses: that he "restricts" or "confines" the Corinthians, depriving them of the freedom (ἐλευθερία) to live to the full.
3. If Paul really believes that he will suffer as he says he will as a result of sending the Letter of Tears, then he is out of his mind.
4. Paul is in fact perfectly rational (σωφροσύνη). He does not believe what he says; rather, he is attempting to deceive the Corinthians in order to defraud them by means of the Collection.

Moreover, some in the church accused him of acting irresponsibly in postponing his original plan to visit Corinth in the Spring (Plan D).

¹⁰²⁹ Ps 69:2.

11. Following Titus' report, Paul reverted to his plan to overwinter in Corinth (Plan S). Titus returned to Corinth to prepare for Paul's arrival; in particular, to oversee the completion of the Collection.

12. Paul composed 2 Corinthians, replying to the criticism and giving a detailed defence of his conduct, appealing for a generous response to the Collection appeal, denouncing his rivals, and warning that he meant every word of the warnings formerly given.

Other significant results include the following:

2. The Literary unity of 2 Corinthians

New arguments have been presented for the literary unity of 2 Corinthians, it has been argued that 2 Cor 1-7 is a carefully response to the report of Titus (7:6f), and that 2 Cor 10-13 belongs to the same letter as 2 Cor 1-7.

3. Paul's Opponents

It has been argued that Paul's opponents, the "false apostles", were apostate Jews who advocated a doctrine of absolute moral freedom. In particular, they supported the "right" of the social élite of the church to dine in idol temples and visit prostitutes. Paul regarded them as false prophets and unbelievers (2 Cor 2:17; 3:3, 12-15; 4:3-4; 6:14-7:1; 11:13-15 etc.). They arrived in Corinth around the time of the dispatch of 1 Corinthians.

4. Pauline Ecclesiology: the Church as a Covenantal Community

Paul understood the local church as a covenantal community. Under the old covenant, Israel was required to maintain its holiness. Those guilty of serious sin were to be removed from the community; failure to do so resulted first in warnings through prophets, then in the imposition of disciplinary measures (curse sanctions), namely economic hardships (drought and famine), sickness (plagues), military conquest and,

ultimately exile from the Land. In the same way, the local church, should it fail to maintain its holiness, ignoring prophetic warnings, would become subject to curse sanctions, including sickness and, ultimately, spiritual exile. Though under the old covenant serious sin was punishable by death, under the new covenant the penalty for such sins is simply expulsion from the Church, and the repentant individual could and should be readmitted to the community. Repentance would result, both for the individual and for the local church, in the restoration of the blessings of the covenant.

5. Paul's Use of the OT and of the Pseudepigrapha

It has been argued that underlying the argument of much of 2 Cor 1-7 are groups of passages from the Hebrew Old Testament which may be linked by *gezerah shewa*, and which the apostle treated as mutually interpreting texts. Through these passages he interpreted his own experiences with reference to OT paradigms. Substantial evidence has also been offered of his literary dependence in 2 Corinthians on a Greek text of the Testament of Reuben which closely resembles that known today; this confirms Rosner's identification of a quotation from Test Reub 5:5 in 1 Cor 6:18a.¹⁰³⁰

6. Exegetical Contributions

Contributions have been offered to the exegesis of a number of passages, notably 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:3-11; 2:1-4; 2:14-3:6 (particularly 2:17; 3:2-3); 3:12-13; 4:1-4; 6:11-7:4 (particularly 6:11-13); 7:5-16 (particularly 7:12); 12:14; 13:1-2.

¹⁰³⁰ Rosner 1992a.

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