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1 CORINTHIANS 13
Paul as Apostolic Paradigm

If the general reader finds 1 Corinthians 13 inspiring, the scholar finds it baffling.[1] The exegetical anomalies it presents relate not only to its content but also to its form and function. Its highly rhetorical (some would say lyrical) form sets it apart from its immediate context (chap. 12 and 14), if not from the rest of the epistle, which is seen by some to be tiresomely prosaic by comparison. To account for its alien literary quality, scholars have variously classified it formally as hymnic,[2] rhetorical,[3] and diatribal.[4]

Given the interconnection between form and function, the chapter's formal distinctiveness has rendered its function ambiguous. Even the most casual reader notices that the text reads quite smoothly from 1 Cor 12:31 to 14:1, and the editorial transitions bracketing the chapter have struck critical exegetes as artificial.[5] At best, its literary function is explained as a typical Pauline digression;[6] at worst, as an interpolation.[7]

Given this formal distinctiveness and functional ambiguity, the chapter's authenticity has quite naturally been questioned,[8] though not seriously in recent scholarship. In spite of the exegetical confusion, a scholarly consensus has emerged in certain respects. Few any longer regard it as hymnic.[9] Most would agree that it is rhetorical, though in what sense is disputed.[10] Virtually all agree that it is a self-contained unit.[11] Few, if any, would now deny its Pauline authorship. There is little agreement, however, regarding its literary function. As yet, no fully satisfactory explanation has been offered to account for its placement between chap. 12 and 14.

Any plausible explanation must take seriously the rhetorical complexion of the passage without denying its alien literary quality. Adequate account must also be given of the immediate literary context in which it is now placed. The rhetorical complexion of the chapter has long been recognized by those who have investigated it against its Greco-Roman background.[12] Rhetorical

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1. For a history of interpretation, cf. H. Riesenfeld, "Etude bibliographique sur la notion biblique d' ἀγάπη, surtout dans 1 Cor 13," ConNT 5 (1941) 1–27; J. T. Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation since the First World War," Int 20 (1966) 159–87; and O. Wischmeyer, Der höchste Weg: Das 13 Kapitel des 1 Korintherbriefes (SNT 13; Gütersloh: Gütesloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1981) esp. 11–16 and literature cited on 11, n. 1.

2. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (ICC, 2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914) 285: "a psalm in praise of love" (cf. Psalm 45); F. R. M. Hitchcock, "The Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," ExpTim 34 (1923) 488–89; N. W. Lund, "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," JBL 50 (1931) 266–76; H. Lietzmann and W. G. Kümmel, An die Korinther I–II (HNT 9, 5. Aufl.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1969) 65: "Das hohe Lied der Liebe."

3. A. Harnack, "Das hohe Lied des Apostels Paulus von der Liebe (I Kor. 13) und seine religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," SPAW 1 (Berlin, 1911) 132–63, esp. 153, n. 4: "Poesie im strengen Sinn ist der Hymnus freilich nicht, sondern 'Rede' (daher ist auch die Bezeichnung Hymnus nicht ganz korrekt)."

4. E. Lehmann and A. Fridrichsen, "1 Kor. 13: Eine christlich-stoische Diatribe," TSK 94 (1922) 55–95.

5. J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief (MeyerK 5, 9. Aufl.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910, repr. 1970) 310.

6. J. Héring, The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: Epworth, 1964) 134. W. Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition (ed. W. R. Schoedel and R. L. Wilken; Théologie historique 54; Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1979) 177–88, esp. 184, sees 1 Corinthians 13 (along with 1:19–3:21

and 9:21–10:13) as a digression, "one of the means traditionally used in epideictic discourse," and it functions to amplify "by intensifying the point Paul leads up to with a series of seven rhetorical questions (12:29–30), the premise of agape" (187). Earlier, A. Fridrichsen, Le problème du miracle dans le christianisme primitif (Strasbourg: Faculty of Protestant Theology, 1925; The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972] 138–41) had also analyzed chap. 13 as a digression (παρέκβασις) whose purpose was to provide variation and lyrical effect. Unlike Wuellner, Fridrichsen recognized the parenetic (and polemical) element in chap. 13, noting especially the internal connection between the content (especially vv. 4–7) and the rest of the epistle.

7. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, xliii; also 311: "Kap. 13 macht durchaus den Eindruck einer 'Einlage'—nicht anders wie Kap. 9, einer Digression, die sich von dem Hauptthema unbillig weit entfernt." Noting the similarities between 1 Corinthians 13 and 9, Weiss conjectures that both belonged originally to the same letter. Also treating chap. 13 as an insertion is H. Mosbech, "1 Kor. 13," TT 3, ser. 5 (1914) 193–263 (as noted by Riesenfeld, "Etude bibliographique," 10). Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor. 13," 67, argue that chap. 13 was a diatribe composed and inserted into the epistle by an unknown Stoic Christian who found Christian "enthusiasm" unappealing. Also C. K. Barrett, The First Letter to the Corinthians (2d ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1973) 297. M. Dibelius, "Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments," TRu N.F. 3 (1931) 231, sees the chapter as a sermon previously prepared by the apostle but placed here as a self-contained unit.

8. E. L. Titus, "Did Paul Write 1 Corinthians 13?" JBR 27 (1959) 299–302. Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 60, doubted chap. 13's Pauline authorship, but Fridrichsen later retracted this view. Cf. prescript to E. Hoffmann, "Zu 1 Cor. 13 und Col. 3, 14," ConNT 3 (1939) 28; also Fridrichsen, The Problem of Miracle, 139.

9. Sanders, "First Corinthians 13," 159: "First Corinthians 13 is not a hymn, as it is often thought to be."

10. J. Weiss, "Beiträge zur paulinischen Rhetorik," Theologische Studien (ed. C. R. Gregory et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897) 165–247, esp. 196–200; C. Clemen, Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912) 67–68.

11. H. Conzelmann, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 217.

12. J. J. Wettstein, Novum Testamentum Graecum (Amsterdam, 1751–52; repr. 2 vols.; Graz: Akademische Druck, 1962) 2. 154–58; Weiss, "Beiträge," 196–200, provides a stylistic analysis that was later incorporated into his commentary, esp. pp. 309–12. Harnack, "Das hohe Lied," esp. 161–63, notes the chapter's rhetorical quality but argues for Paul's dependence on Jewish traditions instead of Greek philosophical or Hellenistic religious traditions. As already noted, Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," adduce numerous Stoic parallels. Riesenfeld, "Etude bibliographique," 12–14, identifies several scholars who investigated links with various Greco-

analysis of the passage can now be extended even further because of recent research on the literary forms and epistolary function of parenesis.[13] This chapter seeks to move the discussion further in this direction by analyzing certain features of 1 Corinthians 13 from the perspective of epistolary parenesis.

This analysis begins with two unassailable premises: (1) the placement of the chapter within an epistolary setting and (2) the parenetic function of the epistle, in part if not in whole.[14] It proceeds with the methodological assumption that close attention to the formal structure of Pauline parenesis can illuminate the form, function, and content of 1 Corinthians 13.

THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULA
(1 Cor 12:31)

The shift from the second person plural to the first person singular, which continues into 1 Cor 13:1–3, has always struck commentators as inexplicably abrupt. Not surprisingly, ingenious efforts have been made to account for this, either by altering the punctuation,[15] taking ζηλοῦτε as an indicative,[16] or

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Roman traditions: Fridrichsen, *Le problème du miracle*, 97–105 (*Problem of Miracle*, 137–47); Clemen, *Primitive Christianity*, 51; G. Rudberg, *Hellas och Nya Testamentet* (Stockholm, 1929) esp. 118–19, 149–50; W. Jaeger, "Tyrtaios über die wahre ἀρετή," SPAW (Philosophisch-historische Klasse; Berlin, 1932) 537–68; E. Hoffmann, "Zu 1 Cor. 13 und Col. 3,14," 28–31, with p. 32 containing an excerpt from Rudberg's work on 1 Corinthians 13; also Hoffmann, "Pauli Hymnus auf die Liebe," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literarische-wissenschaftliche und Geistesgeschichte* 4 (1926) 58–73; Hoffmann, *Die Sprache und die archaische Logik* (Heidelberg Abh. z. Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte; Tübingen, 1925), cf. p. 33, n. 3. In addition, cf. R. M. Grant, "Hellenistic Elements in 1 Corinthians," *Early Christian Origins* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961) 60–66.

13. Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (SBLSBS 19; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* (pt. 2, vol. 2; ed. W. Haase and H. Temporini; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming); L. T. Johnson, "II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Re-examination," *JRelS* 6–7 (1978–79) 1–26.

14. On the epistolary form and function of 1 Corinthians, cf. N. Dahl, "Letter," *IDBSup* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) 539–40; B. Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (AnBib 105; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986) 168–76. Characteristic features of parenesis are noted by Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists"; cf. literature cited therein, esp. Schubert and Bjerkelund.

15. Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 65–70, offer this alternative punctuation: ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα καὶ ἔτι ⟨τι⟩ καθ' ὑπερβολήν· ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι ("Strive for the higher gifts and everything utterly superlative; I will show you the way"). Cf. Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 215, n. 50. Another possibility is represented by p[46] D*, which read εἴ τι, thus καὶ εἴ τι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι ("and if there is anything that surpasses this, then I will show you the way"). But Héring, *The First Epistle*, 134, n. 1, objects that the phrase introduced by εἴ τι would then have no verb, in which case ζηλοῦτε (1 Cor 12:31a) would be implied, a comma would have to be inserted after ὑπερβολήν. Accordingly, the translation would read: "And if you seek something extraordinary, I will show you a way." Barrett, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 297, notes the difficulty: what appears to be a Western reading is supported by p[46]. This reading is also preferred by BDF, paragraph 272 and apparently followed by J. F. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 3. 221: "If there is anything beyond, I show you the way." But the papyrus itself is not clear. These are the very lines that are damaged in the papyrus.

16. G. Iber, "Zum Verständnis von I Kor. 12,31," ZNW 54 (1963) 43–52. In this case, 1 Cor

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dismissing the sentence as an awkward editorial transition designed to incorporate the otherwise literarily extrinsic chap. 13 into the discussion of spiritual gifts.[17]

When, however, the structure of this introductory verse is viewed in the light of Paul's parenetic method, it reveals a typical Pauline move. Adducing himself or certain aspects of his behavior either to illustrate his teaching or to buttress his parenetic appeals is a typical feature in the Pauline letters.[18] Characteristically, this is accomplished by Paul's shifting from the language of moral imperative to self-referential language. This can be done in brief, relatively undeveloped form[19] or in much more elaborately constructed literary periods.

The most notable instance of the latter occurs in 1 Corinthians 8–10, a section whose overall structure is strikingly similar to chap. 12–14. The following similarities may be noted: (1) Both sections are introduced with the same stereotypical formula (περὶ δέ), indicating that Paul is now addressing himself to another in the list of questions submitted to him by the Corinthians. (2) In both sections, there follows the citation of a slogan that was apparently in current use within the church. In each case, the slogan is introduced only to be corrected. (3) Then comes a discussion of the topic at hand, τὰ εἰδω-λόθυτα (meat offered to idols) in one case and τὰ πνευματικά (spiritual gifts) in the other. Obviously, each discussion has its distinctive shape, but generally, both discussions are characterized by the use of imperatives—specifically, the use of the second person plural. In each case, Paul is addressing the church directly. (4) In both of these major sections, there is a conspicuous shift midway in the discussion from the use of imperatives to the use of examples that illustrate the appeal. Grammatically, this is signified by a shift from the second person plural to the first person singular. The shift, in each case, has been marked in our editions by a chapter beginning, that is, chap. 9 and 13. What is significant for our purposes is that the shift to the first person singular in chap. 9 has usually been taken at face value by commentators, whereas this has not been the case with the shift at 13:1. (5) At this point, the structure of the two sections diverges somewhat. In the first section (chap. 8–10), after introducing the first paradigm, Paul introduces an example from history. In 10:1–22 the behavior of disobedient Israel is rehearsed in the Exodus midrash, after which the moral implications are drawn out. After this,

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12:31a would describe an existing attitude rather than function as an ethical imperative. The μείζονα χαρίσματα, in this case, would be the gifts already being pursued, and 12:31b would be seen as Paul's typical counterargument correcting the Corinthians' misguided direction. Cf. Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 215, n. 52.

17. Héring, *The First Epistle*, 134; Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 309; Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric," 184. See note 6 above.

18. Cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 164–90.

19. Cf. 1 Cor 7:1–7. The imperative is stated in v. 5: μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους κ.τ.λ.; then v. 7a refers to Paul's own practice: θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἐμαυτόν. Also, cf. 1 Cor 10:31–11:1; Phil 3:12–17.

there is a return to the original topic as imperatival language is resumed. In the second section (chap. 12–14), however, there is a conspicuous reversion back to the second person plural at 14:1, where the discussion of spiritual gifts is resumed. (6) The two sections conclude in slightly different fashion. In the first section, the moral imperative is fused with the moral paradigm Paul, and the section concludes with an explicit appeal to imitation. In the second section, Paul refers to his own status in the community but issues a warning.

To be sure, these two sections exhibit important structural differences, and their structural similarity should not be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the pattern of argument in 1 Cor 8:7–13 should be noted. The language of ethical imperative becomes explicit in 8:9: "Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak" (βλέπετε δὲ μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν). The curious oscillation between the second person singular in vv. 10–11 and the second person plural in vv. 9 and 12, however striking, does not diminish the force of the imperative, nor does it alter the fact that Paul's remarks are obviously directed to his readers. Suddenly, however, the language shifts to the first person singular in the concluding verse (8:13), where Paul's remarks become self-referential.[20] This shift marks the transition to chap. 9, where Paul gives a highly detailed, personal account of his own apostolic behavior. The function of this chapter is clear: Paul adduces himself as the concrete paradigm of voluntary, responsible self-restraint for the self-indulgent Corinthians. Paul introduces the concluding athletic metaphor and then personalizes it to illustrate and highlight his own conduct; it thus serves as a fitting and graphic climax to the chapter.[21]

What is worth noting in this connection is that this pattern of argument is not uniquely Pauline but thoroughly typical of Greco-Roman parenesis.[22] The use of ethical paradigms in parenesis to exemplify the moral teaching being commended has long been recognized.[23] Plutarch's fondness for adducing named individuals as ethical paradigms typifies the conviction shared by Greco-Roman moralists that example was far superior to precept and logical analysis as a means of illustrating and reinforcing appeals to pursue a particular mode of life, normally the life of ἀρετή (virtue).[24]

20. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 311, however, characterizes the *I* in 1 Cor 8:13 and 13:1–13 as "nicht individuell sonder typisch."

21. On the use of athletic metaphors, cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 206, n. 46.

22. Cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, esp. 26–44.

23. Cf. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists," and literature cited therein. Also, A. Lumpe, "Exemplum," *RAC* (1966) 1229–57; H. Schlier, "δείκνυμι," *TDNT* 2 (1964) 25–33, esp. 32–33; and K. O. Wicker, "Mulierum Virtutes (Moralia 242E–263C)," *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (CHNT 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 112. Also H. D. Betz, P. Dirkse, and E. W. Smith, Jr., "De Sera Numinis Vindicta (Moralia 548A–568A)," *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (CHNT 3; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 198 (cf. esp. *Moral.* 551A); and Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (BHT 37; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967) esp. 107–36. M. Hadas and M. Smith, *Heroes and Gods* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 3–9, discuss charismatic figures as ethical paradigms.

24. According to Aristotle *Pr.* 18.3 (916b 26–36), in speeches and tales, examples have greater appeal than syllogistic arguments. Cf. Plutarch *Moral.* 550D, 551A–B. In 576E; 576F–577A;

One well-established form of example was for moralists to present themselves as paradigms for their readers. Even though some moralists were reticent to do this, others were not.[25] In rhetorical education, rhetoricians instructed the pupils in good rhetorical theory and method, but even more important, they were expected to embody these principles and exemplify them both in speech and character.[26] What is stated as a theoretical principle in Isocrates[27] is reinforced later by Quintilian.[28] The theory becomes rendered as practice in Isocrates' portrait of Nicocles as the ideal ruler whose life serves as the moral paradigm of the precepts he teaches.[29] In *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*, Plutarch not only offers advice about proper conduct in public life but also adduces himself as an example to the addressee, Menemachus.[30] Also in the context of letter writing, the moralist could use self-description in providing examples for the readers. Especially notable in this regard was Seneca, whose letters attest to and illustrate the central importance of his own example in giving moral instruction.[31]

Numerous examples of this use of personal example in parenetic contexts could be offered, but none more instructive than Epictetus. Apart from the fact that he is roughly contemporary with Paul, the catechetical relationship reflected in his *Discourses* bears strong similarities to that of Paul and his readers.

We may cite two instances, one in which Epictetus adduces himself as an

583F–585D Epameinondas exemplifies the Socratic paradigm; in 84C–E and 85A–B ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ τέλειος exemplifies the pursuit of ἀρετή. Cf. generally Wicker, "Mulierum Virtutes," 112, who refers in n. 21 to *Alex.* 1; *Pomp.* 8; *Cim.* 2; *Per.* 1–2; *Moral.* 505A–511E; 768B–D; 770D–771C.

25. Cf. H. D. Betz, "De Laude Ipsius (Moralia 539A–547F)," *Plutarch's Ethical Writings*, 373–82. Cf. esp. Plutarch *Moral.* 539D–E. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 51, 66–67, notes Isocrates' general reluctance to present himself as an example; Isocrates prefers instead to be oblique in this respect. Even so, in *Ep.* 8.10 he becomes explicit in encouraging his readers to imitate his character. But as Fiore (67, n. 46) concludes, "In general, however, from the evidence of the Isocratean corpus, he seldom offered his own example and action as a model for others to follow."

26. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 33–34.

27. Isocrates *Adv. soph.* 16–18 (trans. Norlin in LCL; cited in Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 33–34): "and it is necessary for the disciple . . . on the one hand to learn the forms of speech . . . and for the teacher on the other hand . . . to himself provide the example so that the ones who are able to be impressed might also imitate."

28. Quintilian *Inst.* 2.2.8 (trans. Butler in LCL; cited in Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 34): "For however many models for imitation he may give them from the authors they are reading, it will still be found that fuller nourishment is provided by the living voice, as we call it, more especially when it proceeds from the teacher himself, who, if his pupils are rightly instructed, should be the object of their affection and respect. And it is scarcely possible to say how much more readily we imitate those whom we like."

29. Isocrates *Nicocles* 27–47, esp. 35, 37–38. Cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 45–56.

30. Plutarch *Moral.* 811B–C, 816D–E; cited in Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 70, 72.

31. Cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 87–100, esp. 89–90, who notes esp. *Ep.* 71.7; 6.3–5.

example in a parenetic context.[32] Using many of the typical hortatory devices, such as the imperative mood and rhetorical questions, he exhorts the reader to refrain from inordinate desires that would lead to theft or adultery. Once he frames the exhortation, he then cites an incident from his own life to illustrate it. He had an iron lamp that was stolen, but deciding that the blame lay not with the thief but with his own misguided values in owning an expensive lamp, he replaced it with an earthenware lamp. Typically, he states the principle gnomically—"A man loses only what he already possesses"—and concludes that "our losses and our pains have to do only with the things we possess" (Epictetus *Diss.* 1.18.15–16). Here we have a clear case of a teacher drawing from his own life experience to provide an ethical paradigm for his moral exhortation.

The other instance is less direct, but nonetheless illuminating. In the well-known passage entitled Περὶ Κυνισμοῦ (Epictetus *Diss.* 3.22.1–109), where the Cynic philosophical life-style is delineated, Epictetus provides the reader with a specimen Cynic discourse in which the Cynic preacher, earlier designated as ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ (messenger of the deity) and κατάσκοπος (scout [3.22.23–25]), boldly proclaims the Cynic message of salvation. In the opening section, the hearers are accosted for forsaking the true path leading to virtue and following another way (ὅδος [3.22.26]). They are also censured for refusing to believe when another, presumably the Cynic preacher, points out (δείκνυμι) the way to serenity and happiness (3.22.26). There follows a list of named individuals who serve as examples of the misdirected seeker: Myron and Ophellius, otherwise unknown but presumably dissipated athletes; Croesus, typifying unhappy wealth; Nero and Sardanapalus, the pitiable rulers; and Agamemnon, the unhappy warrior-king. The true nature of the good has eluded them all (3.22.32). The diatribal form of the discourse becomes explicit when Agamemnon becomes the interlocutor and asks the preacher, "In what, then, is the good [τὸ ἀγαθόν], since it is not in these things? Tell us, Sir messenger and scout!" (3.22.38; trans. Oldfather in LCL). The Cynic preacher gladly obliges with a sermon on the nature of the good and happy life. The hearers are enjoined with a loosely connected set of ethical imperatives concluding with the following exhortation: "Poor wretches, develop this, pay attention to this, seek here your good" (3.22.44). The question is then put: "And how is it possible for a man who has nothing, who is naked, without home or hearth, in squalor, without a slave, without a city, to live serenely? Behold, God has sent you the man who will show in practice [τὸν δείξοντα ἔργῳ] that it is possible" (3.22.45–46). Then follows this rather remarkable statement in which the moral imperative is illustrated by the example of the Cynic preacher himself. With typical Cynic boldness, the preacher proclaims:

32. Epictetus *Diss.* 1.18.15–16. Also, cf. 1.10.7–13; 12.12–16; 16.15–21; 17.13–19; 19.4–6; 21.1–4; 22.13–16; 25.23–24; 27.7–21; 28.28–33; 29.7–8, 20–29, 60–64; also Seneca *Ep.* 6.3–5; 92.11–13, 21–22.

"Look at me," he says, "I am without a home, without a city, without property, without a slave; I sleep on the ground; I have neither wife nor children, no miserable governor's mansion, but only earth, and sky, and one rough cloak. Yet what do I lack? Am I not free from pain and fear, am I not free? When has anyone among you seen me failing to get what I desire, or falling into what I would avoid? When have I ever found fault with either God or man? When have I ever blamed anyone? Has anyone among you seen me with a gloomy face? And how do I face those persons before whom you stand in fear and awe? Do I not face them as slaves? Who, when he lays eyes upon me, does not feel that he is seeing his king and master?" (3.22.47–49; cf. 4.8.30–31)

Here, the dramatic shift to the first person singular highlights the paradigm and renders in concrete form the specific life-style that is being enjoined. This text vividly illustrates the formal structure of the parenesis employed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8–10 and 12–14.

Having examined the structure and literary function of the introductory formula, we can now turn to its content. The phrase ὁδὸν δείκνυμι (I show a way) is capable of being used in a literal and a metaphorical sense. The myth of Heracles at the crossroads illustrates how easily these two senses of ὅδος can merge.[33] Frequently, the phrase functions as a technical term for "teach."[34] But what is remarkable, and all too seldom noticed, is that δείκνυμι in the NT is ordinarily used to refer to that which is graphically concrete or, if not, should be.[35] Only once does it function as a synonym for διδάσκειν (Matt 16:21). If it is used here in the normal NT sense, its demonstrative rather than pedagogical force is focal and should be rendered *show* in the sense of "display," "point out," or "demonstrate." That the phrase can be used in parenetic contexts where a particular ethical life-style is being promulgated, and indeed in a context where the preacher himself provides the paradigm, is clear from the passage from Epictetus cited above. On this showing, what fol-

33. Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.21, 23; 2.1.11; 1.7.1. Also, cf. Diogenes Laertius 7.121. References cited in Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief,* 310.

34. Epictetus *Diss.* 1.4.10: οὐ θέλεις δεῖξαι αὐτῷ τὸ ἔργον τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἵνα μάθῃ ποῦ τὴν προκοπὴν ζητῇ (Are you not willing to show him the work of virtue, that he may learn where to look for his progress?); 1.4.29: ὦ μεγάλου εὐεργέτου τοῦ δεικνύοντος τὴν ὁδόν (O great benefactor who points the way! [of Chrysippus, whose teachings have been unfolded in the previous sections]); 1.4.32: τὴν ἀλήθειαν; Lucian *Men.* 4: καί τινα ὁδὸν ἁπλῆν καὶ βέβαιον ὑποδεῖξαι τοῦ βίου (to show me a plain, solid path in life). References cited in Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief,* 310. Also, Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 66, refer to Marcus Aurelius 3.11.2: ἐλέγχειν ὁδῷ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (to test methodically and truthfully); also 5.3; 6.22; and conclude, "Dem stoischen Verfasser ist das ὁδὸν δείκνυμι die gegebene Formel, um eine vorzutragende Lehre einzuführen" (66).

35. Matt 4:8 par. Luke 4:5: all the kingdoms of the earth; Matt 8:4 par. Mark 1:44 par. Luke 5:14: a cleansed leper; Mark 14:15 par. Luke 22:12: a large upper room; Luke 20:24: a denarius; Luke 24:40 par. John 20:20: the hands and feet of the risen Lord; John 2:18: signs; John 5:20 (twice); 10:32: the Father's works; John 14:8–9: the Father alone; Acts 7:3: the land of promise; Heb 8:5: the architectural pattern of the tabernacle; James 2:18; 3:13: works born of faith. Especially instructive is the use of the word in connection with visions or visionary experiences (Acts 10:28; Rev 1:1; 4:1; 17:1; 21:9–10; 22:1, 6, 8).

lows in 1 Corinthians 13 is less a didactic explanation than it is a paradigmatic exhibition.

The Pauline expression καθ' ὑπερβολήν ordinarily functions adverbially (Rom 7:13; 2 Cor 1:8; Gal 1:13), but because of its distance from δείκνυμι, it appears to function attributively here. But if used as an attributive, it would most naturally be understood as a superlative.[36] Following ἔτι, this would be awkward, unless ἔτι were taken temporally. A much smoother meaning may be provided if ὑπερβολήν is understood as a technical rhetorical term.[37] Paul's use of rhetorical figures of speech is pervasive in 1 Corinthians, and the choice of a rhetorical figure of speech here would be typical of his style throughout the epistle.[38] This suggestion that ὑπερβολή be taken in its technical rhetorical sense should not be pushed too far, however. In any case, whether καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδόν is translated as "more excellent way" or "a way expressed in hyperbole," Paul himself intends to "point out the way" to the Corinthians and chooses to do so first by referring to himself.

THE APOSTOLIC PARADIGM
(1 Cor 13:1–3)

The apostolic paradigm is introduced in 1 Cor 13:1–3, where the first person singular, introduced in 12:31, continues. It is not in itself remarkable that Paul employs the first person singular, but why he does so is. Commentators have long noticed Paul's use of the first person singular here, but it is ordinarily taken in a general rather than a strictly autobiographical sense.[39] In

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36. W. Michaelis, "ὁδός," *TDNT* 5 (1967) 85, n. 151, quoting Schlatter, "A ὑπερβολή is a throw which goes beyond that of others. . . . What takes place καθ' ὑπερβολήν is done with surpassing force and elan. . . . The phrase is hard to link with the idea of a 'way.' Thus it should be taken with ὁδὸν δείκνυμι rather than with ὁδόν. Probably something like: "Now in superlative fashion do I show you the way." Or, as Barrett, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 297, renders it, "Beyond all this, beyond all that I have so far said, I show you a way." C. Spicq, *Agape dans le nouveau testament* (EB; 3 vols.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1958–59) 2.65, argues that καθ' ὑπερβολήν is not comparative but superlative. Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 216, n. 53, argues for a comparative sense because of ἔτι: "From the standpoint of content it is pointless to argue about this; naturally, this 'higher way' is the highest. It acquires a certain significance only when to the comparative contained in καθ' ὑπερβολήν we supply τῶν χαρισμάτων, 'than the gifts' (R. Reitzenstein, "Die Formel 'Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung,' bei Paulus," *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* [1916] 367–416, here esp. 398, n. 2). Then faith, hope, and love are not themselves χαρίσματα." Thus Conzelmann (216) concludes that "καθ' ὑπερβολήν goes attributively with ὁδόν: a still more excellent way."

37. Cf. Isocrates *Ep.* 4.88; Aristotle *Rhet.* 1413a29; Demetrius *Eloc.* 52; Strabo 1.2.33; 3.2.9 apud LSJ).

38. Cf. 1 Cor 4:6, esp. the use of αἱ ὁδοί; also Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 178–80, esp. 79.

39. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 311. Wischmeyer, *Der höchste Weg*, 90–91, moves beyond traditional interpretations that see the *I* here as the "typical I," an equivalent of "one." She sees the first section move toward a climax in v. 3b, which is seen to reflect Paul's own apostolic experience. The first person singular in vv. 1–3 she regards neither as an autobiographical *I* in a pure sense nor as a mere figure of speech, but rather as a "generalizing 'I'": "Vielmehr handelt es sich um ein generalisierendes 'Ich' in einer theologischen Grundsatzrede, die zwar nicht autobiographisch abgezielt ist, wohl aber die eigene Person und die eigene Erfahrung direkt in den

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spite of the repeated use of the first person singular in vv. 1–3, these verses are not ordinarily thought to refer to Paul's own apostolic experience. This may be a classic example of the *sensus literalis* being ignored in favor of a far more problematic interpretation.

Whether the activities mentioned in 1 Cor 13:1–3 are taken as seven different items or whether they form subgroups (as is more likely the case), for our purposes what distinguishes them is that each appears to be self-referential in the sense that they function as part of Paul's own self-presentation. As such, they are directly anchored in his own apostolic behavior.

First, the "tongues of men and of angels" (ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων . . . καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων [1 Cor 13:1a]) apparently refers to "the gift of tongues,"[40] even though the phrase is crafted in the form of hyperbole. On his own testimony, Paul possessed the gift of tongues (14:18) and even exercised it (14:6), even though he attached little importance to it, at least before the Corinthians.

Second, Paul's prophetic status (προφητείαν [1 Cor 13:2]) some may have questioned (14:37), but the very questioning suggests that Paul claimed it. This is a claim no one can seriously question (cf. 1 Cor 2:2–16; 7:40; 14:6; also Gal 1:15–16).

Third, "to know all mysteries" (ἐὰν . . . εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα [1 Cor 13:2]) is also self-referential, recalling no doubt Paul's earlier description of the content of his preaching as "the mystery of God" (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ [2:1]). This provides the ultimate certification of his claim. The language of 2:9–10 is hardly surprising: the apocalyptic mysteries formerly hidden from the view of all are now revealed "to us through the Spirit" (ἡμῖν . . . διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος [2:10]). Whomever else ἡμῖν includes, it at least includes Paul, who placed himself among the circle of inspired prophets to whom God's mysteries have been revealed. His oracular utterance in 15:51, "Behold, I tell you a mystery" (ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω), operates from the same assumption. He reckons himself among those appointed "as stewards of the mysteries of God" (ὡς . . . οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ [4:1]). Paul was in the position, at least theoretically, to know "all mysteries" (τὰ μυστήρια πάντα).

Fourth, in spite of Paul's consistent reluctance actually to claim "knowledge of God" for himself (cf. Gal 4:9), we can still interpret "all knowledge" (πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν; 1 Cor 13:2) with reference to Paul himself. "Knowledge" is num-

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Zusammenhang der theologischen Rede einbezieht." Also, cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 183–84.

40. The expression χαλκὸς ἠχῶν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον (a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal) may recall the liturgical practices of pagan cults or the philosophical tradition in which gifted speakers were described in such terms. Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 8.2 records Diogenes' judgment of Antisthenes: "For when he [Diogenes] contrasted the man Antisthenes with his words, he sometimes made this criticism, that the man himself was much weaker; and so in reproach he would call him a trumpet because he could not hear his own self, no matter how much noise he made" (ἔφη αὐτὸν εἶναι σάλπιγγα λοιδορῶν· αὐτοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ἀκούειν φθεγγομένου μέγιστον). Cited in Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 73.

bered among the gifts accessible to all Christians (1 Cor 12:8), but 13:2 may also refer to the earlier discussion in 2:6–16, especially to vv. 8–10, where Paul asserts that what the principalities and powers did not know (ἔγνωκεν)—that is, the content of the divine mystery—inspired prophets do know. It is they, after all, who are said to "know the things given to us by God" (ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν [2:12]). The final claim in 2:16 is equally explicit: "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? For we have the mind of Christ" (τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν).

Fifth, faith capable of removing mountains (ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι [1 Cor 13:2b]), an expression firmly anchored in the synoptic tradition (Matt 17:19–20; 21:21; and parallels), appears to signify the ability to perform miracles of healing, and exorcisms in particular. That Paul possessed such powers is clear from his own writings (2 Cor 12:12; Rom 15:19), and this picture is reinforced by Acts (14:3; 16:16–24; 19:11; 28:3–6). To be sure, Luke-Acts is not only more explicit in portraying Paul as an exorcist (Acts 16:16–24) but also places a far higher premium on the value of such powers as a means of authenticating Paul's apostolic status than Paul apparently did. Even so, Paul does not completely ignore such powers when he describes his own apostolic conduct.

Sixth, relinquishing all possessions (κἂν φωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου [1 Cor 13:3a]) is reminiscent of other passages in Paul's writings where his voluntary pauperization for the sake of the gospel figures prominently. This is especially the case in the περίστασις catalogs, where he defines the shape of his apostolic existence. His decision not to accept pay for his apostolic work he regarded as absolutely fundamental to his apostolic commission (1 Cor 9:12; cf. 2 Cor 11:7–11), and the point is reinforced, not diminished, by his custom of working with his own hands to support himself. 1 Cor 4:11 suggests that the image he projected of himself was that of vagabond and pauper. The list of apostolic tribulations in 2 Cor 6:3–10 concludes with the image of Paul as poverty-stricken. Also relevant here are the items mentioned in 2 Cor 3:9b–10. Even if they are hypothetical in some sense, even if the section is rhetorically constructed, and even if the reality described is the perceived reality of Paul's opponents, the image is still fundamental. How impoverished Paul actually was is less important than the fact that he was perceived to be. In 13:3 the statement is hyperbole, after all.

Seventh, whether the last item in the list also refers to Paul's own apostolic experience depends on how we resolve the well-known textual difficulty (1 Cor 13:3): "that I may glory" (ἵνα καυχήσωμαι) or "that I may be burned" (ἵνα καυθήσομαι). But the reverse may actually be true: the clue to resolving the textual problem may lie in recognizing the thoroughly self-referential character of the phrase. Actually, the decision is not difficult on strictly text-critical grounds: "that I may glory" (ἵνα καυχήσωμαι) enjoys better textual

support,[41] but it appears to be theologically incompatible with Paul's severe critique of καύχησις, especially in 1 Corinthians 1–4. The other reading, "that I may be burned" (ἵνα καυθήσομαι), by contrast, has weaker textual support and appears to reflect a later situation, when death by fire became a living reality for Christians.[42] This latter reading also represents the kind of correction we would expect from a pious scribe who found martyrdom virtuous and boasting vicious, especially if he had come under the influence of the story of the three Hebrew children, which is known to have influenced later Christian martyrology (Dan 3:1–3). Bruce Metzger is right when he concludes the following: "The argument that the presence of the statement, 'that I may glory,' destroys the sense of the passage loses some of its force when one observes that for Paul 'glorying' is not invariably reprehensible; sometimes he regards it as justified (2 Cor 8:24; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Thess 1:4)."[43]

Metzger might have noted further, however, that Paul does not simply boast on occasion but does so precisely in contexts where he discusses his own apostolic ministry. If 1 Cor 13:1–3 are self-referential, and if these verses refer primarily to certain aspects of Paul's own apostolic behavior, "that I may boast" (ἵνα καυχήσωμαι) is not unexpected but wholly compatible with other passages where his apostolic behavior is under consideration.

The other part of the phrase, "if I hand over my body" (ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου), strikingly resembles the language in 2 Cor 4:7–15, another description of Paul's apostolic life-style, where the concern is what disposition is made of his life as the ministerial vessel (εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν [4:11]). The ultimate referent is undoubtedly Christ (cf. Rom 4:25; 8:32; Gal 2:20), and thus the choice of language itself shows how thoroughly Paul's apostolic self-understanding has been transformed by his theology of the cross. His use of similar language in other contexts suggests that his apostolic behavior may also be the referent here. The use of "glory" (καυχάομαι) is not surprising—indeed, is fully expected—in light of 1 Cor 15:31, where apostolic dying (καθ᾿ ἡμέραν ἀποθνῄσκω) and boasting of the fruits of his apostolic labor (νὴ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν ... ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν) are explicitly linked. The choice of the aorist in 1 Cor 13:3 (παραδῶ) instead of the usual present with which he profiles his daily apostolic dying would be consistent with the hyperbolic style employed in the first three verses. It would refer to the ultimate handing over, death itself.

Not only does each of the protases appear to be constructed with Paul him-

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41. The textual support for καυχήσωμαι is stronger (p[46] ℵ A B 6 33 69 1739ᶜ copˢᵃ,ᵇᵒ gothᵐᵍ Clement Origen Jerome and Greek mssᵃᶜᶜ· ᵗᵒ ᴶᵉʳᵒᵐᵉ), although the evidence for καυθήσομαι is not unimpressive (C D F G K L Ψ most minuscules it vg syrᵖ,ʰ gothᵗˣᵗ arm ethᵖᵖ and numerous patristic writers including Tertullian Aphraates Cyprian Origen Basil Chrysostom Cyril Theodoret Euthalius Maximus-Confessor John-Damascus). So, B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) 563–64.

42. Although Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 222–23, esp. nn. 44–48, defends this reading on other solid grounds.

43. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 564.

self as the primary referent, but the apodoses do as well. The double meta-phor "noisy gong or clanging cymbal" (χαλκὸς ἠχῶν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον [1 Cor 13:1]) in this case would not be intended to recall images from pagan worship, as is often suggested, but would recall the philosophical tradition in which identical language was used to caricature the empty-headed Sophist.[44] 2 Corinthians, of course, provides the most explicit evidence that Paul's rhetorical prowess left much to be desired, at least in the opinion of his detractors,[45] but his fear that the cross could be emptied of its power through rhetorical eloquence is already full-fledged in 1 Cor 1:17. His insistence that his preaching was not characterized "by persuasive words of wisdom" (ἐν πει-θοῖς σοφίας λόγοις [2:4]) would only give point to the apodosis in 13:1. Apos-tolic behavior unmotivated by love would indeed be deserving of the charge that his words were hollow and his preaching empty. The charges need not have been brought already by opponents. Paul's own charges made in 1:17–25 would be brought against himself and sustained. If this cluster of ideas under-lies 13:1, it may force a re-reading of the protasis: "speaking with tongues of men and angels" may not refer to glossolalia at all but may be a way of expressing his mode of preaching or teaching in the form of hyperbole; that is, "if I speak with rhetorical flourishes, but have not love."

Similarly, the apodoses in 1 Cor 13:2–3 may equally be construed as self-referential, since the former phrase "I am nothing" (οὐθέν εἰμι) occurs in almost identical form in reference to Paul in 2 Cor 12:11 (εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι), where he is charged by his opponents with being "nothing," and the latter phrase "it profits me nothing" (οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι) appears to anticipate 1 Cor 15:32, "what does it profit me" (τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος).[46] It is also conceivable, though perhaps not demonstrable, that each of these two apodoses encapsu-lates charges brought against Paul, which he concedes would have substance were his prophetic and healing ministry found to be motivated by anything other than love (cf. 2 Cor 6:6).

On this reading of the passage, in the threefold refrain, "if I have not love" (ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω), Paul is seen to be articulating the primal impulse motivating his apostolic behavior. This is so self-evident that it hardly needs restating, except for the fact that "love" here is so seldom understood as refer-

44. Plato *Prt.* 329A. Spicq, *Agape*, 2.146, notes, "After Plato . . . the description of an 'empty' sophist or rhetor as a gong, lyre, cymbal, or trumpet became a commonplace of literature and philosophy." Pliny *Hist. nat.* pref. 25 reports that Tiberius used to call the grammarian Apion *cymbalum mundi.* Tertullian *De Pallio* 4 (PL 2.1098a) speaks of the philosopher Empedocles in his doubtful capacity: "Digne quidem, ut bacchantibus indumentis aliquid subtinniret cymbalo inces-sit" (Worthily, indeed, in order that at the bottom of his Bacchantian raiment he might make some tinkling sound, did he walk in cymbals!).

45. 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2; 10:1; esp. 10:10; 11:6; also 12:16.

46. On οὐθέν εἰμι and οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι, cf. Epictetus *Diss.* 1.24.18; 2.19.10, 24.25; 3.1.10; esp. 4.8.25, of Socrates, who said, "If a man can trust me, what I am engaged in amounts to nothing; if I wait for somebody else to help me, I am myself nothing. If I want something and it does not happen, it follows that I am miserable." Also, cf. *Ench.* 24.4. Cf. Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 72. Also, cf. 1 Cor 7:9; Acts 25:11; Gal 6:3.

ring specifically to Paul's own apostolic self-understanding. As is often the case, what is implicit in 1 Corinthians becomes explicit in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Cor 2:4, Paul openly expresses his love for the church, but nowhere does he become more explicit than in the outburst in 2 Cor 11:11: "And why? Because I do not love you?" (διὰ τί ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς). Equally explicit is 2 Cor 12:15: "if I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?" (εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶ[ν], ἧσσον ἀγαπῶμαι). The reminder in the preceding verse that parents should provide for their children (12:14) renders ἀγάπη more specifically as parental love. Given Paul's reminder in 1 Cor 4:15 that he had fathered the Corinthians, and given the pervasiveness of the father-children metaphor in both epistles, this may serve to establish the metaphorical assumption underlying 1 Cor 13:1–3. The final warning in 1 Cor 4:21 appears to recall the image of the father who must discipline the proverbial misbehav-ing child (cf. Prov 19:13; 23:13–14; 29:15), yet the alternative to stern paternal discipline is to come to the Corinthians "in love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ), presumably fatherly love.

If the father-children relationship defines the nature of ἀγάπη as paternal love, the benediction in 1 Cor 16:24 would then be seen as a father's final reminder to his children. What is more, it would place 13:1–3 even more firmly within the parenetic tradition in which the father's giving advice to his children may have provided the original *Sitz im Leben* of such advice. Isocrates' epistle *Ad Demonicum* best illustrates this genre of epistolary parenesis, where the life of ἀρετή is praised and promulgated; then illustrated with concrete paradigms, first Heracles and Theseus; then illustrated by the example (παράδειγμα) of the pattern of the life of Isocrates' own father, Hipponicus, whom Demonicus is encouraged to imitate (9–11).[47] When, therefore, Paul characterizes his own apostolic ministry as having been carried out "in genuine love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ [2 Cor 6:6]), he is stating posi-tively what is stated negatively and hyperbolically in 1 Cor 13:1–3: ἀγάπη is the primal impulse of his apostolic behavior, particularly toward churches he has fathered. The ethical paradigm could hardly be depicted more graphi-cally.

The carefully crafted structure of 1 Cor 13:1–3, then, consists of three present general conditional sentences, complete with protases and apodoses, with varying complexity. The verses are hypothetical, but they are rendered so because of their hyperbolic form, not because they have an imaginary sub-ject. The first person singular is conspicuous, and the primary referent is Paul. Each of the activities is framed with specific reference to a concrete subject: Paul himself.

It is Paul who speaks, who as a prophet is privy to the mysteries of God, who therefore knows the mind of God, who exercises healing faith, who dispossesses himself of what is rightfully his, who hands over his body to an

47. Cf. Fiore, *Function of Personal Example*, 35, 64.

apostolic ministry that is his only boast. But the structure suggests that the claim is not simply "If I perform my apostolic work, unmotivated by ἀγάπη, my apostleship evaporates into vacuous speech and a hollow life-style." Rather the hyperbole recasts the self-portrait so that each item is stretched to the limit of incredibility because it is recast with the assumptions of the Corinthian enthusiasts. That is, even if he were to allow his apostolic work to be shaped by the assumptions of those Corinthians who are not content with speaking, but insist that an apostle must speak with eloquence surpassing human capabilities; who are not content with prophecy that enables them to understand the divine mysteries and have knowledge of God's will, but must experience the fullness of the eschaton now and know *all* prophecy, know *all* mysteries, have *all* knowledge; who are not content with simple miracles, but insist on the most dramatically convincing signs; who are not content with being poor but insist on possessing now *all* the eschatological riches; who are not content to yield their "bodies" to Christian service, but insist on unqualified suppression of the body and all somatic desires, it would be for nought. In other words, even if his own apostolic existence were redefined according to the assumptions of the Corinthian enthusiasts, yet were unmotivated by ἀγάπη, it would be for nought.

CHARACTERIZATION OF ΑΓΑΠΗ
(1 Cor 13:4–7)

Having introduced the personal paradigm, Paul now turns to a detailed characterization of the primal impulse of his apostolic ministry. What gives definitive shape to his own apostolic behavior, especially his behavior toward the Corinthians, he now enjoins upon them (1 Cor 14:1), expecting it also to give definitive shape to their own behavior toward one another. The personal paradigm is carried over into the characterization but does not dominate it, because the shift now moves toward its implementation. How this is achieved structurally is especially noteworthy.

It should be noticed first, however, that the discussion in 1 Cor 13:4–7 is not totally alien to the rest of the epistle. Although the immediate frame of reference of the appeal here is 1 Corinthians 12–14, the scope is much broader. Early in the epistle, the discussion in chap. 13 is adumbrated when Paul introduces the LXX quotation in 2:9, insisting already that ἀγάπη, not γνῶσις, is the sole prerequisite for participating in the divine mystery. When the epistle begins to address questions raised by the Corinthians, the antithesis of ἀγάπη and γνῶσις is advanced: "knowledge inflates, love edifies" (ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ [8:1]). The second half of this antithesis may be said to form the topic sentence of chap. 14. It is stressed in 8:3 that only if one loves can one experience the knowledge of God, albeit only passively. What is more, the epistle concludes on the same note (16:14, 24). Thus, what actually

turns out to be a recurrent theme of the epistle as a whole reaches its fullest and richest expression here.

The fundamental reference point of the characterization in 1 Cor 13:4–7 is ἀγάπη. Certain, though not all, parts of the characterization appear to be taken directly from previous sections of the epistle itself: "is not jealous" (οὐ ζηλοῖ [13:4]) recalls 3:3 directly (ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε) and 1:10–17 indirectly; "is not boastful" (οὐ περπερεύεται [13:4]) may be taken as being synonymous with "is not inflated" (οὐ φυσιοῦται [13:4]), which specifically relates to 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; "is not rude" (οὐ ἀσχημονεῖ [13:5]) recalls the language of 7:3b, though the sense is different; "does not seek its own" (οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς [13:5]) directly recalls 10:33, which we will note in more detail later; "is not irritable" (οὐ παροξύνεται [13:5]) appears to have no exact counterpart; similarly, "is not resentful" (οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν [13:5]) has no direct counterpart, but may anticipate 14:20 and should perhaps be taken with the following phrase; and "does not rejoice at wrong" (οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ [13:6]) appears to recall the discussion in 6:7–8.

Other parts of the characterization, notably those stated positively, employ terms used elsewhere by Paul to characterize his own apostolic ministry: "patient" (μακροθυμεῖ [1 Cor 13:4]) and "kind" (χρηστεύεται [13:4]) figure centrally in the apostolic profile sketched in 2 Cor 6:3–10, especially v. 6: "in forbearance" (ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ) and "in kindness" (ἐν χρηστότητι). The fact that these two expressions appear beside "in genuine love" (ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ [2 Cor 6:6]) should not go unnoticed. The second part of the antithetical parallelism in 13:6, "rejoicing in the truth" (συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ), anticipates the language of 2 Cor 13:8. The chiastic arrangement of 1 Cor 13:7 causes "bears all things" (πάντα στέγει) to be parallel to "endures all things" (πάντα ὑπομένει). There is an explicit connection between "bears all things" (πάντα στέγει) and "we endure anything" (πάντα στέγομεν) in 9:12, where Paul employs the term in reference to his own apostolic conduct. In his description of his apostolic demeanor elsewhere, "endurance" (ὑπομονή [13:7]) figures prominently (2 Cor 6:4; 12:12). The two middle parts of the chiasmus, "believes all things" (πάντα πιστεύει) and "hopes all things" (πάντα ἐλπίζει), are more elusive, though elsewhere Paul employs both terms self-referentially in contexts where he discusses his apostolic ministry. "Hope" (ἐλπίς) may recall 9:12 or even 15:19, though both are indirect parallels, at best. In 2 Cor 1:7, Paul reaffirms his steadfast hope for the Corinthians; in 2 Cor 10:15, he expresses hope specifically for their growth in the faith. In 1 Thess 2:19, his church, the fruits of his apostolic work, becomes his "hope, joy, and crown" (ἐλπίς, χαρά, στέφανος). "Believes all things" (πάντα πιστεύει) may anticipate 1 Corinthians 15, where the constancy of Paul's own faith (v. 11) informed by his belief in the risen Lord contrasts with the potential vanity of the Corinthians' faith if it becomes shorn of belief in the resurrection (vv. 14, 17).

These one-for-one correspondences, however, should not be pushed too far. Every item in the characterization need not be specifically anchored within the Corinthian situation. This would be placing undue constraints on Paul. There may be an underlying Stoic characterization of the moral ideal that accounts for certain features, as well as the form, of the characterization.[48] Still, if so, its present form appears to be redacted specifically by Paul to the Corinthian situation. What cannot be denied is that those parts of the characterization that surface as distinctively reflecting the Corinthian situation are prominent enough to suggest that in the characterization, Paul has fused both negative and positive paradigms. Those items reflecting his own apostolic behavior serve to illustrate the positive profile that ἀγάπη produces; those negative items depicting unedifying behavior of the Corinthians seem to illustrate the negative profile that results from the absence of ἀγάπη—and the presence of γνῶσις.

Thus, although it is true that certain of the motifs employed in these verses are typical items found in vice/virtue lists, and therefore are of more general character, they are nevertheless quite distinct in both form and function. We see, then, that the present form of Paul's characterization of ἀγάπη in 1 Cor 13:4–7, even if it exhibits an underlying Stoic complexion, is achieved by blending two strands: (1) that which typifies Paul's own behavior is stated positively and is therefore exemplary, and (2) that which typifies the present behavior of the Corinthians is stated negatively and is therefore blameworthy.

This antithetical structure in which behavior to be avoided is set in contrast to behavior to be pursued is perhaps one of the most distinctive features of parenesis. Although Paul has creatively modified the form, it is nevertheless striking because we see in it the fusion of apostolic paradigm, illustrating the positive ideal, with the addressees' present behavior, illustrating the negative paradigm.

This fusion achieves its sharpest focus in the phrase "seeks not its own" (οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς [1 Cor 13:5]), a phrase that underscores one of the most conspicuous shortcomings of the Corinthians (some of them, at least) by recalling a phrase used earlier in 1 Corinthians 10. In 10:24, the following prohibition is given: "Let no one seek his own good but the good of his neighbor" (μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητείτω ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου). To buttress this prohibition—that is, this negative ethical imperative—Paul makes his instinctive move by concluding the section with a final appeal couched in identical terms, but this time he phrases it so as to adduce his own apostolic behavior as the paradigm: "just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved" (καθὼς κἀγὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἵνα σωθῶσιν [10:33]). He thus exemplifies the ideal that he urges upon the Corinthians, as the explicit *imitatio Pauli* motif in 11:1 makes clear. In 13:5 the phrase is stated in the

48. Lehmann and Fridrichsen, "1 Kor 13," 70–79.

indicative, but its earlier occurrence has already shown how the ethical imperative becomes illustrated and concretized by the apostolic paradigm. Thus, what is here stated in a gnomic way and therefore expresses a general truth has already been actualized in Paul's own apostolic conduct (10:33). That this conduct has been adduced as being exemplary for the Corinthians provides the compelling basis enabling them to reproduce this outlook within their own behavior.

THE FINALITY OF LOVE AND THE APOSTOLIC PARADIGM
(1 Cor 13:8–13)

In 1 Cor 13:8–13, the language of vv. 1–3 is recalled, confirming Johannes Weiss's suggestion that the three sections of the chapter are arranged in an a-b-a pattern.[49] In vv. 1–3 the hyperbole served to highlight the "gnostic" propensity for making absolute claims. Verses 8–13 counter this propensity by underscoring the partial quality of human existence, especially existence "in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ).

The section begins with a declaration of the absolute finality of ἀγάπη: "love never fails" (ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει). Spiritual gifts such as prophecy, tongues, and knowledge have no ultimate finality. They are temporary scaffolding belonging to "this age." Even as they are practiced and experienced "now," they are intrinsically partial. The eschaton will only dramatically reinforce their penultimate quality. The Corinthians have erred because they have reversed this fundamental eschatological truth. For them, essentially partial gifts possess finality, and these gifts are worth making ultimate claims about, when in fact ἀγάπη alone can be seen to possess such finality. It alone reveals the interior of the Christ-event that turned the ages. The quintessential eschatological reality, then, is ἀγάπη, and it is the only such reality to have invaded the now in any absolute sense. For this reason, it alone can be called the earmark of existence "in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ). It alone should become the ultimate reality of Christian existence. It alone should be primal.

At this point, Paul makes the instinctive shift to self-referential language by contrasting the "then" and the "now" of his own life. The key term is "child" (νήπιος), for it captures the fundamental misconception of the Corinthians. Their failure to apprehend the finality of ἀγάπη accounts for their puerile behavior in being preoccupied with the partial, as well as for the glaring imperfections in their corporate behavior. It is this that renders them immature children who apparently still "think as children" (cf. 1 Cor 14:20). Paul's "maturity," by contrast, consists in his recognition of the ultimate finality of ἀγάπη, as well as in his recognition that Christian knowledge, in particular, is partial. "Now" this knowledge can only be experienced passively, not grasped

49. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 311; also Lund, "Literary Structure," 266–76.

actively. Ultimate knowledge is beyond the reach of this age. Ἀγάπη alone has penetrated this age. Paul's assertion "Now I know in part" (ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους) expresses his present apostolic outlook. His maturity recognizes knowledge for what it is: excessively inflating and incurably partial. The Corinthians' immaturity causes them to misconstrue knowledge as the gift possessing absolute finality. The surpassing superiority of ἀγάπη lies not in the fact that it alone extends to the eschaton but that it alone represents the extension of the eschaton into the present.

Whether or not this interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13 captures the subtlety of Paul's line of argument, it at least takes seriously the self-referential language and its parenetic function. There is no longer any mystery about ἀγάπη. It has been introduced as the primal impulse of Paul's own apostolic behavior, without which the stereotypical charges leveled against him by unknown opponents would be true. Were his apostolic work not motivated by love, he would be nothing more than an empty-headed Sophist fond of peddling the gospel, and his words would be "empty," as some charge in 2 Corinthians. Equally clear is the fact that the Corinthians' own glaring imperfections, despite their claims to the contrary, only serve to underscore the conspicuous absence of love within their corporate life. For this reason, no substantial "upbuilding" is occurring.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul does not "descend back to the plane of reality," as K. Barth suggests,[50] because chap. 13 is grounded in the concrete reality of his own apostolic experience. From this Paul plunges ahead into a discussion of what the corporate life of the Corinthians would be were they to "pursue love," as he has done. Without launching into a detailed analysis of chap. 14, we may simply note that the discussion is notable for the way in which Paul refers to himself and his behavior. Repeatedly, as in 14:6–12, he proposes what he would do to bring about more edifying conditions were he in their situation (similarly, in 14:14–15, 18–19). As noted earlier, chap. 14 may be seen as the working out of the second half of the antithesis introduced in 8:1–2: "love builds up." In chap. 14, Paul proceeds to instruct the Corinthians how love can and should become a concrete reality in their corporate life as a congregation. Although love is not mentioned in chap. 14 after v. 1a, it functions as the crucial middle term.

50. K. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (New York: Revell, 1933) 88: "After chapter xiii 1 Cor xiv signifies once more a descent to the plane of the rest of the Epistle, which was left at xii.31."

SUSAN R. GARRETT

6

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD AND THE AFFLICTION OF PAUL
2 Cor 4:1–12

Paul saw suffering and struggle as the hallmarks of his apostolic existence (for example, 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 4:7–12; 6:4–10; cf. Phil 1:29–30). He wrote to the Corinthians that the apostles were exhibited by God as "last of all, like persons sentenced to death" (1 Cor 4:9a). The relevance of popular philosophical portraits of the afflicted sage for understanding this aspect of Paul's discourse has long been recognized.[1] In his teaching and publications, Abraham J. Malherbe has helped us to understand how remarkably nuanced and varied is Paul's adaptation of such philosophical portraits.[2] The recent work of one of Malherbe's former students, John T. Fitzgerald, on Paul's use of the *peristasis*-catalogs, or "hardship lists," prevalent in Hellenistic moral philosophy has deepened our understanding still further.[3]

To be sure, some scholars have rejected the theory of Hellenistic philosophical influence, arguing that the proper interpretive background for Paul's ideas about the endurance of suffering is rather to be found in Judaism. Wolfgang Schrage, for example, argues that Paul's hardship lists derive not from Stoicism but from Jewish apocalypticism, which Paul has interpreted in light of his Christology.[4] But, though some of his arguments are persuasive, Schrage's approach reflects an unwarranted tendency "to see an unbridgeable

1. This relevance became known especially through the work of Rudolf Bultmann, in his dissertation *Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (FRLANT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) 19, 71–72. For a history of research prior and subsequent to Bultmann (focusing on scholarly attention to Paul's use of *peristasis*-catalogs, or "hardship lists"), see John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 7–31.

2. Works by Malherbe pertinent to the topic include "The Beasts at Ephesus," *JBL* 87 (1968) 71–80; "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to I Thess ii," *NovT* 12 (1970) 203–17; "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," *HTR* 76 (1983) 143–73, esp. 170–71; *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 141–43; and *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 47–48, 52–60, and passim.

3. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*.

4. Wolfgang Schrage, "Leid, Kreuz und Eschaton: Die Peristasenkataloge als Merkmale paulinischer theologia crucis und Eschatologie," *EvT* 34 (1974) 141–75.

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ABRAHAM J. MALHERBE

Greeks, Romans, and Christians

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FORTRESS PRESS   MINNEAPOLIS

1990