

The Bible Expositor's Analysis

First Corinthians, Chapters 12 – 14

By Sheldon Todd Wilson

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PREFACE

Corinth was a large city situated about two miles inland from the Gulf of Corinth and eight and one-half miles from the Saronic Gulf. It was at the western end of the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus to the Greek mainland. Corinth had two major harbors, (Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf to the east, and Lechaeum on the Corinthian Gulf to the west) and a smaller harbor. Thus, Corinth controlled land traffic between the Peloponnesus and the mainland, as well as the east-west trade routes of the Mediterranean.

The city lay north of the citadel (the Arco Corinth), a steep, flat-topped rock. In ancient times, the Arco Corinth held a temple of Aphrodite. A temple to Apollo was to be found in the city proper.

Corinth had been rather cosmopolitan in its population up to the time of its destruction by the Roman Consul, L. Mummius in 146 B. C. Upon its reestablishment by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., it became, if anything, more cosmopolitan. It was home for Roman freedmen and retiring legionnaires, for naval personnel, traders, Greek natives and dispersed Jews.

Augustus made Corinth the capitol of the province of Achaea. During this period the city began to revive and prosper economically. It quickly became a large "center of industry, commerce and commercialized pleasure."¹

The sources of Corinth's wealth were several. Trade, as well as industry (particularly in ceramics), contributed to Corinthian wealth. But much of the wealth coming into Corinth came, Strabo tells us (VIII. 378), by the many people who came to worship Aphrodite and to seek the pleasure of her temple prostitutes.

Indeed, this particular part of Corinth's "traditional" or purely mythological religion gave rise to the ancient expression "to Corinthianize." This term, intended primarily to describe sexual excesses, such as supposedly characterized temple "worshippers," meant literally "to fornicate like a Corinthian." Almost certainly, however, it came to include other types of gross conduct.

The temple of Apollo (who was also a part of traditional mythology) may have provided somewhat less revenue than the temple of Aphrodite. But two facts are noteworthy. First, Apollo was the Greek god of prophecy (cf. his gift to Cassandra); second, his prophets (particularly the oracles at Delphi) gave advice to those who sought it, and their "method of divination" was by possession, the medium being "filled with" (or inspired by) the god.

The temples of Apollo and Aphrodite have here been described as "traditional" or purely mythological religion. By this is meant that religion which is usually thought of as Greco-Roman mythology. Its followers believed natural phenomena depended upon the gods; sought the advice of the gods through oracles; worshiped in regular temples according to fairly uniform rituals which

¹ Oxford Classical Dictionary (p. 290)

were open to the public; had nothing like Christian piety, but taught that pride (hubris) was sinful if extreme and that the gods were personalities to avoid offending. There were then (as today) crimes and seductions perpetrated in the name of a god.

Other religions also existed, which, by these standards, can only be described as "unorthodox." These were the mystery religions, which were also widespread (so much so that perhaps the term "unorthodox" is ill-advised). They incorporated myths, and involved gods which were believed in some sense to be personal. Found throughout the ancient near-east from Persia to Rome, the better known of these include the following:

The cult of Dionysus (known as Bacchus in Italy) was fairly widespread throughout mainland Greece, with one of its chief seats being at Athens. While less widespread in the Peloponnesus, it is highly unlikely that after the time of Corinth's reestablishment by Rome, both the Athenian influence (Dionysus) and the Roman (Bacchus) should, in such a city, remain unknown.

Also, there were the Eleusinian mysteries, whose main objects of worship were Demeter and Kore. Cereal grain and human fertility were emphasized by the Eleusinian mysteries. These mysteries, revered throughout antiquity, also promised immortality. This cult was centered, as its name implies, at Eleusis, near Athens. These mysteries, like the others, were open only to initiates who underwent a course of purification. The exact secret of the mysteries is unknown, but it is certain that, as already implied, new life, or immortality was their focus. Further, it is known that the mysteries induced ecstasy in the mass of worshipers, and that in this ecstasy the worshipers were assured of a better life to come. The mysteries were characterized by unrestrained emotionalism, and thoughtful men were appalled by such patent irrationalism. It seems that the ancient Greeks were unable to be subject to both profound thought and sublime feelings.

The cult of Isis was another widespread mystery cult. It had its origin in Egypt, but was spread throughout the Mediterranean, primarily by sailors. Initiation into the mysteries of Isis was progressive, leading from the status of Neophyte to fully sanctified. This cult was well known among the coast towns of Greece.

Mithra was an Aryan deity adopted and spread by the Persians. This cult was open to men only and had strong appeal for soldiers. Thus, the Roman legions effectively carried this cult throughout the Roman empire. As with the cult of Isis, initiation was a highly charged emotional affair, which was likened to the experience of death.

Other mystery cults existed throughout the Roman Empire, some of which were no doubt represented at Corinth. But these are four major ones, which by synthesis with other cults, had far-reaching effects. While the earlier sexual excesses may have been curbed by the first century A.D., Dionysus/Bacchus was still a potent force for ecstasy.

In defining mystery religions, a few common features must be described. This is, in some cases, merely a composite, since exhaustive evidence is precluded by the very nature of the mysteries.

The object of these cults was soteriological, the goal being the salvation of men (in the sense of immortality), but the initiates never became actively "mission oriented."

While salvation was thought of in terms of eternity, and even involved, in one sense or another, the identification of the initiate with the cult god, it was regarded as salvation from moral and physical evil, destiny or fate, material corruption and often material imprisonment.

Each cult functioned around its own myth. But these myths, unlike those of the more

traditional religions, were not mere stories, but eternal dramas in which men could be caught up and with whose gods they were encouraged to identify.

It is thought that initiation into the mystery cults involved at least an acting out of the myth-drama of the particular cult by the candidate. In fact, the art forms of drama and tragedy were the direct results of the initiatory rites of Dionysus. The initiate, in this manner, came to be identified with the cult god.

Worship ranged all the way from the adoration of idols (most mystery cult gods and goddesses were represented by idols) to sexual orgies. Josephus records the case of the seduction of a follower of Isis by a Roman of equestrian rank. The seduction succeeded only because of the complicity of the Isis temple priests.

All the mystery religions, so far as the sources indicate, were characterized by ecstasy,¹ both in initiation and other cultic celebrations. Such ecstasy produced behavior which ranged in intensity from gross sexual orgies and the eating of living flesh, to "ecstatic" speech² and bodily manifestations.

It has been stated that the cults were not missionary oriented. This is true in the sense of there being no "divine commission," or official outreach. Yet the power of the ecstasies made zealous advocates of their initiates. As has been noted, such mystical experiences appealed to those not of a thoughtful turn of mind, by presenting an immediate, visible experience rather than an abstract, intellectual theology.

It is well to remember that both the Dionysic and the Eleusinian mysteries originated in Greece, were quite ancient and had their chief seats of worship within 50 miles of Corinth. Mithraism, because it had such a strong appeal to men (particularly soldiers), cannot possibly have failed to be represented in Corinth; for not only was the reestablished Corinth a Roman colony in which freedmen and retired military personnel were settled, but, being the capitol of the province, Corinth doubtless saw its share of troops on active duty.

Since the worship of Isis seems to have been spread primarily by sailors, it seems highly doubtful that, with three ports, Corinth could have escaped such influence.

These mystery cults were the objects of great syncretistic activity; the gods and goddesses of the various cults were often equated with similar deities in different parts of the world, until it came to be the general belief that some of the gods were the same, but had different names in different localities;

Additionally, nobody was restricted to belief in one deity, or initiation into only one cult. Sects were not mutually exclusive.

These trends of syncretism and eclecticism, especially because of the paucity of primary source material, make it impossible to isolate the one or two major religious factors of any given city or time. But within these undeniably broad limits, virtual certainty can be attained on several points.

There are obvious parallels to Christianity, which, we insist, are superficial. Yet to the Corinthians, as to many today, they seemed quite profound. Both Christianity and the mysteries had a story of salvation, rites of initiation, and the "indwelling" of a god or gods (enthusiasm). Hellenism was full of hypostatic unions of one sort or another. Many of the mythical pantheon were said to have begotten children by mortals. Such relationships were entered by Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Aphrodite and Apollo, to name but five. The Iliad pictures the mother of Achilles (Thetis) as divine.

The motif of the dying and rising god was common to both Christianity and Hellenism; so

also were the rites of communion and baptism, as well as the reception of divine spirits into personal lives. Even the love feast, referred to only in I Corinthians, more closely parallels the feasts of the Greek cults than anything else in Christianity.

Certain spiritual dynamics appear common to both Christianity and Hellenism, such as admitting "bond and free" and (with the exception of Mithra) women as well as men (cf. *Hellenistic Religions*, F. C. Grant, p. 173 ff). Furthermore, the Corinthian Christians had doubtless heard of Pentecost, had perhaps witnessed genuine tongues being spoken, and assumed that such tongues were also the equivalent of their former pagan practices. Or perhaps such behavior simply came to be synonymous with worship in Corinth.

Even the Christian belief in resurrection had been confused, probably with pagan notions of immortality. These similarities will be dealt with later; suffice it here to say that there were several notions common to Christianity on the one hand and the mystery religions on the other, and that these similarities could give rise to problems of such magnitude as to account for the entire First Epistle to the Corinthians, most especially chapters 8-15.

Three things must also be remembered about Paul himself, in order to fully grasp the intended effect of the epistle. First, Paul was quite capable of frequent bursts of emotion (cf. Gal. 1:6, 8-10; 3:1-3). Second he alternates between praise and rebuke, his rebukes often being given in a tone of stinging sarcasm. Finally the general tone throughout the epistle is that of total exasperation.

A few observations are now in order with regard to the Church at Corinth. The first thing worth noting is the fact that Paul's preaching in Corinth was done regularly in the local Synagogue. (Act 18:4-5). The second point is that when this arrangement became impractical, the Church moved next door to the house of Justus (Acts 18:7). Another point is Paul's statement that the Corinthians had never had anything stronger than theological "milk"; nor were they yet able "to eat meat" (I Cor. 3:1-3). This assessment is more than amplified throughout the entire epistle.

To take another example of the effect of pagan syncretism when applied to Christianity, note the party divisions in I Corinthians ("I am of Peter," etc.). This reflects precisely the relationship which an initiate to a mystery religion bore to his mystagogue (who performed the initiation). It seems quite clear that the Corinthians were attempting to add the Hebrew God, in the person of Christ, to their pantheon (cf. Lahse, p. 242). Even His resurrection was thought to be more on the order of the pagan view of "immortality," which was the motivating factor in Paul's writing I Cor. 15.

To further demonstrate the nature and extent of paganism, it is helpful, here, to look briefly at Acts 15, 17 and 18. In Acts 15, Paul is in Jerusalem. This is the occasion upon which Peter gave his judgment concerning the issue of circumcision, saying it was unnecessary for Gentile converts to Christianity. But James stated that they should "abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled and from blood." This is stated as the guideline for the proper behavior of Gentile Christians (Acts 15:20). It is confirmed in Acts 15:29 and again in Acts 21:25. The word order is identical in both references. The things "sacrificed to idols" in these verses are summed up as "pollutions of idols" in 15:20, but the content is the same in all three references and is almost formulaic in its expression.

And what of these admonitions? They obviously reflect an attempt to eliminate the features common to heathenism which were most abhorrent to Judaism. Even circumcision, which was so

dear to the Jew, and which caused such a stir at Galatia, and which in fact was the reason for this very edict, could be waived; but the continuance of these other practices could not. F. F. Bruce points out that "idolatry, fornication and murder were the three cardinal sins in Jewish eyes. Abstinence from these is regarded in the Talmud as binding on the whole human race since the days of Noah²." It might seem strange that murder was omitted from this list, but for the fact that murder was considered a crime by the Greeks also; thus, there was no need to state such a prohibition. Perhaps it seems strange to include the admonition concerning fornication in such a list. But, again, the pagan situation explains it, for fornication was "regarded lightly" by the pagans. The other three items are the very essence of idolatrous religions, particularly the mysteries.

The "things sacrificed to idols" (or the pollutions of idols) provides an interesting study. For idolatry is a broad enough category as it is, and the New Testament authors do much to broaden it. As spoken of here, it is used in its sense of heathen worship. Such worship involved animal sacrifice to pagan deities, whether or not an actual idol or image was present. Of all the words relating to idols and idol worship, the greatest concentration is to be found in the Corinthian Epistles.

The word "idolater" is found only in I Cor. 5:11 and Eph. 5:5. The Corinthian passage, unlike Ephesians, assumes that there were some Christian men in Corinth who were indeed idolaters.

The plural, "idolaters," is found in I Cor. 5:10, 6:9 and 10:7. It also occurs in Rev. 21:8 and 22:15. Of these, only the reference in I Cor. 10:7 can pertain to Christians actually practicing idolatry.

The word "idolatries," denoting all forms of idolatrous practice, occurs only in I Pet. 4:3, and is not particularly informative for our purposes.

"Idolatry" occurs in Acts 17:16, I Cor. 10:14, Gal. 5:20 and Col. 3:5. The Acts passage refers to the city of Athens as being so "utterly idolatrous," or "so full of idols." It is a different Greek word than the others, and denotes the practice of idol worship. Of the other occurrences, that in Col. 3:5 is figurative, and expands the notion of idolatry, while Gal. 5:20 is a very general statement and does not necessarily denote the presence of idol worship at Galatia. The passage in I Cor. 10:14, however, unambiguously points to idolatry as being present among the Christians of Corinth.

Furthermore, I Cor. 8:10 gives us the only occurrence of the possessive case of "idol." It states that "if a man sees you who have knowledge, sitting at the meal table in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?" The supposition, be it well noted, involved not the possibility of eating in an idol's temple, but the possibility of being *seen* while eating there. The former was a point of fact about which there was no doubt. It was no slight possibility; it was one of the questions about which the Corinthians had pointedly enquired.

The most important word in this discussion is "idols." It is the translation of two words. The first is the usual word for idol, occurring in Acts 14:20, Rom. 2:22, I Cor. 12:2, II Cor. 6:16, I Thes. 1:9, I Jn. 5:21 and Rev. 9:20. Of these none implies unambiguously the condition of idolatry in the particular setting being addressed, though the Acts passage and the first two of the passages in Rev. speak of idolatry coupled with fornication, and denote a general condition of decline within the Church.

The second word to consider is not simply a word for "idol," but is translated "meat sacrificed

²

F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (1951).

unto idols." This word occurs in the latter two of the three passages in Acts under discussion here (i.e. 15:29 and 21:25) and in I Corinthians 8:1,4,7,10;10:19), where it is made very clear, contextually, that the eating of "things sacrificed unto idols" was in fact being done by Christians at Corinth.

In defense of the Corinthians the following points must be made. 1) Attendance at public festivals would automatically bring the Corinthians into contact with pagan sacrifice, as possibly would 2) membership in a guild. Furthermore, 3) buying meat from the market for home consumption (according to I Cor. 10:25) would likely involve buying "temple cuts," as such meat was perhaps the best which could be bought.

The question remains, however, as to what else the Corinthian Christians might have become involved in if they accepted such an invitation as that of I Cor. 10:27 . It is easy to give the traditional answer that all that was at stake was a meal sacrificed to idols. Still, it seems that such an issue in itself would be insufficient cause for such Corinthian division. And because several other issues are dealt with in I Corinthians, most of which take their starting point in Pagan practice (probably the mysteries), we are quite as justified in supposing there was something more afoot in Corinth than just meat offered to idols, as tradition has been in supposing that there was not.

On this point it is freely admitted that these conclusions are tentative, amounting to nothing more than conjecture with a strong probability.

To return to the admonition of Acts, it will be remembered that the second item of that admonition involves blood. Two possibilities exist. The first is the interpretation in which the word means the shedding of human blood, or "blood-guiltiness." Two points tell against this interpretation one being that the Greek language has a perfectly good and frequently used word for blood-guiltiness, and the other being that even pagans were not generally in need of such an injunction. Certainly other ills were more widespread and more obviously in need of redress than the practice of vendetta. In the second interpretation the word "blood" refers to the libations of blood sometimes used in pagan temples, and more frequently in the mysteries. The sensitivities of Jews would be aroused by this for the same reason as for eating things strangled, namely the exhortation of Lev.17:10ff.

The third consideration of the eating "of things strangled." While this could refer merely to foul killed for home consumption, it is just as likely that it also included sacrifices.

It is worth mention, however, that some of the mystery religions (as well as, upon occasion, certain traditional Greek religions) ate meat freshly killed and raw. Indeed, the devotees of Dionysus, in their ecstatic frenzy, ate the victim while it was yet alive. It is known also that at Alexandria, sacrificial victims were strangled, and that in Macedonia, to the North of Corinth, sacrifice "was not by knives, but by stumps and clubs" (Strabo). Furthermore, the word "strangled" can, in the Greek, mean "drowned. "

The last word of constraint contained in the injunction of the Acts passages involves the word fornication. The precise meaning of the word itself is the point of some debate. But all possibilities involve what Christians regard as sexual misconduct; and such practice was the very reason for temple prostitutes, as well as some of the rites of the mysteries. Thus, pagan temple worship and mystery religion orgies may be assumed as major causes of such behavior.

It is interesting to note that the word "fornication" is used 24 times in the New Testament. Of these, seven appear in Revelation, mostly in a figurative or symbolic sense. It occurs five times

in the Gospels where the subject is adultery, with no specific cases mentioned. The only three occurrences in Acts are in the passages here under consideration, which constitute general admonitions rather than specific cases. The remaining nine occurrences are found in Paul's writings, four in I Corinthians and one in II Corinthians.

In Gal. 5:19, Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5 and I Thes. 4:3, the word is used in a general sense and does not assume the actual existence of fornication among the Christians addressed.

In the Corinthian correspondence, however, Paul deals at some length with actual cases of fornication. Only I Cor. 6:13 can be considered as a general statement, the rest (I Cor. 5:1, 6:18, 7:2) being specific instructions to Christians indulging in fornication. It is not overstating the matter to claim that sexual immorality was rampant in Corinth. Nor can we avoid the conclusion that of the Churches which Paul founded, and for which we have evidence, only Corinth had such a problem, at least on such a grand scale. Again it seems more likely than not that the practices of the mystery religions provide the best means of understanding the injunction.

Taken together, these four items of injunction (things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication) seem much more likely to be major objections to pagan worship habits than merely four isolated and unrelated bits of behavior considered offensive by the Jews. The decision of the Jerusalem Council, then, reflects the truth that pagans need not come through Judaism by means of circumcision in order to become Christians. The other truth reflected in the decision (i.e. to "abstain from pollutions of idols, etc.) is equally clear. That truth is that Christianity requires a complete break from paganism, particularly such practices as are diametrically opposed to the Old Testament teachings.

Hence, while one need not be circumcised to be a Christian, abandonment of pagan religion and ritual is indeed a prerequisite. The Christian faith is perfectly valid without circumcision, but pagan practices are not to be tolerated. It is this very paganism from which Gentiles are to be saved and set apart.

What is so striking is that precisely at Corinth such behavior as resulted in two of these injunctions (as well as other practices common to the mysteries but unnamed in Acts) are so well deserved. That "things strangled" and "blood" don't seem to figure in the problem at Corinth cannot weigh against the probability that the Corinthian Christians were bringing paganism to church with them. These four condemned practices are noteworthy, not simply because they were widespread, but because they were unbelievably gross in the eyes of the Jews. By far the greater number of sacrifices, (even in the mysteries, so far as we have evidence) was "by knife." And drinking blood was perhaps unnecessary even if it was common.

On the other hand, "fornication" and "things sacrificed to idols" were both gross and common to the point of dull routine. Thus it can be no surprise that if the present hypothesis is correct, fornication and consumption of "temple cuts" should provide the basis for the Corinthian enquiry of Paul concerning proper behavior.

With this in mind, Acts 17 and 18 become very instructive indeed. For we are better able to grasp Paul's method of dealing with the Greeks and the Greek response to his teaching. In Acts 17:16 we see Paul as one whose "spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city so full of idols" (or "that was so idolatrous") . This was at Athens. We note further in Acts 17:18 that he offended the Greeks because he "preached Jesus and the resurrection." We need no special insight to know that the Man Jesus would not, Himself, have offended the Greeks; for He would have been

viewed as but one more god or hero. The doctrine of resurrection, however, would have seemed utter nonsense to them, and we might easily conclude that this was what so offended them. This view is explicitly confirmed in vs. 32.

In vs. 21 we are told that the Areopagus was the area frequented by those who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." This attitude is more explicable in terms of habitual syncretism than idle curiosity.

It is quite interesting that Paul uses Corinthian syncretism to his own end, when he points out (vs. 22b - 23) that he understands the Greeks to be "very religious" in all things. Then he mentions the inscription "to an unknown god." This of course was part of the syncretistic thrust of Greek religious passions, and Paul thereby seeks to insert the Judaeo-Christian faith into this conveniently vacant slot, by gratuitously equating true religion with this unknown god. He says "What you worship in ignorance, this I set before you."

Of course, Paul did not conceive of Christianity as just another religion among many and amenable to syncretism. But once Christianity was preached and accepted, its exclusive nature could be drawn out at leisure. The point to be made is simply that the syncretistic impulse of the Greeks was obvious and undeniable; and Paul sought to use this impulse to gain a hearing.

Nor was the method different at Corinth. Even if the content of Paul's preaching was different, his method was not. Though he may not have preached resurrection (though this seems impossible, I Cor. 15 would indicate it was the case), he still began in the Synagogue and ended with an appeal calculated to profit by the Greek tendency to syncretism. In Acts 18:14-15 the Jews had brought Paul before Gallio. It is interesting that Gallio dismissed the case as being built merely on "words and names" and not on "a matter of wrong."

Now the Jews were the very picture of those who abhorred syncretism. They even hated and rejected Paul's attempt to equate Jesus Christ with God "contrary to law."

Yet Gallio's response is instructive. He assumed that syncretism was the natural order of things for all men, as it was for the Greeks, and as indeed it appears to have been for himself. For he was unable to see what the Jews were upset about.

This impulse to syncretism does much to complicate the task of understanding individual Greek religions; *but it provides the hermeneutic key necessary for understanding I Corinthians.*

Bearing the Corinthian background in mind, and remembering especially their strong ties to idolatry, what Paul said to them at many points must have sounded very strange indeed. In I Cor. 8:7 Paul notes that some "have been so accustomed to the idol" that they cannot accept the practical results of liberation from idolatry; hence their weak conscience is defiled when they eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols.

This truth must have been very unsettling, for it went counter to all that the Corinthians had for so long believed and practiced. Yet it could have sounded no stranger than the truth of I Cor. 12-14 will sound to those who for years have labored under the self-gratifying delusions of the modern charismatic movement. These studies will sound quite alien to anyone who has been long in that movement.

Hence the plea that the statements found herein be treated in their entirety before they are judged. Sane, scholarly criticism will give a hearing to the whole corpus rather than firing from the hip at each sentence as it is read. Such a hearing will convince the fair judge of the truth contained in what follows.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF I CORINTHIANS

- I. Greeting and Thanksgiving (I Cor. 1:1-9)
- II. Concerning the Disorders Reported (I Cor. 1: 10 - 6: 20)
 - A. The spirit of division (1: 10 - 4: 21)
 - B. The moral question of fellowship (5: 1-13)
 - C. Appeals to courts of law (6:1-11)
 - D. Moral relapse (continued) (6: 12-20)
- III. Concerning the Corinthian Enquiries (I Cor. 7: 1 - 15: 58)
 - A. Marriage (7: 1-40)
 - B. Meats sacrificed to idols (8: 1 - 11: 1)
 - C. Disorder in public worship (11: 2-34)
 - D. Spiritual manifestations (12: 1 - 14: 40)
 - E. Resurrection (15:1-58)
- IV. Conclusion (16:1-24)

The following is a list of verses in I Corinthians which show remarkable parallelism to the mystery religions, or demonstrate either the Corinthian impulse to syncretism or Paul's method of using Corinthian syncretism in his teaching method.

1:12-14 shows the division caused by personal devotion to ones mystagogue.

2:6 demonstrates the sense of superiority of initiates to the uninitiated masses.

3:11 demonstrates the syncretistic impulse.

4:1 shows Paul's reliance on Corinthian syncretistic tendencies in his teaching method.

5:1-2, 6 show the Corinthian's pagan attitude toward morality (and incidentally reflects the syncretistic spirit).

8:5-10 demonstrates the distinct possibility, if not the practical likelihood, of Christians in pagan worship.

10:5-8, 14, 18-21 demonstrates Paul's teaching method in erecting a theological edifice with a syncretistic scaffold, then removing the scaffolding upon completion of the edifice.

15:1-4 Treats Paul as a mystagogue (cf. 1:12-14).

15:4-12 reflects the Greek belief in immortality rather than resurrection.

15:29 conjecture: a remnant from Paganism?

15:43 shows Corinthian beliefs to be consistent with the mysteries, that full power comes at initiation rather than at the resurrection.

15:51 Paul plays the mystagogue by "showing a mystery." (Had he fallen into disrepute among the Corinthians for not revealing enough "mysteries" to those who, like the Athenians, always wanted "to hear some new thing"?).

TRANSLATION OF FIRST CORINTHIANS, CHAPTERS 12 – 14

12:1 But concerning those who are spiritual, brothers, I do not wish you to be ignorant. 2 You know that when you were Gentiles you were being swept away unto dumb idols just as you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the spirit of God asserts "Jesus is cursed" and no one is able to say "Jesus *is* Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; 5 and there are diversities of ministries and the same Lord; 6 And there are diversities of effects but the same God, who incorporates all in all. 7 And to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common advantage. 8 For to this one through the Spirit is given a word of wisdom, but to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit. 9 To another faith by the same Spirit but to another gifts of healings in the one Spirit; 10 but to another effects of miracles, to another prophecy, to another differentiation of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues and to another translation of tongues. 11 But the one and the same Spirit produces all these things, allocating privately to each one just as He decides.

12:12 For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of the body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all made to drink one Spirit.

12:14 For even the body is not one part, but many. 15 For if the foot should say "because I am not a hand, I am not of the body" is it, because of this, not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say "because I am not an eye, I am not of the body" is it, because of this, not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing; if the whole were hearing, where the sense of smell? 18 Now God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 But if it were all one part, where were the body?

12:20 Now on the one hand *there are* many parts, but on the other hand, *there is* one body; 21 and the eye cannot say to the hand "I do not need you," or again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." 22. But much rather the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable. 23 And upon the parts we consider less honorable, we bestow greater honor, and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty. 24 But our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body giving greater honor to the lacking parts 25 in order that there be no schism in the body, but that the parts should care the same one for another. 26 And if a part suffers, all the parts suffer together; if one part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it.

12:27 Now you are *corporately* the Body of Christ and individually parts of it. 28 And these parts God has placed in the church: First missionaries, second prophets, third teachers then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of tongues. 29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak in tongues? Do all translate? 31a But seek the greater gifts.

12:31b And I will yet show you a most superior way. 13:1 If I should speak with the tongues of men

and of angels but have not love, I am become a ringing bronze or a crashing cymbal. 2 And if I should have prophecy and should know all the mysteries and have all the faith (so as to displace mountains), but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I should donate all my possessions, and if I should give up my body in order that I might boast, but have not love, I am benefitted nothing.

13:4 Love is patient. Love is kind, is not envious, does not brag, and is not arrogant. 5 *It* does not behave indecently, does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not consider evil, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all, believes all, hopes all, and endures all.

13:8 Love never fails. If there are prophecies they shall be abolished, if there are tongues they shall cease; if there is knowledge it shall be abolished. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But whenever the perfect might come, that which is partial shall be eliminated. 11 When I was a child I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I reasoned as a child. When I became a man, I eliminated the things of the child. 12. For now we see in a mirror an indistinct image, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know completely even as I am also known. 13 Now remains faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love.

14:1 Pursue love, yet seek the spirituals; but rather that you may prophesy. 2 For the one speaking in a tongue does not speak to men but to a god, because no man understands, but he speaks mysteries in a spirit. 3 But the one prophesying speaks to men edification and encouragement and comfort. 4 The one speaking in a tongue edifies himself; but the one prophesying edifies the church. 5 Now I wish you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you might prophesy; and greater is the one prophesying than the one speaking in tongues, except he should translate, that the church might receive edification.

14:6. But now, brothers, if I should come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I benefit you, except I should speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching? 7 Similarly, lifeless things giving voice, whether pipe or harp, if they should not give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be understood what is being piped or harped? 8 For even if a trumpet should give an indistinct voice who shall prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, except you give by the tongue intelligible speech, how will it be understood what you are saying? For you will be speaking into the air.

14:10 There are, perhaps so many kinds of languages in the world and none *are* unable to communicate. 11 Therefore if I should not know the force of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the one speaking *will be* a foreigner to me. 12 Since you are zealous of spirituals, seek that you might abound to the edification of the church. 13 Hence, let the one speaking in a tongue pray that he might translate. 14 If I should pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind. 16 Because if you should bless in a spirit, how shall the one filling the place of the novice say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you say? 17 For truly you give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

14:18 I give thanks to God that I speak with tongues more than all of you. 19 But I would rather say five words in church with my mind, that I might instruct others also, than say ten thousand words in a tongue.

14:20 Brothers, do not be children in understanding, but be baby-like in evil; yet in understanding be mature. 21 In the law it is written that "in other tongues and by other lips I will speak to this people and they will not hear" me even so, says the Lord. 22 So tongues are for a sign, not to the ones who believe but to the non-believers; but prophecy is not to the non-believers, but to the ones who believe. 23 If, therefore, the whole church should be gathered together and all should speak in tongues and novices or non-believers should enter, would they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all should prophesy and a novice or a non-believer should enter he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; 25 The secrets of his heart become manifest, and so, falling upon his face he will worship God, declaring that "God is indeed among you."

14:26 What is it then, brothers? Whenever you are gathered together each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has a translation; let all be done for edification. 27 And if any man speaks in a tongue *let* it be by two or at most three and in order, and for translation. 28 But if there should not be a translator, let him keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 And let two or three prophets speak, and the others discern. 30 But if it is revealed to another sitting down, let the first keep silence. 31 For you can all prophesy one at a time, in order that all might learn, and all might be encouraged; 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33a For God is not a God of disorder, but of harmony.

14:33b As in all the churches of the saints, 34 let the women keep silence during the services, for it is not permitted for them to speak; but let them be in subjection as the law also says. 35 But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church; 36 or did the word of God come forth from you? Or did it reach you only?

37 If anyone supposes himself to be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge the things I write to you, that they are a command of the Lord; 38 but if anyone *is* ignorant, let him be ignorant. 3 So brothers, seek to prophesy and do not forbid to speak in tongues; 40 but let all be done properly and in order.

FIRST PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

A. TRANSLATION

12:1 But concerning those who are spiritual, brothers, I do not wish you to be ignorant. 2 You know that when you were Gentiles you were being swept away unto dumb idols just as you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the spirit of God asserts "Jesus is cursed" and no one is able to say "Jesus *is* Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

12:2 ἀφωνα (adjective, accusative, neuter, plural) 1. Of Idols: *silent; dumb* 2. "*Incapable of speech, or of conveying meaning.*" The idea of describing idols as "dumb" or "speechless" in a passage preparatory for dealing with spirit engendered speech is interesting. Probably no firm conclusions can be reached, but it is striking that the learned behavior of ecstatic utterances is quite appropriate of a god who can neither inspire nor understand speech under the very best of conditions. But too much should not be made of this little irony, which was, perhaps, unintended.

12:2 ἀπαγόμενοι (present participle, passive, nominative, masculine, plural) *To lead away; carry off; lead astray.* The prepositional prefix has at least an intensive effect. The word often has the connotation of referring to a state of helplessness on the part of the subject. So here, that element is visible also. "However you were carried off (led astray, or misled) you were swept away to serve dumb idols."

12:3 λαλῶν (present participle, active, nominative, masculine, singular) 1. *Prate; chatter; babble* 2. *To make an inarticulate sound* 3. *To talk.* It may indeed refer here to inarticulate speech or to the non-language of ecstatic babble. However, it is a purely gratuitous assumption to say that it *must* designate inarticulate utterances. The analogy of the word to the English word "speak" is wholly appropriate, focusing not on the *type* of speech, but on the fact of verbalization in some manner. To press it further is to press an assumption into duty as a fact.

12:3 λέγει (present, active, indicative, third person, singular) Here, *to recount, tell or relate.* Again it is often used of articulate speech. But it is also used with reference to oracles and need not refer to coherent speech *per se*: rather, like the English word "say" it emphasizes the content of the

utterance rather than the specific nature of communication. James twice says that "the scripture says;" we cannot understand this to refer to anything other than the *content* of scripture.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

There is in 12:2 a relative clause which Burton categorizes as "Past General Supposition" in which "the relative clause refers to any occurrence of a certain act or class of acts, and the principal clause what was wont to take place in any instance of the act referred to in the Relative Clause. Here, the principle clause states that the Corinthians were "being swept away to the dumb idols" and the relative clause states that this "being swept away" in fact coincided with or resulted from being "led."

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:1 "But concerning those who are spiritual, brothers . . ." The phrase "those who are spiritual" has been variously translated "the spiritual gifts," "the spirituals" or something of the sort. These are all possible. But the immediate context speaks of people, not gifts. The text does not refer merely to speaking "in spirit" but to *people* who thus speak. Furthermore in the following context, when gifts are under discussion, it will be observed that there to, the problem deals primarily with people who make distinctions among themselves on the basis of their gifts.

If the phrase is to be understood as a spiritual manifestation, it certainly refers to a verbal manifestation, and, like the terms "spirituality" and "inspirations" cannot be separated from the human aspect. The entire text (chapters 12-13-14) makes it abundantly clear that "spirituality" had become a contest with winners and runners-up. It cannot be wide of the mark to see here a deliberately broad reference which embraces both the human element as well as the spiritual inspiration which animates men. The notion is simply that of "spirituality."

12:1 "I do not want you to be ignorant." The Corinthian milieu was doubtless well characterized as ignorant. It will become clear that Paul is dealing with another area in which the Corinthians had incorporated a facet of pagan idol worship into their "Christianity" just as they already had in other areas (Cf. I Cor. 8:1-7, 10; 10:14; 15:1, 2, 34). The ignorance of which Paul speaks is not mere ignorance, but the result of syncretism, or the combining of several religions, to the detriment of Christianity.

12:2 "You know that when you were Gentiles you were being swept away unto the dumb idols." The word "Gentiles" here could as well be understood as "pagans" or "heathen," but certainly not Jews."

Clearly the reference is to the pre-Christian lives of the Corinthians, who were not Jewish converts. The characteristic concern here is that of defining idolatry for the purposes of rooting it out. It is said that they were constantly (or perhaps habitually) being swept away into the practices of idolatry. This is a general statement and may include all the practices current in the pagan religions of the time. Verse 3 narrows the idea to what most likely were the ecstatic speech characteristics of the orgies of the mystery religions. The idea of being "swept away" or "led off" or "led astray" reinforces this impression. It should be noted that the "being swept away" occurs in the present tense. While the present tense here is treated as an instance of the "historical present," it may be thought of as the "static present," indicating events then in progress.

12:2 "Just as you were led." The usual translations seem wanting here, rendering the Greek particles "however" or "howsoever" etc. As Burton points out, in constructions such as this, the relative clause denotes a definite act, set of acts, or conditions, the occurrence of which provides some of the causal circumstances for the occurrence denoted in the principle clause. When stated in the imperfect, as here, that occurrence is said to be repeated, habitual, or customary. Thus the issue is not unrelated to how the Pagan Corinthians were led. The statement might be paraphrased "just as (under those circumstances) you were led."

It is possible to translate the passage as follows. "You know that you are (even now) being swept away unto dumb idols, just as you were led when you were Gentiles." While this is admittedly fanciful and farfetched, the general sense of the present situation seen in verses one and three, demands that something of that situation be present in verse two. It would have been pointless, in this context, to remind the Corinthian's of their past life in Paganism if there were not salient features of that life still in play at the time when this passage was written. We will not adopt this "translation," but the situation which it clarifies is certain.

What were the circumstances in which the Corinthians were "swept away to dumb idols?" They were the circumstances of Corinthian Paganism. The cultural element of idolatry and the mysteries pervade the text from Chapter 8 through 15.

Perhaps no one fully knows the extent of Corinthian Paganism but much is known about it. Two things must be kept in mind: 1) Corinth was a hodgepodge of cults and mystery religions, and 2) It is at least likely that the earliest types of Gnostic thought found both expression and an eager audience in Corinth. Here, the point is that as Pagans, the Corinthians had been led away to many varieties of idolatries, magic and mystery religions (all of which come under the heading "idolatry") by whatever spirits or impulses moved them.

Furthermore none of the mysteries had a sense of mutually edifying purpose or direction, so far as society or even the cults themselves were concerned. Each cult or mystery appealed to individuals, but no effort was made to transcend the purely individual except in the sense of being received into the association of the blessed after death. The sense of one's usual religious practices being for the benefit of others was alien to the Mysteries. All mutual edification pertaining to this life was thought to be derived from political or social institutions; hence, the state religions were thought to provide

blessings upon society as a whole, the benefits of which were open to all.³

12:2 "Therefore I make known to you." The reason Paul is making something known is that he doesn't want the Corinthians "ignorant." Their ignorance concerned true spirituality, and resulted from confusing their Pagan past with the Christian present. As verse three will demonstrate, this particular aspect of spirituality is that which is manifested in speech and might be called "inspiration."

The nature of Paul's teaching will take as its starting point the Corinthians' past experience in Paganism; hence the statement of v.2, "You know. . . ." The unknown must always be explained on the basis of the known. The ignorance of the Corinthians concerned the true Christian counterpart of their well-known Pagan past. That is, they had to be told what the manifestations of the Christian spirit would look like. Just as Pagan religions were characterized by a certain sort of "leading" and its resultant behavior, so Christianity also had a specific set of characteristic manifestations of which the Corinthians were in fact ignorant.

How this ignorance came about is largely speculation, but it is certain that a large element of eclectic intermingling of religions took place. This deliberate syncretism resulted in a more or less homogenized, "cosmopolitan" Paganism; but when the Jewish notions inherent in Christianity were added to the concoction, inconsistencies and confusion resulted.

12:3 "That no one speaking in a Spirit of God says 'Jesus be cursed'." The assumption is that Jesus was being cursed or at least that such was always a very real possibility. The point is that no one could curse Jesus and claim to be led by God's Spirit. The spirit that curses Jesus, and the Jesus who is thus cursed are incompatible. This is true whether the cursing of Jesus (Christ in His humanity) was done in regular speech, as the Gnostics might deliberately have done, or in ecstatic speech, as anyone might have unknowingly done. Two facts stand out: 1) Only Gnostics or avowed infidels would deliberately curse Jesus; but avowed infidels are not Paul's concern here. Neither, probably, are Gnostics. "Cursing Jesus therefore was an accidental or unknowing behavior. This could only have occurred in ecstatic speech where the speakers did not know what they were saying (or indeed if they were saying anything at all). 2) Such practices as were acceptable and common in the mystery religions could not be deemed suitable for Christianity, because of the ever present possibility of unknowingly cursing Jesus.

It may also be that cursing Jesus was the way to avoid persecution, while calling him Lord was a way to assure it. This immediately returns the thrust of the argument to the problem of Gnosticism, yet without altering its thrust against ecstatic utterance.

³ Indeed, this is apparently why the mystery religions arose in the first place. The functions of public religion gave individuals little or no personal hope for dealing with their deepest needs. The mysteries had no function beyond meeting these existential needs.

12:3 "And no one is able to say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." The contrast is obvious. It is between the confessional statement "Jesus is Lord" and the cursing of Jesus which could result from ecstatic speaking fostered by any spirit other than the Holy Spirit. If the word translated "speaking" in the previous clause has any special significance here, it is that it denotes speech as such, whether ecstatic utterances or articulate statements. Thus it is contrasted with the purposeful, articulate, confessional statement "Jesus is Lord." The cursing of Jesus is probably best understood not as a specific statement or formula, but as any of a class of statements which bring reproach on His name. To deliberately maximize the contrast for the purpose of explanation, we may paraphrase the entire thought thus: "Anyone may at any time curse Jesus in any one of a variety of ways, even in inarticulate speech; and this may be done in any spirit other than God's spirit. But no man, under any circumstance is able by his own power or that of another, to stand and confess plainly to men that Jesus is the Christ, except by the Holy Spirit."

To say, by the Holy Spirit, "Jesus is Lord" was to confess unambiguously, before all within hearing, that one was a Christian; many have died for such a clear confession. To curse Jesus in any way was not of the Holy Spirit. And to speak in an inarticulate manner was to give oneself to unknown influences perhaps to speak unknown curses.

The spirit which curses Christ is not Holy, and the one which plainly calls Him Lord is not profane. The first and unmistakable implication is that one must speak articulately to know the spirit which guides him.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical aspects of Paul's teachings become better developed later. The primary teaching here is that all religious fervor, or worship, is generated by a spirit.

There is a contrast drawn between the manifestations of "pagan spirits" and the Holy Spirit, insofar as the views of Jesus are concerned. The pagan spirits curse Him; the Holy Spirit alone calls Him Lord.

But there is also an implicit contrast in the phrase "just as you were led." This not only indicated the diversity of idols which might be served by pagan spirits, but that such service involved certain kinds of behavior, whether ecstatic speech, live sacrificial meals or drunken orgies. In all cases the Corinthians were said to have been "swept away *just as* they were led."

The point is that the very test to determine the kind of spirit manifesting itself in human speech (and behavior) is whether or not it will plainly, articulately call Jesus "Lord."

H. PARAPHRASE

Now, my brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant with regard to true spirituality. I want you to be able to recognize spirituality. For you remember how, when you were pagans, you were swept away to serve idols incapable of human speech, just as, under those circumstances, you were led. So let me explain that cursing Jesus, regardless of how ecstatically, is not the leading of God's Spirit. Rather, the test of the Holy Spirit is to plainly designate Jesus as the Lord of your life. No other spirit can do this.

SECOND PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

A. TRANSLATION

12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; 5 and there are diversities of ministries and the same Lord; 6 And there are diversities of effects but the same God, who incorporates all in all. 7 And to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common advantage. 8 For to this one through the Spirit is given a word of wisdom, but to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit but to another gifts of healings in the one Spirit; 10 but to another effects of miracles, to another prophecy, to another differentiation of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues and to another translation of tongues. 11 But the one and the same Spirit produces all these things, allocating privately to each one just as He decides.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

12:4 διατέρεσ (noun, third declension, feminine, nominative, plural) 1) *Appointment; division.* 2) *tearing apart.* The first general meaning is obviously correct. In this context the idea is that of dividing portions, or issuing "shares." The word "allotment" is perhaps the best English translation. Verse 11 is a recapitulation of this statement.

12:4 χαρισμάτων (noun, third declension, genitive, neuter, plural) *A gift; something freely and graciously given or a favor bestowed;* 1) of material goods and possessions; 2) of mental, emotional, or spiritual blessings. The essential feature of this word is its nature of being free. The gifts of God include daily bread, children and clothing. The "gifts of healings" provide the only specific example of "spiritual gifts" to be found in this text. A convincing case might be made that gifts are to be thankfully received rather than sought after, but such a case enters evidence not strictly from the area of lexicography.

12:6, 11 ἐνέργημα is translated in accordance with the meaning dictated by the two sentences in which it occurs. The meaning of the word is, in both cases, primarily related to the work of God within the Christian, rather than the nature of the work itself.

In the first instance (v.6) the thought is basically that of "working in" or "bringing in" the spiritual manifestation. This seems to necessitate the awkward compound *in-works*, or the slightly ambiguous *incorporate*.

In the latter case (v.11) the force is not so much that of distribution (which is denoted by the word "allocating") but of the actual motive power; thus the word "produce." This eliminates the ambiguity of the word "incorporates" in v.6 by stating explicitly that these spiritual manifestations (lit. "these things") are not given to Christians to use as they please, or even when they please. In any actual occurrence of a Spiritual manifestation, it is nothing less than the Spirit manifesting God's character or will, as He decides. If this point alone were to be made, much of the current charismania would disappear over night.

12:6 ἐνέργημάτων (noun, third declension, genitive, neuter, plural) 1) *Work; activity.* 2) *Effect;*

experience. The word occurs only twice in the N.T., here and in v.10. It presents either the cause (activity) or the effect (experience) of something, but not both at the same time. Therefore a choice is to be made. The term under consideration cannot itself give a clue as to which realm it denotes. The context alone can be decisive and it too is fraught with ambiguity. On the one hand it can be argued that the parallelism is designed to denote three sorts of objective activity, or types of spiritual "outworking" in which the channel is clearly the person involved. This is the standard approach and cannot be dismissed easily. On the other hand, it could as easily be that by this parallelism Paul seeks to demonstrate three distinct ways in which the Holy Spirit works. By such an understanding it is clear that "gifts" refers to abilities or conditions, "ministries" refers to acceptable service, and "effects" to the result. Thus, a person may have the *gift* of faith and exercise it in his ministry of prayer and see the effects of God-produced miracles.

This view best explains the language of what follows. For what follows are not all "gifts" but they are all "manifestations of the Spirit." And at this point in the tract, Paul is dealing with spiritual manifestations, as indistinguishable from either the man or the activity.

Furthermore, the word also can be so translated in 12:10, whereas "works" would be somewhat more awkward and would still refer to the effects rather than the causes. "Workings" would do awkward justice to the word.

"Effects" is the translation given by NASV, and is certainly correct. The word for "do work; perform," or "practice" is ἐργάζομαι while the corresponding noun is ἐργον.

But here, the root word (ἐργον) is prefixed by the word for "in" or "within" (ἐν). This is frequently used of supernatural powers and "internal" action. The effects of such internal supernatural "inworking" may be quite visible, but the idea of the text is not that people are given permanent power to perform miracles at will; such teaching may well be financially profitable but it is cruel and a sign of moral bankruptcy to teach such a view.

12:7 φανέρωσις (noun, third declension, nominative, feminine, singular) *Disclosure; announcement; manifestation*. The word in this context encompasses the categories of gift, ministry, and effects (even if this is understood as works) and thus is broader than "announcement." "Disclosure" is better, but it is awkward. The main point is the diversity of the ways in which God discloses His character and will. Thus, gifts, ministries, and effects are viewed as a group, leaving "manifestation" as the best translation. The important contribution of this word to the context is the confirmation of the idea of diversity, contained in the allotments of gifts, ministries, and effects. Indeed, the case could easily be made from this context that all gifts which are spiritual have proper spiritual application (ministries) and end with predictably spiritual results (effects), all of which are spiritual manifestations.

The following points should be noted: 1) ministries, gifts, effects are "disclosures" or "manifestations"; 2) the Spirit's functions on behalf of the believer include communicating God's will, word, and work to the spirit of the believer; 3) negatively, the spirit Himself is never magnified. 4) Acts 2:4 "As the Spirit gave them utterance" (as opposed to "as the Spirit was manifested in them") perfectly parallels the subjective genitive ("manifestation of the Spirit") here.

The word occurs in the singular not because only one manifestation is given. This is to assume, as is often done, that the word "manifestation" is a simple equivalent for the word *gift*. And *Gifts*, it is further assumed, are permanent and multiple. Rather, the word is in the singular precisely because manifestations are given one at a time as the Spirit pleases, and they are usually not permanent. Christians do not show people the Holy Spirit himself, but manifest His will, by showing, saying and

doing as He makes it known. For the content of such a disclosure must be the will or character of God.

12:7 δίδοται (present, passive, indicative, third person, singular) Here the word denotes a continual or intermittent "giving" rather than a once, given permanent enablement. Hence, the disclosures of the Spirit are not generally to be considered as permanent. Even the "gifts of healings," because they are in the plural, seem to refer to an ongoing process whereby healing is granted to the recipient on numerous occasions. Thus, while some healings may be permanent, even remissions can be considered as healings, and the gifts themselves seem to be part of an ongoing process of "disclosure."

12:7 συμφέρον (present participle, active, accusative, neuter, singular) 1) *Bring together; help; confer a benefit; be be profitable or advantageous;* 2) *bear together; gather; collect.* As an articular participle occurring as the object of a preposition the word must function as a substantive. It is best understood primarily as that which is gathered together, in this case, the church. But the nuance of corporate advantage is unmistakably present making it impossible to use the word usually translated "church."

Furthermore, Paul is stressing, in the larger context, the necessity for church building by proper use of spiritual manifestations. This sort of mutually beneficial behavior is precisely at the root of the term used i.e. "to bear together."

12:10 δυνάμεων (noun, third declension, genitive, feminine, plural) 1) *Power; might; strength; force.* 2) *ability; capability.* 3) *meaning.* 4) *deed of power; miracle; wonder.* 5) *resources; wealth.* 6) *Power, as an alien spirit* 7) *that which gives power.*

The best translation renders the word "miracle" or "wonder." The expression demands a slightly heightened effect which the word "power" does not have; hence "supernatural power;" wonder or miracle. It must be pointed out that the spiritual manifestation here described is not the ability to perform miracles, but the blessing of *experiencing* them. The word used merely means power or wonder; it does not mean "endued with power" or "authorized and empowered to work wonders." Such a meaning would require δυναμόω or the compound word ἐνδυνάμοω.

The phrase, then, means "the effects of God's miracles" not the "ability to empower." We are not to think of a Christian magic act, but a "charmed" life such as that of John Newton. Those people whose lives seem to be characterized by supernatural protection or deliverance can easily be seen to enjoy the "effects of miracles" though we should greatly embarrass them if we looked to them to perform miracles.

12:10 ἐρμηνεία (noun, first declension, nominative, feminine, singular) *Translation; interpretation.* Here, the word means translate. Even given the somewhat looser meaning of interpret, the meaning could only be equivalent to the word "paraphrase" because it deals with the elucidation of unknown speech. It has been urged that the Acts 2 occurrence of speaking in tongues was "interpreted" by Peter when he said "these are not drunk as you suppose etc." Peter is said to have "interpreted" the occurrence by explaining the nature of the phenomenon. But that will scarcely do because those who listened to Peter's explanation were there as a result of hearing in their native dialects of the "mighty works of God." Thus Peter could explain the significance of the phenomena, only because there was no need for either translation or paraphrase. But what Paul calls for is not the explanation of the significance of tongues, but their *meaning.* The "words" need to be understood for the Church to be edified.

12:11 βούλεται (Present, active, indicative, third person, singular) 1) *Wish; want; desire* 2) *make a deliberate decision.* Here, of course, the meaning is that of a deliberate decision. And though we are not given any particular reasons why the manifestations are distributed as they are, the decision cannot be whimsical or arbitrary. The overall purpose underlying the distribution of such manifestations (as given in 12:7, 11; 14:45 and illustrated in 12:24-27) is the edification of the church.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:4 "Now there are diversities of gifts." This simple statement has several implications, all of which can be brought out to a greater or lesser degree by comparing the translation *diversities* with the equally useful word *allotments*.

The concept of diversity of gifts is emphasized by the KJV and retained in the ASV. The word "variety" is used in the RSV and the NASV and emphasizes the difference present in the gifts rather than the interdependence seen with "diversity." Both words imply distinctiveness. But the sense of "deliberate distribution" is absent from those translations. A good paraphrastic expansion would translate the word by "diverse allotments." The situation to which Paul spoke, as the text implies, is that of many spirits leading to a single sort of practice. This is the paganism which is contrasted with Christianity in which one spirit produces various practices and manifestations. (cf. 12:1-3). The whole purpose of vv.4-6 is to show that Christian religion is unlike paganism; indeed it was unlike Corinthian Christendom. The clear implication is that pagan misunderstanding and practice had already strongly infiltrated the church at Corinth. The governing principle of the whole of I Cor. 12-14 is that paganism cannot be sanctified, but must be excised.

The first step in that direction is taken by defining "spiritual" activities, both pagan (12:1-3) and Christian (12:4-10) and contrasting Christianity with Paganism. The gifts, ministries, and effects of vv. 4-6 are in contrast with the religious practices identified with the dumb idols of v. 2, whether fellowship with a temple prostitute, an animal sacrifice, or the orgiastic frenzy associated with the mystery religions.

It is instructive that the contrast is not a temporal contrast, as one would expect. "When you were pagans" (v.2) may refer to the past; but the "now" of v.4 does not refer to "now" as a point of time, but in the purely abstract realm of logic. The statement of v.4 is factual and normative for Christianity; but it need not be a practical reality, and the implication is that for the Corinthians it was indeed not a temporal reality, either "then" or "now." In short, Paul is drawing the attention of the Corinthians to the fact that religious practice, or spiritual manifestations are not uniform in Christianity.

12:4 "But the same Spirit." This mention of the Spirit, along with "Lord" (v.5) and "God" (v.6) are identified, with one another (by the parallelism) and contrasted to the "dumb idols" themselves (v.2). These dumb idols are not to be limited to the wood or stone statues, but include all the pagan gods of Corinth.

The Philosophical theme of "the one and the many" is seen here. The one spirit provides diverse gifts. By "participation" in the one, the many receive their character and identity.

12:5 "And there are diversities of ministry, but the same Lord." The theme of unity in diversity is again sounded, there being "diverse allotments of ministries" or "services," but only one Lord. The parallel unmistakably associates "ministries" with "gifts," and "spirit" with "Lord."

12:6 "And there are diversities of effects but the same God." To the theme of unity in diversity are added the "effects" of "the same God." It is important to notice that the parallelism speaks of what is commonly called the Trinity, which is regarded as unity on the one hand; and gifts, ministries, and effects which on the other hand are clearly not a unity but a diversity (until they are subsumed under the rubric of "manifestation").

This is clearly to be expected, for Paul is dealing with the contrast between the Trinity and the diverse pagan gods on the one side, and between the diversity of God's manifestations and the essentially monolithic characters of the various cults, on the other. Each cult had a story, a myth, a liturgy, a promise, and a sacred rite or mystery.

It should be reemphasized that there is no temporal contrast between the Corinthians as pagans and as Christians, but a reminder of how things *once were* contrasted with how things *now are*. The past and what *is*, is contrasted with a stated norm which *ought* to make a difference.

12:6 "Who incorporates all in all" The RSV and the NASV overstate the case by supplying "them," the RSV supplies "things" and NASV supplies both "things" and "persons". The implication then is that God inspires or produces all the spiritual gifts in all the Christians, contrary to what has just been stated, and what will be stated again more emphatically in 12:2-30. The expression is an idiom which may here be paraphrased "God runs the whole show" or "God works everything together" or "Who manifests himself in each of us."

The word translated "inspires" in the RSV is best translated "works" as in KJV, ASV, and NASV.

There is also an implied contrast, for Paul claims that Christian spiritual manifestations, though diverse in nature, are worked produced, or operated by one God rather than, as with any effects of paganism, by the devotees themselves or by evil spirits.

12:7 "And to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common advantage." In this verse Paul (1) sums up gifts, ministries, and effects under the teaching of "manifestation;" (2) defines the purpose of such a manifestation; and (3) contrasts the purposefulness of God's work with the chaotic, individualistic, purposelessness of "just as you were led" (v.2). This completes the "introductory" portion of the paragraph. The body consists of the examples of vv.8-10; and the conclusion (which partially restates the introduction of vv.4-7) is found in v.11.

It is only an assumption that these spiritual manifestations are permanent. True gifts, such as salvation or the indwelling Holy Spirit are permanent. But such manifestations as these surely are not. Any person can be given any manifestation on any given occasion. One week one may prophesy and the next have a word of knowledge, or perhaps something else. Though the incident does not record the use of such terminology, Peter provides a good analogy: For one minute he was given a spiritual manifestation when he confessed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus pointed out that this was revealed by the Father. A little later, Peter tried to deny Jesus His cross, whereupon Jesus said "get behind me Satan." While this does not prove a swift succession of spiritual manifestations, it does support the notion of their inherent impermanence.

12:8 "For to this one through the Spirit, is given a word of wisdom, but to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit." Here Paul turns to a string of examples to illustrate his basic contention of vv.4-7 and to heighten its contrast with vv.1-3. The important factors include the following: (1) Different spiritual manifestations are given to different people; (2) The same Spirit is operative in the distribution of all the manifestations.

The word of wisdom is compared with the word of knowledge. Apparently, the word of knowledge has to do with intellect, acquired knowledge, and accurate memory. The spiritual manifestation of a "word of knowledge" involves spiritual enablement to recall and properly state an item of acquired knowledge, or a datum of judicial inquiry, to the benefit of the Body of Christ. But the knowledge and intellect were gifts of God at a person's natural birth (indeed such a gift has been called the "gift of study"). The spiritual manifestation is not of knowledge previously unlearned, but consists of a word of knowledge; it is spoken to the right people under the right circumstances. That seems to be the extent of the Spirit's work with this particular manifestation.

The manifestation of a word of wisdom, on the other hand, seems to take even less promising material, i.e. common sense, and derive from it an insight into problem and solution which is simple in its statement yet profound in its effects on the Body. It seems best to describe this manifestation as the verbal expression of an insight into the various needs of the corporate Body and its individual members.

The contrast is instructive. The Spirit might give utterance to one who has a superior knowledge, or give insight to one who has only common sense or perhaps both, but the same Spirit is manifested in both.

12: "To another faith by the same Spirit, but to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit." The contrast here seems strange, but is particularly instructive for our Corinthian Age. The manifestation of faith is here not saving faith, because it is said to be a spiritual manifestation, and is not given to all, but to some. Saving faith is, by definition, had by all who are saved. The manifestation of faith would have different effects in different circumstances. But it is as likely to issue in subjective, purely personal, responses as it is to result in any material or physical blessing. One's manifestation of faith may bring strength, courage and peace to one's fellow martyrs, or joy to the assembly. This faith is not a secret password to use in getting God to be good to us. (Indeed, the most it can do is merely *let* God give us His goodness.)

Juxtaposed with the manifestation of faith is the "gifts of healings." It goes without saying that no Christian is ever healed of all his diseases; for all finally die. The "gifts of healings" refer to Christians who receive miraculous, or non-humanly-mediated, healings. It is a gratuitous concession to see here a wandering faith-healer or miracle-worker. The "gifts of healings" refer to the healings *experienced* by men, not anything bestowed by or through men.

It is instructive that the manifestation of faith is contrasted with gifts of healing. To one is given faith, to another healings. The faith does not guarantee healings, and the healings are given without reference to faith. Why? The answer is that it must be in keeping with the "common advantage."

It should be noticed that healings are the *only* spiritual manifestations specifically called "gifts" in this text. By this is meant a lasting effect, not a skill or craft. A gift of healing describes the divine healing of a person of some infirmity. The effect (restored health) lasts indefinitely within the healed person; whereas a word of knowledge occurs periodically and has, for the speaker, no lasting personal effect. The word of knowledge is once spoken and thus externalized. The results of healing abide within the person healed; it is his. Even so, the "gifts of healings" properly belong to the

church; they are for the "common advantage" and give the Body a glimpse of God lovingly at work. This is a cause for joy and at once a reward and cause for an ever deepening faith.

12:10 "But to another effects of miracles." This "spiritual manifestation" refers to the Christian who leads a "charmed life." God's hand of protection and deliverance bears such a believer steadily through "many dangers, toils and snares" in situations of impossibility or great improbability. The end is always of major consequence for the church. No vagabond wonder-worker is in sight here. No "worker of miracles" is in view here, but one to whom is given an existence conditioned upon God's mighty works.

12:10 "To another prophecy." It should suffice to say that Biblical prophecy differs markedly from the current Jean Dixon sort of occultism. Biblical prophecy is the result of seeing behind the visible structure of our cosmos, of seeing the fullness of the spiritual truths which undergird the universe and hold it together. The verbal expression of such "visions" or "revelations" are prophecy, and only incidentally contain direct statements concerning future events, though often a great many future-oriented implications may be drawn from them.

12:10 "To another differentiation of spirits." This manifestation is the counterpart to prophecy. It allows some members to protect their fellow believers from false or exaggerated prophecies or other claims by discerning the spirits of the prophets whether true or false. Though the immediate context does not deal with the criteria of discernment, three basic considerations of judgment are given elsewhere, within the limitations of which discernment is made by the gifted individuals. The first is the consistency of the prophecy with the fruits of the Spirit (Matt. 7:15, Gal. 5:22-23) or the Spirit of Christ (I Cor. 13:1-8) The second is the prophecy's usefulness or pragmatic value for the church (I Cor. 14:14-26). The third is whether the Spirit affirms the Lordship or Messiahship of Jesus (I Cor. 12:3) as well as the Apostolic witness (I Jn. 2:4, Mk. 16:20).

12:10 "To another various kinds of tongues." First the tongues granted by the Holy Spirit are said to be "kinds"; i.e. of various standardized, categorized, recognizable types. By "recognizable" is meant that all people would recognize the sounds as language, whether or not they understand the meaning of the words, just as a person today can tell by listening that Chinese and French are languages without understanding anything that is said. Second, these tongues are the subject of translation. Tongues here are definitely to be viewed as actual languages.

12:10 "And to another, translation of tongues." As noted in the lexical study, mere interpretation of the significance of the phenomenon on each occasion of its occurrence is insufficient. Only the idea of helping the church to understand the meaning of what has been said by means of translation or paraphrase is acceptable.

This notion of translation is also able to bear two different meanings. It may be that the manifestation of interpretation is simply that a person less expert or less fluent, in a given language or language group can understand well enough to paraphrase, or translate haltingly, but is unable himself to speak clearly or precisely in the language.

The other possibility is that it is a manifestation given by the Holy Spirit without regard to aptitude or prior training.

12:11 "But the one and the same Spirit" is in stark contrast with the implied situation of the paganism of 12:2. There is here no "just as you were led "(however that may have been), no "unto dumb idols" just "the one and the same" unifying, gracious, Holy "Spirit".

12:11 "Produces all these things" is in equally stark contrast with the situation in Corinth where man-

made divisions and hierarchies of all sorts were the rule. It also contrasts nicely with what today passes for the phenomenon of "gift" tongues, which is deliberately taught and learned by Mormons, Moslems, Hindus, and alas, by Christians.

Just as in v.6 God is said to produce or work "an in all" here the Holy Spirit is said to produce or work "all these things."

12:11 "Distributing privately to each one" again provides a contrast to much of what passes today for spirituality. The statement is unambiguously clear that each person receives precisely that manifestation which the Holy Spirit deems appropriate.

It is equally clear that the distribution is private. It is not a public bestowal. This last point is another good bit of evidence that the Acts phenomena were not the free exercise of "gifts" at all, but the opening ceremonies of a new age, with the appropriate manifestations of the authentic nature of the Apostles and their Gospel.

Finally, there is the sense of distribution so foreign to much of Christianity today (both charismatic and non-charismatic). The only necessary requirement for all Christians, wherein they must be alike is in their being ever more "conformed" to Christ. But within the limits of the requirement is enough freedom to swallow all "be-like-me" Christians.

12:11 "Just as He wills." This is perhaps the most important phrase of the pericope. This prohibits seeking manifestations not already possessed. It prohibits trying to teach that which cannot be learned. It prohibits trying to learn from men what only the Holy Spirit can impart. cf. Simon Magus.

Some Christians are both intellectually gifted, and well educated. But only the Holy Spirit can direct the "word of knowledge." It is this consideration alone, in this pericope, which tells against the "learned language theory" of tongues. Furthermore, this passage alone provides the clue to the interpretation of 12:31 and 14:5, the first of which is quite ambiguous otherwise, the latter being either a figurative usage, or blatantly contradictory.

Conclusion: Verses 7 and 11, taken together provide the most concise conclusion. Verse 7 is stated from the believers side and it teaches that all spiritual manifestations are granted for the common good of the church. Verse 11 teaches, in unequivocal terms, that the Holy Spirit apportions His manifestations just as He pleases.

Both verses agree in teaching that each believer receives at least one manifestation of the Spirit.

The whole point of the passage is the diversity of these spiritual manifestations, and the essential unity of the Benefactor. These "manifestations" are the means whereby each person is granted by the Holy Spirit, some form of visible display of the character and will of God.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In 12:2 the statement "being swept away to dumb idols just as you were led" bears an implicit contrast to an unspoken proposition in regard to Christians. "Swept away" can scarcely describe Christian worship as it is pictured or described anywhere in the N.T. (except at Corinth; but of course that is precisely the issue to be corrected).

Furthermore, "dumb" well applies to idols who cannot distinguish even the clearest speech, and who

can therefore be worshiped in gibberish; but it is antithetical to the Christian God, who both speaks and understands common speech.

But there is also present the notion of sameness in paganism regardless of the individual cult, temple, or mystery, which is reminiscent of orgies and ecstasies, and which is antithetical to the diverse methods of worshiping God and the edifying of one another, which Paul here predicates of Christianity.

Indeed, the notion of edifying one another is wholly missing from the idea of being "swept away." But it is clearly, and at length said to be the case with Christianity that true spiritual manifestations or disclosure is given by the Holy Spirit and severally are worked together by God for the common good of the saints.

H. PARAPHRASE

Now there are distinctive varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. And there are distinctive varieties of services, but the same Lord is magnified. And there are distinctive varieties of effects, but the same God who incorporates them in us. And to each one is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the benefit of the other. For to this one is given a word of wisdom by the Spirit, but to another the same Spirit gives a word of knowledge. To another is given faith by the same Spirit, and by that one Spirit another is given gifts of healings. To another is given the effects of miracles, to another prophecy; to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to yet another the translation of these tongues. But the one and the very same Holy Spirit produces all these various things, and distributes to each his own, just as He decides.

THIRD PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:12-13

A. TRANSLATION

12:12 For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of the body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all made to drink one Spirit.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

12:12 καθάπτερ (conjunction or adverb) *As; just as; as it were.* This word is intensive in nature, and is here used in developing a strong simile. The parts of the simile, (the new teaching and the illustration) are more nearly identical than merely separate entities with some common characteristics; hence this intensive construction.

The sense is almost that of delimiting the conception of a living body rather than making a comparison of two different kinds of bodies.

The sense of the intensive construction is clearly that of "just exactly as." The point is that the "body of Christ *is* a living body in the same ways that a living human body is, i.e. being made of many parts and "partaking of one Spirit."

12:12 σῶμα (noun, third declension, nominative, neuter, singular) 1) *Body.* Used of a man or animal, whether dead (corpse) or alive; 2) *slaves;* 3) *that part of the (physical) body that constitutes the physical reality, or the thing itself;* 5) *the Christian community.*

The present context uses the word both as the living human body, and as the Christian community. The Christian community is here likened (by means of a strong simile) to a living human body. The clear inference is that the church, i.e. the Christian community, or local church is the body whose Spirit is the Holy Spirit. This does not deny that believers have the Spirit. Indeed, Paul has just explained that all Christians are given "a Spiritual manifestation for the common good."

It now becomes apparent that these diverse spiritual manifestations are complete only within the Christian community where the aggregate of the Spiritual manifestations may, in the words of the ASV, "profit withal."

This whole concept, while hinted at broadly in isolated clauses, is spelled out emphatically in the phrase "to drink one Spirit."

12:12 μέλγ (adverb). *In this manner; thus; so.* This is an adverb of comparison. Here the members of the comparison are the living human body and the "body of Christ" i.e. the Christian community or church.

12:13 ἐβαπτίσθημεν (I aorist, passive, indicative, first person, plural) *Dip; immerse; baptize.* The word here means "baptize" in a figurative sense. All Christians were "plunged into," or "immersed"

in the body of Christ. The special idea of this context (cf. v.27) is that of a permanent state of affairs, which came about at the time of salvation. This meaning is not merely a function of the tense of the verb, but rather of the sense of the whole context, which constitutes an explicit statement to that effect.

The parallel is seen in the process of dyeing a garment; it is once dipped into the dye but it ever remains dyed.

12:13 ἐποτίσθημεν (I aorist, passive, indicative, first person, plural) *Make it possible to drink*. The word here occurs in the aorist passive and implies a past accomplishment. It indicates not an ability granted, but a mission accomplished. To indicate that the ability to partake had been granted would require a different construction using the word translated "able" and an infinitive.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:12 "For just as the body is one and has many parts." This clause is the first of two which state, from opposite viewpoints, one truth, i.e. diversity in unity.

As was mentioned in the lexical study, the idea being expressed here lies somewhere between mere simile and complete identification. It is a simile in that it likens two similar entities, i.e. the human body and the Christian community. It is identity insofar as the same word (body) is understood to refer to both (cf v.27). The "body of Christ" uses the word body figuratively while the use of body to describe a human being is quite literal.

The vantage point of this clause can be described as that of unity, or of the body, for it shows the "parts" as belonging to the body, It is holistic, defining the unit (body) as that which possesses.

12:12 "And all the parts of the body, being many, are one body." This clause expresses nothing new, but views the truth already expressed from the perspective of diversity, or the various "parts." That is, it defines "parts" as those things which, though many in number, constitute one being. "Parts of the body" is the collective subject of this clause

12:12 "So also is Christ." Here the comparison is made. The first two clauses constitute one element of the comparison and are preceded by the word meaning "just exactly as;" the sense there is clearly "in the same way and to the same degree as." This does not indicate that one believer is a foot of Christ while another is an ear, but that unity and diversity maintain the same sort of relationship to one another in both bodies. This final clause is preceded by the words "so also." The comparison then is quite strict; "For just exactly as. . . so also. . ."

The exact point of contrast between this figurative "body of Christ" and the literal "living human body" is exactly at the point of individual function governed by unified purpose.

As an additional note it is worth pointing out how the passage takes on added meaning when the

word "Christ," which sometimes seems to be nothing more than a common name, is dropped, and its Jewish equivalent, "Messiah" is inserted in its place. As Messiah is a definite office or function, and not a proper name, the true function of this one great body becomes shockingly apparent. (Cf. Gal. 2:20 "Not I but Christ . . .")

12:13 "For by one Spirit we all were baptized into one body." In this clause, baptism refers either to the initiatory rite which is the sign and the symbol, or more probably to what it seals, i.e. salvation. The statement indicates that the Spirit unified many "parts" and implies that there was a common good to be sought. The essential feature involves the notion of unity, for by means of such baptism, a single entity is formed or perpetuated, i.e. the body of Christ.

12:13 "Whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free." This clause illustrates the extreme diversity of origin; and contrasts that diversity with the diversity of "bodily parts." The origin of churchmen might be so diverse as to make association of any other sort nearly impossible, yet the one Holy Spirit baptized these different people into one organism, gave them one corporate purpose, and yet, as has been stated, gave them "as bodily parts" diverse "spiritual manifestations."

Both Greeks and Jews were keenly aware of their own identity. It is doubtful that there could have been an extensive relationship between them were it not for the governmental interference of Rome.

The Greeks were explorers and often set up colonies far from Greece. But they were the very picture of cultural snobbishness, feeling that the high culture of Greece, though inimitable, should somehow be the norm. The Jews, however, were at heart isolationists despite the dispersion, and longed for the homeland. Their religious tradition and separation made it even less likely for them either to find or have much sympathy with foreigners.

The educated Greeks looked upon the Jews as barbarians suited best for slavery, while the more pious among the Jews regarded Greeks (and all who might fall into that category) as uncircumcised gentile dogs.

The distinction between slaves and free is well known. Here it is not that there was no contact between the two classes, but that legally one had rights, was regarded as human, and was greatly honored and protected, while the other had almost no recourse to law, was seen merely as property, and was frequently, if not always, the object of abuse and ridicule.

It is difficult to imagine what possible motive there could be to put such antagonistic extremes together unless as a demonstration of the universality of God's love. But even so, such a union must serve some purpose, or be instrumental in some work.

12:13 "And were all made to drink one Spirit." The basic identity of Christians of such diverse origins and spiritual manifestations is twofold. They were "baptized into one body" and they did "drink one Spirit." The word play is both interesting and instructive. Christians are baptized dipped, or immersed into one common body. And all were made to drink one Spirit. As was noted earlier, being "baptized into one body" refers to the principle of unity. This clause refers to the principle of diversity. Each individual within the Corporate body is said to "partake" of one Spirit.

The sense is synonymous with the notion of functional diversity, not that of spiritual manifestation. There is no appeal to man's volition, but rather a simple statement of fact. One of the essential features of a living organism is that it has but one Animating Spirit, i.e. one life force. This is spoken of here. The one Spirit is that of which all Christians, as "body parts" partake.

Thus, at salvation the Holy Spirit places each person within the Body of Christ, whereby he becomes a member or part of the Body. At the same time, and by the same act, the Holy Spirit enters the believer and becomes the life force within him. This is a simple reality, though frequently a Christian's behavior belies the fact. Furthermore "partaking" of the Spirit is not the same as spiritual manifestation, and though the former logically implies the latter, often practice denies it. Two points are noteworthy: 1) The essence of being a living body is the ability to partake of, or manifest, one spirit. Other spirits may also be present, but one spirit is essential to life itself. 2) The one spirit, by which the body lives is the driving force of the members of the body.

It is, however, a different matter to actually behave as though one were a body member. This does require a volitional response and characterizes the body's care of itself, i.e. one part looking out for another.

When the human body takes care of itself, the hand brushes the teeth for example, as the teeth have need, and as the spirit directs in response to knowledge of that need. In the body of Christ, one part meets the need of another part by means of spiritual manifestation. This is the Spirit's way of applying to one part of the body the necessary aspects of the will and character of God by means of another part of the body. This is Spiritual manifestation, and cannot exist apart from the body of Christ, i.e. apart from the Spirit of whom "all partake."

There is no sense here of a second work of grace, or of seeking to obtain certain spiritual manifestations, but rather the reality of salvation and the concomitant position of the believer within the Body of Christ.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The church is likened to one body with several diverse members. It is implied that different body members might be expected to have different functions on behalf of the body (cf. 12:14-26). The means whereby various people are made members of "one body" are explicitly stated to be, 1) through the agency of one Spirit (not more); 2) on the basis of identification or union (regardless of race or social standing), and 3) being made to partake of one Spirit. This last item sounds like a tautology, but is not; it is but an equivalent of the statement that God is a jealous God. The Holy Spirit will not enable believers to "partake" of, be animated by, or to manifest spirits other than Himself. Such manifesting of other spirits is accomplished by the believer himself when he is no longer satisfied with the Spirit he was freely given. When believers partake of other spirits (and the Corinthians were doing so), it is not by the will or enablement of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit, who regularly inspires plain speech in confession that "Jesus is Lord" (v.3), never enables believers to partake of other spirits.

H. PARAPHRASE

For just exactly as the living body is one organism and is composed of many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many and different, are still only one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we all were both baptized into one body (whether originally Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free) and were all enabled to partake of one Spirit.

FOURTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:14-19

A. TRANSLATION

12:14 For even the body is not one part, but many. 15 For if the foot should say "because I am not a hand, I am not of the body" is it, because of this, not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say "because I am not an eye, I am not of the body" is it, because of this, not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing; if the whole were hearing, where the sense of smell? 18 Now God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 But if it were all one part, where were the body?

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

No theologically significant additions to previous vocabulary.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

V.15 Notice that here two negatives cancel rather than strengthen each other.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:14 "For even the body is not one part but many." This verse is a reiteration of v.12. There the fact is stated that the body has many members; here it is stated that "it is many members." This is a different facet of the problem of "unity in diversity." This verse begins a two-part illustration of the facts given in vv.12-13. Verse 20 reiterates v.12b and begins the second part of the illustration.

No new teaching is given here, the single new implication being that the body (unity), by virtue of its having many members (diversity), constitutes itself a body. That is, there is no such thing as a body having many members apart from the fact that the members are the body, and thus belong to one another. There is no body apart from its several members.

The illustrations which follow serve also to show the extreme state of Corinthian ignorance. While it may be argued that there are aspects of the Corinthian epistles which teach more or less profound truths, it is doubtful that anyone would argue that these passages do more than relate the "milk" of which Paul had spoken (cf. 3:2f.); for while the theme of unity in diversity itself gives rise to some scholarly debate. Paul is not teaching so much about unity or diversity as ends in themselves, but using them as examples to illustrate the principles of "love" and "service" -- ideas which are the very basics of Christian conduct. Nor is he speaking of conduct in the world, or in the face of persecution, but in the very church itself (cf 3:3ff 11:22 14:51) The verse proleptically provides a blanket denial of the unexpressed premise of the following syllogism.

12:15 "For if the foot should say 'because I am not a hand, I am not of the body.' " The illustration begins from the perspective of the individual body member. The mood of the verb "to say" is the subjunctive, indicating in this context, the impossibility of such an occurrence, but probably also the fact that a foot (unlike the Corinthians) knows better than to deny the very ground of its being. That is, "even if a foot could talk, it would never be so foolish as to deny its membership in the body."

Yet on the assumption that it did make such a denial, and did so in a manner analogous to the Corinthian denial, the conclusion would be patently false.

The full argument is an enthymeme, the unexpressed premise being "only hands are of the body." The full argument would then run as follows: 1) Only hands are of the body. 2) I am not a hand 3) therefore I am not of the body." The syllogism is valid, the reasoning simple and straight forward, but the conclusion is wrong. This can only be so because one or the other (or both) of the premises are false. Here, the unspoken premise is obviously false. Hands are not the only members of the body. The analogy to the Corinthian madness reveals that many in Corinth believed (as do many today) that without a certain spiritual manifestation, there is no membership in the body of Christ, no salvation and no hope. At this point Paul is not dealing with a heresy of hierarchy or elitism, in which some Christians are first-class citizens of the Kingdom) and others merely second-class Christians. Here, Paul is dealing with the heresy of spiritual exclusivism, whereby admittance to the Church is based upon the manifestation of a certain mode of spiritual behavior to the exclusion of others.

12:15 "Is it, because of this, not of the body?" The question is aimed at jarring the readers out of their rut and into a proper way of thinking. The argument is patently absurd and the Corinthians are, by this question, invited to examine it. The question is aimed directly at the false Corinthian conclusion: "If the foot concludes that it is not of the body, that doesn't mean it really isn't of the body does it?"

Paul might easily have gone on with his point, as many today wish he had. But instead he labors his analogy, indicating how advanced the Corinthian disease had become.

12:16 "And if the ear should say 'because I am not an eye, I am not of the body', is it, because of this, not of the body?" The analogy here is the same, the enthymeme identical in structure, and the conclusion equally wrong. The question is again aimed at eliciting in the Corinthians a denial of the conclusion. Note how the conclusion both here and in v.15 is stated as a rhetorical question accommodating even the most ignorant reader. Eyes are not the only member of the body, regardless of how loudly they may say so, and regardless of how convinced of the matter the ear (in its insecurity and ignorance) may become.

12:17 "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where the sense of smell?" Paul now views the analogy from the perspective of the whole body. These questions are designed to reinforce the earlier denial of the unspoken premises "only hands are of the body" and "only eyes are of the body." Again, the analogy is labored, seemingly beyond the constraint of necessity. These rhetorical questions imply the impossibility of a body (which by definition has many facets and functions) having but one part or performing but one function and still being called a body.

12:18 "Now God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased." Paul closes the analogy with the explicit statement to the effect that the body not only is composed of many members, but that the arrangement and functions of the various members are determined by God, and that He is pleased with His handiwork (cf. Gen. 1:31). The statement points out that 1) God

placed the members in the body, 2) He provided a place and function for every member, and 3) He was pleased with the product.

12:19 "But if it were all one part, where were the body?" Here Paul explicitly affirms what is common knowledge, and what has been implied throughout this analogy, i.e. the body cannot be one member and still be a body. A body has many members (cf 12:12-13).

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The notion that different members might logically be expected to function differently, which was implicit in the reference made to "one body" in the last pericope, is here dealt with in explicit terms. The body is said to consist of many diverse, yet mutually dependent, members. While no single member may be said to be the essence of the body, each member is necessary to the composition and well-being of the body. There is within no single member a *sine qua non* by which any other member may be judged either in regard to its membership in the body, its proper function or its general usefulness. The only *sine qua non* by which a body member may be deemed useful is if its spiritual manifestation is used for the edification of the rest of the body. This is the very method of determining if a spiritual manifestation is genuine or not.

H. PARAPHRASE

For the body is not just one member but many. So if the foot should chance to say "I am not part of the body because I am just a foot and not a hand" is it, by virtue of this fact, really not part of the body? And if the ear should chance to say, "I am not part of the body because I am just an ear and not an eye" is it, by virtue of this fact really not part of the body? Of course not, for if the whole body were nothing more than an eye, where then, would be the hearing? Or, if the sole bodily function were hearing, how could it smell? But God placed every single member in the body just as He pleased. But if that body were only one member, in what sense could we call it a body?

FIFTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:20-26

A. TRANSLATION

12:20 Now on the one hand *there are* many *parts*, but on the other hand, *there is* one body; 21 and the eye cannot say to the hand "I do not need you," or again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." 22. But much rather the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable. 23 And upon the parts we consider less honorable, we bestow greater honor, and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty. 24 But our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body giving greater honor to the lacking parts 25 in order that there be no schism in the body, but that the parts should care the same one for another. 26 And if a part suffers, all the parts suffer together; if one part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

12:22 ἀσθενέστερα (comparative adjective, nominative, neuter, plural). *Weak; powerless*. Here the word is used in the illustration of membership in the church by reference to the human body. The members here under consideration are said to be "weaker" or "more feeble." It is impossible to guess specifically which members are referred to, or in what sense they may be considered "weaker" beyond the statement of the text itself.

In the last pericope, the point being made was simply that the body is not one member but many. Here the point is that those members do not have the same degree of strength, honor, or presentability, yet are nonetheless of the body.

It may well be that the descriptive terms found here are those used by Corinthian Christians for one another. Thus there may have been some ministries or persons who (cf. exposition on 12:3) were considered weak, services which were dishonorable, and gifts which were "less presentable." It has been pointed out that "there is a comparable estimation of man by his works in the mystery cults on the basis of natural morality." Indeed, initiates into the Mysteries progressed through stages, or degrees, to a point of utmost spirituality and beatitude. This corresponds strikingly with what is recorded in I Cor. 8:15 in the following ways: 1) The morality and mentality of Corinth were decidedly pagan rather than Christian. 2) The hierarchy seemed to be based not only upon the party divisions of Paul and Apollos (Apollo?), but also upon the uniformity of practice (pagan tongues is implied). 3) Finally, there was such division as cannot be utilitarian, but which implies a value judgment of some sort. (Paul's value laden language concerning parts being honored, being presentable, and suffering implies such a situation.) In fact, it may be that Paul demonstrates the impropriety of using value laden terms in referring to members of the Body of Christ, by comparing them to members of the human body.

It appears, then, that the problem at Corinth arose as a result either of the failure on the part of some of the Christians, to view Christianity as a Mystery Religion, or of a disagreement among them as to the mode of spiritual progression within the cult.

12:22 ἀναγκαῖα (adjective, nominative, neuter, plural). *Necessary*. In this context the word has the

sense of essential. The term is contrasted with the charge of being weak. In other words, Paul counsels that what may seem weak or powerless to the Corinthians is in reality essential to the proper functioning of the body (the church).

12:23 ἀτιμότερα (comparative adjective, nominative/accusative, neuter plural). *Unhonored (common or profane); dishonored; treated as common.* Both literal and figurative senses are attested. Here, the sense is clearly that of "unhonored," or common, rather than "dishonored." The sense of the passage is clear; it is not that noble members are viewed as profane, but that those members not considered especially honorable (novices and those who have not progressed very far in the mystery, as indicated by their spiritual manifestations!) be shown the proper care and respect.

12:23 ἀσχήμονα (adjective, nominative, neuter, plural) *Shameful; unpresentable; indecent.* And εὐσχημοσύνη (noun, first declension, accusative, feminine, singular). *Propriety; decorum; presentability.* These two words stand in contrast to one another despite the fact that they are not used as exact antonyms. (The antonym of the first word appears in v.24 and does contribute significantly to the meaning of these terms). Those specifics here described as "unpresentable" (as well as those in v. 24 described as "presentable") are body members. Those members said to be "unpresentable" are said to "have greater presentableness." That is, what the body member lacks naturally is compensated by the rest of the body. And the compensation is of the exact nature of which the presentable members have no need.

Thus, the unpresentable does not change and become presentable, but by one means or another is treated with propriety (literally "has" propriety), and is made presentable by other body members.

12:24 συνεκέρασεν (I aorist, active, indicative, third person, singular). *Mix; blend; unite.* Both literal and figurative senses are attested. Despite the fact that Paul has stated and illustrated the principle of mutual and inseparable dependence among the parts of human body, he here resorts to a word used, when speaking of such individual parts, of forming a whole from them, such as a house from boards. Paul here begins to emphasize the church rather than the human body, and he views such body parts as distinct entities.

Regardless of which perspective is emphasized, it is the end result that remains Paul's present concern. Seen in this light, it is clear that the body is indeed a functional unity. Thus, the English word "composed" seems best to fit the context.

12:25 σχίσμα (noun, third declension, nominative, neuter, singular) *Split; division.* 1) Literally; *tear; crack.* 2) Figuratively; *division; dissension; schism.* In this case the word applies to both sides of the analogy. In accordance with the probable shift in emphasis from the human body to the church, the primary meaning is figurative. As such, it 1) tells the Corinthians something which was not obvious to them; and 2) is consistent with the meaning most likely for the word translated "composed" (God composed a unity; i.e. without schism).

Either schism or division is an adequate translation, schism doing more justice to the Greek original.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No Grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant Data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:20 "Now, on the one hand there are many parts." This verse, like v.14 of the last pericope, reiterates a point made in v.12, for the purpose of demonstrating by means of analogy, the truth of that assertion. This verse refers back to the statement that the body "has many parts" (v.12). The emphasis here is on the several members which make up the body. The point being illustrated is that the "many parts" are not self sufficient. Contrast the teaching of vv. 14-19 in which the point is that the parts are not independent. Those verses deal with the implications of the individuality of members and their relationships one to another, while here the text is concerned with the implications which arise naturally from corporate membership.

12:20 "But on the other hand there is one body." The contrast between the two clauses of this verse is essentially the same as that between vv.12 and 14. Only the emphases are different. However, for this new illustration to be completely accurate to the Corinthian situation the point in its entirety must be made again. It is the third time in less than 10 verses that Paul has said that "there is one body with many members."

12:21 "And the eye cannot say to the hand 'I do not need you, or again the head to the feet, 'I do not need you'." Paul, having stated his point, reverts to figurative speech for his illustration. The figurative sense is seen in the personification of the words "eye" "hand" "head" and "feet."

While these body members were viewed as being semi-autonomous by the Hebrews, Paul has nothing of this sort in mind. Instead, he reminds the Greeks (who should certainly have known) that in reality, the body functions as a unit. No member of the human body can properly be said to be unnecessary, regardless of how that member functions. Feet can be amputated, but not without the head registering a loud complaint. Eyes can see what hands cannot; but they usually want to handle what they see. The body functions as a unit. It is only in Man's mind that "weaker" or "less honorable" or "less presentable." This is the point of the analogy. So long as the members have their ground-of-being in the body, (i.e. in one another) or so long as they are not independent (cf. last pericope), they cannot be self sufficient, much less mutually exclusive, regardless of their apparent strength, honor, or propriety.

12:22 "But much rather, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable." The first factor which might make a body member seem to be self sufficient is its strength (analogous to those cult members who have progressed far in the mysteries!). The assumed Corinthian attitude is that some members of the church are strong enough to be independent, self sufficient, indeed too good for fellowship with weaker brothers (cf. I Cor 8). This position is due a severe blow; for no believer can truly thrive (or even survive) apart from the rest of the church members, any more than an arm can long survive apart from the body. Indeed Paul's point here is that even the weak little finger is ultimately essential to the total well-being of the body. Strength does not make for self sufficiency in the church any more than it does in the human body. In fact, the weak members are essential, their usefulness having nothing at all to do with their individual strength.

12:23 "And upon the parts we consider less honorable, we bestow greater honor." Nor is a member more likely to be an island unto himself because of any honor accorded him. Regardless of how highly esteemed a part of the body (or a church member) may be, it is nonetheless only a part, and cannot function self sufficiently. Though the feet may have seemed less honorable or have been less highly esteemed than other body members in the ancient world, providing for the cleansing of a guest's feet was a common courtesy. Jesus, when he sought to show himself a humble servant, did so by cleaning his disciples' feet. In so doing He illustrated (among other things) that we lavish honor on those members which seem most unworthy. How can it be otherwise in a healthy church?

12:23 "And our unpresentable parts have greater modesty." Nor can it be urged that mere presentableness or seemliness qualifies a member to be self sufficient. There are many reasons why members should not trouble themselves over others less presentable than themselves. Members may be unschooled, rude, or simply dumb, to say nothing of maimed or deformed. But far from allowing the presentable members to view themselves as estranged from these unpresentables, and not responsible to them, they are rather obligated to them. Just as the presentable members of the human body clothe the unpresentable, so the acceptable members of the church must be diligent to make provision for the less acceptable members.

The range of excuses for attempted self sufficiency runs from seeming not to be benefitted by the other members, (in the case of being strong) to having no obligations to other less honorable members (in the case of appearance). Yet no excuse avails.

12:24 "But our presentable parts have no need." This explicitly states what was implicitly clear already; "having *no* need" here means only that certain members do not have the *same* needs as other members. The presentable members of the body work to clothe those members which are not presentable, despite the fact that they themselves have no similar need for clothing.

12:24 "But God composed the body giving greater honor to the lacking part." As has been seen, the members of the human body care for each other without thought or complaint. The body functions naturally as one organism, for that is how God composed it. What the Corinthians either did not know, or chose to forget, was that the church is in many ways analogous to a human body. If there is division and self seeking in the church, it is without legitimate foundation. For the church is (as Paul will point out) the very body of Christ, set in order by God himself, to function as a single organism. Failure to do so is no more an option for the church than it is for a human body.

12:25 "In order that there be no schism in the body." The reason that God gave "greater honor to the lacking member" and instructed the members of the body to do so, is simply to avoid schism, division, or factions. And schism never occurs naturally in a healthy body; nor should it occur in a healthy church. Yet division was one of the diseases at Corinth. (How many of the problems dealt with by Paul in I Cor. can be seen to have been the cause or result of divisions of different sorts?) The Corinthians did not know (or chose to ignore) the very nature and purpose of the church.

12:25 "But that the parts should care the same, one for another." The alternative to schism is mutual care and loving-kindness, one body member for another. To be sure, this eliminates the very possibility of independent, self sufficient, or mutually exclusive "members" for it is the very *sine qua non* of the autonomous organism. Without the mutual benefits bestowed by members upon one another, there could be no organic functioning; only a chaos of competing claims of self worth voiced noisily into a constant din of proud and vocal self deception. Such a din is, of course, the very picture of the Corinthian church.

12:26 "And if a part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it." This is the explicit statement of the relationship of care and mutual dependence which the members of an autonomous, healthy organism sustain. This is quite simply the way it *is* with the human body, and therefore (according to this analogy) the way it *ought* to be with the organism of the Church as a whole. Both suffering and honor are shared by all the members of the organisms (regardless of specific location within the body), not merely by the affected member. Thus we are to rejoice with those who rejoice, and cry with those who weep

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because there is within no body member a universal *sine qua non* by which it may judge the usefulness or proper function of any other member, there is no ground for elitism among members. No specific function is more needful to the body than another, so far as the individual members themselves can determine.

This not only eliminates the ritual and "spiritual" ground of elitism among members common among the Mystery Religions, but necessitates voluntary caring of one for another; for if one member suffers, in a true body, all other members suffer with it.

Thus any envy produced by one's exercise of certain spiritual manifestations is sinful. Care, not exclusivism, exhibits the proper attitude with which to exercise Spiritual manifestations. This will be seen more clearly in Chapter 13.

The proper function of body members, then, is not self aggrandizement, self seeking, self gratification, or self edification, but, first and foremost, care of the body as a whole.

H. PARAPHRASE

It is perfectly true that there are many members, but it must be remembered that there is still only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you; I can function quite well without you." Nor can the head say to the feet, "I am self sufficient and can function happily without you." No; instead, the members of the body which seem to be weaker, far from receiving abuse from stronger members, are recognized as indispensable. And upon those members we consider to be less honorable or less worthy of respect, we show greater honor and attention. It is the same with our unpresentable parts; instead of being shamed by them, we acknowledge their modesty and clothe them. Those parts which do not need to be clothed are those which are pleasing to the eye. God, giving greater attention to the lacking parts, so made the body that there is within it no dissension, but careful consideration, one part for the other. When one member suffers, the pain is felt all over the body; and when one member is honored, the joy is not confined, but spreads to all the members.

SIXTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:27-31a

A. TRANSLATION

27 Now you are *corporately* the Body of Christ and individually parts of it. 28 And these parts God has placed in the church: First missionaries, second prophets, third teachers then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of tongues. 2 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak in tongues? Do all translate? 31a But seek the greater gifts.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

12:27 $\mu\epsilon\lambda\gamma$ (noun, third declension, nominative, neuter, plural). *Member; part; limb.* The word can be used either literally or figuratively of parts which make up a whole to which they are essential. Most often the word designates parts of the human body, hence members or limbs. This is the word used in the preceding contexts at I Cor. 12: (2), 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26 (4), and implied at other points within the context. It is rendered consistently throughout as "parts."

12:27 $\mu\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$ (noun, third declension, genitive, neuter, singular). *Part* (in contrast to the whole). Though the phrase in which this term occurs when taken as a whole, would seem to mean "part of a part" thus indicating the Corinthians' role in the local Church rather than in the Church universal, it most likely means individually. Indeed, though the former case can make perfectly good sense, two points weigh against it. First, the word often changes its meaning when coupled with a preposition. Here it occurs in a construction which can mean "in part; partial; individually." The term is here found in a phrase which is used adjectively to modify the term translated "part" throughout I Cor 12.

Second, the context demands some such idea as individually be carried by the term, because it completes the identity of individual believers begun in the first part of the sentence. The ideas are that 1) you are all (corporately) the body of Christ, as well as 2) individually members of it. Thus, believers as a group are Christ's body, and as individuals are "body parts." This has been the thrust of the lengthy illustrations of I Cor 12 :12-26.

12:28 Apostle: This word has two basic usages in the New Testament, which overlap in one very important area; in both cases, the sense is derived from the basic notion of one who is sent with a mission. For ease of discussion, the basic notions carried in the word apostle will be designated as 1) missionary or, 2) original church-founder: It is obvious that a "church-founder" may be a "missionary" as was Paul, without it being so obvious that one is not, by virtue of being a missionary, necessarily an apostle in the sense of "church founder."

Now either usage of the word "apostle" may well derive its significance from the Jewish word "Shaliah," rather than the more specialized usage of the classical Greek term. For the Jews, *Shaliah* designated an official representative of individuals or corporate bodies such as courts or synagogues, whose mission and term of service was firmly fixed in each case. The Greeks, however usually employed the word *apostle* to designate a shipping dispatch, an export license, or even a ship's

commander. It is rarely used of personal representatives.

Also, the Jewish model of the *shaliah* included the concept that "a man's *shaliah* is like to himself;" that is, a representative who is responsible for his actions to the one who sent him (cf. M. Ber. 5:5).

Jesus repeatedly represented himself as one "sent from God" i.e. God's *shaliah*. Furthermore, when Jesus sent forth his disciples on their mission, he clearly spelled out the nature of their mission, just as in the case of the *shaliah*.

The parallel between the New Testament idea of a missionary and the *shaliah* or apostle, are clear. The notion of apostleship as applied to the 12 and to Paul and James is a highly specialized one which nonetheless derives, in all probability, from the same source. The office of apostle or "original Church founder" had distinct qualifications and functions, carried supreme authority in Church matters, and was verified in a unique manner. This office was itself nontransferable by its very nature. Thus, qualification for apostleship, that is the *sine qua non* of that office, was the ability to bear personal witness to the risen Lord, that he indeed was the Jesus who was God's own Son, who had lived, been crucified and was risen from the dead. (It is interesting to note that Paul could indeed bear witness to the risen Lord, but either had to have been present in Jerusalem during Christ's earthly ministry, or truly count the church as the body of Christ to in *any* way bear witness to an earthly ministry of Christ). Indeed the very function of the apostles was first and foremost to witness to the fact, not merely of the resurrection, but of the prophetic and soteriological significance of the slain and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. The gathering of believers into local churches was accomplished on the basis of their acceptance by faith of this testimony as the basic premise of their future existence. These apostles were authoritative in those doctrines which they held in common, and which came to be associated with orthodoxy; and they provided the necessary leadership in other areas, as well as in the founding of the infant church.

Now it is a point of no small significance that no God-inspired miracles, signs or healings were accomplished in the N.T. except in the presence of the Apostles, and that at an early date, self styled (though false) apostles were to be found. In fact, from an early date, the signs and wonders that accompanied the apostles were rightly regarded as validation of the apostle's divine commission, and of the truth of their witness; hence the post-Apostolic church did not allow either that miracles were still being performed, or that any true apostles remained.

Because of these two facts, and the Biblical teaching that the Holy Spirit would lead the disciples into all truth (Jn. 14:26), the church fathers accepted as normative only that which was the clear consensus of the New Testament Apostles. The teachings of the apostles then, were the very test of truth and therefore of Orthodoxy.

It remains only to be noted in this connection, that the very nature of the qualifications for Apostleship, the fulfillment of its foundational functions, the disappearance of the validating signs and miracles, and the authority recognized in the Apostolic teaching, demonstrate both the special nature and the non-transferability of this type of Apostleship.

The significance of this lies in the fact that what Paul is describing as the manifestation of apostles in I Cor 12:28ff is (insofar as it might be attainable by the Corinthians) the "office" of missionary. Thus, the three "higher gifts" are missionary, prophet, and teacher. Paul most emphatically is not saying that the Corinthians either are or ought to be seeking to be Apostles in the same sense in which he uses the word to designate his own office.

12:28 *Prophets*: New Testament Prophets both proclaimed the truth and foretold certain events.

They did not receive new truth, but received insights into the implications and future outworkings of truth already known and accepted. While it is true that upon occasion, in the presence of an Apostle, or as a direct result of the ministry of an Apostle, new converts might have prophesied, this was rather rare, and served primarily, like the other signs, as validation of the Apostle. It is not this "Apostle verifying" prophesy which Paul urges the Corinthians to seek, but rather an occasional manifestation of "insightful forth telling." It is important to notice that the "instant prophecy" (cf. Acts 1:6, for example) differs from the manifestation of prophecy, or the office of prophet precisely in its function and its duration, not in its content or mode of expression.

There is an instructive parallel between the manifestation of prophecy and the manifestation of tongues, which may be tentatively suggested here. Both had precursors whose primary function was to validate the authenticity of the Apostles and the veracity of their teaching. Acts shows both prophecy and tongues to have occurred spontaneously, and not in accordance with the norms of spiritual manifestations designed to edify the church; i.e. they had the specific function of signs, rather than edification. As will be seen later, this is a tremendous distinction.

12:28 *Teacher*: A teacher occupied a more or less established, though unofficial position in the Synagogue, and the position in the early Church was roughly analogous to it.

12:28 δυνάμεις (noun, third declension, accusative, neuter, plural) The word has several usages. The main one connotes *power, strength, might or force*.

Another sense of the word is *ability*, or *capability*. Yet another category of meaning focuses on the outward expression or manifestation of power such as *miracle, wonder* or *deed of power*. Here, two basic considerations lead us to adopt the latter definition as a broad generalization. The first consideration is that the immediate context deals with manifestations to the Church which are "embodied" in its members. Thus, the text is not dealing with some abstract notion of power as a category, but as a concrete, edifying entity or "office" analogous to prophet or teacher. In support of this notion it should be noticed that in the list of "rhetorical questions" of vv.2-30, the verb is understood to be "are" unless otherwise stated. *Are all apostles? Are all . . . etc.* But *do* all have gifts of healing, *do* all speak in kinds of tongues? This, then, seems to indicate a quality of being, rather than either a possession (gifts of healings) or an ability (speaking in kinds of tongues). Thus, "miracles" designates a man, not who works miracles, but one who is a miracle, or who manifests the miraculous in his life. Anyone who owes his continued existence to a miracle or the divine intervention of God and whose story inspires awe and reverence toward God in those who hear it, may be said to have this gift or manifestation.

This is confirmed by the earlier consideration of the manifestation in I Cor. 12:10, where it is expressly stated that "to another effects of miracles are given" and where it was noted that "no vagabond wonder worker is in sight . . . but one to whom is given an existence conditioned upon God's mighty works." When Paul lists the manifestations, "first missionary, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles," he does not jump levels from particular to abstract, but continues to speak of men within the church; some of these men are teachers, and some are miracles, or more appropriately, those whose existence has been uniquely dependent upon God's wondrous or miraculous intervention in their lives. This brings up a further point. There is a tendency to arbitrarily assign to this word its rather secondary meaning of "miracle" rather than letting it retain the more basic notion of power or wonder. After all, the only public benefit of a miracle resides in its function either as a sign or as a means of Church edification. Any display of power or any "wonder" serves as a symbol or characteristic for that which produced it. Thus, any incident which seems unlikely, but which is brought to pass with the result that God's power is recognized and His name praised is a "wonder" or a "miracle."

12:28 ἀντιλήμψεις (noun, third declension, accusative, feminine, plural). *Helps; helpful deeds.* Here, the term seems to mean the ability to render effective assistance in a number of diverse situations.

12:28 κυβερνήσεις (noun, third declension, accusative, feminine, plural). *Administration; government; management.* The term indicates a position of leadership in the church in the capacity of management, or administration. It seems to pertain to purely practical matters.

12:31 μείζονα (comparative adjective, accusative, neuter, plural). *Greater; bigger; richer, etc.* There has been some discussion as to precisely how the context modifies and shapes the meaning of the term. See exposition ad loc.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies in this pericope.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

12:27 "Now you are *corporately* the body of Christ." This is similar to the statement at Jn. 1:1 that " . . . the word was God. It is grammatically simple, indicates not simple identity as such, but a shared essence, and thus states a theological profundity. The impression given is that the body of believers constitutes the present, earthly Body of Christ. Indeed this concept is seen repeatedly in the N.T. (e.g. Col 1:18, 24). However, this passage, in keeping with the tenor of the whole epistle, is strikingly explicit, being almost condescending in its tone and simplicity. The statement here is that all individual Corinthian Christians are of the essence of Christ's earthly Body. The thought may be accurately paraphrased "now you Corinthians are corporately part of Christ's Body, the Church."

The concept of corporateness arises, not from an explicit statement or a given word, but from connecting a plural subject with a singular object by means of a copula indicating common essence, and by the implied contrast to the notion of individuality expressed in the next clause.

12:27 "And (you are) individually parts of it." The Greek idiom here rendered "individually parts of it" has been variously rendered (AV -- "members in particular." ASV -- "severally members thereof." RSV and NASV -- "individually members of it.")

The basic idea is that each Corinthian Christian is a member of a group called the Church, and that, as an individual, he has a part in it; i.e. a function to fulfill or a task to fulfill.

Because some emphasis is placed upon the idea of individuality, and because of the previous teaching concerning the various body parts as they relate to and function within the whole, it is feasible to conclude that membership in the Church implies a dynamic role for each member, rather than a passive acquiescence to the status quo or an active devotion to certain leaders.

Paul, it must be remembered, is denying both the party spirit, and that unguided (or misguided) seeking after showy spirituality at Corinth which based membership, or posited advanced spiritual standing in the body on any one spiritual manifestation. Thus, stress must first be placed upon an over-arching unity, then upon the importance of the individual within that unity, and finally upon

the interdependence and value of those individual members.

12:28 "And these *parts* God has placed in the Church." This statement confirms the idea of the importance of individual Christians (implied in the last sentence), and lays the ground work for properly evaluating the relative merits of the various gifts. It should be remembered that God does not put gifts or spiritual manifestations into the church except in the form of men, and that he does not put men in the Church except as channels of blessing to the Body. So much has been established.

The fact that God has placed these parts (or men) into the Body lends importance to the dignity both of the Church and its members. The idea has already been put forth in vv. 11 and 18.

12:28 "First missionaries, second prophets, third teachers." The first order of blessings is dealt with numerically in order of importance. Perhaps a case could be made that the historical order is in view here, with the gift which appeared first listed first. Certainly it would seem that there were Apostles before any other members in the church were exercising a ministry. This is subject to some debate, but the deciding factor is that Paul either admonishes the Corinthians to seek the *greater* gifts, or charges them with scrambling helter-skelter after the "showier" gifts; in either case, temporality is not in view. The value and function of these gifts are obvious, and need not be further discussed here.

12:28 "Then miracles, then gifts of healings." Reference is again made to what in 12:10 is called the "effects of miracles." This constitutes, with the gifts of healings, the second rank of gifts, or spiritual blessings. It must be remembered that those who have received the "effects" of miracles or the "gifts of healings" are a constant source of spiritual reassurance of the love and mercy of God, and continuous reason for praise. These gifts benefit the Church by giving it confidence in its source of life.

12:28 "Helps, administrations, kinds of tongues." The last rank of gifts mentioned are dashed off hurriedly. In the rhetorical questions which follow, the only manifestation mentioned from this last rank is that of tongues, and the corresponding manifestation of translation. This is because they had become an issue, not because they were particularly important in themselves. It should not be inferred, however, that because these manifestations were not particularly important, those manifesting them were therefore unimportant or useless; to do so would be to make precisely the mistake for which Paul has chastised the Corinthians, i.e. judging the spirituality and importance of people on the basis of their spiritual manifestation. It should be recalled that Paul has just reiterated that God Himself placed these manifestations in the church as it pleased Him.

12:29-30 "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak in tongues? Do all translate?" This list of rhetorical questions is designed to elicit a repetition of negative responses, thereby making the points that nobody has all the manifestations, and that no manifestation is shared by all. Furthermore, in light of the illustration of the body, in which Paul asks "if the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing?" and the statement that these were placed in the body "just as He pleased" it must be concluded that this is as God intended it.

12:31 "But seek the greater gifts." This statement may represent either an admonition, or a statement of fact, depending on whether the verb "seek" is understood as in the indicative mood (stating a fact) or imperative mood (indicating a command or strong admonition). In either case, it indicates that the Corinthians were in spiritual trouble. If the statement indicates a fact (but you are seeking . . .), the gifts being sought must be understood as being not truly greater but showier. That is, Paul

would be charging the Corinthians with doing precisely that which is intimated in the earlier verses of this chapter, i.e. seeking showy spirituality. Paul would scarcely waste time telling the Corinthians they were doing what they already knew they were doing without in some way showing it to be of a different character than they imagined. What an utter waste of breath to tell them they must eat three meals a day, unless something further is implied in the statement which might not be so obvious otherwise. However, it may be simpler to view the statement as straightforward instruction. In that case, it is still obvious that the Corinthians are not seeking what they ought to seek, i.e. the "higher gifts" but rather those gifts which are used for show. The situation at Corinth is plain in either case.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As was seen in I Cor 12:4-11, true gifts are given by God with the intention of strengthening the whole body. Edification of the body is the very reason for (and function of) manifestations. All Christian believers are members of a larger group, and have, as individuals, roles to play within that group for the edification of the whole. God has dispensed the roles, and the gracious enablement to fulfill them as He sees fit. For Paul it was obvious that the most important spiritual manifestations were those which disseminated rational truth in the purest form to the greatest number with the least effort. The efficient dissemination of revealed truth, or its consequences, were of the utmost importance. Visible results of divine power constituted the second rank of manifestations. These are important, but because they are subject to easy misunderstanding, are second. The third rank of spiritual manifestations, are essentially mundane. It is not that they have no place, or that they are not essential, or that the church should be less than grateful for them; however they generally do not present truth, but rather clarify or apply the lessons learned in practical ways.

The concept of blessing the church by placing within her blessed men, makes separating the manifestation from the man impossible in general terms, though occasionally Paul makes it clear whether he speaks primarily of men or of manifestations.

The statement "seek the higher gifts" (whether taken as a statement of fact or an admonition) however, seems to be ambiguous. It may mean "seek church members who have the greater gifts so that you might benefit by their presence among you;" or it might mean "seek to have or develop within yourselves the higher gifts." Since Paul has said that God has distributed spiritual manifestations to Christians as it pleased Him, it does not seem likely that "seeking the greater gifts" can easily be separated from seeking the men who have them. This is the truer because the second sentence of this pericope states that God has placed within the church certain "parts," or manifestations. Thus, because spiritual manifestations are distributed to men as God pleases it is pointless to seek greater gifts or manifestations than the ones He was pleased to Give. Because these gifts are within men who are themselves appointed or established within the church, it seems highly likely that seeking "the greater gifts" involves seeking the active local ministry of those who have the gifts, or further development of spiritual manifestations already displayed by others. The only restriction is that such seeking not become a glorying in the flesh; i.e. Christians are not to become groupies or devotees of men.

H. PARAPHRASE

Now you Corinthian Christians are corporately of the very essence of Christ's earthly body, and you are individually parts of that body. And God has set these parts in the church; first are missionaries; second are prophets; third are teachers; then those who show in their lives the effects of miracles; and then those who have been divinely healed; finally there are helps, administrations, and speaking different kinds of languages. Now not all Christians are apostles are they? Or prophets? Or teachers?

Are all Christians proof of miracles, or do they all exhibit divine healings? Do they all speak different kinds of languages, or translate them? Of course not. So if you are going to seek after the gifted, seek the greater gifts, not the lesser ones.

SEVENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 12:31b-13:3

A. TRANSLATION

12:31b And I will yet show you a most superior way. 13:1 If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I am become a ringing bronze or a crashing cymbal. 2 And if I should have prophecy and should know all the mysteries and have all the faith (so as to displace mountains), but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I should donate all my possessions, and if I should give up my body in order that I might boast, but have not love, I am benefitted nothing.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

12:3 Three variant readings occur here. The first reads "in order that I might boast." The second reading is "in order that I should be burned." These readings are both in the subjunctive mood. The third reading is "in order that I will be burned". The difference between this and the second reading lies in its mood and tense; the third reading is future indicative. Thus, the differences between readings two and three may not come through in translation; and since the basic ideas are the same, little practical importance attaches to the resolution of this problem.

But the difference between the first reading on the one hand, and readings two and three on the other, poses a problem which must be resolved. Did Paul have in mind giving to such a degree that boasting might result, or was he presenting the notion of the ultimate sacrifice; i.e. his very life?

Little can be made of intrinsic evidence: Paul has used language to denote all possible extremes ("tongues of men and angels, all knowledge, faith to move mountains), thus allowing for the possibility that he was speaking of the ultimate sacrifice i.e. "giving my body to be burned." But the very nature of the argument pits love against *any* worthy accomplishment about which one might justifiably boast. Thus the notion is that, without love, even such charity as might call forth the praise of men, and be the cause of boasting, means nothing.

The passage is neither longer nor shorter regardless of the reading. Neither is one reading more difficult than the others.

The difference between the first and second readings is only one letter; between the second and third readings the difference lies also in a single (though different) letter. And the differences between the first and third readings are but two letters. While this makes scribal error more of a likelihood it gives not a clue as to which of the first two readings have priority.

However, the third reading seems a little less likely than either of the first two for the following reasons:

1. A verb in the subjunctive mood is grammatically preferable to the future tense for presenting such an idea.
2. The subjunctive mood is used otherwise uniformly in all three conditional sentences.
3. Though it is difficult to see, which of the first two readings gave rise to the other, the third reading may have given rise to the second reading; it could not explain the first reading on any ground.

Having removed the third reading from the realm of probability, a closer look at the context shows that the notion of "giving up my body" sometimes implies sacrifice of life. Indeed Jesus is frequently said to have been. "given up" (or "given over").

Now if this were indeed the notion intended, as it certainly must be, the addition of "to be burned" while not precisely redundant, is perhaps superfluous, since the precise nature the sacrifice envisioned contributes little or nothing to the passage. The same effect is had merely by saying "if I should give up my very body." But to add "to be burned" is not only needless, it is not the purpose clause one might reasonably expect in such a context. The purpose of giving up one's body (even assuming self sacrifice is in view) would not be merely in burning. The purpose would be to gain ground for boasting, earn respect, merit salvation, or some such thing.

And since the extreme behavior described in this passage is conveyed by the notion of "giving over" or "giving up" ones body, the "purpose" clause would then likely have been added deliberately to heighten the contrived antithesis to love.

The text adopted therefore includes the first reading, "and if should give up my body in order that I might boast". This comports well with the implicit notion that men might, before this epistle, have felt that such ground for boasting was a positive benefit.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

13:1 *Tongues*: Though the term "tongues" is usually used of human languages, it also occasionally designates ecstatic utterances, and in Acts is used of "unlearned, divinely inspired" languages. Here, however, the term is used in the broadest possible sense to denote verbal discourse without reference to anything more specific. The emphasis of the passage is concerned primarily with the promotion of love and only secondarily with the aspects of verbal communication.

13:1 χαλκὸς (noun, second declension, masculine, nominative, singular) *Copper, brass, bronze*; whether the metal itself or an object (such as an idol) made of it. It may also be used of coinage.

13:2 μίνστρια (noun, second declension, masculine, accusative, neuter, plural) *Secret; secret rite; secret teaching; mystery*. The word is used in secular Greek writings to designate those secrets of certain religions which are divulged only to initiates, usually after performing certain rites or rituals. In this sense, the emphasis falls upon the secretness or hiddenness of the teaching, for the mysteries or secrets were jealously guarded from the uninitiated.

Paul uses the word generally in such a way that the emphasis falls on the fact that Christian "initiates" understand the mysteries. That is, the "secrets" are no longer secret or hidden, but are revealed. Hence, from this perspective, a startling parallel developed between "mystery" and "revelation." In fact, the Christian usage of the word "mystery," is frequently used as a synonym for "revelation".

The importance of the usage of this term lies in the probability that it is used generically here, as tongues certainly is in 13:1. These generic terms will later give rise to specific, deliberate ambiguities in the use of the word "tongues" in Chapter 14.

13:3 ὠφελοῦμαι (present, passive, indicative, first person, singular). *Benefit; be of use to*. The notion here is "benefitted." The term is in the passive, making the speaker (Paul) the recipient of the action. The paradox here is not so much in the fact that by "donating" one may expect to "benefit" or even that by the "sacrificing" of one's very body he may expect to be helped (how, after

all, may one whose body has been sacrificed, perhaps burned, be helped?). The paradox lies in the fact that, regardless of how otherwise praiseworthy an act may be, if it is not accompanied by, or motivated by love, it is useless, there being no profit in it.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

There are, in this pericope, three pairs of concessive and conditional sentences; one pair in each verse. It is extremely important to note the difference between the concessive clauses and the conditional clauses. Each pair is followed by a single apodosis.

Both conditional and concessive clauses contain the word "if," and are followed by a "result" clause. In both, the first clause ("if" or "even if") is called the protasis, while the second clause ("then" or "then still") is called the apodosis.

A conditional sentence, is one characterized as "if . . . then." The conditional clause is introduced by "if" and is followed by a clause which either begins with the word "then," or in some other way implies a consequent.

In a similar way, a concessive sentence is one which can be characterized by "even if . . . then still". The concessive sentence deliberately separates its two clauses into statements about facts which are essentially independent of one another.

While, a conditional sentence views the fulfillment of the apodosis (or consequent) as closely related to the fulfillment of the protasis (or antecedent) a concessive sentence views the fulfillment of the apodosis as essentially (though perhaps surprisingly) unrelated to fulfillment of the protasis.

The concessive sentence however deals with clauses which are surprisingly unrelated. This can be stated thus: Even if A, (then) still B.

One further point: In the concessive clause which begins with $\kappa\alpha\iota\epsilon\iota$ ($\epsilon\alpha\nu$) or $\epsilon\iota$ ($\epsilon\alpha\nu$) $\kappa\alpha\iota$ the "force" of the word $\kappa\alpha\iota$ is apparently intensive, representing the supposition as actually (or from a rhetorical point of view) being an extreme case, improbable in itself . . ." (Burton p.113); or perhaps it represents an impossible case. If the word order is $\kappa\alpha\iota\epsilon\alpha\nu$, as it is in both v.2 and v.3, (v.1 being introduced by $\epsilon\alpha\nu$ alone) the sense of an entirely improbable situation is understood, i.e. "even if." This is entirely consistent with the tenor of the passage.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

13:1 In *On Architecture*, written about 30 B.C., Vitruvius noted that the newer amphitheaters were being constructed with simple amplification systems called "sounders." These were made of bronze. It may be to these devices Paul refers when he says "I am a bronze sounder."⁴

F. EXPOSITION

12:31b "And I will show you a most superior way" This sentence provides the transition from the topic of "spiritual gifts of the Body of Christ" to the topic of "spirituality." The apostle has just

⁴Harris: "'Sounding Brass' and Hellenistic Technology" *Biblical Archaeology Review* vol. 8, No.1, 182.

exhorted the Corinthian Christians to set their minds and hearts on the "greater gifts."

The discourse which follows bears a slight resemblance to the method used by Jesus to get beyond the facade, to the real issue.

Having developed in general terms the Christian position on gifts within the Body of Christ, Paul now turns to the truly pivotal issue of love, without which there can be no such thing as spirituality. The question is "a more excellent way" to do what? it is obvious from the close connection with the previous discussion that true spirituality is here the subject of discussion. Whereas Paul has just dealt with the *outward* spiritual manifestations given *to the body through* "gifted" men, he now turns his attention upon the inner dynamic of spirituality. Indeed Paul will deal with love in such a way as to show that there is no such thing as spirituality without love, regardless of what kind of experience, manifestation or "gifts" one may have. It is no overstatement to say that there is no such thing as a "spiritual gift" without love; love is the very essence of spirituality and therefore of any truly spiritual manifestation.

13:1 "If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love." The "even if" (concessive protasis) is stated positively, and deliberately delineates a condition of impossibility. The "if" clause (conditional protasis) is stated negatively and draws attention to a simple lack of love.

The two parts of the antecedent (protasis) form a single, complex condition and thus may be stated "if the condition arises in which I am able to use the languages both of men and even of angels but in which I am not possessed of love. . . ." This condition emphasizes love as the *sine qua non* of spirituality. It does so by drawing a strong contrast between the impossible condition of having the ability to speak in all human languages and even in the languages of angels, and the true but undesirable situation of lacking love. The text, far from supporting a belief in "angel language," presupposes its non-existence, at least insofar as it can have any relevance for men. Thus the full force of the clause can be more clearly seen in the paraphrase "even if I should do the clearly impossible, yet should do so without plain love, then I am a mere noise maker." The implication is clearly that the language of angels, if such there be, is impossible for man to speak. But even assuming the breach of the barrier of impossibility, such a person is not, contrary to human notions, thereby made magnificent. The very point at issue is that nothing can make man more than a noise maker, without love.

The condition outlined, then, is that of achieving the impossible, yet having not love. It is interesting that being more than a mere noise maker is predicated of having love (which is possible) and not upon speaking the languages of all men, and even of angels (which is implicitly impossible). Thus, the important elements in this verse lie almost entirely in its structure. Paul could just as pointedly (and truly) have said "If I should speak with the tongues of men and of fence posts but have not love. . . ." The point of the statement lies in the contention that without love one is a mere noise maker, regardless of the unlikely or even impossible linguistic feats he may learn to perform.

13:1 "I am become a ringing bronze, or a crashing cymbal." This proposition supplies the "then" clause, or the apodosis. It is fulfilled on bases independent of high personal achievement such as speaking in the language of angels. The condition of fulfillment of this clause is dependent upon the idea of having no love. To be an empty noise maker requires only that one have no love, and that he produce any sound at all.

13:2 "And should know all the mysteries." Again Paul uses a term in wide circulation in the pagan cults in an ambiguous sense. The term, in fact, as Paul often used it, was a direct borrowing from the pagan mystery religions to teach pagans about God's revelations. As such, Paul may well have

used the word as common ground. "If you seek after mysteries, I'll show you a mystery." Paul is not concerned to distinguish between pagan prophecy and Divine prophecy, because prophecy is here only a prop, not an issue. Love is the issue.

13:2 "And all the knowledge." Once more knowledge is a term which is ambiguous, at best. Christian knowledge may qualify, as may philosophical knowledge or even the Docetic precursor of full blown Gnosticism. For knowledge, regardless of its nature, is not the point; you can have it and still be nothing. Love is the issue.

13:2 "And if I should have all faith (so as to displace mountains)." Here, the degree of improbability again reaches the realm of impossibility, but at least is undeniably Christian in its reference. The reference to "moving mountains" is designed to recall the very words of Jesus. Faith which is so great as to be visible and material is, of course, impossible under present conditions. But even Christian faith is not the issue here; Love is the issue.

13:2 "But do not have love." At last the issue. It is all too possible, indeed too easy, to not have love.

13:2 "I am nothing." This is the result of not having love. All other attainments are as nothing without love.

Paul speaks throughout this chapter in the first person, and not without a purpose. "I am nothing" works because some of the Corinthians still held Paul in fairly high regard. The implication is that no matter how great the outward spiritual manifestation, there is no reason to seek him who has it, if he has not also love; for he is nothing. This tells a great deal about the Corinthians. For some of them were obviously pretending to great spirituality, and others were forming behind them ranks of "groupies." Yet if Paul were considered to be nothing without love, how much more so these unloving pretenders to spirituality?

13:3 "And if I should donate all my possessions." Here is a proposition of some possibility -- even a degree of probability. The main idea here is a donation to feed the hungry, and Paul, on another occasion, even encouraged Christians to take up collections for the needy at Jerusalem. (I Cor. 16:2-3, II Cor. 8:1-6, Gal. 2:10.) And he was doubtless aware of the fact that the first Christians in Jerusalem "had all things in common" (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32). But even this is not the issue.

13:3 "And if I should give up my body in order that I might boast." The giving up of the body doubtless implies death. In the first place, the pattern of progressing from the more probable occurrence to the least probable demands something greater yet less likely to occur than parting with all one's possessions. In the second place, the giving up of the body must provide some basis for human merit, such as martyrdom might provide. This is, as was pointed out earlier, entirely consistent with the usage of the word.

13:3 "But have not love." This is the third time this "if" clause, or conditional protasis, has been repeated in exactly the same form, marking it out as the essential ingredient of the context. Love is the issue.

13:3 "I am benefitted nothing." The attempt to merit a basis for boasting or a spotless reputation for righteousness, comes to naught without love in spite of all other attainments, even the impossible.

Through these verses a structure repeats itself three times. It was said earlier that the statements each had two parts but delineated only one situation. If the common negative aspects of the statements are abstracted and compared, a perfectly possible situation is described in hypothetical terms; it is

all too possible to do things without love. And doing so makes "nobodies." Indeed, love (or the lack of love) is the only element to recur both in structure and in content in all three verses.

Perhaps it would not be amiss if at this point, a few comparisons are made. The first comparison involves the "even if" clauses (the concessive protases) which provide the impossible conditions which, more or less surprisingly, have no bearing upon the fulfillment of the apodoses. Paul says that neither 1) facility with all speech nor 2) possession of all faith, knowledge and foreknowledge (in short, the greater spiritual manifestations and/or their pagan counterparts) nor even the heartiest attempts at holiness (cf. Jesus' remarks to the rich young ruler) have any meaning apart from love.

When the apodoses are compared it is seen that the attainment of these abilities, possessions, and positions all leave 1) a noise maker (or even worse, a noise echoer), 2) a nothing, and 3) a spiritual pauper. These "nothings" are to be understood as spiritual non-entities.

Even the correspondence of what is sought to what is actually obtained is instructive. 1) Even in gaining the tongues of angels, one is still but a noisemaker, without love. 2) To attain the chiefest gifts of knowledge, faith and prophecy leaves one a mere nobody, without love. 3) Giving one's possessions, or even one's life, for the exalted gain of righteousness, leaves one a spiritual pauper without love.

In each verse there is an identical clause which makes explicit a "conditional protasis" i.e. "if . . . I have not love."

Each of these verses is seen to have a rather remarkable and complex structure, beginning with what might best be called a fourth class concessive clause, of different contents; each verse continues with a negative first class conditional protasis of identical form and content; and each ends with a single apodosis which answers to both, and is stated in terms antithetical to the expectations implicit in the "concessive protasis."

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This text clearly states one single proposition which is both theological and ethical in nature: Without love there is nothing gained. There is no teaching here which affirms the existence of angel language, or predicates truth of the pagan mysteries. But the unmistakable implication is that even if there were angel tongues, their use by man is hollow noise without love. The implied situation shows that even if truth were to be derived from the mystery religions, without love the knowledge of such truth would be worthless.

All the truer then, that even the holy office of Apostle is nothing without love. Indeed, it can be properly inferred that no manifestation can be considered to be truly spiritual unless it is exercised with undeniable love. Love will produce spiritual manifestations. For it is equally true that "with love I am something" and that something is spiritual.

H. PARAPHRASE

And I will show you a still more excellent approach to spirituality. If I should learn all manner of human speech, in fact even if I learned angel talk, but did not have love, I would be nothing more than a spiritless noise maker such as a bronze sounder or a clashing cymbal. And if I should be a prophet, and know all the mysteries, and have all the knowledge; in fact, even if I could have faith sufficient to move mountains, but had no love, I would still be an unspiritual nobody. And if I should donate all my material possessions in order to aid the needy, or even if I donated my body to

martyrdom, in the attempt to boast of my spirituality, but did so without love, I would not even profit spiritually.

EIGHTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

A. TRANSLATION

13:4 Love is patient. Love is kind, is not envious, does not brag, and is not arrogant. 5 *It* does not behave indecently, does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not consider evil, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all, believes all, hopes all, and endures all.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major textual variants.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

13:4 *Love*: The peculiar New Testament dynamic of love is here treated by Paul, as the supreme Christian virtue. The primary marks of such love are: 1) It is volitional and deliberate rather than emotional. 2) It is to be uniformly, rather than arbitrarily, demonstrated. 3) It puts the absolute welfare of others first. How these general traits are manifested in particular incidents is the burden of this pericope.

13:5 παρπέννεται (present, passive, indicative, third person, singular) *Urge on; stimulate*, especially *provoke to wrath; irritate*. The passive means to become provoked, irritated or angry. The term is nestled between the ideas "seek its own" and "does not consider evil". These three items, perhaps more than the others, seem to display love's interest in others. It is not selfish, is not provoked to anger by those who are, nor does it consider any other evil act. Love is not provoked, and does not react harshly even when it might be expected to do so.

13:5 λογίζεται (present, indicative, third person, singular) 1) *Reckon, calculate, take account of*; 2) *think about, consider, ponder*, 3) *believe, think, be of the opinion*. Here, the term is slightly ambiguous, both of the first two usages being possible for this passage. Love can truly be said not to take into account any evil done. This idea is brought out in a number of superior translations.

However, it is just as true of love, particularly in a context such as this, that it does not consider doing evil. Love does not seek its own, is not provoked, and "does no evil." Indeed the following clause may strengthen this idea by adding that love does not even rejoice in unrighteousness (presumably that of others).

The ambiguity can (and should be) translated by the word "consider." Thus, love does not consider evil, neither that done by others nor yet doing evil itself.

13:7 στέγει (present, active, indicative, third person, singular) 1) *Cover; pass over in silence; keep confidential*. 2) *Bear, stand, endure*. Here the concept is not merely that of *bearing* or *enduring*; that notion is here conveyed by ὑπομένει. These two words are not generally synonymous though their meanings might overlap slightly. Here, "endurance" does not mean standing idly by while being subjected to something unsavory. Rather, the connotation is of deliberate refusal to make a fuss over something regardless of the intent of the provocation. In this sense one may "endure" a gossip even if one is not the object of the slander. One "endures" a gossip by failing to let that particular character trait keep him from showing love, yet without receiving the slander itself. One

makes a big fuss neither about the tale-bearer nor his slander, but deals prudently with both as the occasion arises. Love "passes over" all things.

13:7 ὑπομένει (Present, active, indicative, third person, singular). 1) *Remain, stay behind.* 2) *Refuse to flee; stand ones ground; hold out, endure.* 3) *Wait for.* Again, a seeming ambiguity presents itself. Whether the word here is to be translated "endures" or "waits for" is difficult to decide, if indeed a choice must be made. The context is positive rather than negative. Love "believes all things" and "hopes all things." It would seem natural to follow these with the idea that it waits for the fulfillment of all that it believes and hopes. But in this waiting there is, and must be, interminable *enduring* of yet unfulfilled trust and hope. The two meanings cannot always be so neatly divided as the English language makes necessary. "Endure" is the basic meaning, but it is a hopeful *waiting*, an *anticipation* rather than merely a dull, resigned waiting for the axe to fall. It is not that tribulations and evils do not await, but that while "enduring" them, love confidently awaits the best. The paraphrase "confidently endures" is not wide of the mark.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

For all its seeming simplicity, this pericope is difficult to deal with because the structural simplicity of the grammar may hide a host of mutually compatible ambiguities. The first half of the equation is simply stated in the words "love is." The simplicity ends there however, for the predicate, though usually expressed by one word, gives a broad generality which is best defined by recourse to practical example rather than to lexical analysis. This will be noted in the brief notes on the various clauses which follow.

13:4 "Love is patient. Love is kind." Patience itself seems to be predicated of forgiving hopefulness. That is, failure is forgiven in the hope of future success. Patience makes the practice of forgiveness possible. Patience is not so eager for results that it ignores the character of the means to those results.

Love is willing to wait in precisely those circumstances which would tempt one to haste. Love gives a fair trial where otherwise there would be a lynch mob. Love allows failure where otherwise there would be intolerance of shortcomings. In all of this though, there is no explanation of the clause which is better (or less general) than the clause itself: Love is patient.

It is also kind. This is a deceptively simple proposition. The problem of defining the notion "kindness" has perplexed philosophers for centuries, and it may be that nothing more can be said than that kindness is loving. But this does not solve a thing; it merely turns the equation around. Better here to postulate that kindness itself is a category of human awareness which is not capable of definition any more than is the notion of "red" or "blue. Kindness can be experienced or shown, but it cannot be adequately defined in such a way as to cover all the possibilities. Paul indeed builds on precisely this fact, for while the yet pagan-like Corinthian Christians needed exhortations in such matters as love, the Lord's Table, and the resurrection, these must be given in terms which are themselves basic.

Thus, to say that kindness (and therefore love) is gentle, unnaturally limits kindness itself. For there may be occasions when kindness must be firm or even harsh. In the present context, however, patience and kindness are related to the strife at Corinth, particularly in reference to the division caused by the touting of a certain manifestation as being especially "spiritual." Thus, rather than becoming exasperated and cruel, or of furthering the divisions in the church by rigid intolerance and dogmatic posturing, or by gossip or mean slander, the Corinthians are exhorted to exhibit loving patience and kindness (true spirituality) toward one another.

13:4 "Love is not envious." This statement is perhaps a little more clear. The notions of bitterness and hatred are present in the English word "jealously" thus either eliminating or making secondary the more basic idea of the covetousness, or envy found in jealousy. The Greek word can be understood either as "zealous" (desirous of something which ought to be) or as jealous (desirous of something which might well not be) but in either case the basic concept is that of strong desire. Indeed covetousness, or envy (Paul's sin) might not have outward manifestations at all as jealousy and zeal do.

The simple idea is that love does not crave that which belongs to another. In this context, while gold and wealth are not excluded, the most obvious object of envy is a certain spiritual manifestation. Thus, one should not personally desire the spiritual manifestations granted to others.

13:4 "Does not brag" also gives a general truth which cannot be fully delineated apart from practicality, and which is not exhausted by the obvious limitations of the present context. Love never brags. But here the idea is that it does not become vocal about the merits of a particular spiritual manifestation or the supposed attainment of an advanced spiritual standing.

13:4 "Is not arrogant." Here the silent counterpart of bragging is also denied. Love is never arrogant; but particularly here it cannot even look down its nose at those blessed with the "lesser" manifestations (whatever they may be). Not only is bragging disallowed, but so is silent haughtiness.

13:5 "It does not behave itself indecently." Of course, all sorts of indecency from impoliteness to public frenzy and libertinism are covered by this general statement.

But the important factor within this context deals with order in church such as at the Lord's Table or (most especially) in the exercise of spiritual manifestations. Love always exhibits decency, order and proper decorum. Evidently, the unloving conduct at Corinth was disgraceful.

13:5 "Does not seek its own." This is the counterpart of being envious. Envy seeks that which it has not. The idea is that love does not seek to have its own way, or make things uniform according to its own pattern. To return to Paul's earlier illustration using the human body, "love is not envious" of the spiritual manifestations of others by insisting "because I am not an eye I am not of the body. How I do wish I were an eye"; Nor does love "seek its own" way by saying "I have no need of you; after all you, being a mere hand, have not my advanced spiritual standing."

Love does not seek to export, impose or normalize its own mode of spirituality.

13:5 "Is not provoked." Love is never provoked to anger, envy, resentfulness or indecency by the unloving forces without. This is the more true within the church, particularly where divisiveness might otherwise get the upper hand. At Corinth, many were the divisive factors, not the least of which was a total misapprehension of spirituality. The very church splitting battles that must have raged are visible just beneath the surface of this, the love chapter.

But love is not provoked by the self styled spirituality or arrogance of others.

13:5 "Does not consider evil." That is, it takes no account of evil intent, and does not consider evil to be viable behavior for itself. How remarkable that the Corinthians had to be told this, and the more so since it is in reference to supposed spirituality. What sorts of evil were done or contemplated, Paul graciously (lovingly!) passes over in silence; but that there was evil afoot is not itself a point for debate.

But love puts an end to evil. Love disregards evil done, and intends no evil of its own.

13:6 "Does not rejoice in unrighteousness." Love does not rejoice, exult or delight in evil, it does not congratulate, welcome, or condone unrighteousness either as an end in itself, or as a means to an end. Love gives neither active nor passive acceptance to unrighteousness.

Though the whole of I Corinthians deals with specific sins, the text does not permit detailed knowledge of the specific kinds of unrighteousness which attached to the misuse of the Corinthian charismata. There can be little doubt however, that it comprised factions, claims to super spirituality, and the unloving use of God-given talents and spiritual manifestations.

It is plain that love had in Corinth, much in which it could not delight.

13:6 "But rejoices with the truth." Truth is antithetical to unrighteousness, and love has truth in which to exult. Though ultimately Jesus is the truth, Paul probably uses the term here as an abstract philosophical term. The truth at Corinth was the Gospel. Again, the need for such an exhortation, demonstrates clearly that there was little truth at Corinth; or at least it failed to have its proper effect. Had the Corinthians merely celebrated the objective truth of the Gospel, there would have been little enough ground for the pandemonium which existed instead. (Pandemonium is used advisedly here!)

It is not that there is a denigration of the subjective element of truth, that which lives within the Christian; but much time and prayer and meditation, as well as much loving labor over the objective aspects of truth must be given before the subjective spirituality can be properly understood, applied, or incorporated within a Christian life. To reverse these principles is to let the tail wag the dog.

13:7 "Love bears all"; it covers over in silence all negative factors. It spreads no gossip, and turns a deaf ear to those scandal mongers who seek allies. Love could even endure Corinth.

13:7 "Believes all" necessarily refers to that which is good. Love believes all truth and believes any report which confirms this notion.

13:7 "Love hopes all." Love fervently hopes for the best outcome for all. Love hopes for that which it believes, i.e. that the truth will overcome.

13:7 "And endures all." Love must endure all that is not good and true. Though love believes and hopes that truth will conquer, it must in the meantime endure all the evils of Corinth. This is no mere "passing over in silence" but a suffering of actual abuse at the hands of fellow Christians.

13:4-7 Note. It is obvious, by Paul's prescription, what the nature of the Corinthian problem was. One would never exhort Job to have patience, for he had it. Exhortation betrays the lack it is meant to fill. Exhortation to faith demonstrates a condition of doubt. Exhortation to love demonstrates a condition of lovelessness (whether hatred, indifference or jealousy).

It is, then, not just fair, but necessary to see the Corinthian church as full of petty, arrogant, backbiting braggarts. One need only cheek the abstract characteristics of love to see what the particular problems were in Corinth.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Theologically, love is seen to be the practical (ethical) answer to all that was wrong in Corinth, as well as with what is wrong in the church today. Love is clearly spirituality with which no mere manifestation can compare. In fact it becomes axiomatic at this point that without love there is no such thing as "spiritual manifestation." Love is the very dynamic by which God operates His manifestations.

This pericope shows that love meets evil with non-resistance, i.e. it fails to allow evil men or matters to determine its outlook or behavior, either negatively or positively. It fails to partake in evil, to make an issue of evil, or condone evil. Put another way, Love will not do evil; and while it will not even condone evil neither will it make evil the center of attention. Jesus Himself said "resist not evil;" and love does not.

It is highly instructive that even supposedly spiritual manifestations can become the source of evil, and that only love can overcome such evil, and make truly *spiritual* manifestations of such sources of contention.

H. PARAPHRASE

Love, (or true spirituality) is patient and kind. Love is neither greedy, nor boastful and is not holier-than-thou. It does not behave itself disgracefully, and is not selfish. Love is not provoked and disregards evil. it does not rejoice in sinfulness, but delights in the truth. Love passes over all pettiness, is unsuspicious of all, hopes for all good things, and endures all that is not love.

NINTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 13:8-13

A. TRANSLATION

13:8 Love never fails. If there are prophecies they shall be abolished, if there are tongues they shall cease; if there is knowledge it shall be abolished. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But whenever the perfect might come, that which is partial shall be eliminated. 11 When I was a child I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I reasoned as a child. When I became a man, I eliminated the things of the child. 12. For now we see in a mirror an indistinct image, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know completely even as I am also known. 13 Now remains faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

13:8 πίπτει (present, active, indicative, third person, singular) The basic meaning of this word is *to fall*. However, it has a wide variety of uses; it is used figuratively and symbolically as well as literally. Even within these categories the word has many nuances. It can be used of a physical fall from a higher point to a lower one, collapse of a standing object or structure, the prostration of worshipers before the object of their adoration, or even of death. It has here, however yet another meaning which deals with three categories; i.e. 1) longevity 2) utility and 3) quality. The interplay between this word, and the terms translated "abolished" and "ceased" provide the dynamics of this passage.

Love is said to never fall or fail; therefore love is here seen to be characterized by permanence in some sense. By comparison with things which are abolished, or cease, it can be seen that love always meets a need or has a purpose.

Love does not pass away with changing conditions, and survives beyond the coming of "the perfection," therefore implying its own purposefulness and perfection. Now the word "fail" accommodates these notions within itself, and therefore best translates the word.

The word also shares another common factor with the word translated "cease"; i.e. it also is intransitive. This sets up an opposition between "never failing" and "ceasing;" for love not only will always have a purpose (as those things which shall be abolished will not), it will therefore always have a use, which things that are outgrown will not.

13:8 καταργηθήσονται (future, passive, indicative, third person, singular) 1) *Make ineffective, powerless or idle.* 2) *Abolish, wipe out, set aside.* 3) *Release completely and permanently.* Paul uses this word in connection with the fate of prophecies and knowledge, and later of "the things of the child." It is noteworthy that the use of this word, in the passive voice implies an outside agency as the effective force of negation. That is, prophecies and knowledge are made superfluous or abolished by something from outside oneself. This notion is as strong as if the term were used transitively. The idea here is that prophecies and knowledge are necessarily rendered needless or superfluous, by the presence of their objects, whereas love is eternally maintained by that same object ("the perfection").

13:8 παύσονται (future, middle, indicative, third person, plural) In the middle voice, the word means *stop oneself; cease; or be ended*. It is used frequently of things which by definition are in some sense self limiting, whether by lack of need, use, or continuance. A speech is said to bring itself to an end. Christians are told to pray without ceasing. Wrath is also said to cease i.e. when it is outgrown, or no longer useful. Here, a fuller definition of the term is seen by way of a striking contrast.

Contrasts are drawn in a wide variety of ways. For example, the use of the English term "but" translates both the weak and strong contrasts of Greek. Verbs can be contrasted by means of different tenses, voices, or moods. And any part of speech can be used to help draw a contrast by juxtaposition with an antonym. Here, Paul uses a different word (nearly synonymous) as well as a different voice to express the contrast in the way different manifestations will end. Because, this is not the major point for consideration however, he avoids focusing undue attention on the contrast at this point, by use of the strong adversative "but" and thus only implies the distinction he will take up later.

It must not escape notice however that while love is said never to fail, or to become superfluous, and while prophecies and knowledge will be abolished, or rendered needless, tongues are said to end of themselves; the strong implication is that they become useless of themselves (at adulthood) and are consciously put away when they are recognized to be useless.

13:10 τέλειον (adjective, masculine, accusative, singular, or neuter, nominative, singular) *Having attained the end, or purpose. The end, completion, or perfection.* It is often used substantively to denote *that which is perfect or complete*, and of humans as those who are *mature*, i.e. *adults*. The context contrasts those things which "are in part," and that which "is perfect, complete, or at an end." Furthermore, "the Perfect," is said, when it comes, to bring an end to that which, at resent, is only partial. This suggests the idea of completion, or fulfillment. The context is alive with the contrast between the partial and its elimination (either by completion or by rendering superfluous) by *the perfect*.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

13:8 "Love never fails." This is the governing idea of the pericope. It dictates the meaning of the entire passage in terms of the permanence and need of certain spiritual manifestations.

The basic idea of this clause is that love constitutes an abstract, yet eternal edifice, the relative importance of which will be the burden of the rest of the passage. Love never fails; that is, it will always have a purpose, and therefore can never become needless.

13:8 "If there are prophecies they shall be abolished." Unlike love, prophecies will be abolished, not in the sense of fulfillment (though prophecy will in fact be fulfilled), but in the sense of becoming needless. Paul does not mean by prophecy the mere foretelling of the future, but the proclaiming of the truth in all its ramifications for the present as well the future. He is dealing with the institution

of prophecy in all its functions. The whole concept of prophecy shall be abolished, or made needless.

This can only happen by means of the intervention of some factor extrinsic to prophecy itself. Prophecy will be acted upon by an external agent in such a way as to make it needless.

13:8 "If there are tongues they shall cease." The phenomenon of tongues shall also come to an end, and not find its way to eternity. But the major difference between the impermanence of tongues and that of prophecy and knowledge is that tongues are said to cease of themselves. They are not acted upon by any outside force, but simply cease of themselves. They either serve functions which are themselves temporary, or by their very nature must be needless. The specific nature of the cessation of tongues is left ambiguous. But the fact that they will cease without outside intervention is demonstrated both by the voice of the verb and the fact that a different word is used.

13:8 "If there is knowledge it shall be abolished." Paul reverts to use of the verb which was used with prophecy. Like prophecy, and unlike the phenomenon of tongues, knowledge will be made needless by an outside factor; i.e. the object of all knowledge, "the perfection."

13: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." This is a description of the nature and aspect of prophecy and knowledge which render them unnecessary. Prophecy and knowledge are unworthy of eternity because, or insofar as, they are partial rather than complete disclosures of their object.

13:10 "But when the perfect should come." The identification of that which is perfect has long been a problem. It has often been identified as Jesus or the Bible, but both of these options have severe problems. Jesus would likely be named, and certainly would not be designated by a neuter article. The Bible was not in view, because Paul had no idea that what he was writing would later be taken into the canon; he considered the Jewish scriptures to be the Bible. And those scriptures had already come. *The perfect*, whatever it may be, can only be identified by recourse to the context. The next clause provides a major clue.

13:10 "That which is in part shall be abolished." Two things become clear with this clause. It can be seen that the outside agency which brings about the abolition of "that which is in part" (prophecy and knowledge) is "the perfect"; and *the Perfect* is that which brings about the elimination of "that which is in part." This mutual identification is not ambiguous in the least. For both prophecy and knowledge, which are in part, are rendered needless in the presence of their objects. Prophecy of a person or an event serves no purpose once the person or event becomes a present reality. Knowledge about something is always less desirable and complete than possession of the object of knowledge. To have an apple is infinitely more satisfying than merely knowing about it.

It is apparent then, that love remains after the coming of *The Perfect*, that prophecy and knowledge are abolished at the time of the coming of *the Perfect*, and that tongues shall cease of themselves at a time other than at the coming, and that it is therefore not the coming of "the perfect" which causes them to cease. Since only love is said to never fail, remaining even beyond the coming of The Perfect, and prophecy and knowledge are abolished at the coming, tongues must cease before the coming of the Perfect. "The Perfect" may refer to the parousia, or the coming of Christ, as some believe. But an intriguing alternative is heaven itself, or eternity in His presence, where nothing of the temporal or partial shall leave a trace. At some time prior to the coming of the Perfect, tongues shall cease of themselves because they will fail to have any further usefulness; prophecy and knowledge will cease at the parousia because of the presence of their object; and love will abide because it is of the essence of "The Perfect."

13:11 "When I was a child." Thus begins a figure which describes both the nature and extent of tongues. Childhood refers to a time of early development, of childish practices and habits which have little or no use.

13:11 "I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I reasoned as a child." Certainly no description can more accurately apply to the Corinthian situation or modern neo-Corinthianism than childishness. To speak as a child is but a thinly veiled reference to tongues, and feeling and reasoning in a childish manner certainly refer to the overall Corinthian situation.

Paul here deals with two aspects of mentality (feeling and reasoning) rather than two modes of acquiring knowledge such as judging and calculating, and the ASV is doubtless correct in rendering the terms *feeling* and *thinking*. The whole notion is that of childish behavior.

As has been seen, the Corinthians were greatly impressed by showy behavior, and their reasoning and thinking were superficial at the very best, being based upon childish desires for mere appearances.

This idea is similar to Paul's dealing with legalism in Gal. 4:9, though he here uses himself as an example in order more closely to identify with the Corinthians.

This passage, does not imply that Paul himself ever spoke ecstatically. But he did have a childish element in his speech. "Becoming a man" for Paul most likely is to be equated with becoming a Christian and having an adult understanding of Christian standing and doctrine, and a growing awareness of their implications for Jews.

If this is so, Pharisaism and its attendant legalism would represent Jewish childhood (and thus Paul's childish speech) as it does in Gal. 4:3, 10. And Gentile childhood would, for the Galatians, be represented as idolatry (Gal. 4:8). The Corinthians also have been shown to have passed time in idolatry (I Cor 12:2); some indeed are "used until now to the idol" (I Cor. 8:7).

Thus, Paul is urging the Corinthians to purge themselves completely of their Pagan childishness just as he has already purged himself of his Pharisaic childishness. It is clear that Paul's addressees are Christians; however, it is also clear that they have not yet grown beyond their childish, Pagan ways of speaking, feeling and thinking.

Paul will later specifically admonish the Corinthians to "grow up" (I Cor 14:20), but here only implies the need to become adult.

13:11 "When I became a man, I abolished the things of the child." This idea, though it appears to parallel the abolition of the "things which are in part" clearly does not, despite the use of the same verb. For whether the man actively and consciously puts away things for which he once had a legitimate need, or whether the act of becoming an adult itself rendered the "things of the child useless" no outside agency was involved, and the underlying mechanics imply the adult discontinuance of a practice valued only by a child.

Whether or not these practices had a legitimate function or not is left undecided because at this point it does not matter. Indeed, chapter 14 is difficult to interpret properly because of this very ambiguity.

13:12 "For now we see in a mirror an indistinct image." This answers an unasked question (why should tongues cease and knowledge continue until the perfection?) by referring back to the partial prophecy and partial knowledge of v.9. This does not refer to the condition of childhood mentioned

in v.11, for Paul presents childhood as already in the past, and adulthood as a present, continuing reality.

Seeing is the function of the prophet. He is the man of vision whose office is to make his vision plain to others. Clearly then, Paul teaches that the prophets, and we with them, see an indistinct image. But this is much to be preferred to not seeing at all.

13:12 "But then face to face." Here is the solution to the problem of an indistinct image. Seeing an indistinct image is not resolved but by the coming of the object of the image. This face-to-face seeing and understanding comes at the parousia.

13:12 "Now I know in part." Again, even in adulthood, Paul can say that his knowledge is still "in part." (This confirms the idea that his earlier statement at v.2 "if I should have all knowledge" is full blown hyperbole.)

Paul's use of the singular subject with the verb "to know," and his use of the plural subject with the verb "to see" should not be pressed to indicate either that he had not the gift of prophecy or that the Corinthians had no knowledge.

Thus, the need for knowledge, like the need for prophecy goes beyond childhood. These needs cannot pass except their object be present.

13:12 "But then I shall know completely, even as I am also known." Again, the need will exist until its object is present. Such knowledge will be "complete" and parallels precisely "seeing face to face" except that He whom Paul shall know completely already knows Paul completely. Once more, the conditions demand that Paul now be in "adulthood" and that knowing completely can only refer to the time when "the Perfect" should come. It is a remarkable reassurance that the same kind of complete knowledge with which we are known shall one day be ours. But that day is not yet, and until then the need for even partial knowledge will not cease to exist.

13:13 "Now remains faith, hope, and love, these three." Throughout adulthood these three remain. They abide now, but not all of them shall abide forever. Faith is no longer needed, (and cannot any longer exist) once the object of faith is present. This presence is both the vindication and end of faith.

So also with hope. Paul says in Romans 8:24 that "hope that is seen is not hope."

Paul has also said (v.8) that love never fails; and having demonstrated plainly the eternal nature and need for love, it is no surprise that he ends this passage with the obvious conclusion.

13:13 "But the greatest of these is love." Indeed, the greatest attitude or attainment mentioned in this passage, and the only one designed to pass into eternity, is love.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This pericope represents high theology which is matched in I Cor. perhaps only in Chapter 15. The only ethical idea is implicit, and subordinated to the theology of love. Love is seen to be permanent, useful, and commensurate with "the Perfect." Prophecy and knowledge are shown to be needed until "the Perfect should come" but needless thereafter. Tongues are seen to cease of themselves at adulthood (or else they outlive any usefulness they might have). Even the highly acclaimed "virtues" of faith and hope are shown to be terminated at the parousia.

The inclusion at all of a phenomenon such as tongues with such institutions as prophecy and knowledge and virtues such as faith and hope is, however, not arbitrary. Paul has carefully allowed the ambiguity concerning the nature of the cessation of tongues to remain for later treatment. But tongues are undeniably relegated to "the things of the child" while knowledge and prophecy, imperfect as they are, clearly are of adulthood.

Love, alone of the three virtues, abides beyond the coming of "the perfect."

H. PARAPHRASE

Love never fails. Prophecy shall be made needless. Tongues will cease of themselves. Knowledge also shall be made needless. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part. But whenever perfection comes, all that is partial shall be eliminated. When I was a child I spoke as a child speaks, I felt as a child feels, and I reasoned as a child reasons. But when I became an adult, I eliminated the things of the child. For now we see in a mirror an image which is imperfect and unclear; but then we shall see the object of the image clearly, face-to-face. Now I know only in part; but then I shall know completely in the same way that even now I am known. For now there remain faith, hope and love; but of these three love is the greatest.

TENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:1-5

A. TRANSLATION

14:1 Pursue love, yet seek the spirituals; but rather that you may prophesy. 2 For the one speaking in a tongue does not speak to men but to a god, because no man understands, but he speaks mysteries in a spirit. 3 But the one prophesying speaks to men edification and encouragement and comfort. 4 The one speaking in a tongue edifies himself; but the one prophesying edifies the church. 5 Now I wish you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you might prophesy; and greater is the one prophesying than the one speaking in tongues, except he should translate, that the church might receive edification.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:2 μυστήρια (noun, second declension, accusative, neuter, plural). *Secret; secret rite; secret teaching; mystery.* Here the word is used in its heathen sense. No "godly secret made manifest" is in view, but rather the sound without meaning, the noise without signification, which could only be justified by recourse to the name "mystery." That the speaker of tongues purposely communicated anything at all is denied here by the use of the term "mystery." Even in Pagan circles the justification for such behavior was that of "a prayer language" which men could not comprehend, but which a god might be expected to unravel. And why not? The dumb gods didn't deny the proposition.

Even here, Paul says the speaker addresses *a* god. There is no justification for assuming the God of the Bible to be the addressee. Put simply, "speaking mysteries" was the deliberate production of inarticulate sounds. If tongues with translation is equal to prophecy (I Cor. 14:5), then tongues without translation is equivalent to mysteries (I Cor. 14:2). The two types of tongues dealt with, then, may be designated mysteries and prophecy, the one spoken to *a* god, the other to unbelievers (I Cor. 14:20 ff.).

14:3 οἰκοδομὴν (noun, first declension, accusative, feminine, singular). *Building, either as a process or as a completed edifice.* The process (i.e. building) can be used figuratively of strengthening particularly of spiritual strengthening. Paul uses the word regularly for building up the church, or individuals.

It is, even when figurative, used of objective, verifiable results, and as such standards in stark contrast to "speaking mysteries." Whereas "speaking mysteries" is said to be beyond man's comprehension, the prophet speaks such things as are not only comprehensible but have obvious outward effects.

The notion of edification, however, does not imply that what is objective is of the essence of edification itself. Rather edification is what happens when some force is put into positive action. The kind of edification therefore depends entirely upon the kinds of process which brings it about. Thus prophecy may edify by exhortation. Construction can edify by sawing and nailing.

With this point in mind, even the sort of edification accomplished by means of speaking in tongues is put in high contrast to that effected by means of prophesying. In the case of prophecy, Paul plainly states that prophecy "speaks edification" to men, whereas the one speaking in a tongue edifies only himself.

Edification, then, speaks of "building up." The sort of building up may be subjective or objective, literal or spiritual; only the context can make plain what is meant.

14:3 παράκλησιν (noun, third declension, accusative, feminine, singular) 1) *Encouragement; exhortation.* 2) *Appeal; request.* 3) *Comfort; consolation.* The primary sense here is that of encouragement or exhortation which results in encouragement. But the notion of appeal is not absent, as part of the task of the prophet involves an appeal to his hearers to make practical application of the exhortations given. A prophet may declare the meaning of a text, show the social consensus to be in opposition to this plain teaching, admonish his hearers to be of stout heart and live the Biblical precept even in the face of strong worldly opposition, or even persecution. The very nature of Christian prophecy here includes "forth-telling," warning, encouragement and appeal. The notion of declaring or interpreting a truth or text might properly be thought of as edification, though no perfectly clear line of demarcation exists here.

The aspect of comfort which logically attaches to the exhortation of the prophet is specified in the next term. Even there, however, no clear line of demarcation exists.

The essential point of the context deals with the clear teaching of articulate speech, as opposed to the meaningless babble of pagan tongues, which are not articulate and therefore cannot be encouraging.

14:3 παραμυθίαν (noun, first declension, accusative, feminine, singular). *Encouragement; especially comfort, consolation.* This is the end of prophetic activity: God's message to the saints is comforting in itself, but often a specific word of comfort is added to the message. Such is the import of this term.

As with the other verbal functions of the prophets, the "speaking comfort to men" stands in antithesis to speaking in Pagan tongues, by which means nothing meaningful, and therefore comforting, can be said.

14:5 διερμηνεύῃ (present, active, subjunctive, third person, singular) 1) *Translate.* 2) *Interpret; explain.* The idea here seems to be "to translate," for the following reasons. 1) Speaking in tongues is contrasted with prophecy, i.e. the essentially meaningless with the meaningful. Thus, the notion that meaningless speech may provide some sort of subjective edification for the speaker is contrasted with the idea that the articulate speech of the prophet edifies the church; tongues remain meaningless unless they are such as have content, and their meaning is made plain to the hearers. A mere explanation of the reason *why* tongues are spoken on a given occasion is also subjective and unverifiable to the hearers; for the speaker's reason for speaking would itself be neither less subjective nor more edifying than the phenomenon of the utterance itself. 2) The "except" clause, is best paraphrased by the expression "except on the outside chance that he should be able to translate." The implication clearly is that such tongues as the Corinthians spoke admitted of no translation, for anyone speaking such a tongue could extemporize a reason for such behavior with impunity, owing to its subjective nature. (Note that I Cor 14:32 says that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Regardless of the specific meaning of this verse, such cannot be predicated of Corinthian tongues.)

The implication clearly is that the phenomenon of Corinthian (pagan) tongues, spoken of here, admitted of no translation at all. This creates, or furthers, an ambiguity which centers in the very nature(s) of tongues.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:1 "Pursue love." This means simply to make the way of love the major criterion of spirituality. The behavior of love most clearly is to be adopted, the results of love cherished, and those who exhibit love to be emulated.

As has been seen, spiritual manifestations are given to the church in the form of men. Since the essential feature of a truly spiritual manifestation is its exercise in love, the process by which the Corinthians were determining who was spiritual, as well as which manifestations were greatest, had been neatly reversed. The characteristic to note first is the presence or absence of love. A man who exhibits love is to be sought after as surely as is love itself. Spiritual manifestations, when accompanied by love, will prove authentic.

This is the second criterion for determining the genuineness of spiritual manifestations, the first being the edification of the church.

14:1 "Yet seek the spirituals." Having exhorted the Corinthians to pursue love first, Paul now tells them to seek the spirituals; i.e. both the manifestations of the spirit and the fellowship of spiritual men.

If manifestations without love are not truly of the Christian spirit, i.e. if love is the dynamic which makes manifestations genuine, it follows that love constitutes spirituality, and manifestations are the evidence. The idea may be paraphrased and expanded as follows: "Follow after that true spirituality which is love, yet seek also a manifestation or a godly way to disclose that love."

Thus the dynamic of a spiritual manifestation (the dynamic of love) is shown not to replace the manifestations but rather to make them necessary as modes of disclosure of the character and will of God.

14:1 "But rather that you may prophesy." This sets up a contrast between the manifestations themselves. There is no indication that prophecy is something of another order than the other manifestations, but rather that it is the most desirable of attainable manifestations.

14:2 "For the one speaking in a tongue does not speak to men, but to a god." The reason the Corinthians are to seek the spiritual manifestation of prophecy (or the fellowship of a prophet) rather than that of tongues (or he who speaks them) is that the speaker of this "variety" of tongues does not speak to man. Obviously, the emphasis is to be on communication between men *about* God. This is entirely consistent with the idea that "spiritual manifestations" are demonstrations of God's love.

The tongues speaker is said to speak to a god. This includes any pagan gods toward which praise was customarily directed by means of speaking in tongues. This fact sustains and furthers the sense of ambiguity already detected with reference to the true nature of tongues.

14:2 "For no man understands him." This does not mean that words not understood by men are therefore of necessity directed to a god; rather, the common pagan assumption that "tongues" were prayer languages is in view here. The idea is brought out by the paraphrase "now it is evident that he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but uses prayer language to a god, because men don't understand." In short, the tongues-speaker *evidently* does not speak to men, because men don't understand.

It should be noted that if "no men understand" no man can translate. It seems reasonable to assert that in order to interpret, one must understand what is to be interpreted. This is true if by interpretation Paul means translation, and it seems unlikely that anything else is possible.

14:2 "But he speaks mysteries in a spirit." This statement contributed no new knowledge to the Corinthians. They were quite familiar with the use of tongues. Paul merely mentioned the use of tongues by way of drawing a contrast with the purpose of prophecy, which follows. Just as it was evident that the tongues speaker did not speak to men, because men did not understand what was being said, so it was evident that the tongues speaker did speak to a god, because "he speaks mysteries in a spirit." The common assumption that this type of tongues speaking is a prayer language, or "spirit-talk" is here supported by the very status and nature of the addressee.

It is interesting, too, that while this phrase is universally understood to mean speaking "in spirit" or here "in a spirit" two other options are available, namely, "speaking in spirit" (as in one's own spirit), and speaking "for a spirit." It may be recalled that in I Cor. 12:1-3 Paul indicated that the pagans served "dumb idols just as they were led." Therefore, there may be very little reason to distinguish the mode of worship from the empowering force of the worship. The idea that the tongues speaker "speaks mysteries for a spirit" is not to be dismissed simply because of its novelty. At any rate, such a notion is not much different from that of speaking in (or by the power of) a spirit. Furthermore, that the phrase "in spirit" (without the indefinite article) may simply refer to the human spirit, is entirely consistent with the idea of self edification, as emotional stimulation, and the release of tension would then be a major factor.

The question would justifiably arise as to the nature of the empowering force behind the speaking "in spirit." Plainly the answer would always be "self" (as in self edification or self gratification) or by such powers that lead to the worship of dumb idols or to the inarticulate cursing of Christ.

The paramount fact here is that such tongues are not directed to men at all, in the sense of communication, and that because of this they are not to be sought.

14:3 "But the one prophesying speaks to men." The contrast is clear: seeking after men who speak mysteries to a god, or seeking to speak to a god in tongues oneself, is essentially to seek that which is impractical; whereas the premium clearly should be placed on speaking to men.

14:3 "Edification and exhortation and comfort." The content of prophecy is also thrown into sharp contrast with the mysteries of tongues; to say it contrasts with the content of tongues is improper, for it cannot be demonstrated that tongues *per se* have any actual, determined content whatever. Even the notion of "giving thanks well" (v.17) does not imply that the true thankfulness of the heart actually finds expression in tongues.

But assuming there is content in tongues, it borders on blasphemy to think that such content could edify, exhort and comfort the Christian God. Christians have no business speaking to any other supernatural entity on such an intimate basis. Tongues are indeed forms of "prayer language"; that is how the ancient pagans used them, and that is how neo-Corinthians use them.

However a casual glance at the charismatic proof-text for such practice denies, rather than affirms, the validity of this position. In Romans 8:26 "our infirmities" in prayer are said to be overcome by the Holy Spirit, who "makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (ASV) The entire proposition speaks of that "which *cannot* be uttered." The word for uttered is the same one used of inarticulate speech or sound. The text does *not* mean prayer which cannot be cogently presented! Nor does it mean that the Holy Spirit inspires in us such that, for they "*cannot* be uttered" i.e. they cannot be produced at all by a human tongue. It is not that they are inarticulate, but that they are altogether unutterable.

There are also ample verses to indicate that God searches hearts, knows man's needs and desires, and cannot be counseled by men.

Such is the stark contrast between the needless, contentless mysteries spoken to gods in tongues, and the edification, exhortation, and comfort which is the function of speaking to men through prophecy.

As noted in the Lexical Study, edification refers figuratively to the process of "building up," "exhortation" to the admonition to make practical use of truth revealed, and "comfort" to the imparting of peaceful or joyful acceptance of circumstances (even of those which are adverse) in the full assurance of a favorable final outcome.

14:4 "For the one speaking in a tongue edifies himself." Another contrast is begun, and another ambiguity is introduced. The ambiguity here centers in the meaning of public versus private edification. Does Paul mean that the tongues speaker builds himself up in the eyes of men and potential followers by having a showy, mysterious gift? Or does he mean that he makes himself better in some subjective way? Neither alternative can be safely ruled out, but owing to the nature of tongues speaking itself, as well as the Corinthian parties and zeal for the mysterious, it seems most likely that one's collecting a group of followers is meant. In such a case, one would edify himself by collecting "groupies" eager to "follow the leader." It should be recalled that in many of the mystery religions mystagogues gathered a following in just this way. Again, one is reminded that "love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

On the other hand, because tongues is a contentless, emotional experience, the possibility that edifying oneself refers to an individual, subjective edification could limit such edification to emotional self gratification. Nor is there any reason why both meanings may not be present here, the former riding upon the strength of the latter.

14:4 "But the one prophesying edifies the church." The contrast is either between gathering a coterie of followers around oneself, and church building by means of edifying believers, or between self gratification and the selfless strengthening of fellow Christians.

In either case, the contrast is again striking. It has been built up in three parts. The tongues speaker 1) speaks to a god, 2) speaks mysteries in (or for?) a spirit, and 3) edifies himself. The prophet, on the other hand, 1) speaks to men, 2) edifies, exhorts and comforts, and 3) directs his efforts toward the church. It is difficult to imagine a better way to discourage tongues in light of the teaching on love than to draw such a contrast.

14:5 "I wish you all spoke in tongues." This reflects not so much a genuine wish as a passive acceptance, as is seen by the clause which follows. The tone is that of an exasperated father who tells his children, "Sure I wish you could play hop-scotch, but rather that you got A's in school" or "I wish you could all have lots of bubble-gum but rather that you would eat your spinach."

It is obvious that the only tongues Paul could wish his Christian coverts to seek were the genuine ones. The ambiguity persists (and is soon be drawn out) between pagan tongues and the Christian variety.

14:5 "But rather that you might prophesy." This clause reflects Paul's heartfelt wish. Throughout this pericope prophecy has been contrasted favorably with tongues. Paul's tone concerning the relative merits of tongues and prophecy now becomes more adamant. The reasons for preferring prophecy to tongues have been given in the contrasts.

14:5 "For greater is the one prophesying than the one speaking in tongues." This constitutes the basic conclusion of this pericope. The Corinthian priorities were obviously the reverse of Paul's, placing a premium on the same kinds of religious practices which had characterized their pagan days. (Remember Paul's remark at 12:2.)

Here the statement is an unambiguous affirmation of the superiority, not merely of prophecy, but of the prophet himself, making the prophet the one with whom to seek fellowship and wise counsel.

14:5 "Except he should translate that the church might receive edification." This "except-clause" both reaffirms the need for church edification as a criterion for judging the genuineness of a spiritual manifestation, or as a definition of a true manifestation, and at the same time implicitly denies the translatability of pagan tongues. If tongues are real they will have content susceptible of translation; if not they will be meaningless noises. The assumption is that Corinthian "tongues" were ecstatic pagan holdovers.

This contention is strengthened by the "except" clause itself, for it seems most likely that it was intended as something on the order of the English expression "except on the outside chance." Henceforth, the reader must consider well every statement concerning tongues, whether it implies Christian tongues, or something inconsistent with them.

It should also be noted that in Paul's list of spiritual manifestations, translation was mentioned. Here, however, it is not another who is to translate, but the speaker himself; Paul well realized that those who heard genuine tongues as their own languages (as on the day of Pentecost) would edify the church by making the content of tongues clear to the rest, hence "exercising" the manifestation of translation. But no man can be expected to translate pagan gibberish -- not even the speaker. Indeed the challenge to the speaker to translate what he has said in tongues impales him on the horns of a dilemma. For if he can translate meaning, their was no need for the tongues themselves, but only the articulate expression of their meaning. On the other hand, if the speaker himself could not translate, he had to admit his tongues were not truly a spiritual manifestation at all.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is nothing here dealing specifically with ethics, beyond the implied admonition to avoid selfish practices such as self edification by means of speaking in tongues.

Rather we find here a good description of the function of practical theology, i.e. the notion that theology speaks to men about God. The prophet is to direct his attention to the church, both as a

corporate entity and as individuals. This is consistent with the illustration of the body members and the Pauline concept of genuine spiritual manifestations.

It is pointed out in this pericope that prophecy is clear speech which is directed toward men as opposed to the probably empty babble of tongues, and it is well, in this context, to recall 12:1-3 where cursing Christ is a clear possibility in inarticulate speech. Thus, two reasons are now given for articulate speech.

First, clear confession of Jesus as Lord (12:3) is directed toward men, whereas tongues may conceal an inadvertent curse. Second, for tongues to be authentic they must be beneficial to man, and thus must be translatable. Either tongues have content or they do not. If they do not, there is no excuse for them beyond self gratification.

And if they do have content they must be translated for the benefit of the church, either as a proclamation that Jesus is Lord, or to edify in some other way. But if a translation can edify, that is, if plain speech edifies, then tongues are at best superfluous. Thus, tongues, except for the Christian variety which are a sign to the unbeliever (v. 22f.), are empty, needless noises. The notion that tongues constitute prayer languages is affirmed here, but their essential worthlessness, even as such, will be the burden of much of the rest of chapter 14. The fact that tongues may disguise a curse, (12:3), and the idea of speaking mysteries to a god (14:2) are both alien to Christian thought and experience.

H. PARAPHRASE

Pursue that true spirituality which is love; yet seek spiritual manifestations through which that love can be shown, especially prophecy. For the one making inarticulate sounds isn't speaking to men, but to a god, for no man can understand; rather he speaks secret things by the power of a spirit. But the prophet speaks clearly to men that which edifies, and encourages, and comforts. The one making inarticulate sounds serves only himself, whereas the prophet serves the church. Now it would be nice if you all spoke in tongues, but it is better that you should all prophesy. Greater is the prophet than the person making inarticulate sounds, unless, perchance, he is able to translate what he says so that the church might be served.

ELEVENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:6-9

A. TRANSLATION

14:6. But now, brothers, if I should come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I benefit you, except I should speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching? 7 Similarly, lifeless things giving voice, whether pipe or harp, if they should not give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be understood what is being piped or harped? 8 For even if a trumpet should give an indistinct voice who shall prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, except you give by the tongue intelligible speech, how will it be understood what you are saying? For you will be speaking into the air.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:6 ὡφελήσω (future, active, indicative, first person, singular) *Help; aid; benefit; be of use to.* Here, the word is applied to a hypothetical situation in which Paul pictures himself coming to Corinth speaking unintelligible tongues (not having such content as revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching, i.e. being totally unedifying). The question Paul puts to the Corinthians is this: "If I speak unintelligible gibberish, how shall I benefit you, or aid you?" This use of the word therefore implies that some positive good is to be imparted from one to another, not merely refraining from some negative practice. This is in keeping with the whole New Testament Ethic of "Positive Righteousness."

In this connection it is unmistakably implied that the use of language is to have a positive effect. Anything less than clear language is essentially useless, for it is incapable of communicating "to you" a "benefit."

14:8 ἀδηλον (adjective, accusative, feminine, singular) *Indistinct.* Here even *unintelligible* might be acceptable, as the "sound" or "voice" clearly has a specific function, i.e. to call to arms. The notion is clearly that of a kind of "voice" intended to have significance, but owing to its actual indistinctness, being totally unintelligible and hence, useless. The parallel is unmistakably to the human voice, most specifically to its intended use of producing language.

Perhaps it is not too far removed from the analogy to suggest that such "indistinctness" as is dealt with here, is deliberately produced; it is plain that what *ought* to be a call to battle would be sent forth only by one capable of sounding such a call. Failure to properly sound the call, (to misuse the voice of the trumpet) not only fails of its intended, intelligible purpose, but results in disaster.

14:9 εὐσημον (adjective, accusative, masculine, singular). Εασιλψ ρεχογνιζαβλε; *clear; distinct; intelligible.* Its use here is most instructive. The word translated "indistinct" in v.8 prefixes the *alpha privative* to the word meaning *clear* obvious etc. Because the essence of the term here under discussion entails the opposite meaning of the word used in v.8, Paul might easily have dropped the *alpha privative* and used the word itself.

Instead, he uses a compound word capable of synonymous usage, but formed from two words

meaning "a good sign." This, in connection with plain speech, and here explicitly opposed to tongues, makes plain language rather than tongues the "good sign" which is itself intelligible.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies in this pericope.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:6 "But now brothers, if I should come to you speaking in tongues" presents a hypothetical situation. There is no claim here that Paul has ever spoken in tongues as many of the Corinthians understood the term. The ambiguity between tongues properly so called, and the pagan practice of ecstasy, is soon to be drawn out. This whole verse defines pagan ecstasy, or tongues without content, as useless.

14:7 "What shall I benefit you" again sounds the note of benefit for the body and communication to men. Speaking in one sort of tongues (the empty, ecstatic variety) is implicitly useless as far as having any practical value. The notion is that noise is useless unless it has purposive content and is deliberately spoken for the benefit of others. This is the very point of the rhetorical question. Unless *something* is said, *nothing* is said; if nothing is said, no benefit is imparted to hearers. For there is then nothing to hear.

It should also be recalled that only what is edifying to the saints and is performed in love can be understood as a spiritual manifestation. Again, the ecstatic utterances which have no clear, discernible content, and which are said to be "spoken to a god" (i.e. prayer language), Paul simply defines out of consideration.

14:6 "Except I should speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching." Paraphrasing the entire sentence helps clarify the meaning. "If I should come to you speaking in tongues, what will it benefit you if I do not convey content such as revelation or knowledge or prophecy?" This demonstrates that tongues *may* discernible, translatable content; indeed that true tongues must have such content. That content itself, however, is not different in quality from everyday speech, comprising revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching. The question only now begins to develop as to the real purpose of true tongues if its content is no different than regular speech. Paul will soon provide the answer to this question, but presently confines his comments to distinguishing the true from the false.

The full idea thus far may be paraphrased as follows: "If I should come to your aid speaking in such tongues as have no content such as revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching, exactly how have I helped you?"

The notion that the phrase "I should come to you" implies coming for the purpose of aid is seen in three points: 1) the very clause "what shall I benefit you" implies aid as the purpose of coming. "Coming to you" cannot be viewed either as a random wandering, or a gratuitous visit. Paul always sought to be of benefit to those whom he visited. 2) The Corinthians quite likely extended to Paul an invitation to come to Corinth for just such a purpose as dealing with their problems. 3) It is inconceivable that Paul would undertake any journey just to sit around babbling with his hosts. Cf.

I Cor. 4:14-21 and I Cor. 16:1- for Paul's typical reasons for "coming to you."

The result, then, is that any purpose in "coming" is frustrated by inarticulate, contentless speech, for nothing is gained or given. The irony is that the very problem created by inarticulate speech must be solved by recourse to the articulate pronouncements of Paul.

The term *revelation* refers to new knowledge imparted to Paul as an apostle, while *knowledge* means the insight into practical application and further implications of existing scripture. Prophecy refers to the proclamation of truth as it bears upon the general situation of the local church, and teaching means the imparting of biblical knowledge of God and the doctrines deriving from the scriptures. These functions are only illustrative rather than exhaustive of the roles of rational discourse.

14:7 "Similarly, lifeless things giving voice, whether pipe or harp" again seeks to make the point by analogy. Paul introduces the analogy to show that if even musical instruments must function in accord with the rational principles of music to be understood and appreciated, then much more must the human voice do so. Even genuine tongues must behave according to discernible patterns. The absence of such linguistic patterns in "speech" or noise making constitutes unintelligible, empty utterances.

Here, the pipe and harp are taken as examples of those "lifeless things giving a voice" or producing sound.

14:7 "If they should not give a distinction in the sound" means simply not to play some form of music. The thought of distinction implies music in some form, even if it is only an improvisation. What is excluded is the endless repetition of one phrase, or the continued drone of a single note.

14:7 "How shall it be understood what is being piped or harped?" Again, Paul poses a rhetorical question. Not only the negative answer, but also the reason for it is plainly understood; what is being piped or harped would not be understood because there would be no basis (or convention) for understanding it. The very definition of the "distinction in the sound" of the last clause is that it must be recognizable as music. Even if what is played is an impromptu performance or an improvisation, it must be music; it must follow certain conventions; it must be more than mere noise. It must function according to recognizable conventions to be music or it will be mere noise and unrecognizable as music. (Modern "composers" should take note of this!)

14:8 "For even if a trumpet should give an indistinct sound." The trumpet functioned much more simply than did the harp or pipe. It was in widespread use for informing soldiers of such things as rallying, preparing for battle, mounting a charge, or retreating. It was also used in the fanfare of rulers. The uses of the trumpet were simple, widespread and well known. It was not so often used in the production of music per se, but in sending forth a specific message. (Cf. 1 Thes 4:16. If the trumpet is indistinct . . . then what?)

The point here is that even these relatively simple functions are frustrated by indistinct sounds.

14:8 "Who shall prepare for battle?" This is an example of the use of the trumpet. Yet if the sound is indistinct, even such a simple function as the call to arms is frustrated. Thus it is not merely the production of relatively complex music, but the basic function of general instructions sounded by the unsophisticated trumpet which is nullified by indistinctness in sounds. The point is thus even more forcefully made that sound without content (adherence to convention) is mere empty noise, with no regular meaning or response.

14: "So also you, except you give, by the tongue, intelligible speech." This is an example of a thought begun in one way and completed in another. Paul perhaps ought to have provided "you" with a finite verb.

The point is nonetheless inescapable; the Corinthians, here likened to various "lifeless" instruments "giving a voice" or "making a noise" are shown that unintelligible utterances are meaningless at best (though, it may be recalled, such babble may contain an "accidental" curse; cf. I Cor. 12:1-3). Plain speech is the "good sign" of intelligibility; cf. Lexical Study.

14: "How will it be understood what you are saying?" How indeed? Another rhetorical question. Again, both the answer and the reason for it are perfectly obvious; without content there can be no understanding, for it cannot be determined if anything (even an accidental curse!) is actually being said. Apart from linguistic conventions, the very best that can be deliberately uttered is mere meaningless noise. This clause, far from implying that if the mouth is in motion something *is* being said, rather implies that a moving mouth *ought* to be conveying content. It is not merely the "what," but the "whether" as well, which is in question. To interpret the verse on the basis that the word "saying" must refer to intelligible speech, falls flat on three points. 1) It is the burden of this analogy to demonstrate that nothing, in fact, is being said intelligibly, 2) the rhetorical question revolves around the impossibility of "understanding," and therefore, 3) to argue that this passage implies articulate speech involves one in begging the question.

14: "For you will be speaking into the air." Very little is required here by way of comment, except to note that the "mysteries" spoken "to a god in a spirit" has here been reduced to "speaking into the air." This is consistent with Paul's teaching concerning gods and idols (I Cor. 8:1-6) and their being characterized as "dumb" (I Cor. 12:2).

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical implication revolves around distinguishing genuine tongues from false. Obviously genuine tongues are to be practiced rather than false ones. But if genuine tongues have the same sort of content as plain speech, what is the purpose of "seeking" them at all.

Theologically it has been assumed that Paul desired to benefit other saints by the use of edifying spiritual disclosures. These, without fail, produce some positive good and in the area of speech must have content. That edification takes place by recourse to such things as revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching makes verbal content the *sine qua non* of speech, and condemns the pagan tongues spoken at Corinth as "Speaking into the air."

By means of three rhetorical questions, Paul has demonstrated that without content, there is nothing to comprehend. And without comprehension there can be neither translation nor edification.

Edification comes through conventional modes and patterns, showing pagan tongues to be useless and genuine tongues to be inexpedient.

H. PARAPHRASE

Now, brothers, suppose that I should come to you speaking tongues. In what way would my speech benefit you unless it imparted revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching? It is similar even to lifeless instruments, whether pipes or harps, when they give forth sound; unless they make distinctions in the sounds they produce, how will anyone understand what they are playing? And if a trumpet sounds indistinctly who will answer the call to arms? It is even so with you; unless you

exercise your tongue in intelligible speech how will such utterance be understood? For you will be filling the air with empty noise.

TWELFTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:10-17

A. TRANSLATION

14:10 There are, perhaps so many kinds of languages in the world and none *are* unable to communicate. 11 Therefore if I should not know the force of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the one speaking *will be* a foreigner to me. 12 Since you are zealous of spirituals, seek that you might abound to the edification of the church. 13 Hence, let the one speaking in a tongue pray that he might translate. 14 If I should pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind. 16 Because if you should bless in a spirit, how shall the one filling the place of the novice say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you say? 17 For truly you give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:10 φωνῶν (noun, first declension, genitive, feminine, plural). 1) *Sound; tone; noise; 2) voice; 3) language.* There is little choice but to translate the term by the English word language. Voice normally might fit, and several versions use that word. But the statement that no voice lacks the capacity to signify or communicate wrongly includes ecstatic utterances and other vocal sounds. It was the burden of the analogy to "lifeless instruments to deny this very possibility. Furthermore, the additional idea of being a barbarian or foreigner to one whose voice is not understood clearly demonstrates that language is meant. It is language that distinguishes countrymen from foreigners to the human ear, even as musical instruments must speak the language of music (vv.7-8).

Furthermore, the context makes it plain that Paul is seeking to set up a legitimate, widely recognized phenomenon with which to compare ecstatic utterances. But the term "voice" is as ambiguous as is the term "tongues," and so does not provide a suitable translation. If one seems a foreigner to another on the basis of different languages, how much stranger is it when not only does no other man understand, but the speaker himself does not grasp what he is saying? "Pray that you may translate" indeed. And how does this phenomenon affect the novice? He would be so far from edification that a mere foreigner would be a welcome sight.

There is simply no other word which so well translates this term into English as *language*. And the usual word for languages (tongues) is already being used in this text.

14:12 περισσεύητε (present, active, subjunctive, second person, plural). Used transitively of persons: *abound; have an abundance; be rich.* The word "abound" best serves the present context, and is used in connection with the edification of the church. As such the term strengthens the contrast already set forth between speaking in tongues and edifying the church. In I Cor. 14:1 Paul set forth the contrast between speaking in pagan tongues and edifying the church. Here the contrast is heightened by use of the term "abound."

14:16 ἵδιώτου (noun, first declension, genitive, masculine, singular). 1) "Layman;" *unlearned or untrained person.* 2) *new initiate; catechumen.* In I Cor. 14:23 ff the unlearned and unfaithful

(infidels) are contrasted to Christians in such a way that both ignorance and infidelity are instructed. Here, the layman or catechumen is said to have a place reserved for him in church. This is in keeping with the technical sense of the word found in some pagan religions of novices or new initiates who have not reached full religious stature. Normally the word might denote baby Christians, but in Christianity the difference between "baby" and "adult" Christians has to do with the kind of doctrinal diet they are able to handle, whether milk or meat (cf. I. Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-6:1). It is obvious to even a casual reader that the Corinthians were, as a group, babies; the doctrines which had to be dealt with in the Corinthian epistles smack of infancy; and this is no less so of the tongues controversy. The translation, then, must reflect the notion of one not yet fully instructed in the most elemental of the basics. *Novice* not only fits perfectly, but reflects another probable practice of the pagan mysteries brought over into Christianity.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

14:11 Note the use of ἐν as simple dative.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:10 "There are perhaps so many kinds of languages in the world." This is a mere generality stated for the purpose of changing the subject slightly. Paul has dealt with tongues as a concept in itself, his teachings being deliberately ambiguous and general, and providing only the basis for discrimination between genuine and pagan tongues. In 14:1 ff he becomes more specific, dealing with tongues as pagan utterances. Here, the phenomenon of pagan tongues will be contrasted with real (although foreign) language. It has been noted that genuine tongues are susceptible of translation, whereas pagan tongues are, except for guidance by an evil spirit, meaningless noise spoken "into the air." Here Paul indicates an indefinite number of languages in the world.

14:10 "And none are unable to communicate." The phrase "unable to communicate" is a paraphrastic translation of the same word used of idols in 12:2 and there translated "dumb." There are no dumb languages, because by definition oral communication requires language. The idols of 12:2 are "dumb" precisely because they cannot communicate; they neither speak nor hear, both necessary components of communication. If a language (or voice) can convey meaning it is indeed a language, and not merely meaningless (or dumb) sounds.

14:11 "Therefore, if I should not know the force of the language." The word here translated "force" has elsewhere been quite properly translated "meaning" (ASV, Moffatt etc.). The word means *power strength* or *might* in most contexts; and the power or strength of a sound is its *meaning*. Hence, it is further confirmed that what Paul is dealing with here is a language. Rather than say, in v. 10, that no language is "meaningless" (as e.g. RSV and NASV) and in v. 11 that one might not understand the "meaning" of a language, it is perhaps better to translate the two words differently, and more in line with their basic ideas. Thus, no language is "unable to communicate" but its "force" might be missed or not understood.

14:11 "I shall be a foreigner to the one speaking." That is if one does not understand the language being used he will be a foreigner to the one who uses that language. It makes no difference whether the two are actually from different linguistic backgrounds or not. If one Englishman speaks Portuguese to a fellow countryman who has no knowledge of that language, they are, for all practical

purposes, of different linguistic backgrounds; for communication does not take place, though it might be expected to if both knew Portuguese.

This clause forms the first half of the "then" clause (apodosis) in the conditional statement of v. 11. The protasis is the preceding clause. As such, the notion is confirmed that language, is in view here, rather than ecstatic utterances. In 14:2 ecstatic utterances, were in view, for what was spoken "no man understands." Here, however, understanding is still impossible because the language, though a real language, cannot be understood. In the first case there is no meaning or content *to* be understood, while here content is clearly present, but is expressed in a language not comprehended by the hearer. Paul's argument against tongues is strengthened by referring to such contingencies.

14:11 "And the one speaking will be a foreigner to me." This is the second half of the apodosis, and is a necessary corollary to the first. For if one seems a foreigner who does not understand, so must the one who speaks seem a foreigner whose language conveys no meaning to the hearer.

14:12 "So also you." That is, you are like foreigners to one another because of your tongues speaking. If any of the Corinthians were engaged in the use of tongues, they would seem to be foreigners to those who heard. It follows with even more force that if genuine languages could fail to communicate, ecstatic utterances would, of necessity, be totally inappropriate for the ears of others; the more so since, without communication, there can be no edification. It might be recalled that Paul has already stated that ecstatic utterances are not directed to men but "to a god."

14:12 "Since you are zealous of spirituals" (spiritual men or spiritual manifestations) describes again the basic desire in Corinth to be "spiritual." Some form of spiritual manifestation was a must, simply as a Christian status symbol. This is not unlike the situation today.

14:12 "Seek that you might abound to the edification of the church." This is the proper aim of those who would be spiritual. True spirituality has already been shown to be love (I Cor. 13); the church has already been shown to be the body of believers where the members are mutually dependent on one another, and where seeking to have the functions of others is fruitless (I Cor. 12:12-30). Tongues (as ecstatic utterances) have been shown to edify only the speaker (I Cor. 14:4). Even genuine tongues (foreign languages) are worthless to those who do not understand (I Cor. 14:11). What has long been implied is now made an explicit command. The desire of the one who would be truly spiritual is not to have a showy spiritual manifestation, but to build up the body of believers in accordance with the means made available to him.

It is instructive to note that here Paul does not admonish the Corinthians to seek additional manifestations, or manifestations other than those already possessed, but to seek a way to edify the Church. The Corinthians are told to seek the strengthening and building-up of the church; and this in no half measure, but in abundance. This clause also has another function; it serves as a transition from languages back to the well-worn topic of pagan tongues.

14:13 "Hence, let the one speaking in a tongue pray that he might translate." This general rule can apply to either ecstatic utterances or genuine tongues. The need for translation is not only that the Church might be edified, but that genuine tongues might be discerned from pagan ecstasies and that the speaker might not remain a foreigner to his hearers. The concept is interesting for what it does to ecstatic utterances. They are, by their very nature, untranslatable; thus the doom of ecstatic utterances is sealed (once again!). But even the genuine gift of tongues requires translation if spoken within the assembly. It is worth noting that the one speaking in tongues is to pray that he himself might translate for the edification of the church.

It must be stressed that this pericope spells the death of ecstatic utterances; indeed this clause constitutes the challenge: "Translate or desist." Translation and edification are the acid tests for genuineness in regard to tongues.

14:14 "If I should pray in a tongue." Paul does not here say that he does in fact pray in a tongue. He does, however, say in v. 18 that he speaks in tongues. The difference between praying and speaking lies in the addressees; prayer is directed to "a god" or the God, while speech, unless otherwise indicated, is directed to men. This, is the very essence of the discussion on tongues, for Paul is concerned that men should be edified, rather than that speech should go "into the air." Paul is, in effect, saying "If I should speak into the air . . . "

14:14 "My Spirit prays." This is the case in any kind of sincerely motivated prayer. This makes possible the seemingly ambiguous statement of v. 9 ("except you give by the tongue intelligible speech, how will it be understood what you are saying?"). Tongues (or even language itself) are incidental to a prayerful, reverent spirit. This is what God reads. It is sheer folly to think that God is dependent upon either tongues or the King's English for a knowledge of what is going on within a man's heart. God knows the innermost parts of a man, and has no need that man make revelation or disclosure to Him.

There is, then, no particular need for language at all when addressing the Christian God, though he may be addressed in language. The use of language in prayer to God simply does not encode any vital information not otherwise immediately available to God.

14:14 "But my mind is unfruitful." This reiterates the thought implicit in 12:1-3 that the mind must be informed of what is spoken lest Christ be inadvertently cursed by a spirit. This expression merely means that the mind is unaware of what is said, which is a perfect description of cursing Christ accidentally in a tongue.

This confirms another problem of the use of ecstatic utterances, namely that even the speaker does not understand what is spoken (cf. 12:1-3, 14:2 and the implicit challenge of 14:13).

The notion that ecstatic utterance is, however, a "prayer language" is consistent with 12:1-3 and 14:1-4. It is noteworthy that at 14:4, after telling the Corinthians that ecstatic tongues are prayer language spoken "to a god" Paul tells them that such a speaker "edifies himself;" yet here such edification is clearly seen to bypass the mind, for the mind is "unfruitful." This is precisely what might be expected from people bursting with emotion which bypasses the mind.

14:15 "What is it then?" means simply "What shall we do then?" or "What is the solution?" This notifies the readers that a problem has been raised or described, and prepares them for the solution which is to follow. In effect, this clause separates the problem from its solution.

An interesting example of this is found in Acts 21:22. The question was raised in vv.17-21. The inquiry (v. 22) reads, "What is it then?" or "what is it therefore?" and serves as the transition from problem to solution. The solution follows in vv.23-26.

In Romans, Paul uses two distinct formulae for the summing up of a problem and the introduction of the solution. 1) "What then?" and 2) "What shall we say then?" The first of these occurs in Rom. 3:1, 6:15, and 11:7. The second occurs in Rom. 4:1, 6:1, 7:7, 8:3 and 9:14, 30.

Both formulations deal with abstract reasoning; that is, they serve notice that Paul's logic has reached a certain level of development in the communication of his argument, and has raised certain

corresponding problems. The argument can advance only through the satisfactory resolution of problems raised at that level. Hence, he pauses and asks the question "What then?" By posing this question he notifies his reader that he has developed a problem which he will now resolve. In every case the solution follows immediately. And never is the solution merely a restatement of the problem.

Thus also with the expression "What is it then?" (or "What is it therefore?") and its variations. Here it indicates that a problem has been posed (by means of a hypothetical or conditional clause) and that its resolution is to follow. The problem is that while tongues may be said to exercise the spirit the understanding is left empty. Obviously Paul regards this as a problem and puts forth as the solution, "I will pray in the spirit but I will also pray with the understanding." That this must refer to one kind of prayer which exercises both spirit and mind is easily seen from the fact that to view the statement as an indication of two distinct kinds of prayer is merely to restate the problem rather than to solve it; for one would still be engaged in that which does not edify the mind.

Analogy: If I should chew bubble gum my taste buds are excited, but my body is not nourished. What is it therefore? I will chew something which will excite my taste buds but also nourish my body.

It is obvious that what is in mind is the end of gum chewing and the beginning of steak dinners. Were it otherwise, Paul would simply have been restating the problem.

Even so, such a situation could possibly exist (I will chew bubble gum *and* eat steak dinners) except for the absence of the strong adversative (*alla*) indicating a contrast between two dissimilar items.

But either of these two factors pushes such a possibility to the very threshold of credulity; together they destroy it.

14:15 "I will pray with the spirit." This of course is unavoidable in any sincere prayer. One may say, "Thank you Lord" and God actually sees the "attitude of gratitude" behind the prayer. On the other hand, how often is meal-time grace a mere rote ritual totally devoid of real significance? Neither tongues nor language is capable of hiding or revealing human hearts to God.

The point is that praying with the spirit means nothing more than being sincere and reverent in prayer. Praying "with the spirit" does not designate a particular mode of prayer, though oral prayer is indeed referred to here.

14:15 "But I will also pray with the mind." This limits prayer to those modes which are capable of transmitting content. Paul is for prayer with the spirit, and against dead rote recitals. He insists that prayer be "productive" that it enlighten and inform the mind of the one praying as well as those who might hear. "I will pray in sincerity but also in a rational manner" paraphrases the thought.

14:15 "I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind." The idea is the same with singing as with praying: The point is to sing praises from a full heart and from an active, searching mind.

14:16 "Because if you should bless in a spirit." Paul here gives the reason for praying in such a way as will exercise the mind. But in doing so he reverts again from himself (if I should . . . I will, etc.) to the Corinthians. He also continues the comparison of pagan ecstatic prayer with rational prayer, referring again to the Corinthian practice of blessing "in a spirit" or ecstatic prayer.

14:16 "How shall the one filling the place of the novice say the 'Amen' at your thanksgiving." It is obvious that the novice (catechumen; unlearned; layman; initiate?) lacks not the sincerity, but the understanding.

Apparently, at least at Corinth, new Christian converts had a special area marked off for them in the assembly. They were thus able to partake in and be enlightened by the service yet kept separate from the rest.

14:16 "Since he does not know what you say." Paul reiterates the reason given for abstaining from ecstatic speech (14:2), i.e. lack of understanding on the part of the hearers. This might seem strange, having just stated that even the one praying in a tongue does not understand the utterance, except that Paul is preparing an easy transition back to the idea of edifying the church, before going on to reveal the true purpose of genuine tongues.

14:17 "For truly you give thanks well." This refers not to the mode of utterance, but the state of heart. The Corinthians, despite myriad childish problems, were doubtless sincere, committed Christians. (Were this not so, Paul could not have entertained even a faint hope of correcting the Corinthians by means of an epistle.) Thus their sincerity was read by God despite, and not because of their ecstatic speech. They gave thanks well because they were truly thankful, not because they had a "neat individual prayer language."

14:17 "But the other is not edified." Here is the recapitulation of the theme of church edification. In this light it is again plain that what has no translatable content, what speaks mysteries rather than enlightenment (especially to the novice), what does not edify the church, and what is essentially separate from the inner state of sincerity is, at best, an empty waste and, at its worst, a concealed curse of Jesus.

It seems hypocritical to have a section reserved for novices, that they might receive instruction, and then spend much time in empty ecstasies.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is surprisingly little theology here. The implicit affirmation of praying or singing with the spirit shows it to be essentially different from pagan ecstasies, and to reflect a genuine inner attitude.

There is also the strong teaching concerning the disposition of the mind in prayer and praise. This "presence of understanding" guards against the possibility of speaking curses in a spirit, and assures meaningful content and church edification in all speech.

Ethically, Paul not only places a high premium on edifying the church, but also shows concern for the training of the novice, which *could not* occur through (or during) ecstatic speech.

H. PARAPHRASE

There are doubtless many languages in the world, and none are incapable of meaning. So if I should be unlearned in another language, I will be a foreigner to one who speaks that language, and he will be a foreigner to me. So it is with you; since you zealously seek spiritual manifestations, you must seek that (rather than seem worse than a foreigner) you might greatly strengthen and build up the church. Therefore, let the one who wants to speak in a tongue pray that he is able to translate what he says. If I were to pray in a tongue, my spirit certainly would pray, but my mind would not understand what I said and would be wholly unproductive. What is to be done then? I will pray with

my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing praises with my spirit certainly; but I will also exercise my mind in so doing. Because if you bless in ecstasy you are, remember, making yourself worse than a foreigner; and how would a novice then say his "Amen" to your prayer, since he would have no understanding of your "foreign" language. True enough you give thanks well, but no one else is edified by your prayer.

ELEVENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:6-9

A. TRANSLATION

14:6. But now, brothers, if I should come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I benefit you, except I should speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching? 7 Similarly, lifeless things giving voice, whether pipe or harp, if they should not give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be understood what is being piped or harped? 8 For even if a trumpet should give an indistinct voice who shall prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, except you give by the tongue intelligible speech, how will it be understood what you are saying? For you will be speaking into the air.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:6 ὡφελήσω (future, active, indicative, first person, singular) *Help; aid; benefit; be of use to.* Here, the word is applied to a hypothetical situation in which Paul pictures himself coming to Corinth speaking unintelligible tongues (not having such content as revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching, i.e. being totally unedifying). The question Paul puts to the Corinthians is this: "If I speak unintelligible gibberish, how shall I benefit you, or aid you?" This use of the word therefore implies that some positive good is to be imparted from one to another, not merely refraining from some negative practice. This is in keeping with the whole New Testament Ethic of "Positive Righteousness."

In this connection it is unmistakably implied that the use of language is to have a positive effect. Anything less than clear language is essentially useless, for it is incapable of communicating "to you" a "benefit."

14:8 ἀδηλον (adjective, accusative, feminine, singular) *Indistinct.* Here even *unintelligible* might be acceptable, as the "sound" or "voice" clearly has a specific function, i.e. to call to arms. The notion is clearly that of a kind of "voice" intended to have significance, but owing to its actual indistinctness, being totally unintelligible and hence, useless. The parallel is unmistakably to the human voice, most specifically to its intended use of producing language.

Perhaps it is not too far removed from the analogy to suggest that such "indistinctness" as is dealt with here, is deliberately produced; it is plain that what *ought* to be a call to battle would be sent forth only by one capable of sounding such a call. Failure to properly sound the call, (to misuse the voice of the trumpet) not only fails of its intended, intelligible purpose, but results in disaster.

14:9 εὐσημον (adjective, accusative, masculine, singular). Εασιλψ ρεχογνιζαβλε; *clear; distinct; intelligible.* Its use here is most instructive. The word translated "indistinct" in v.8 prefixes the *alpha privative* to the word meaning *clear* obvious etc. Because the essence of the term here under discussion entails the opposite meaning of the word used in v.8, Paul might easily have dropped the *alpha privative* and used the word itself.

Instead, he uses a compound word capable of synonymous usage, but formed from two words

meaning "a good sign." This, in connection with plain speech, and here explicitly opposed to tongues, makes plain language rather than tongues the "good sign" which is itself intelligible.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No grammatical anomalies in this pericope.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:6 "But now brothers, if I should come to you speaking in tongues" presents a hypothetical situation. There is no claim here that Paul has ever spoken in tongues as many of the Corinthians understood the term. The ambiguity between tongues properly so called, and the pagan practice of ecstasy, is soon to be drawn out. This whole verse defines pagan ecstasy, or tongues without content, as useless.

14:7 "What shall I benefit you" again sounds the note of benefit for the body and communication to men. Speaking in one sort of tongues (the empty, ecstatic variety) is implicitly useless as far as having any practical value. The notion is that noise is useless unless it has purposive content and is deliberately spoken for the benefit of others. This is the very point of the rhetorical question. Unless *something* is said, *nothing* is said; if nothing is said, no benefit is imparted to hearers. For there is then nothing to hear.

It should also be recalled that only what is edifying to the saints and is performed in love can be understood as a spiritual manifestation. Again, the ecstatic utterances which have no clear, discernible content, and which are said to be "spoken to a god" (i.e. prayer language), Paul simply defines out of consideration.

14:6 "Except I should speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching." Paraphrasing the entire sentence helps clarify the meaning. "If I should come to you speaking in tongues, what will it benefit you if I do not convey content such as revelation or knowledge or prophecy?" This demonstrates that tongues *may* discernible, translatable content; indeed that true tongues must have such content. That content itself, however, is not different in quality from everyday speech, comprising revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching. The question only now begins to develop as to the real purpose of true tongues if its content is no different than regular speech. Paul will soon provide the answer to this question, but presently confines his comments to distinguishing the true from the false.

The full idea thus far may be paraphrased as follows: "If I should come to your aid speaking in such tongues as have no content such as revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching, exactly how have I helped you?"

The notion that the phrase "I should come to you" implies coming for the purpose of aid is seen in three points: 1) the very clause "what shall I benefit you" implies aid as the purpose of coming. "Coming to you" cannot be viewed either as a random wandering, or a gratuitous visit. Paul always sought to be of benefit to those whom he visited. 2) The Corinthians quite likely extended to Paul an invitation to come to Corinth for just such a purpose as dealing with their problems. 3) It is inconceivable that Paul would undertake any journey just to sit around babbling with his hosts. Cf.

I Cor. 4:14-21 and I Cor. 16:1- for Paul's typical reasons for "coming to you."

The result, then, is that any purpose in "coming" is frustrated by inarticulate, contentless speech, for nothing is gained or given. The irony is that the very problem created by inarticulate speech must be solved by recourse to the articulate pronouncements of Paul.

The term *revelation* refers to new knowledge imparted to Paul as an apostle, while *knowledge* means the insight into practical application and further implications of existing scripture. Prophecy refers to the proclamation of truth as it bears upon the general situation of the local church, and teaching means the imparting of biblical knowledge of God and the doctrines deriving from the scriptures. These functions are only illustrative rather than exhaustive of the roles of rational discourse.

14:7 "Similarly, lifeless things giving voice, whether pipe or harp" again seeks to make the point by analogy. Paul introduces the analogy to show that if even musical instruments must function in accord with the rational principles of music to be understood and appreciated, then much more must the human voice do so. Even genuine tongues must behave according to discernible patterns. The absence of such linguistic patterns in "speech" or noise making constitutes unintelligible, empty utterances.

Here, the pipe and harp are taken as examples of those "lifeless things giving a voice" or producing sound.

14:7 "If they should not give a distinction in the sound" means simply not to play some form of music. The thought of distinction implies music in some form, even if it is only an improvisation. What is excluded is the endless repetition of one phrase, or the continued drone of a single note.

14:7 "How shall it be understood what is being piped or harped?" Again, Paul poses a rhetorical question. Not only the negative answer, but also the reason for it is plainly understood; what is being piped or harped would not be understood because there would be no basis (or convention) for understanding it. The very definition of the "distinction in the sound" of the last clause is that it must be recognizable as music. Even if what is played is an impromptu performance or an improvisation, it must be music; it must follow certain conventions; it must be more than mere noise. It must function according to recognizable conventions to be music or it will be mere noise and unrecognizable as music. (Modern "composers" should take note of this!)

14:8 "For even if a trumpet should give an indistinct sound." The trumpet functioned much more simply than did the harp or pipe. It was in widespread use for informing soldiers of such things as rallying, preparing for battle, mounting a charge, or retreating. It was also used in the fanfare of rulers. The uses of the trumpet were simple, widespread and well known. It was not so often used in the production of music per se, but in sending forth a specific message. (Cf. 1 Thes 4:16. If the trumpet is indistinct . . . then what?)

The point here is that even these relatively simple functions are frustrated by indistinct sounds.

14:8 "Who shall prepare for battle?" This is an example of the use of the trumpet. Yet if the sound is indistinct, even such a simple function as the call to arms is frustrated. Thus it is not merely the production of relatively complex music, but the basic function of general instructions sounded by the unsophisticated trumpet which is nullified by indistinctness in sounds. The point is thus even more forcefully made that sound without content (adherence to convention) is mere empty noise, with no regular meaning or response.

14: "So also you, except you give, by the tongue, intelligible speech." This is an example of a thought begun in one way and completed in another. Paul perhaps ought to have provided "you" with a finite verb.

The point is nonetheless inescapable; the Corinthians, here likened to various "lifeless" instruments "giving a voice" or "making a noise" are shown that unintelligible utterances are meaningless at best (though, it may be recalled, such babble may contain an "accidental" curse; cf. I Cor. 12:1-3). Plain speech is the "good sign" of intelligibility; cf. Lexical Study.

14: "How will it be understood what you are saying?" How indeed? Another rhetorical question. Again, both the answer and the reason for it are perfectly obvious; without content there can be no understanding, for it cannot be determined if anything (even an accidental curse!) is actually being said. Apart from linguistic conventions, the very best that can be deliberately uttered is mere meaningless noise. This clause, far from implying that if the mouth is in motion something *is* being said, rather implies that a moving mouth *ought* to be conveying content. It is not merely the "what," but the "whether" as well, which is in question. To interpret the verse on the basis that the word "saying" must refer to intelligible speech, falls flat on three points. 1) It is the burden of this analogy to demonstrate that nothing, in fact, is being said intelligibly, 2) the rhetorical question revolves around the impossibility of "understanding," and therefore, 3) to argue that this passage implies articulate speech involves one in begging the question.

14: "For you will be speaking into the air." Very little is required here by way of comment, except to note that the "mysteries" spoken "to a god in a spirit" has here been reduced to "speaking into the air." This is consistent with Paul's teaching concerning gods and idols (I Cor. 8:1-6) and their being characterized as "dumb" (I Cor. 12:2).

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical implication revolves around distinguishing genuine tongues from false. Obviously genuine tongues are to be practiced rather than false ones. But if genuine tongues have the same sort of content as plain speech, what is the purpose of "seeking" them at all.

Theologically it has been assumed that Paul desired to benefit other saints by the use of edifying spiritual disclosures. These, without fail, produce some positive good and in the area of speech must have content. That edification takes place by recourse to such things as revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching makes verbal content the *sine qua non* of speech, and condemns the pagan tongues spoken at Corinth as "Speaking into the air."

By means of three rhetorical questions, Paul has demonstrated that without content, there is nothing to comprehend. And without comprehension there can be neither translation nor edification.

Edification comes through conventional modes and patterns, showing pagan tongues to be useless and genuine tongues to be inexpedient.

H. PARAPHRASE

Now, brothers, suppose that I should come to you speaking tongues. In what way would my speech benefit you unless it imparted revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching? It is similar even to lifeless instruments, whether pipes or harps, when they give forth sound; unless they make distinctions in the sounds they produce, how will anyone understand what they are playing? And if a trumpet sounds indistinctly who will answer the call to arms? It is even so with you; unless you

exercise your tongue in intelligible speech how will such utterance be understood? For you will be filling the air with empty noise.

FOURTEENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:20-25

A. TRANSLATION

14:20 Brothers, do not be children in understanding, but be baby-like in evil; yet in understanding be mature. 21 In the law it is written that "in other tongues and by other lips I will speak to this people and they will not hear" me even so, says the Lord. 22 So tongues are for a sign, not to the ones who believe but to the non-believers; but prophecy is not to the non-believers, but to the ones who believe. 23 If, therefore, the whole church should be gathered together and all should speak in tongues and novices or non-believers should enter, would they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all should prophesy and a novice or a non-believer should enter he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; 25 The secrets of his heart become manifest, and so, falling upon his face he will worship God, declaring that "God is indeed among you."

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:20 παιδία (noun, second declension, accusative, neuter, plural) *Infant; very young child.* Much of the force of this pericope depends upon the usage of this term. It is contrasted with terms for baby-like and mature. It is juxtaposed with both intellect and evil. The comparisons are instructive. This term appears in the phrase "children in intellect." It is in stark contrast with the phrase "baby-like in evil" and in opposition to the phrase "in intellect be mature." The sense of the term, then, is that of young children rather than mere infants.

The idea of "not being children in intellect" is that of being prepared to learn something which might be unpleasant. It is a call to faithful acceptance and understanding instead of childish defensiveness in the face of the difficult teaching soon to follow.

14:20 φρεσίν (noun, third declension, dative, feminine, plural). *Thinking; understanding.* The term, like all Greek words relating to human mentality, is extremely difficult to limit rigorously. The word had long been used for *heart, will, purpose, perception, thought* and *understanding*. It has here to do with intellect, because of its contrast with evil, in regard to which the Corinthians are urged indeed to be mere infants. This maturity is necessary for intelligent acceptance of the teaching which is to follow. The term is used in the absolute sense and without direct modifiers; thus it is abstract to the point that the English word *intellect* is a sound but awkward choice for translation. Hence the choice of *understanding*.

14:20 νηπιάζετε (present, active, imperative, second person, plural) The word has been used to describe children from birth to puberty, and even of the fetus in early stages of development. It is also found in figurative usages meaning "childish to the point of being blind with regard to premeditation." The notion "without foresight" is entirely appropriate here, owing to the fact that Paul (a strict believer in the sinful nature of man and original sin) was not exhorting the Corinthians to moral perfection, but to intellectual maturity. This being the case, the admonition to be "baby-like" is a parenthetical thought; perhaps it anticipates the Corinthian argument that Christ enjoined child-likeness.

At any rate the idea is that the Corinthians were to be like babies insofar as any evil actions were concerned; i.e. without forethought and followed by genuine, faithful repentance.

14:20 $\tau\acute{e}\lambda\epsilon\tau\omega\iota$ (adjective, nominative, masculine, plural) *Having attained the end or purpose; complete; perfect.* The term is contrasted with "children" and so should be translated adult, or mature. The full contrast is between being "children in intellect" and being mature in intellect. The need for such intellectual maturity is seen in the teaching which follows. Paul now leaves the subject of ecstatic utterances and turns to describing the essential limitations of the genuine manifestation of tongues. This was necessary because the Corinthians either made no distinction between the two sorts of tongues, or because they used the very existence of genuine tongues as justification for the practice of pagan ecstasies.

Thus, the call to intellectual maturity serves both as a reminder of the force of the argument thus far, and as a warning that the most serious argument is yet to come.

The undeniable reference is to I Cor 13:11, where Paul stated that as a child he behaved childishly, but that when he "became a man he put away childishness." The Corinthians were being prepared to put away their childishness in the same manner as Paul did, i.e. by putting away childish reasoning and thought. (Note that Paul was asking them to "be mature in intellect" in order that they might also put away their childish speech.)

14:22 $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\omega\iota$ (noun, second declension, nominative, neuter, singular). *Sign; 1) as a distinguishing mark (a mark, token, or seal); 2) as, or coupled with, wonders or miracles.*

It is generally held that signs had, in the Old Testament, the forms and functions of portents, identifying marks, declarations, warnings, assurances, reminders, object lessons, etc.

Tongues are said to be a sign to the non-believer; Duet. 28:4 and Isa. 28:11 are quoted in demonstration of this contention. The sign of strange tongues, in both contexts, simply means a foreign nation will be God's witness *against* Israel. It should be noted that the "other tongues" are foreign languages and not ecstasies. It is also well to note that the function of the sign was a judgment upon, or witness against Israel; the sign was essentially independent of what was spoken, but was constituted a sign solely by virtue of the fact that God told Israel well in advance not only what would happen (the sign of the other tongues), but why it would happen. This being the case, the sign of other tongues was clearly a reminder of God's previous instruction to Israel. As such, the sign had content and meaning which was both beyond and independent of the foreign tongues themselves.

The *sign* of other tongues might have been given on a number of occasions; not merely the occasion of the capture of Judah. And there is no reason why the content of foreign tongues might not be the gospel itself, since 1) the sign is not dependent upon the content of the speech for its meaning; 2) it *ought* to have the effect of causing national repentance (being, after all, a reminder to the Jew regarding what God had promised); and 3) when rejected, it becomes a witness and judgment against her. It is not amiss to conclude that after the first advent of the Jewish Messiah, on the day of Pentecost, the "sign of other tongues" contained the gospel message for those who would heed it. Nor would it be amiss to suppose that as long as there was a nation of Israel awaiting her King, and a Kingdom message being proclaimed, tongues could effectively serve as a sign.

These points are, of course, entirely consistent with information in the Acts passages dealing with tongues. For Paul makes a drastic break with what has gone before concerning the pagan ecstasies, and now focuses his attention fully on the purpose and nature of genuine tongues. Not every

occurrence of the "sign of other tongues" can be understood as the manifestation of tongues; the Assyrian captivity was no spiritual manifestation, but it was the "sign of tongues."

Again, it must be stressed that for reasons which will be shown later, the Acts phenomena need not (and it will be argued, should not) be equated with the manifestation of tongues, but with the "sign" of tongues.

In the New Testament, particularly with Jesus and Paul, signs as such are declarations or warnings, as in the Old Testament; but they are also means of authenticating the person and mission of God's messengers. As such, the New Testament figures shunned working miracles and giving signs upon request, because of the cheapening effect such sideshow performances would have had.

This is likely the reason why miraculous signs, and the power to work miracles and to heal were never given to other than Jesus and the Apostles. The temptation to make merchandise of such abilities or to use them as cheap entertainment could simply not have been resisted. (Let it be remembered that the "effects of powers" and the "gifts of healings" were the results of such manifestations, rather than the ability to perform them.)

With these points in mind, it can be seen that the manifestation of tongues was probably the effect of an apostolic sign of authentication in which certain men received the ability to speak to unbelieving Jews in the languages of their native countries throughout the Diaspora.

Or perhaps the genuine manifestation would only function in the presence of unbelieving Jews. In any case, some of the Corinthians flaunted pagan ecstasies in the attempt to show how "gifted" they were. Little imagination is needed to see how this would inevitably lead to precisely the confused state in Corinth to which Paul addressed himself.

14:23 $\mu\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$ (Present, deponent, indicative, second person, plural). *Be mad; be out of one's mind*, and as a result, *have no control over oneself*. It is noteworthy that this is the word used of the impression left on outsiders by those who were filled with divine "gnosis." (cf. Hermetic writings 9:4). It is also noteworthy that madness should be predicated of the Corinthians rather than drunkenness, as was the case in Acts. The charge of madness seems better to comport with the pagan mysteries, or Gnosticism (or whatever "pre-gnostic" forms were to be found in Corinth), than the mere drunkenness charged in Acts. (cf. I Cor. 12:1-3 Exposition).

In the ancient near east, madness was often thought to be the result of special or close contact with divinity. There was also a prevalent idea that demon possession caused madness. The Greeks had an adage to the effect that "whom the gods will destroy they first make mad." This is not far removed from the idea of Deut. 28:28 that madness is one form of divine punishment for disobedience to God's Law.

Madmen were generally greatly feared and scrupulously avoided. (cf. Lk. 8:2, 30, 11:14 etc.). In this context it is evident that speaking in tongues, if it projected the impression of madness upon spectators, could not have had a positive function. For if Jews or thoughtful Greeks encountered what they perceived as madness, they quickly terminated the encounter, and avoided the mad man. On the other hand, those who actively sought close contact with a god viewed such characteristic madness as a positive good. Hence the popularity of the mysteries in Hellenistic times.

Certainly Jews regarded madness as something with which to avoid contact at all costs. Even intelligent Greeks avoided the ecstatic excesses of the mysteries as a general rule. Thus, tongues, as the Corinthians practiced them, defeated any possibility of evangelism.

This is the exact opposite of the effect produced either by prophecy or by genuine tongues.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

14:20 The abstract nouns translated "intellect" and "evil" have the article. This construction is unusual, and probably relates the abstract to the Corinthians, the same as a personal pronoun would have. It is possible to translate the articles in just this way, though it is not necessary to do so.

14:22 The place of the predicate nominative has here given way to the Hebraism employing the prepositional phrase; literally "the tongues are *into a sign*."

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:20 "Brothers, do not be children in understanding." The word "brothers" serves to mark a new unit of thought, but it also prepares the Corinthians to receive a strong corrective by explicitly identifying them as Paul's Christian brothers.

The admonition which follows is also preparatory. It is a strong statement to the effect that the Corinthian Christian should not "think as a child" (13:11). The whole verse is an open invitation (in the imperative mood!) to grow up. The basic area needing development is the mind or understanding; the spiritual truth about to be imparted is given through the understanding. It may be that it is not necessary to completely understand every spiritual principle in order for it to become operable; but it is certain that misunderstood spiritual principles don't work. Spirituality involves the same basic mental circuitry as any other aspect of mentality.

14:20 "But be baby-like in evil." The one area that should remain in child-like simplicity and innocence is the area of evil. This is consistent with the idea of having the faith of a child, i.e. without ulterior motive and desiring no ill.

14:20 "Yet in understanding be mature." This is a positive repetition of the first clause. Again the invitation to adult thinking was extended. What follows would require the Corinthians to think like adults rather than the childish "spiritual showoffs" they had become. This corresponds to 13:11b, where Paul says that when he "became a man" he put away childish thinking. This clause concludes the preparation for the coming instruction.

14:21 "In the law it is written." This is the standard formula for citing Scripture as final authority. Here, it is the introduction to that teaching, the proper reception of which will require the Corinthians to be mature in their understanding. The authority of Scripture is assumed, both by Paul, and (presumably) by the Corinthians as well; otherwise citing Scripture would have been a waste of time.

14:21 "'In other tongues, and by other lips I will speak to this people'." This is from the Greek translation of the Hebrew poetry found in Isaiah 28:11-12. The quotation is incomplete; but enough is quoted to make the point. The specific content of the speech of the Assyrian captors has nothing in common with the content of the tongues of Pentecost, or subsequent occasions. Nor is the "strange language" at Pentecost Assyrian (at least not exclusively Assyrian). The point Paul is drawing from Isaiah 28:11-12 is that God will use different tongues as a sign to the unfaithful Jews. Such prophecy is not susceptible to only one fulfillment. Thus, the important elements are 1) God

will speak 2) to the unfaithful Jews 3) by strange tongues (foreign languages).

14:21 "And they will not hear me' even so, says the Lord." The idea of hearing usually implies obedience; it is not the case that the Jews simply refused to let the sound of Assyrian voices register upon their ears. Rather they refused to acknowledge this as God's judgment upon them; they refused to repent and become obedient. That was the failure of the Jews, both in the time of the Assyrians and at Pentecost and beyond.

This results in a complex situation. The Assyrians were simply speaking everyday Assyrian. They were about their business. Doubtless, they were not indulging in ecstasies. Their language had content even if that content was not a call to repentance.

Yet God did not expect the Assyrians to deliver His message to the Jews *in* the Assyrian language, but by the fact of *hearing the Assyrian tongue* spoken on Jewish soil. The captivity was the sentence passed by God upon the Jews, just as tongues had been His sign of judgment upon them, independent of what the Assyrians actually said.

What God expected Israel to "hear" was the Law of the O.T. Scriptures (perhaps, for example Duet. 28:47-51 ff.). Failing this, God could say Israel would not "hear me." The people would be *listening* to the strange language of the Assyrians, but they were to be *hearing* God. This fact obtains whether or not the Israelites understood what the Assyrians were saying.

The same situation did not occur at Pentecost for there the Jews of many nations heard and understood what was being spoken. It can scarcely be maintained that what was spoken at Pentecost was not a language, since the Jews of different regions concurred as to the content of what was spoken.

14:22 "So tongues are for a sign." That is how God had said he would deal with Israel if she were unfaithful. The primary function of tongues, then, is as a sign of judgment on unbelieving Jews.

14:22 "Not to the ones who believe but to the non-believers." Non-believers were always asking for a sign; not that they would necessarily have been persuaded by it, but because they wanted to decide for themselves if such a sign was of God.

This certainly fits the record of Acts. Though the phenomenon of tongues is for other reasons not consistent with the idea of a "gift" of tongues, it is instructive nonetheless. For it is obvious that the phenomena of genuine tongues 1) had content and were therefore languages, 2) that they were a sign of judgment upon those who could not understand or would not obey, and 3) that the content of the language does not constitute the significance of the sign. The *sign* is given to the unbeliever, not for edification, but to signal that judgment has begun.

Thus, genuine tongues must not only have content, (so as to edify believers who may hear a translation) they also must, *as a sign*, be spoken in the presence of unbelieving Jews who may or may not understand or repent.

14:22 "But prophecy is not to the non-believers but to the ones who believe." This is the exact opposite of tongues. Tongues are a sign of judgment to the unbelieving Jew, while prophecy is no sign at all, but a straightforward mode of edification for those who believe. This is the second repetition of the basic idea stated in 14:5b. Surely even the Corinthians must have gotten the point. Yet Paul proceeds with another illustration.

14:23 "If, therefore, the whole church should be gathered together." The whole church here refers to the local body of believers. It is a regular gathering, whatever the specific agenda might be. There is no indication that this is a special meeting. This is the first condition of a multi-conditional sentence.

14:23 "And all should speak in tongues." This does not mean all persons speaking at once. The parallel in the next verse precludes this, for if "all prophesied" at once, the din would be just as unintelligible as the confusion caused by "all speaking in tongues" at once.

Pandemonium (in its modern sense) simply is not the question here. The question here involves a church service given over entirely to speaking in tongues. This is the second conditional clause.

14:23 "And novices or non-believers should enter." The third condition is the arrival of non-believers, or novices (those instructed in Christianity, who were either not yet committed to it, or were not yet full members of the local assembly.) The hypothetical situation thus described is a regular Church meeting during which all those present speak in tongues, possibly two or three at once, but not the entire assembly at the same time. The arrival of some novices presents an interesting possibility here. If the "novice" were a catechumen, as is entirely possible, it is evident that the secrets or "mysteries" of tongues had been withheld from him during his indoctrination.

As a novice, or unlearned or "uninitiated" member, he cannot be numbered among the "full members" or "initiates" of the Church; yet he is not an "unbeliever." Thus, upon entering the church meeting (perhaps his first?) he would be confronted with a spectacle which perhaps he had deliberately shunned as a thinking Greek, or for which he would be totally unprepared as a Jew.

14:23 "Would they not say that you are mad?" This would likely be the conclusion of *anyone* who witnessed an entire service given over to ecstatic utterances. This situation, is reminiscent of Chapter 12; all are performing one function! Even the more stable Greeks considered the ecstasies sheer madness -- and they were well acquainted with the mysteries. But if a Jew, for whom genuine content-laden tongues constituted a sign of judgment saw such a scene, he would flee for his life; for he viewed madness as itself a divine judgment! He would conclude then, that it was not he that was under judgment, but the Corinthians! It should be noted that there is a difference in the kind of tongues here. Paul reverts to the notion of gibberish tongues, for he has just designated genuine tongues as a sign for unbelievers. Thus if genuine tongues should occur many things might happen, but certainly they would be recognized as languages by the unbelievers, and madness would not be predicated of the speakers. Yet Paul, after saying that tongues are *for* the unbelievers, says that the unbeliever would view the Corinthian practice as madness. This can be true only if these tongues are of a different variety than those of vv.21-22, the "unbelievers" were of a different sort, or both. The tongues are obviously different, for signs (and hence sign-tongues) always have a coherent meaning quite explicable in everyday terms, whereas only the ecstasies of the mystery religions seem to be madness. Thus, the unbelievers in question may be either local or alien Gentiles, since in neither case do they receive instruction, but are said to view the proceedings as madness. Such "madness" was simply the general assumption as to the mental state of cult devotees. It is quite unlikely that anyone could have been familiar with the Greek world (and particularly with Corinth) without also having been familiar with the existence of the mysteries. But even the Jews would not have viewed such behavior as a sign, because it characterized much of Gentile religious practice, and occurred in his own home land. Indeed, the judgment of dispersion had already occurred for such Jews as made their homes in Greece.

This being the case, it can only stand to reason that if tongues are being spoken and a thoughtful stranger approaches, he will flee (as seen above), while a less thoughtful stranger, and one who is

inclined toward the mysteries will enter. And he who flees will do so for the same reason as the other enters; they both perceive the madness of the mysteries to be in progress.

But whereas, Corinthian tongues may actually attract the unlearned and unbelievers who are attracted to the mysteries, prophecy will attract a different set of unbeliever or novice, i.e. he who seeks rational religion.

The ancients did not view madness in quite the same way as do moderns. For while there was about the notion a certain negative aspect which made it repugnant to those of a thoughtful turn of mind, this view was not shared by all. Many indeed actually sought such madness as a sign of the nearness of a god. An analogous situation can be seen in the way different segments of modern society view rock music, or the "maniacal" use of drugs. Many abhor such practices on religious and intellectual grounds, while the generally less refined view such practices as not only acceptable, but positively good. But it is absolutely beyond question both that the notion of madness cannot provide the *proper* reason for entering a Christian service, and that such a practice as makes strangers flee without understanding is not in accord with Christian outreach.

Prophecy, on the other hand, would appeal to those who sought truth. For they would understand such proceedings as a claim to teach truth. Hence they enter and are convicted and say "God is indeed among you."

So it becomes apparent that the strangers who enter the service when tongues are being spoken are different than the one who ought to enter when prophecy is being spoken. For not only do they obviously enter for different reasons, and are affected differently, but the grammar indicates a difference in number and quality. The latter is designated as "a certain" unbeliever or novice, while the former include any number of disparate personalities. It would be unwise to speculate further concerning the nature of such "a certain" unbeliever or novice, but it is obvious that even in case of the pronoun having the thrust of our indefinite article, there is a distinction being made.

14:24 "But if all should prophesy." The first condition, that of the whole church gathered in a regular meeting, is here assumed. The difference within the church, is that all are prophesying, rather than speaking in tongues. This does not mean all prophesying at once, but rather a church service given over entirely to prophecy. There is no implication that this was really the case. Nor, would Paul actually desire that all prophesy to the exclusion of the exercise of the other spiritual manifestations. But the point is more forceful, stated this way.

In this case, all are prophesying, and edifying one another in orderly fashion. This is a very different scene which greets the hypothetical visitor; it is certainly not one which might be viewed as a display of madness, but rather as the activity of divine sanity.

14:24 "And a novice or non-believer should enter, he is reproved by all." While the saints edify one another by means of prophecy, an unbeliever enters, is convinced of the truth, and perhaps is saved and added to the Church. It is instructive to note the similarity of genuine tongues and their translation (as seen in Acts) and the practice of prophecy here enjoined.

The picture is not of everyone's attention going to the visitor, and each one divining his secret vices for the whole assembly to hear; rather the prophets make clear God's will, and the visitor sees himself at cross purposes to that will. The idea is that of being reproved *by* all, not *to* all.

14:24 "He is judged by all." Again, the nature of prophecy in the church is such that judgment is passed on sin, both generally, and in any known specifics. An observer with any vices in his life

must be made to feel uncomfortable in such circumstances as these. All that had been exposed to him, and all of which he had become convicted, is seen in its true light and his real guilt becomes clear to him.

14:25 "The secrets of his heart become manifest." This is likely a subjective manifestation; but open revelation of his secrets is not impossible. It should be noticed that this is not a specific function of "all" who prophecy. His secrets may become manifest *in their sinfulness* to himself alone, or perhaps a single prophet is given divine insight into his heart. It is not out of the question that, upon conviction, he may confess his secrets to the church.

14:25 "And so, falling upon his face he will worship God." The cumulative effect of prophecy, then, exposes and convicts the stranger, and judges (without knowing?) his specific sins, which may become manifest to the body in one way or another, with the result that the visitor will surrender and give praise to God.

14:25 "Declaring that 'God is indeed among you'." This is a far cry from assuming the Churchmen to be mad, which resulted in the first hypothetical case, that of "all speaking in tongues." But the second case, that of prophesying in the church, results in the judgment of the visitor and his confession that "God is indeed among you."

This is more than mere notice of a fact; it is the notice of a *difference*. Greeks had worshiped in pagan temples, and many had celebrated the mysteries and consulted oracles; Jews had been, as a rule, in their synagogues from childhood, and likely had visited the temple in Jerusalem. Yet in none of these places had they been convinced that they were indeed in the presence of the living God. The important point is that such conviction of sin could no more be effected by a church engaged in ecstasies (or even in the practice of genuine tongues!) than it could by celebrating the mysteries or the Passover! But the practice of prophecy makes God's presence a certainty!

This, incidentally, is another positive way of edifying, or building up, the church. New members are the positive, visible proof of internal activity.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In Paul's admonition to be mature in understanding there is the implication that such maturity should characterize Christians. Christians should always have open minds. They need not fear learning or thinking, or dealing with issues, but should instead fear the closed mind and the instinct which seeks for the stifling security of herd-bound behavior. Religious issues should be handled intelligently rather than merely emotionally. Spirituality is intelligently pursued; it is not a competitive sport!

Also to permanently characterize the Christian is his "baby-likeness" in evil. His innocence and deliberate failure to "provide for the lusts of the flesh" should brand him.

The major theological motif is the clear superiority of prophecy even to genuine tongues, at least insofar as church practice is concerned. For tongues is primarily a sign of judgment to the unbelieving Jew, and a mode of evangelism only in certain circumstances. Prophecy on the other hand edifies the church, in its simple function of communicating God's will to the saints, and upon occasion by adding visibly to the body of believers through conviction and conversion of non-believers.

There is also the clear implication that the church meeting is not to be closed to strangers. This speaks to those who would guard the communion table by conducting closed services.

None of what is recorded in these verses indicates that every believer ought to prophecy in church. The implication is that in Corinth many were "speaking in tongues" to their own detriment; if excess must be the rule, at least excessive prophecy would be beneficial.

Little comment is needed to show that the church is built up both doctrinally (in its present members) as well as numerically (by the addition of new members) by the practice of prophecy. Prophecy provides both sorts of edification; whereas genuine tongues serves only as a sign of judgment, and Pagan ecstasies have a positively detrimental effect.

H. PARAPHRASE

Brothers, do not be children as far as your understanding is concerned. Be mere babes in regard to evil, yet in regard to understanding be adults. In the Old Testament it is written that "in other tongues and by other lips I will speak to Israel, but in vain" says the Lord. This shows that genuine tongues are meant to be a sign, not to believers, but to non-believers; prophecy, on the other hand is not meant for non-believers, but for believers. If all of the church came together, and proceeded to speak in tongues, and some unschooled or unbelieving men entered also, wouldn't they think that you were all mad? But if you exercised prophecy and one who was unlearned or a non-believer entered, he would be exposed and judged by all, and his secret vices would be identified for what they are, and he would bow before God and worship Him, and marvel that it was among you that he had found God.

FIFTEENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:26-33a

A. TRANSLATION

14:26 What is it then, brothers? Whenever you are gathered together each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has a translation; let all be done for edification. 27 And if any man speaks in a tongue *let it be* by two or at most three and in order, and for translation. 28 But if there should not be a translator, let him keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 And let two or three prophets speak, and the others discern. 30 But if it is revealed to another sitting down, let the first keep silence. 31 For you can all prophesy one at a time, in order that all might learn, and all might be encouraged; 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33a For God is not a God of disorder, but of harmony.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:31 μανθάνωσιν (present, active, subjunctive, third person, plural). *Learn; discover; appropriate to oneself.* The idea is that of making some piece of information one's own, whether by instruction or practical experience. The present context demands the sense "learn through instruction." The term is paired with the word translated "be encouraged."

14:31 παρακαλῶνται (Present, passive, subjunctive, third person, plural) 1) *Summon, call to one's side;* 2) *appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage;* 3) *request, implore, entreat;* 4) *comfort.* This word shows a wide range of usage, but here, it is linked with the word translated "learn" and used in connection with the function of prophets within the church.

It has been urged repeatedly that prophecy be given preference to tongues; it has also been put forth more than once that edification of the church is the function of genuine spiritual manifestations. Both ideas come together again, making the edification of the church the function of prophecy. The specific manner in which this edification is gained is through the discerning of the teaching of the prophets i.e. learning and encouragement. These two functions of prophecy provide the meat which cannot come via either pagan ecstasies or genuine tongues; in both cases this is true by definition; ecstasies cannot be translated, and genuine tongues are a sign of judgment upon the nation of Israel, not a spiritual manifestation for the edification of the Church.

14:33 ἀκαταστασίας (noun, first declension, dative, feminine, plural) 1) *Disturbance, 2) disorder, unruliness.*

14:33 εἰρήνης (noun, first declension, genitive, feminine, singular). 1) *Peace, order; 2) welfare, health.*

These terms also provide a word pair. They are mutually dependent upon each other for their unique contextual meanings. Throughout I Cor. 12:1-4, Paul makes a concerted effort to show the Corinthians that the function of spiritual manifestations is the edification of the church. Implicit in all of this is the notion of orderliness. It is certain that there was nothing orderly about the pagan mysteries; nor, therefore about the Corinthian church service.

At times the disorderly nature of the Corinthian church service was clearly implied (e.g. "Will they not think you mad?"). Paul here finishes his contrast between tongues and prophecy, not by further definition, but by issuing a directive. Tongues were to be employed 1) by no more than three 2) by turns, and 3) for translation. This, of course inflicted a severe order upon what, in Corinth, was by its very nature disorderly. In contrast, prophecy can easily fit the prescribed rules, and by so doing, edify the church.

Hence, Paul put the seal upon this passage by claiming that God is the God of *harmony* rather than of disorder. It is plain that in this context, this word pair can function in no other way. "God is not the God of disorder but of *peace*" utterly fails the context.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

14:28 The article is used with the term "God" as it is twice in 14:25, in opposition to the anarthrous usage found in 14:2. The same opposition is found to exist between the articular construction with "Spirit" in 14:15 (twice) and the anarthrous constructions in 14:2 and 14:16. These occurrences of the articular constructions "refer back to the God whom the Corinthians recognized as Paul's God. This is therefore the anaphoric use of the article. Its use strengthens the notion of tongues being of two distinct varieties.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:26 "What is it then brothers?" What shall we do? This phrase occurs after the problem had been stated, and an answer sought. As the introduction to a new pericope it assumes the idea or situation posed in the preceding pericope. It will be remembered that Paul reminded the Corinthians that prophecy, rather than tongues, was the tool for reaching novices and non-believers; that whereas even genuine tongues served as a sign to Israel, and ecstasies were madness, prophecy was consistent with evangelism.

Here, Paul returns to discussing the true function of the church, i.e. edification of the saints. Evangelism was brought into the picture for the sole purpose of comparing pagan ecstasies (which had already supplanted genuine tongues) with prophecy.

Paul introduces this pericope with the question "What is it then, brothers?" and the sense is "Since genuine tongues are for a sign to unbelieving Israel, and pagan ecstasies merely convince outsiders that you are mad, and whereas prophecy convicts them of their sin, what shall we do?" The answer follows.

14:26 "Whenever you are gathered together" that is whenever you have a formal service to praise God and exhort, comfort, and teach one another.

14:26 "Each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has a translation." This list is suggestive, rather than exhaustive of things one may wish to do in a church service; indeed it represents things which members of a local body, the Corinthians in particular, might have wanted to contribute to the worship service.

It is possible that time had been spent between services, thinking of songs to sing, or reviewing a

teaching. It is even conceivable that "tongues" had been "practiced." It is certain, however, that one cannot practice the translation of a tongue in advance and independently of the speaker. Though this is seemingly trivial, it reminds one that there could be no such thing as "practicing" a genuine tongue, and therefore true translation would be even more impossible to practice in advance, except on the assumption that the translation was to be done by those in whose native tongues the message would be spoken.

14:26 "Let all be done for edification." Not self edification, as this had already been done to death (I Cor. 4:4), but the edification of one another.

This pericope is Paul's closest approach to a frontal attack upon tongues. It begins, not with further definition of pagan or ecstatic tongues, nor yet with another description of the total uselessness of pagan ecstasies, but with a directive: Let everything (in church) be done for edification. This applies to any exercise done within the regular church meeting. The presumptive benefit to others of psalms, teachings and revelations is noteworthy, while the uselessness of both genuine tongues and pagan ecstasies has been demonstrated *ad nauseam*. The first qualification for the exercise of spiritual manifestations in church is that such exercise be of immediate spiritual benefit to those believers present.

14:27 "And if any man speaks in a tongue." The sense, because of the indicative mood, is "If any man speaks in a tongue (despite what has been said)." The statement is made in this way in order not to eliminate any genuine tongues which may occur.

14:27 "Let it *be* by two, or at most three." This limits the scope of activity; for genuine tongues, as a sign to the Jews, would not require more than two speakers. But such a limitation would have sharply restricted the ecstatic practices widespread in the Corinthian church.

14:27 "And in order." This directs that any such speaking be done in an orderly manner . . . no hurried attempts to be the first to speak, nor any other showy displays of inconsiderate behavior.

14:27 "And for translation." The third particular directive disallows entry into ecstasies; for tongues spoken in church are to be translated. This limits tongues in regard to genuineness, and banishes ecstasies from the church service.

Paul has cited a general "rule" for all spiritual activity within the church meeting: "Let all be done for edification." He now follows the general rule with three specific directives designed to curb excesses and condemn anything false: 1) Let tongues be spoken by no more than three; 2) let it be done in an orderly manner; 3) let tongues be translated. These directives severely limit the scope, quality, and nature of the tongues which are to be spoken in church, for the idea of speaking in order implies an order-keeper or leader of some sort. Clearly, Paul saw that the ecstasies would die the painful death of being ignored if, in order to be exercised, permission had to be granted by the leader in charge of the meeting. With even greater emphasis, the third directive eliminates ecstatic utterances, because such, even if they contain an accidental word or a veiled curse of Christ, are not translatable.

Here it appears that the mechanics of the spiritual manifestations of prophecy and tongues/translation are contrasted for yet another reason. If, as seems likely, tongues, properly translated, can function in the same way as prophecy for the edification of the church (14:5), the question raised in the previous twenty two verses begs for attention. For if tongues must be translated, obviously it is the translation itself which edifies the church. But how would one know if the translation were "accurate" unless he also knew the tongue? The first possibility is that the translator be at least

vaguely familiar with the tongue being spoken. In this case, the unbelieving (foreign Jew?) would be within earshot of the church service, and the speaker of tongues would deliver the *sign* in the unbeliever's native language, whereupon a translator would arise in the church and translate for the edification of the body. In such a case the speaker would not know in advance if a translator were present and the body would not know if the translation were accurate.

The other possibility, however, is that the translator is the unbelieving visitor. This not only removes the question of the validity of translation, but provides the perfect explanation of how tongues/translation can function in the body as prophecy, and edify the church by adding to it "such as are to be saved."

In either case, it is obvious that neither the tongue nor the translation could be rehearsed in advance and thus, the Holy Spirit would be seen to produce a spontaneous manifestation, just as in Acts 2.

Paul urged his Corinthian readers to grow up and put away their pagan practices, adding emphasis by way of very pointedly explaining the true purpose of genuine tongues.

For the sake of disentangling the true from the false, Paul has dealt with tongues in this round-about manner. Pagan ecstasies had, at this point, been legislated from the scene. But for good measure, Paul reiterates the last directive in such a way as to leave no room for misunderstanding.

14:28 "But if there should not be a translator." The conditional clause poses only a possibility. It does not indicate a great degree of probability, or improbability. It merely states a situation which might arise; i.e. if there should not be one present who could translate a tongue.

14:28 "Let him keep silence in the church." This is the consequent (or "then" clause). If the situation arose in which one wished to speak in tongues in the church service, but no one was present to translate, then the would-be speaker was to keep silent. This command is in the imperative; there is no doubt as to its meaning. Under these circumstances even genuine tongues were limited.

14:28 "And speak to himself and to God." This implies that one may (quite contrary to the "prayer language view") speak to God in the same way one speaks to himself; i.e. in his heart, without a sound, and in the thought forms of his native language! The would-be tongues speaker was instructed to remain silent if his message could not be translated. In other words, if edification of the body would not be effected, he should quietly address only himself and God. This is proper "church behavior." Spiritual enablement is never provided (nor is it needed) in connection with a Christian's relationship with God. Rather *all* spiritual enablement is given for the sake of a Christian's relationship to other men, particularly the edification of other Christians.

This sentence offers a slight structural problem; i.e. does the phrase "in church" modify the word translated "keep silence" only, or the whole clause "Keep silence and speak to himself and to God"? If the first alternative reflects Paul's intent, the implication might be that in church one should keep silence without a translator, but elsewhere speaking in tongues permissible. This, however, is not consistent with the notion of spiritual manifestations as outlined in Chapter 12. And because the focus is upon the abuses attending church meetings, it is unlikely that Paul would here devote a clause to behavior outside the church.

On the other hand, it is practically impossible to force the other interpretation on the clause owing to its structure, despite the fact that its sense obviously deals with speaking to oneself and to God in church. Nor can it be urged that Paul means to imply that one should not speak (silently) to oneself and to God outside of church. The interpretation of "speaking to oneself and to God" in

church does not come from the prepositional phrase at all, but from the main clause, "If there should not be a translator."

The clause "speak to himself and to God" is, then, a sort of afterthought, the thrust of which demonstrates that God can be addressed adequately in silence.

14:2 "And let two or three prophets speak." The same basic idea of order attends the exercise of prophecy. Prophets also were to speak two or three per service. It may be assumed that such order as Paul explicitly demanded in regard to tongues was characteristic of other types of less showy speech.

14:2 "And the others discern." Herein lies another great contrast between tongues and prophecy. Whereas tongues cannot edify the saints without a translation, and whereas speakers of tongues must therefore remain silent without a translator, prophets enjoy immediate access to the hearts and minds of the audience. Each saint has only to discern the truth of what is said. Discernment is to be exercised by *all* the listeners. It requires no super gift; it needs no intermediaries.

Of course such openness takes all the intrigue out of pagan mysteries. However, the "mysteries" of Christianity are quite different, in that they are comprised of the 'secret' things of God heretofore undisclosed, which have now been revealed and which are to be relayed to the common man in common, everyday language.

And assuming that a "translator" is present, there is no certainty that the translation of the tongues is accurate if the traditional view is held. Hence, the listeners still must exercise discernment as to the truth of what the translator says, even though they have no basis upon which to do so. The translators could simply speak exhortation to the church without any regard to what might have been "said" by the tongues speaker.

But in that case, the translator has no need of the tongues speaker. All of the discernment in the world cannot verify the integrity of a translator. This confirms the notion that the translator must be one of the "unbelieving or unlearned" visitors. As such his translation would go unquestioned, the content of what he said being the object of discernment, just as with prophecy. (cf. Acts 2.)

14:30 "But if it is revealed to another sitting down." That is, if one prophet is addressing (perhaps exhorting) the brothers, it may be that another receives further revelation which would be of immediate benefit; this contingency is far from impossible, and is easily subject to "Paul's rules of order." One would merely raise his hand or in some other way signify his desire to speak.

14:30 "Let the first keep silence." Here Paul moves more explicitly into the rule of order as it pertains to prophets. The first speaker was to give place to the one to whom new revelation had been given, thus maintaining strict order.

14:31 "For you can all prophecy one at a time, in order." The concept of order in regard to prophecy is clearly set forth. "If need be, you can all prophecy if it is done in an orderly manner." Both the phrase "one at a time" and "in order" parallel the element of orderliness directed at tongues.

The idea of "all" prophesying is not a contradiction of the "two or three" of vs.2. It does present the possibility for a service to be devoted wholly to prophecy, just as it might be devoted to prayers or singing. But the instruction of "two or three" still offers a good general rule.

14:31 "That all might learn, and all might be encouraged." This is the sole aim of New Testament

prophecy. If in a certain service this end could not be met in any way other than all taking a turn at prophesying, then so it must be.

Again, it should be recalled that neither learning nor encouragement comes by means of tongues, but by means of translation of tongues. Why would God go to the trouble to inspire tongues in one man, only to have the people learn from the translator, when a prophet can speak God's message immediately to the people?

Edification in the church means learning and encouragement. By definition, as well as by implication, tongues cannot be the vehicle for such edification.

14:32 "And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets." This parenthetical statement is an astounding reminder of I Cor. 12:1-3. The Corinthians were subject to pagan spirits and thereby "swept away." But the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. While this might imply that prophets could judge one another, this is not the primary thrust of the passage; for all "the others" were to discern, or judge, what the prophet had said. This gives the Church (as a body) final authority over the acceptance of the teaching of a prophet, and this in itself is an index to the nature of the prophet's spirit.

The main thrust of this passage is a direct charge-by-implied-contrast against pagan ecstasies. For true prophets always exhibit self control, neither giving themselves to every passing spirit, nor allowing themselves to be used in a manner which might cause scandal or abuse.

In short, prophets can exercise or refrain from exercising spiritual manifestations without doing violence to the Church or themselves, whereas the same cannot be said for either variety of tongues. Genuine tongues seem to be spontaneous and to function as a sign, and require a translator.

14:33 "For God is not a God of disorder, but of harmony." This is literally the bottom line of the matter; God does not inspire pagan ecstasies because He is a God of harmony. God does not want pagan tongues within the Church because they are not conducive to edification, and tend to disorder, which is patently inconsistent with God's character.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Edification is equated with learning and encouragement by virtue of the parallel drawn between valid church activities and prophecy. The structure here contrasts valid activity (prophecy, wherein is learning and encouragement) with invalid activity (tongues, wherein is chaos). Valid church activity is that which edifies. Thus, once again, prophecy is sanctioned, while tongues-speaking is banned.

But here the contrast between valid and invalid church activities is coextensive with the theme of church order. Order is equated with harmony in vs.33; God is not a God of disorder but of harmony. Such order as is explicitly commanded in the exercise of tongues in the church service, and which is explicated by phrases such as "by two or at most three" and "for translation" spells doom for ecstatic utterance in the church service. Order is enjoined also upon the practice of prophecy. Such harmony dictates that the one speaking may be preempted by another who might receive new revelation. This, too, is a picture of the spontaneous disclosure of God's character and will by the Holy Spirit.

The theological element (orderliness in worship and teaching) and its ethical counterpart (edification of one another) are seen to coincide perfectly. Edification is orderly; the structure can be schematized as follows. The various facets of the worship service are all to result in edification.

That which would be set forth to edify must be done clearly and harmoniously, or not at all. Thus, all may participate and all may learn and be encouraged. Proof of the correctness of this doctrine is the very nature of God himself, for He is the God of Harmony.

H. PARAPHRASE

What is to be done then, brothers? Whenever you meet together, each person has something he wants to contribute, such as a song, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or a translation. But whatever is done must be done for the edification of all. If any wish to speak in tongues, they must be limited to no more than three speakers. These speakers must take their proper turn, and their tongues must be translated. If no translator is available, let the would-be tongues speaker keep silent in church, and speak only to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets minister, and the others discern. But if a revelation is given to another sitting down, let the one speaking keep silent. In this way you can all prophesy if need be, by turn, so that you can all learn and be encouraged. The spirits of prophets are under the control of the prophets. For God is not characterized by any sort of disorder, but by divine harmony.

SIXTEENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:33b-36

A. TRANSLATION

14:33b As in all the churches of the saints, 34 let the women keep silence during the services, for it is not permitted for them to speak; but let them be in subjection as the law also says. 35 But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church; 36 or did the word of God come forth from you? Or did it reach you only?

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The uncials D and G (dating from the fifth and ninth centuries respectively) and a few old Latin versions (all from the Ninth Century except for one from the Fifth Century) contain a reading in which verses 34 and 35 are transposed to follow verse 40. The verses are read in the order of 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 34, 35.

The rest of the manuscript evidence supports the common reading. The Moffatt version follows the variant reading, with a pleasing effect.

However, it seems best here, as elsewhere, to let internal evidence decide the readings. It is obvious that the poorly attested variant adopted by Moffatt places verses 34-35 at the end of chapter 14 on logical grounds. That is, these verses make better sense when treated separately than when they are allowed to intrude into the context of tongues. However, Paul's almost proverbial penchant for parenthetical devices and other insertions need not here have succumbed to literary polish or strictly logical development.

The primary consideration here, is whether the content of verses 34 and 35 constitute a totally independent teaching, or whether it is in some way related to the context of tongues in which it is found in most manuscripts.

While the general lines of internal analysis do not apply here, scribal rationale does. Thus, it is not appropriate to look for a shorter reading (they are the same) or an intrinsically more difficult reading (they say the same thing). But it is clear that the transposition of verses 34 and 35 to the end of the chapter provides a smoother reading, than transposing material originally at the end of the chapter to the middle of a different context. This is true on the assumption that there is no connection between the content of the verses in question and verses 33 and 36ff.

Put bluntly, no scribe on earth would deliberately transpose wholly irrelevant material into an independent context.

The fact that the material in question (i.e., vv.34, 35), if it originally appeared after verse 40, would have necessitated its being moved forward in the text and thus precludes the possibility of transcribing from an oral source, but instead demands direct copying. And it is quite unlikely that such a gross revision of the text could have taken place accidentally, but must have required some considerable thought. Yet, as has been shown, it is highly questionable that a thoughtful scribe would have produced such an obfuscated text. It is much more likely that a well meaning scribe attempted to polish Paul's style, thinking that by doing so he did the text no damage, but rather that he did it a great service.

But the possibility of some connection between tongues and women speaking in church must exist, and at the same time not be completely obvious to later scribes in order to fully justify the production of the variant text. This is consistent with the orthodox notion that "tongues" died out in the first century.

And indeed such a possibility does exist. For Paul has mentioned four things which ought to characterize tongues (but do not) but which *do* characterize prophecy. Tongues speakers are: 1) *To speak* under certain circumstances when they are 2) *in church*. Not meeting these requirements, they are to 3) *keep silent* presumably because such speech 4) makes it impossible *that others might learn*. These characteristics bear an unmistakable relationship to Paul's teaching concerning women.

Furthermore, the rhetorical questions of v.36 are perhaps more natural coming after the clause "as the law also says" than they would be preceding it.

In light of the probabilities, the B rating given to the established reading seems quite weak. The real problem is to establish, not the text, but the meaning of the verses in question within their broader context.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

14:34 *Woman*. The discussion of women's rights has made the role of women in the Bible a widely debated subject. Two points are, however, agreed upon, namely that socially, women were subject to their fathers or husbands, and that "in Christ" there was no such thing as sexual distinction.

The territory between these two points is hotly debated. For the present purpose it must be pointed out that, paradoxical as it may seem, women had more social freedom in Christian circles than anywhere else in antiquity, while some N.T. passages hint that religiously they were more hampered.

Several factors should be remembered regarding the status of women in dealing with the present passage. First, sin came through the woman's having been deceived; second, Christianity sought to guard women against pagan customs; and third, the Church was to project the image of piety to a culture in which women were employed as temple prostitutes, participated in pagan rites and mysteries and were used to pervert men's religious beliefs and practices.

Hence, women's subjection to men protected them from outside criticism, and protected the witness and separation of the church as well. Thus, women are equal to men but fulfill different roles. It is noteworthy that Paul says women should not usurp the position or authority of men, while men are never admonished to be subordinate to women. Quite simply, women *do* seek that which is man's, while men *do not* seek (at least generally) the woman's role. This is in accordance with Genesis 3:16.

Three things must be remembered when dealing with the subject of women in the early church. First, Christianity represented a true social liberation; women were considered equal to men on the basis of individual merit. They could, and did hold certain offices in the Church, but probably not without restrictions.

These restrictions had to do with women's roles, and had nothing to do with the value of women themselves. Such restrictions were necessary because of two other considerations bearing directly upon the subject: (1) That the church was formed within the Jewish milieu; (2) that it had spread abroad and was to witness to, yet remain separate from, Hellenistic religions.

In Judaism, woman was considered equal to man before God. But here also, restrictions hedged her about, often for her own protection, and never without some religious or social justification. Christianity took many of its social precepts from Judaism, justifying them either upon the law, or upon uniquely Christian theology. Thus, Paul did not hesitate to defend his teaching concerning women *via* reference to "the law." (probably Gen. 3:16).

Again, it would be a means of visible separation for certain features of Christian worship to stand in as stark contrast as possible to the pagan religions of the time and area. Indeed, the teachings concerning meat sacrificed to idols, the Lord's table, factions within the church, as well as the immediate contentions concerning tongues, assume some form of separation of the church from analogous features in pagan religion. Whereas pagan women gained their highest independence in the realm of religion (whether as temple prostitutes or devotees of the mysteries), Christian women were to be chaste and silent in church; yet their freedom extended beyond church life.

This explanation, while not intended to be exhaustive, is suggestive, and gives rise to some interesting possibilities.

14:34 ὑποτασσέσθωσαν (Present, passive, imperative, third person, plural) *Be subject to; be submissive or subordinate to.* The idea of subordination is common to both this and the preceding pericopes, though in the case of prophecy, it demonstrates something of a reflexive subjection, while the present consideration is that of one party being in subjection to another entity, whether to a person or to a statute.

Paul's reference to "the Law" probably points to Genesis 3:16. If so, such subjection as is here enjoined is of the woman to her husband.

Indeed, Paul says in v.35 that these same women are "to ask their own husbands" if they "wish to learn something."

Thus, subjection here means not speaking but keeping silent in church, and going to the husband for explanations of things related to the service. The word refers primarily to a role imposed on women by God in the Law; i.e. the wife as subject to the husband. So much was, in fact, assumed; for this is not the primary teaching of the passage. The person to whom the woman is subject is left unexpressed.

Such submission rarely means mere obedience, but is to be understood as a voluntary, loving disposition in which the woman puts her husband's wishes first in her own consideration. This, it will be noted, is the very antithesis of the attitude describing women in Genesis 3:16 (to say nothing of modern attitudes).

14:35 μαθεῖν (II aorist, active, infinitive). *To learn.* In v.31 this word was rather general in scope, being coextensive with whatever type of teaching was being done. If prophecy or exhortation or exposition was the type of teaching taking place in the church service, then "to learn" meant to attend with diligence to understanding the content of that teaching. Here in v.35, however, the meaning lies in trying to comprehend some of the implications which may not be so easily understood. The notion of learning here means "coming to know," but it involves knowledge of deeper implications; thus, the woman is not to speak, but to listen and to learn; and if she would learn more she should not interrupt, or address detailed questions to the speaker, but to ask her husband at home. This is, incidentally a marvelous way to compare notes and synthesize the teachings into firm knowledge.

14:35 αἰσχρόν (adjective, nominative, neuter, singular). *Ugly; base; shameful.* The context admits

the possibility of the term meaning *base* in the sense of *coarse* or *common*. The Jews would use this word to describe certain Gentile practices. The connotation clearly contains a note of scorn for socially unacceptable behavior, such as the unlearned or lower classes might be expected to exhibit. Whereas the word "base" describes the objective side of an event, i.e. pronounces a judgment upon an act or sort of behavior, the notion that something is *shameful* points out the general subjective impact of such an act. For example, eating with one's fingers is *base*, although sometimes it is done. Belching is not only *base*, it is *shameful*; it embarrasses all concerned.

In applying this term, it can be assumed that Paul was trying to teach something new, or reinforce an old teaching. The Corinthians were doubtless aware that practice of women speaking in Church was not the norm, that it was inconsistent with Christianity's Jewish roots. However, the practice probably continued, thus requiring here the stronger sense of the word *shameful*.

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

No Grammatical Anomalies.

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant data available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:33b "As in all the churches of the saints." This clause may properly belong with the last pericope (as in Textus Receptus, Westcott and Hort, KJV, RV). In such a position it would form the conclusion to the thought begun in vs.31: "You are all able . . . to be exhorted . . . as it is in all the churches." Verses 32 and 33a would then form a parenthetic statement. If this is indeed the case, Paul is telling the Corinthians that prophecy, rather than ecstasy, characterizes "all the churches of the saints." This, of course, is consistent with the picture presented in the New Testament and by the early Church Fathers; nowhere but in Corinth were tongues an issue of any sort.

However, tempting as such a construction may be, it seems a bit awkward even for Paul. It seems best to view this clause as part of what follows in verse 34 (with Bover, Nestle-Aland, British and Foreign Bible Society, ASV and RSV).

If this is the case some awkwardness remains but is easily relieved. The concept put forward by this clause, regardless of placement, is the grouping together of all other local congregations throughout the evangelized world, for the sake of comparison with the Corinthian Church. The comparison is made solely for the sake of bringing the conduct of the Corinthian church into line with the other churches, whether with regard to prophecy or the role of women. The implication is that the Corinthian practice is "sub-standard" and requires redress.

It is to be noted that the word translated "churches" means congregations, or local bodies.

14:34 "Let the women keep silence." This is a general statement and applies to type of noise. But it must be remembered that some women held church offices which may have required them to speak at some points. However, those holding office would not be designated by the term "women" for they may be "deaconesses," for example. Thus the women referred to here are those having no office and by rights being subject to a husband, as the context clearly indicates. Presumably, women discharging the functions of church office would be referred to by the title of the office.

An apt illustration can be visualized by posing an analogous situation in a modern delivery room where medical students and their wives are observing the birth of twins. The admonition of the lecturer, prior to the entry into the delivery room, for "women to please remain silent and ask your husband questions later" obviously does not apply to female nurses, the expectant mother, women doctors or female medical students. The admonition clearly applies to those who have neither the learning nor the experience to stay close to the proceedings and explanations without perhaps getting lost. It does not mean that the women are not to learn, but that they must address their questions to their husbands later, so that the main teaching of the moment can proceed. So in the church at Corinth.

14:34 "During the Services." Here Paul designates *when* they are to be silent; the word for churches here, though the same as that in 33b, can only mean "assemblies" or meetings. "As in all the congregations women are to keep silence in the meetings." This is an illustration of a word being used twice within a single context to mean two different things.

14:34 "For it is not permitted for them to speak." This clause more sharply defines the type of silence to be kept by women. As has been seen, the women here under consideration are those who are unlearned, inexperienced, or do not hold an office. They are females worshiping and learning with their husbands. They are to refrain from speech of any kind. The word translated "speak" is the same word which has been used almost exclusively from 12:4 onward. It designates any form of verbalizing, from a prepared speech, to ecstatic gibberish, to private, whispered inquiries.

It would seem that two sorts of speaking are in view here, the first being tongues, the other inordinate questions. The idea that women are not to speak in tongues in church continues the flow of thought from previous pericopes. Paul, in vs.21, cites an Old Testament prophecy regarding tongues, implying that such tongues shall be delivered by men. Then in vv.27-28 the implication clearly is that men should not speak in tongues but keep silent when translation is impossible. In fact, it seems highly likely that the terms "speak, keep silent, learn" and "in church" (if not the term "be subject") are responsible for the insertion of this pericope, since they may have reminded Paul of a problem which he had intended to address anyway. The basic similarity of the ideas may have provided Paul the perfect opportunity for just such an insertion as this. If this is true then a prohibition of women speaking in tongues in the assembly is implied.

14:34 "But let them be in subjection as the law also says." For women to speak in church is in direct opposition to subjection. Such subjection further defines who should keep silence (i.e. those women who are not officiants). It also defines as insubordination such a woman's act of speaking in church. The reference to the Law is an appeal to established authority, and points out the source of feminine subjection as well as to whom a woman is to be subject.

14:35 "But if they wish to learn anything." This does not imply that women do not wish to learn; nor that they should have no interest in learning, nor yet that instructing women is not the function of the church. Rather, a deeper, more detailed sort of learning is in view here. It is that which is good, deliberate, and necessary, but may, in the context of the service, constitute a rabbit trail. Often, things said in church provoke interests which go in other directions than the speaker is prepared to go. To force the issue, particularly for an unlearned woman in antiquity, would have been "base."

But such discussions as might be instigated by the implications of direct statements are the very essence of detailed learning and "Gestalt-building." This is the sort of learning thoughtful women would want to do, and which they might be tempted to do in church.

What is implied here is that the speech from which women are to refrain while in church may be any sort of speech at all, even that which would ask a relevant question. Again, tongues suggests itself as the type of speech which Paul originally had in mind, and which reminded him of this general principle involving women. This is a conditional sentence with an obvious concessive implication. The conditional sentence is "if a woman wants to learn then let her ask her husband at home." The implied concessive clause is "Even if a woman wants to learn, she must still keep silence in church." She is not merely to refrain from talk such as tongues or idle chatter, but even from asking questions relevant and necessary to her own learning.

The clause, "if they wish to learn anything" applies the general rule, "it is not permitted for them to speak" to even the finest and noblest reason they might have for breaking the silence. Thus the rule applies with the more force to inadequate excuses for speaking such as tongues (which were placed in antithesis to learning in the last pericope!).

14:35 "Let them ask their own husbands at home." Their own husbands can be trusted to share their very best personal and acquired insights, not misleading, but nurturing them. They ought also to be prepared to entertain difficulties and shift their thinking accordingly when necessary.

"At home" is of course the best place for lengthy, comfortable, uninhibited discussions; in fact, a tool for enhancing family stability and unity.

14:35 "For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." As an unlearned non-participant a woman's only temptation may have been to ask questions, thus causing a disturbance. Yet whatever may be the type of speech, it is not only base but "shameful" for a woman to succumb to the temptation in church.

Paul seems to be much more concerned with preserving the purity of the worship service than in instituting or promoting the healthy approach of at-home discussions. Yet in preserving the one he established the other.

14:36 "Or did the word of God come forth from you?" This biting sarcasm is a direct challenge to the Corinthians to acknowledge that their behavior contradicts Old Testament teachings. Also the authority of Paul's own teaching is implied. Everything the Corinthians had been taught, and which they (presumably) believed, had come directly from the Old Testament, or from Paul's revelation concerning Jesus the Christ. The rhetorical question is a sharp reminder of this, lest they should behave presumptuously as though the word had come through themselves.

Such sarcasm has characterized this epistle at many points, and is not out of place here. The easiest explanation is that at this point the Corinthians were deliberately wrong; this may have been an area where they had received teaching, but simply refused to be governed by it.

14:36 "Or did it reach you only?" The sarcasm continues. Paul asks "if the word didn't *begin* with you perhaps you are the only ones to whom God has made revelation? Perhaps it didn't begin with you, but ended with you. This would help explain why you are living by your own set of rules, while the other churches live by the common revelation." This paraphrase brings out the full force of Paul's short, caustic questions.

It is worth noting that these rhetorical questions prepare the reader for the next pericope, which sets the record straight regarding the origin of God's word to the Corinthians.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The notion of "shamefulness" indicates that which is ethical rather than theological. No direct theological importance is linked directly either to the admonition for women to keep silence in church or to the alternative, i.e. that they ask questions of their own husbands at home.

Even the sarcasm concerning the origin of God's word does nothing more than prove once again that God *is* concerned with man's behavior; and most emphatically with Christian behavior.

Because the pericope deals with an ethical issue, it is reasonable, to seek ethical explanations. It would seem that since Paul was dealing with order in worship, and since he admonished women not to speak in church, the issue was simply one of maintaining order and not causing distractions in church. Learning takes place best in an orderly environment without distractions. The same is true of worship. And Paul took great pains to establish "order" in the worship service (cf. vv.26, 33, 40).

One might expect that in a city such as Corinth the women were unusually vociferous, particularly where religion was concerned. Paul emphasized that women were to be subject to their husbands -- certainly not that they were inferior. Theologically, it seems strange that women were singled out as needing to be especially quiet. The likelihood is that the women at Corinth were quite vocal. This is especially true in a city such as Corinth, where religion, particularly the mysteries, were a woman's only escape from the status of chattel to that of equality. It is especially true also of a time when women were generally uneducated.

This pericope does not teach that women are inferior to men but that they are to be subject to their husbands. This only means that men and women behave differently at different points and not that one is better than the other.

The silence in church enjoined upon women does not itself preclude women from holding an office, but is a direct address to those women who *do not* hold such an office. The point is that women not filling an office are to fill the role of subjective wives, and not disturb the service.

H. PARAPHRASE

As it is in all the other Christian Churches, let the women be quiet in the Corinthian meetings as well; for it is not permitted for them to speak in the service. Instead, let them remain in subjection just as the law says. And if they would break their silence in order to learn something, let them instead question their husbands when they get home. For it is an affront and a disgrace for a woman to speak in church and disrupt the service. Or am I wrong, and is it you who are the vehicle of God's revelation? Or perhaps God has seen fit to enlighten only you?

SEVENTEENTH PERICOPE: I CORINTHIANS 14:37-40

A. TRANSLATION

37 If anyone supposes himself to be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge the things I write to you, that they are a command of the Lord; 38 but if anyone *is* ignorant, let him be ignorant. 3 So brothers, seek to prophesy and do not forbid to speak in tongues; 40 but let all be done properly and in order.

B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

14:37 Several variant readings cluster about the clause "they are a command of the Lord." Only two basic variants, however, make any difference to translation into English. These variants regard number in the word translated "command" whether singular or plural. The rest of the variants have to do only with word order.

If the word is plural (commands or commandments) it refers back to all the limitations Paul has placed upon speaking in tongues and the speaking of women in church.

However, the sense of the word, when in the singular, has an interesting effect: It continues the series of sarcastic remarks by challenging supposed prophets to acknowledge (1) that Paul's remarks were made by command of the Lord, and (2) that this should be obvious because of the condition of the Corinthian church, which simply begged for reform. In other words, Paul exhorts the would-be prophets to acknowledge the justice and divine commission of his remarks as being peculiarly fitting for the Corinthian problems.

It seems that this is a fair assessment and a good reading. It also has the distinct advantage of being the more difficult reading. It is plain that scribes would suffer a strong temptation to alter the number of this word to conform to the number of the subject and the verb, while the tendency to alter an original plural to a more difficult singular would be very unlikely. It seems, therefore, that the reading should be singular.

14:38 Two readings worth considering are 1) "he will himself be ignored" or "unknown" and 2) "let him be ignorant." The word is the same in both cases, but the first is in the middle voice while the second is active imperative. It is a difficult problem to resolve. Most of the good evidence supports the first reading, while a little of the very best evidence supports the second reading.

The most difficult reading (to modern men) is, of course, the middle voice of the first variant. Yet this was scarcely a difficult reading for those familiar with Koine Greek. Indeed, it may be the case that the active imperative of the second reading seemed to the scribes to say little or nothing, whereas something of a parallel to 13:12 might be achieved by substituting the middle voice. The second reading, being the word in the active imperative, is here adopted.

14:40 Concerning transposition of verses 34-35 to follow vs.40, as found in some manuscripts, see discussion in the previous pericope.

C. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDY

14:37 ἔπιγνωσκέτω (present, active, imperative, third person, singular) *Know; understand;*

recognize; acknowledge; notice; perceive; learn. Though the word is capable of simply meaning "know" the prepositional prefix does affect its meaning here. Its occurrence in the apodosis of a conditional sentence gives a strong indication as to how the term is used. The protasis, "If anyone supposes himself to be . . . spiritual" conditions the word in such a way as to have it provide demonstration of a tacit affirmation, *viz.* "I am spiritual."

Thus, acknowledging the nature of Paul's "command" is a demonstration of a degree of spirituality. This applies personally and, presumably, publicly as well. This whole sentence is very much like a confession of faith; if one is spiritual he will acknowledge the nature of Paul's limitations on tongues and women speaking in Church as those of the Lord Himself. Thus will church doctrine on this point be established.

It is interesting to note that no other combination of meanings for the word in the protasis translated "suppose himself" and the word in the apodosis rendered "acknowledge" gives anything but an inadequate sense. For this word to mean "learn" for example, or even "know" would require a different sense in the protasis, e.g. if anyone "wishes to be" spiritual.

14:37 ἐντολή (noun, first declension, nominative, feminine, singular) *Command; order; decree.* The sense is that all the limitations placed by Paul upon the speaking of tongues in church, and the speaking of women in church, constitute a single command of the Lord. That is, the Corinthian church received from the Lord the command to obey the injunctions given by Paul. It cannot be argued that the "Command of the Lord" refers to the content of Paul's remarks unless they are thought to be summed up in the following admonition ("Let all be done in order etc."). Paul is urging his Corinthian readers to acknowledge that these injunctions are binding upon them as the "Command of the Lord."

D. GRAMMATICAL NOTES

14:3 The infinitives "to prophesy" and "to speak" function as objects of the verb. Both are articular, and as such have reference back to something already mentioned, or already well known. Thus, Paul says, "Seek to function prophetically in the ways mentioned earlier, and do not prohibit to speak in tongues in the proper manner just described." It is not the case that ecstatic utterance is meant here, as that has already been discredited; rather those tongues may not be refused which meet the criteria already set forth, (i.e. translatable and spoken to unbelieving Jews; or, if done in the church, to edify the believers, and done in an orderly manner by no more than three speakers).

E. HISTORICAL DATA

No relevant material available.

F. EXPOSITION

14:37 "If anyone supposes himself to be a prophet, or spiritual." This section of First Corinthians opened with the statement that "concerning those who are *spiritual*, I do not wish you to be ignorant" (I Cor. 12:1). It closes with this pericope, beginning with an admonition to "anyone who supposes himself to be a prophet or *spiritual*." It is obvious that because of the inclusion of the category of "Prophet," Paul has, in the intervening material done what was necessary to dispel the "ignorance" of which he spoke in 12:1.

The main thrust of the clause is to prepare those who view themselves as prophets, or spiritual on other grounds to make proof of their supposition or abandon it. Such a proposal to provide proof

demands that the verb "suppose" be reflexive; for one is not called upon to prove another's assumption. Thus, if the protasis ("if" clause) were intended to mean "If anyone seems to be a prophet or spiritual" it could not be logically followed by an apodosis ("then" clause) intended to mean "let him demonstrate such by acknowledging etc." For simply acknowledging a fact cannot suffice to prove another person's assessment correct.

The comparison of "prophet" and one who is "spiritual" recalls the frequent earlier comparisons between prophecy and tongues. Though speaking in tongues was certainly the primary basis for assumed spirituality, it need not have been the only factor compared with prophecy. The complete thought runs as follows: "Now if, after all I have said, any of you still thinks himself (to be spiritual because he is) a prophet or spiritual (for speaking in tongues or for some other reason), . . ."

14:37 "Let him acknowledge the things I write to you." The proof, or demonstration, of one's supposed spirituality is acceptance, as true and authoritative, of those things written by Paul to the Corinthians concerning tongues and women speaking in church. This clause reaches back at least as far as 12:1 where "spirituals" first became the issue; while the "things I have written to you" might include everything from 1:1 up to this point, it is certain that they include everything from 12:1.

14:37 "That they are a command of the Lord." But it was not enough merely to acknowledge the truth and authoritative nature of what had been written; it must also be acknowledged that the writing was itself "a command of the Lord" and therefore constituted a command. What Paul was commanded to write, the Corinthians were, with the more force, commanded to acknowledge (and obey). This very process itself put Paul back in his rightful position of apostolic authority and helped heal the breach created by factions and party loyalties, by making would-be spirituality contingent upon such acknowledgment. In other words, Paul calls those who would be spiritual back into fellowship with God and each other by demanding that the divine inspiration of his teachings be acknowledged.

14:38 "But if anyone *is* ignorant." This forms an antithesis to anyone who supposes himself to be spiritual. The contrast is interesting, for it not only contrasts spirituality with ignorance, but the state of supposed (or presumably desired) spirituality with the actual fact of ignorance. Again, there is a parallel to 12:1, where Paul declared that he did not want his Corinthian readers to "be ignorant" concerning spirituality. Enough teaching has been given and reiterated in the intervening material that now spirituality can be contrasted in such a way that the readers had to acknowledge themselves either spiritual or deliberately ignorant.

Furthermore, it should be recalled that the Old Testament wisdom literature called lack of spiritual insight and behavior "foolishness" or "ignorance." Thus, the implication is that those who do not acknowledge the things Paul has written as being a command of the Lord, show themselves to be deliberately ignorant.

The state of spirituality is verified by acknowledgment of the things written, while denial constitutes or confirms spiritual ignorance.

14:38 "Let him be ignorant." That is, let him remain in his self imposed ignorance and self styled spirituality. This means that no great debate was to be scheduled; it means that those who deliberately placed themselves beyond God, could not be wrestled into "orthodoxy" by mere men. It also implies that remaining in ignorance is its own temporal punishment. God often punishes man for rejecting the truth by letting him live with his lie and its consequences. (cf. Rom 1.)

The full contrast of ignorance with spirituality carries over into behavior. Let the supposedly

spiritual acknowledge, but let the ignorant remain ignorant. The full force of this contrast is to separate the spiritual, that is, the true believers, who will acknowledge Paul's writing as "a command of the Lord" (regardless of the cost in terms of swallowing pride and discontinuing their ecstasies), from the ignorant, or those who would sooner depart from the Lord than from their ecstasies.

This is the final state of the ambiguity resulting from the use of tongues in two distinct ways. There are at least three possibilities open. 1) One may perhaps have spoken in genuine tongues, and therefore have felt no particular loss in acknowledging Paul's injunctions concerning tongues. 2) One may have practiced pagan ecstasies yet repented of them as a result of Paul's "command from the Lord." 3) One may have practiced the ecstasies and refused to acknowledge the command of the Lord with its ecstasy-destroying limitations, and thus constituted himself a true pagan.

14:39 "So brothers, seek to prophesy." The conclusion to all of I Corinthians 12-14 is here summed up as the "command of the Lord" in three neat points, the first being "seek to prophesy." This is nothing more than a restatement of the thought already expressed on a number of occasions, directly in 14:1 and 5, and indirectly in 14:12 and 24.

It is important to notice that "brothers" were addressed here, as at the beginning in 12:1. Yet the number of those addressed had become smaller; for by now the false brothers had been weeded out by their refusal to accept Paul's teachings as "a command of the Lord." The exhortation to "seek to prophesy" was now addressed strictly to those who, by their acceptance of Paul's present writings, had proven themselves to be spiritual, and therefore brothers.

14:3 "And do not forbid to speak in tongues." This admonition also was directed only to those whose acknowledgment of the present teachings on tongues confirmed their membership in the body. The tongues, therefore, which are not to be forbidden, are those genuine tongues which conform to the very limitations laid down by Paul, the acknowledgment of which demonstrates one's position in the body of Christ.

It is a note of great irony, then, that true spirituality was (and is) not, as was commonly held in Corinth, demonstrated by tongues, whether ecstatic or genuine, but rather by the ability to discern between the two, and to refrain from pagan ecstasies. This was not so easy as moderns might think. It is entirely possible that Paul himself had not thought through the issue so thoroughly as to coin a new term for one kind of tongues or the other. Even for Paul, the word "tongues" may have done double duty. It is most likely that the distinctions between them were hammered out for the first time only in these passages.

14:40 "But let all be done properly and in order." This is the third point of the conclusion. It refers both to the use of prophecy in the church service (14:26-33a) and the conduct of women in the service (14:33b-36). Functioning as the final segment of the conclusion, it confirms the accepted text as authentic, and reinforces the contention that the issue of women not being allowed to speak in church arises naturally out of preceding passages in which orderly behavior was the issue.

Here also, the directive is addressed to the true Christians at Corinth, i.e. those who will acknowledge and accept Paul's writing as a command of the Lord.

"Properly and in Order" summarizes the very essence of the passage from 14:26 onward.

G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Theologically, the important factor is Paul's claim that his writing is divinely inspired; it is a

command of God. This constitutes at least divine sanction if not verbal inspiration. As such, the Corinthian Christians are to acknowledge and obey.

Thus, ethically, this divine command issues in acceptance of Paul's writing as precisely the inspired treatment it is. Such separation is marked, here as elsewhere, by ethical behavior consistent with acknowledgment of God's word, to wit, increased emphasis on prophecy, repentance from the ecstasies, the proper practice of genuine tongues, and order in the worship service.

H. PARAPHRASE

"Now if, after all I have said, any of you still thinks himself to be spiritual because he is a prophet, or to be spiritual for his speaking in tongues or anything of such a nature, let him demonstrate his spirituality by acknowledging that what I have written to you concerning these very things is a command of the Lord. But if anyone is willfully ignorant of this, let him remain ignorant. And so, brothers, seek to prophesy, do not forbid to speak in genuine tongues, and let it all be done properly and in good order.

PARAPHRASE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTERS 12 – 14

Now, my brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant with regard to true spirituality. I want you to be able to recognize spirituality. For you remember how, when you were pagans, you were swept away to serve idols incapable of human speech, just as, under those circumstances, you were led. So let me explain that cursing Jesus, regardless of how ecstatically, is not the leading of God's Spirit. Rather, the test of the Holy Spirit is to plainly designate Jesus as the Lord of your life. No other spirit can do this.

Now there are distinctive varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. And there are distinctive varieties of services, but the same Lord is magnified. And there are distinctive varieties of effects, but the same God who incorporates them in us. And to each one is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the benefit of the other. For to this one is given a word of wisdom by the Spirit, but to another the same Spirit gives a word of knowledge. To another is given faith by the same Spirit, and by that one Spirit another is given gifts of healings. To another is given the effects of miracles, to another prophecy; to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to yet another the translation of these tongues. But the one and the very same Holy Spirit produces all these various things, and distributes to each his own, just as He decides.

For just exactly as the living body is one organism and is composed of many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many and different, are still only one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we all were both baptized into one body (whether originally Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free) and were all enabled to partake of one Spirit.

For the body is not just one member but many. So if the foot should chance to say "I am not part of the body because I am just a foot and not a hand" is it, by virtue of this fact, really not part of the body? And if the ear should chance to say, "I am not part of the body because I am just an ear and not an eye" is it, by virtue of this fact really not part of the body? Of course not, for if the whole body were nothing more than an eye, where then, would be the hearing? Or, if the sole bodily function were hearing, how could it smell? But God placed every single member in the body just as He pleased. But if that body were only one member, in what sense could we call it a body?

It is perfectly true that there are many members, but it must be remembered that there is still only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you; I can function quite well without you." Nor can the head say to the feet, "I am self sufficient and can function happily without you." No; instead, the members of the body which seem to be weaker, far from receiving abuse from stronger members, are recognized as indispensable. And upon those members we consider to be less honorable or less worthy of respect, we show greater honor and attention. It is the same with our unpresentable parts; instead of being shamed by them, we acknowledge their modesty and clothe them. Those parts which do not need to be clothed are those which are pleasing to the eye. God, giving greater attention to the lacking parts, so made the body that there is within it no dissension, but careful consideration, one part for the other. When one member suffers, the pain is felt all over the body; and when one member is honored, the joy is not confined, but spreads to all the members.

Now you Corinthian Christians are corporately of the very essence of Christ's earthly body, and you are individually parts of that body. And God has set these parts in the church; first are missionaries; second are prophets; third are teachers; then those who show in their lives the effects of miracles; and then those who have been divinely healed; finally there are helps, administrations, and speaking different kinds of languages. Now not all Christians are apostles are they? Or

prophets? Or teachers? Are all Christians proof of miracles, or do they all exhibit divine healings? Do they all speak different kinds of languages, or translate them? Of course not. So if you are going to seek after the gifted, seek the greater gifts, not the lesser ones.

And I will show you a still more excellent approach to spirituality. If I should learn all manner of human speech, in fact even if I learned angel talk, but did not have love, I would be nothing more than a spiritless noise maker such as a bronze sounder or a clashing cymbal. And if I should be a prophet, and know all the mysteries, and have all the knowledge; in fact, even if I could have faith sufficient to move mountains, but had no love, I would still be an unspiritual nobody. And if I should donate all my material possessions in order to aid the needy, or even if I donated my body to martyrdom, in the attempt to boast of my spirituality, but did so without love, I would not even profit spiritually

Love, (or true spirituality) is patient and kind. Love is neither greedy, nor boastful and is not holier-than-thou. It does not behave itself disgracefully, and is not selfish. Love is not provoked and disregards evil. it does not rejoice in sinfulness, but delights in the truth. Love passes over all pettiness, is unsuspicious of all, hopes for all good things, and endures all that is not love.

Love never fails. Prophecy shall be made needless. Tongues will cease of themselves. Knowledge also shall be made needless. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part. But whenever perfection comes, all that is partial shall be eliminated. When I was a child I spoke as a child speaks, I felt as a child feels, and I reasoned as a child reasons. But when I became an adult, I eliminated the things of the child. For now we see in a mirror an image which is imperfect and unclear; but then we shall see the object of the image clearly, face-to-face. Now I know only in part; but then I shall know completely in the same way that even now I am known. For now there remain faith, hope and love; but of these three love is the greatest.

Pursue that true spirituality which is love; yet seek spiritual manifestations through which that love can be shown, especially prophecy. For the one making inarticulate sounds isn't speaking to men, but to a god, for no man can understand; rather he speaks secret things by the power of a spirit. But the prophet speaks clearly to men that which edifies, and encourages, and comforts. The one making inarticulate sounds serves only himself, whereas the prophet serves the church. Now it would be nice if you all spoke in tongues, but it is better that you should all prophesy. Greater is the prophet than the person making inarticulate sounds, unless, perchance, he is able to translate what he says so that the church might be served.

Now, brothers, suppose that I should come to you speaking tongues. In what way would my speech benefit you unless it imparted revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching? It is similar even to lifeless instruments, whether pipes or harps, when they give forth sound; unless they make distinctions in the sounds they produce, how will anyone understand what they are playing? And if a trumpet sounds indistinctly who will answer the call to arms? It is even so with you; unless you exercise your tongue in intelligible speech how will such utterance be understood? For you will be filling the air with empty noise.

There are doubtless many languages in the world, and none are incapable of meaning. So if I should be unlearned in another language, I will be a foreigner to one who speaks that language, and he will be a foreigner to me. So it is with you; since you zealously seek spiritual manifestations, you must seek that (rather than seem worse than a foreigner) you might greatly strengthen and build up the church. Therefore, let the one who wants to speak in a tongue pray that he is able to translate what he says. If I were to pray in a tongue, my spirit certainly would pray, but my mind would not

understand what I said and would be wholly unproductive. What is to be done then? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing praises with my spirit certainly; but I will also exercise my mind in so doing. Because if you bless in ecstasy you are, remember, making yourself worse than a foreigner; and how would a novice then say his "Amen" to your prayer, since he would have no understanding of your "foreign" language. True enough you give thanks well, but no one else is edified by your prayer.

I am truly grateful to God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But not in church. For there, it is far better to speak even a very few meaningful words, that others might be taught, than torrents of meaningless ecstatic babble (which is a waste of time at best).

Brothers, do not be children as far as your understanding is concerned. Be mere babes in regard to evil, yet in regard to understanding be adults. In the Old Testament it is written that "in other tongues and by other lips I will speak to Israel, but in vain" says the Lord. This shows that genuine tongues are meant to be a sign, not to believers, but to non-believers; prophecy, on the other hand is not meant for non-believers, but for believers. If all of the church came together, and proceeded to speak in tongues, and some unschooled or unbelieving men entered also, wouldn't they think that you were all mad? But if you exercised prophecy and one who was unlearned or a non-believer entered, he would be exposed and judged by all, and his secret vices would be identified for what they are, and he would bow before God and worship Him, and marvel that it was among you that he had found God.

What is to be done then, brothers? Whenever you meet together, each person has something he wants to contribute, such as a song, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or a translation. But whatever is done must be done for the edification of all. If any wish to speak in tongues, they must be limited to no more than three speakers. These speakers must take their proper turn, and their tongues must be translated. If no translator is available, let the would-be tongues speaker keep silent in church, and speak only to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets minister, and the others discern. But if a revelation is given to another sitting down, let the one speaking keep silent. In this way you can all prophesy if need be, by turn, so that you can all learn and be encouraged. The spirits of prophets are under the control of the prophets. For God is not characterized by any sort of disorder, but by divine harmony.

As it is in all the other Christian Churches, let the women be quiet in the Corinthian meetings as well; for it is not permitted for them to speak in the service. Instead, let them remain in subjection just as the law says. And if they would break their silence in order to learn something, let them instead question their husbands when they get home. For it is an affront and a disgrace for a woman to speak in church and disrupt the service. Or am I wrong, and is it you who are the vehicle of God's revelation? Or perhaps God has seen fit to enlighten only you?

"Now if, after all I have said, any of you still thinks himself to be spiritual because he is a prophet, or to be spiritual for his speaking in tongues or anything of such a nature, let him demonstrate his spirituality by acknowledging that what I have written to you concerning these very things is a command of the Lord. But if anyone is willfully ignorant of this, let him remain ignorant. And so, brothers, seek to prophesy, do not forbid to speak in genuine tongues, and let it all be done properly and in good order.

FINDINGS

The idea throughout this work has been to treat the teachings of I Corinthians in isolation in order to prevent extraneous ideas from creeping into the conclusions and turning exegesis into eisegesis. Several interesting questions arise when this is done, not the least of which is whence the notion that "tongues" is a gift? Another question involves the gratuitous identity of the acts phenomena with those of I Corinthians. Finally, there is the question of the seemingly irreconcilable inconsistencies within I Corinthians itself as regards the very nature and function of tongues, and whether they are to be merely interpreted or are to be translated. To popular beliefs are seen to have no support at all in I Corinthians, namely that "gifts" are given at salvation (or subsequently), and that speaking or praying in genuine tongues is to be identified with speaking gibberish.

The first order of business was to try to detect in I Corinthians what Paul claims is normative for tongues. This is done by distinguishing between prescriptive and descriptive statements; that is, the concern here is not with what *did* happen in Corinth, but what *ought* to have happened.

The first thing noted was the implication of I Cor. 12:30. For the passage unavoidably contains the notion that a genuine display of tongues does not involve all the members of the local body. However, all manifestations of Christian spirituality may be tested against the definition of spirituality, i.e. edification of the Church and their exercise in love. Hence, tongues meet the first requirements as a spiritual manifestation if they edify the Church and are exercised in love; otherwise they do not.

Tongues are to edify the church if spoken in the assembly. In I Cor. 14:12-13 so much is clear. The church must know the content of anything spoken during its assembly. See also 14:16.

In 14:18-19 it appears that what Paul considers genuine tongues (that is, those tongues which he speaks) are practical only outside the assembly. He immediately explains that tongues are a sign to unbelievers. Originally, these unbelievers were Jews; whether or not they were restricted to Jewish unbelievers in Paul's estimation is not clear, but it seems likely that such is the case.

Finally, it is stated plainly that tongues in church 1) are to be spoken by no more than three, 2) to be done by turn, and 3) must be translated.

Turning to Acts, and examining the passages dealing with the phenomena of tongues presented there, certain grave inconsistencies with I Corinthians present themselves. The pertinent passages are Acts 2:4-11, 10:44-46, 19:6-7.

First, the Acts phenomenon termed !!tongues!! is in every case a spontaneous event having nothing to do with either prior training or permanent enablement. In Acts the Holy Spirit is said to !!fall upon!! or !!come upon" those who then manifest His will by speaking in tongues, whereas in every passage in I Corinthians 12-14 (with the possible exceptions of 12:1-3, which clearly deals with Paganism and 14:20-22, which deals with the Acts phenomena, tongues are portrayed as willed behavior. The Corinthian practice could be restricted in number of participants or avoided altogether, suggesting learned behavior or permanent enablement. This quality is wholly lacking in the Acts passages.

The greatest inconsistency involves the relative number of participants. In I Corinthians the norm is both explicitly and implicitly limited to a few speakers. In the Acts passages, all are said to have spoken in tongues. That is, all upon whom the Holy Spirit fell, or all the believers.

In Acts, tongues function, without such being expressed, as apostolic authentication, preparing the converts to recognize and follow the Apostles as Christ's spokesmen in the founding of the Church. (cf. Mark 16:20). No hint of such an emphasis is found in I Corinthians.

These differences also may be noted. In Acts (and I Corinthians 14:20-22), unbelievers are the intended audience of tongues. In Corinth, such was not the case. For in Corinth, tongues were spoken in "church" to "a god!! and were probably the basis for petty rivalries. Acts does not show tongues being spoken in the Church assembly.

In Acts (and the norm implied in I Corinthians 14:20-22), tongues were valid languages, using real words that unbelievers could understand and translate. In Corinth this was not true.

In Acts, the tongues speakers were called "drunk" whereas in Corinth the likelihood was that the speakers would be thought mad.

In Acts, tongues edified the church in the sense of adding' new members as well as being translated for the inspiration and building up of the Christians. Clearly this was not so in Corinth; rather in Corinth the effect seemed to be divisive rather than cohesive.

In Acts, speaking in tongues accompanied and signified the coming of the Holy Spirit into a new. geographical sphere of activity. In Corinth, tongues signified nothing.

In Acts, tongues are clearly, completely and unambiguously the result of the activity of the Holy Spirit. In Corinth, the babbling was willful and (perhaps largely) due to demon leading.

In Acts, there was unlearned behavior which was both intelligible and edifying. In Corinth there was simply learned behavior which was neither.

It is quite clear that tongues, as portrayed in Acts, were distinctive, and had little or nothing in common with the Corinthian phenomena. And little can be transported from one to the other by way of clarification. Rather, each book must be dealt with on its own terms.

In I Corinthians 12-14, the situation is not clear; ambiguities abound. As has been pointed out, it is probable that both Pagan ecstasies as well as genuine manifestations are discussed without distinction. This would scarcely have created a problem for Paul's Corinthian readers, but moderns have an understandably great difficulty interpreting him at this point. Having, however, already listed the prescriptive passages in I Corinthians, the inconsistencies may be seen still by listing and comparing them with the descriptive statements. It is beyond question that Paul is dealing' with a problem, hence the need for contrasting what *was in fact* happening in Corinth with what *ought to have been* happening.

Looking at the descriptive statements concerning tongues, it is seen in I Corinthians 14:2 that tongues such as were widespread in Corinth were spoken 1) Unto a God (Paul's use or omission of the article throughout these chapters is instructive); 2) "in" or "for" a spirit; 3) they" contained" mysteries (not in the Christian sense of something revealed but in the pagan sense of having no content at all); and 4) were edifying only to the speaker.

Thus Paul sees in Corinthian utterances speech which no man understands and he prescribes translation (14:5, 13, 27). He sees that the Corinthians are speaking to a god, and implies that they ought to be directed to men (by means of translation) and so states in 14:21-27. He sees that the Corinthians speak mysteries and prescribes either plain speech (14:4, 9, 19, 24), translation (see above) or silence (14:28). Paul sees that the practice at Corinth was such that only the speaker was edified (*not* that he understood, 14:14) but only that he was in some sense edified or gratified); he prescribes edifying the Church (14:4,5,12,17,19,26). It becomes clear that what was happening in the worship services at Corinth bore a striking and horrifying likeness to Pagan ecstasies, which Paul sums up by saying that they are "speaking into the air." It is even more clear that what Paul prescribes are "correctives" will eliminate pagan tongues from the Church; for his prescriptions fall within two categories, neither of which is compatible with ecstasies. The first category of corrective deals with tongues spoken within the assembly, and it is obvious that by challenging the Corinthians to use tongues in accord with the guidelines established in chapter 12 for genuine spiritual manifestations he legislates their ecstasies out of the Church. The second category of corrective teaching shows that genuine tongues are to be spoken outside the assembly of the Church (14:18-19, 23) and are meant to be directed to the unbeliever (14:21-22). Thus he legislates ecstasies out of *all* Christian experience.

It is also worth noting that both kinds of tongues are brought to an end in I Corinthians. Paul says that childish things are to be put away (13:11) and then challenges the Corinthians to "grow up" (14:20) and shows them the purpose of the genuine manifestation. Additionally it may properly be assumed that the sign dies with the need for it hence the death of sign tongues. This brings us

to new ground.

While the word "tongues" has been treated through the body of the text as a word with several "meanings," these "meanings" were determined by the contexts rather than by a lexical definition. Thus there arose the necessity to point out the "ambiguity" which the word showed in certain contexts.

But it must be noted that this ambiguity exists only for us. The term was not ambiguous to the ancient, but was simply the word used to cover a wide range of human vocalization.

For Paul and the Corinthians the word "tongue" meant first the organ of human speech and then the capacity of the tongue to mark off sounds in distinct syllables. It is not too fine a distinction to suppose that humming for example, cannot be referred to as tongues, while ecstasies can be so designated. This is the line of demarcation where tongues end and "sound" or "voice" begins. (Note Paul's use of the instruments and their "voices".)

This being the case, tongues, as a word, cannot be narrowed except by context. The word has a broad range of meaning, including foreign languages and ecstatic speech, the spontaneous utterance at Pentecost, and even with the proper modifier everyday speech. The word is very much like other broad-category-terms such as "faith" or "law."

Every time a narrower meaning is to be understood or a distinction made, it must be done on the basis of context; no other words are available to carry the same freight. It is simply the case that the word "tongues" can carry too much freight. Context serves to unload some of that freight and leave only that desired by the speaker.

It should now be clear that "tongues" (meaning "syllabification") must be restricted to one thing in the case of "tongues of men and Angels" (1 Cor. 13:1), and something else entirely when it refers to that which is "spoken into air" (1 Cor. 14:9) It means unlearned languages in Acts and 1. Cor. 14:21ff, while it designates that syllabification used in the pagan ecstasies in 14:1-4, and shifts back again to unlearned language in 14:5 and 14:18. It is not a shift which takes place in the actual meaning or significance of the word "tongues," but a shift in context and in implications *about* tongues.

At this point it is perhaps well to examine the question, "Whence the notion that tongues is a gift?" It is neither stated nor implied anywhere in I Corinthians that tongues is a gift. In chapter 12 three kinds of spiritual manifestation are mentioned; gifts, ministries and effects. Paul even summarizes these three categories of spirituality as manifestations (12:7). It is interesting then, that when he does get around to a direct definition of genuine tongues, Paul says not that it is a gift, but that tongues are "for a sign" or "unto a sign." This eliminates from current debate the objection that God would not take back a "gift." For tongues thus defined fall much more readily into the category of ministry than into that of gifts.

The question ought also to be answered concerning the wholly gratuitous assumption that gifts are given at (or subsequent to) salvation. For while this may be true, it cannot be established on the basis of I Corinthians.

The notion that Paul meant *translation* rather than merely *interpretation* is based upon two assumptions. The first is that if tongues are mere gibberish and interpretation merely relaying to the Church the significance of tongues (that is, why they occurred rather than what they meant), then there would be no reason for the tongues at all since they have no independent function and differ not at all from pagan ecstasies. The second is that either all tongues are gibberish, or some, at least, have content. There is no good reason to suppose that God would inspire the same sort of contentless gibberish which was part and parcel of paganism. And if His inspired speech is not the same as contentless pagan gibberish then it has content which must be revealed if it is spoken in Church rather than as a sign directed to those who will understand the language.

It seems, then, that genuine tongues first came to men with the advent of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts. These early occurrences involved all the new believers, had content which some among them understood, and validated the office and function of the Apostles. It cannot be argued

that these early tongues were *not* a sign, because it is not certain in any of the Acts passages that there were *no* unbelieving Jews present.

Whatever the status of these early tongues, it seems likely that some few Christians (and perhaps *only* Apostles) retained, as a permanent enablement, the ability to speak unlearned languages as a sign to unbelieving Jews. As such these tongues had content, were not for Church, and were not, therefore, a spiritual "gift." Small wonder then that the repeated exhortations that tongues spoken in Church were to be translated and were to edify the Church spelled death to pagan gibberish. Even *genuine* tongues were not intended for the church.

This whole contention is seen clearly from another aspect as well. Beginning in I Corinthians 12:4 Paul repeatedly makes statements and gives illustrations of the paramount importance of Church edification; indeed the essential feature of "the spirituals" (12:1) is that they edify the Church.

It is this very doctrine of "edification of believers" which results in the eradication of tongues from the Church, and the contrasting promotion of prophecy. The function of the Church demands that activities carried out during the service *must* edify the believers in the way prophecy does, in order to be considered a spiritual manifestation; yet tongues speaking *cannot* function as prophecy, and thus fail. Verse after verse downgrades speaking in tongues within the assembly because such behavior cannot function as prophecy; on the one hand, Corinthian tongues have no content; on the other hand, genuine tongues are a sign spoken outside the assembly to unbeliever.

The running contrast of tongues with prophecy throughout Chapter 14 leaves no doubt that tongues, in order to be exercised in Church are to function precisely as prophecy, i.e. for the edification of the saints. This is implied by the fact that tongues are repeatedly said to fail at precisely the point where prophecy in fact succeeds.

Paul's statement (14:6) that speaking in tongues cannot benefit the hearers unless they contain revelation, knowledge, .prophesying or teaching, is nothing" less than the bold assertion that meaningless gibberish has no objective function. And the directive which logically follows in 14:12, to "pray that you are able to translate," is a direct challenge to the Corinthians. This (and 14:20 ff) is as close as Paul comes to a direct assault against Corinthian ecstasies.

The teaching, put plainly, is this: Unless tongues have prophetic content which can be made known to the Church, it has no place in the Church and hence is no "spiritual manifestation" at all. This again demonstrates that the statement in 14:39 to "forbid not to speak in tongues," far from being a green light given to the continuance of such speaking in Church, is really a !!tongues-in-check" challenge to distinguish the proper use of genuine tongues as a sign to unbelievers outside the Church from the improper use of any sort as service filler within the assembly.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Tongues are never designated "gifts."
2. Gifts are but one form of spiritual manifestation.
3. Spiritual manifestations are designed for church edification -- by definition.
4. "Tongues" means nothing more than any syllabification other than everyday speech.
5. Such tongues as have no content cannot edify the church, hence are not truly spiritual manifestations in the Christian sense.
6. The *sign* of tongues has content and is directed toward unbelievers.
7. One is "charismatic" if he is a Christian who believes. The definition of "Charismatic Christians" is found in I Corinthians 12. Spiritual Christianity is developed in Chapter 13, and confusion on one particular issue is cleared up in 14.
 - A) That all spiritual manifestations given by God are for the direct benefit of the Church.
 - B) That God in fact blesses Christians with spiritual manifestations.
 - C) That He blesses Churches by placing within them these believers.
 - D) And that some manifestations are not permanent, thus allowing that several may be given to any individual.
8. I Corinthians 12-14 is seen to be excellent primary source material for the mystery religions.
9. Another area of interesting findings is that of Greek grammar. Worthy of note is the presence of sentences containing a double protasis, i.e. a concessive ("even if") clause, followed by a conditional ("if") clause, and concluding with a single common apodosis ("then" or "even so" clause). These are seen in 1. Cor. 13:1-3.
10. Yet another observation has to do with the use or omission of the definite article. In connection with the word "tongues" the article appears only three times. The first occasion is in 13:1 in connection with angels. This has no direct bearing upon the problem of genuine tongues as opposed to pagan ecstasies. The second articular occurrence of the word is to be found in 14:9, where the tongue as the organ of speech is denoted. This also is irrelevant to the issue. The third occurrence is in 14:22, where it is explanatory of the anarthrous construction found in the quotation of v.21. (This anarthrous construction, however, is not only a quote, but modifies a compound word meaning "other tongues. ") This occurs in the heart of the main passage dealing with the proper use of genuine tongues.

All other uses of the word "tongues" occur without the article and without a prefix. These constructions, according to the present exegesis, are of two varieties, the first being general in nature, and not attempting to distinguish between pagan and genuine tongues, or between proper and improper use. They are, in short, neutral, and generic, making no real distinctions. These occurrences are found at 12:10, 21, 30, and 14:39 (as one might expect, at the beginning and end of the discussion). The rest (14:2-6, 13, 14, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27) seem to coincide with tongues best understood as pagan ecstasies, with the exceptions of 14:6 and 18, where Paul himself is said to speak in tongues. While this does pose something of a grammatical problem, it is certain that Paul did not sanction or indulge in pagan ecstasies. It may be that these two occurrences belong under the heading of generic or general, since in neither case does the issue involve a contrast between two varieties, but general instruction regarding tongues of any variety. Furthermore, Paul wished to identify himself as one who had used tongues without alienating himself by distinguishing between the type he spoke and the type practiced by the Corinthians. In other words, Paul did not wish the Corinthians to cease their ecstasies merely because he himself spoke a different sort of tongues; this would have only contributed to the party spirit in Corinth. Rather, he wants them to pay close attention to the qualitative distinctions between the two types of tongues.

Thus, it is improper, at these points in the text, to ask which sort of tongues Paul used, for he was not at all interested in telling his readers that.

The use of the article also makes for interesting findings with regard to the words "God" and "Spirit." For I Corinthians 14:2, reads literally "For the one speaking in a tongue is not speaking to men (concrete reality), but to a God (abstraction) for no one understands him, but he speaks mysteries in a spirit (or perhaps in spirit).

Note also that two occurrences of the articular construction of "spirit" in 14:15 is followed by the anarthrous construction in 14:16.

Finally, note I Cor. 14:20 - 33b. This begins with the passage (14:20-25) which includes both the compound of tongues in the articular construction and constitutes the definitive pericope for genuine tongues. The word "God" appears uniformly in the articular construction. It becomes quite clear that not only are tongues differentiated, but this is confirmed by the fact that the objects of worship are also differentiated.

MAJOR OBJECTIONS

Owing to the nature *of* the findings *of* this research, and the unique exegesis *of* these texts, it is understandable why many objections may be encountered.

A few *of* the more obvious objections have been anticipated and answered below.

The first item which might arouse objection is the notion that the bulk *of* I Corinthians 12-14 is aimed at elimination or modification of tongues. After all, few verses are obviously *of* a "corrective" nature, and any serious misuse *of* a spiritual "gift" would likely receive a direct assault calculated to eliminate error.

But several points tell against this objection. First, not every argument, exhortation, or corrective need be stated in polemical fashion.

This is most notable in reference to Greco-Roman slavery. It is a simple fact that Paul never confronted the issue of slavery in a direct assault. Yet his few teachings on the subject destroyed (or were at least logically sufficient to destroy) the institution. Here is another issue which was simply legislated to death. For while it is true that the institution of slavery did not need always to exhibit extreme cruelty, it *could* not exhibit the Christian humanitarianism advocated by Paul, *and remain* slavery in its Pagan form. Any advocate of humanitarian treatment of slaves is in reality an enemy of that institution, for he seeks to undermine and destroy the essential structure and methods of slavery.

And so with tongues. Legislation *of* requiring 1) translation in Church; 2) that tongues must edify the body; 3) that they be restricted to no more than three speakers in Church, simply legislated the pagan ecstasies to death. For pagan tongues were meant to be used in groups. And the notion that genuine tongues were not for public worship, but a sign to "unbelievers" outside the church, simply ended pagan gibberish for the Corinthians. It ought to do the same today.

Also to be considered is that Paul had already dealt with several issues with straightforward polemic. His stinging sarcasm is ever present and his emotional involvement has been strong and obvious throughout the preceding chapters. Because many of the issues dealt with in those chapters also appear to be either pagan holdovers or have certain pagan similarities, there is a cumulative anti-paganism effect. As has been noted, the divisions in the Church spoken *of* in 1:10 if. appear to be the same as might have found in the mysteries, where the fame of the mystagogue, and his exploits would have provided ground for division. Food offered to idols (8:1-13), idolatry (10:18-21), and abuses of at the Last Supper, provide good examples of the encroachment of paganism on Christian ground.

In correcting these abuses it would have been obvious to the Corinthians, without being stated explicitly by Paul, that their pagan past was wholly inconsistent with Christianity. Thus, by the time the issue of "the spirituels" in general and "tongues" in particular, is discussed, Paul is able to be less direct and less emotional. There is little need to be strongly polemical, for by now the Corinthians had surely seen the main idea.

However, as has been noted, the word "tongues" designates a wide range of linguistic activity, including genuine Christian "sign tongues"; so even if Paul had wanted to deny ecstasies he could not have done so by forbidding tongues altogether; for in so doing he would also have banished genuine tongues!

A final consideration is also enlightening. For while a direct assault was not needed to be effective, Paul's dealing with the problem of pagan gibberish within the Corinthian Church was doubtless viewed by the Corinthians themselves as much more direct than it is viewed by moderns. Though Paul could use a slightly different approach, as noted above, and though he used the word "tongues" to refer to what we must view as two distinct phenomena, the Corinthians were left in absolutely no doubt as to Paul's meaning. They had not the trouble we have today; for even if only one word could be applied to both the genuine and the pagan phenomena of tongues, still the

Corinthians were able to distinguish between genuine and false simply by applying Paul's teaching directly to their own well known activities. If the Pauline directives were obeyed today, what is known as "tongues" (nothing but warmed over paganism) would cease within the Church in the space of twenty-four hours.

This naturally points up two more objections. First it might be objected that the one word cannot serve to designate two different entities within the same context; second, that modern tongues are not equivalent to the pagan tongues of Corinth.

To take the second of these objections first, it need only be pointed out that Mormons, Hindus, and practitioners of the black arts all speak the same sort of gibberish which in Christian circles passes as the "gift of tongues." This in itself demonstrates its pagan nature. If it is asserted that this is not the case, all that remains is that the tongues in question be translated in Church, or serve as a sign to unbelieving Jews outside the Church. Their failure in this regard constitutes proof of their spurious nature.

Either modern tongues are a resurgence of ancient pagan practices, a revival of genuine tongues, or a strictly new ingrafting of paganism from other sources. In either case, the challenge of Pauline limitations is sufficient to separate genuine from false, and eradicate the false. Advocates of the modern tongues movement have but to subject their gibberish to the acid test of Paul's teachings to quickly and accurately vindicate or condemn their practices.

As for the objection that one word cannot have two meanings within the same context, particularly when that word denotes the very subject(s) under discussion, two things must be noted.

In the first place, such a practice is far from linguistically impossible. Indeed, the more abstract the idea under consideration, the more likely is this to be the case. Linguistically, no word ever has precisely the same nuance, even in the same context. It can be nothing great to capitalize on this fact, even if unconsciously, in making distinctions within an area of abstraction.

The New Testament abounds with examples of this very practice; the following provide an intriguing though inexhaustive list.

A few non-Pauline examples can be found in James, i.e. "tests" or "trials," as found in 1:2,12. Though the context shifts slightly, to be sure, the term used differs greatly in its connotation.

Another good example from James (though it does contain a helpful modifier in one instance) is the word "religion" in 1:26-27 where the notion of "vain religion" is contrasted with "pure religion".

The word "faith," in perhaps the most controversial passage in the New Testament (James 2:14-26) gives a perfect example and a beautiful parallel to tongues. For in James 2:18 it is demonstrably certain that "faith" (used three times) is at least once used in a sense which cannot but mean "genuine faith," and once in a sense that can only be understood as "false faith" or "mere belief." This, is the best example yet.

Turning attention once more to Paul, the term "law" is most instructive. In Romans 2:12-15 the word occurs eleven times (twice with alpha primitive). At least two distinct meanings are readily apparent with only a cursory examination.

Another marvelous example occurs in Romans 7:21-23. Here again, in the space of three verses the word "law" is used five times with no fewer than three distinct meanings; and "law" is the subject of discussion.

Again, a most striking example is to be found in Galatians 2:19. Here also, law is the subject under discussion (as was "faith" in James 2:18 and "law" in Rom. 7:21-23). Here, the word is not only used twice in the same verse, but twice in succession. The Greek reads literally I "through law to law" died. The sense is "through law properly understood I died to law as it is seen by legalists." Again, the notion of proper versus improper is determined totally by con text.

Turning once more to I Corinthians a final example is seen in the very chapters treated.

In I Corinthians 14:33-34, the word "churches" appears twice. In the first case, in means "local bodies of believers"; in the second in denotes the regularly scheduled meetings.

In the second place, the idea that the word "tongues" refers to two distinct entities may be obvious only to those who were in a position to make such distinctions. The word "tongues" in this context, had but one very broad meaning for Paul and his Corinthian readers, i.e. "any human utterance not intended for daily discourse." The notion of "content" (or in's lack) as in relates to speech, was not, as we have seen, implicit in the word "tongues" itself; hence the extravagant lengths and circuitous course of Paul's discourse in legislating behavior for the exercise of tongues. The difference clearly is contextual and so, particularly for moderns, *becomes* part of the baggage of the word "tongues" itself. This is the way words grow. And Paul stretched the limits of several words, among them "flesh," "spirit" and "law."

Paul uses one word (tongues) within the same context, in ways that imparted a new distinction to the very word itself. This fact (or the force of this fact) was obvious to the Corinthians; but because pagan tongues, within the Church, did indeed cease historically, the subtle new nuance thus introduced died also. This is why it is less than obvious to modern readers.

The foregoing should also be sufficient to answer any objection to the effect that both sacred and profane entities would not receive treatment side by side. But additionally there is Pauline precedent in Galatians 4:9, where the expression "beggarly elements" refers both backward to the Gentiles' former religious practices, and at the same time forward (note the word "again") to the adoption of "law" which the Galatians were contemplating.

Another objection often heard is that God never takes back a "gift;" that the notion that the "gift" of tongues ceased is nothing more than a gratuitous assumption on the part of "non-Charismatics."

In response it need only be pointed out that the notion that the phenomenon of tongues constitutes a spiritual gift is itself a gratuitous assumption. Nowhere is the phenomenon of tongues called a "gift."

The only places where tongues is even mentioned in the same breath as gifts are 12:8-11 and 12:28-30. In the first of these, tongues is clearly *not* considered a gift, but a manifestation of another sort. In the other example, the word "tongues" follows the word "gifts" at some distance, with several manifestations intervening, and hardly designates a gift; that is, even if the word "gifts" were a generic term comprising what follows (healings, helps, government), it does not include tongues. Tongues not only has not been designated a gift in 12:8-11, but the notion is thoroughly dashed in vs.30, where the rhetorical questions specifically avoid attaching the word "gift" to the word "tongues".

Nor is it true that God does not recall spiritual blessings or gifts. The very dispensations themselves testify to a progressive element in God's plan, as does revelation itself. Furthermore, God withdrew from the Jews the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, as well as the manna. When? When they were no longer needed. And ever since that day it would constitute evil as well as stupidity for Jews to seek a spiritual experience by returning to the desert in search of pillars and manna. Even if some form of counterfeits were found, comparison with scripture should be sufficient to show the difference between the true and the false.

The next objection is that if tongues are indeed to cease (by virtue of I Corinthians 13:8-11) then so are the "gifts" of prophecy and knowledge.

But the very nature of the way in which these are handled destroys this criticism; for prophecy and knowledge are said to be *brought* to an end, suggesting an outside agency. Tongues, on the other hand, simply cease in and of themselves. This is in accordance with the idea of maturity, implied both in 13:11 and 14:20.

Another frequently heard defense of tongues: By praying in tongues the speaker confounds Satan, for he is unable to understand tongues, or "prayer language."

The facts however, are these: 1) The speaker of tongues, when he uses a prayer language confounds and confuses only himself, for he does not understand what he is saying (Rom. 8:26 and I Cor. 14:2). 2) Such gibberish may just as easily contain a *demonically inspired curse* of Jesus.

In fact, this is probably exactly what Paul means when he says, "Nobody says in the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is accursed." This is why he says in 14:13, "let the one speaking in a tongue pray that he may be able to translate." Whereas a genuine tongue might have content and be translatable, gibberish *most certainly is not* susceptible of translation.

Behind all of this lies a simple dilemma. How can one know if, while speaking in tongues, he is blessing or cursing Christ? If he can translate his tongue he knows what it means, and there is then no need for the tongue. If, on the other hand, he cannot translate his tongues he is uncertain whether or not he is cursing Jesus; and he is certainly indulging in mere emotionalism.

3) It is absurd to believe that the Creator, sustainer, and redeemer of the Cosmos, from whom there is no secret, from whom no heart can hide its innermost sinfulness and guilt, and who can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, has any need to be addressed in gibberish, even if it is designated "prayer language." For just as a new mother knows the needs of her infant, quite apart from articulate (or inarticulate) petition, so much more is God able to discern the needs of men long before they recognize those needs themselves. God has absolutely no need of language at all. Language is for our benefit, not His. And gibberish is of no benefit, either to God or to man.

This brings up two further questions. What possible difference can it make if Satan hears, understands and would prevent our petitions? To the whole concept the question "so what" is addressed. The charismatic god is small indeed. if he must be either addressed in prayer language or can be frustrated by Satan.

Then again, the notion that speaking in tongues is the sign of the coming of the Spirit upon believers today and hence a sign of true salvation, redemption, or sanctification leaves many true Christians "unsaved", while at the same time proving certain voodoo practitioners to be children of the Kingdom.

This is quite likely the beginning of the end, for the ecumenical aspect of the modern tongues movement does indeed unite disparate entities in the name of the Church. Can the Beast be far behind?

Wake up Christians!!

IN CONCLUSION

It has been seen that the apparent inconsistencies within the text of I Corinthians lead to some new understandings, when they are reconciled with the background of Corinthian paganism.

The conclusions are seen best as a review of general information gained through the exegetical process and a few of the major implications thus gained.

It has been seen that the situation in Corinth was one of division and confusion. The first note of instruction is that the type of spirit inspiring ones speech can be judged by what is said about Jesus Christ. This general principal is so broad as to cover all of human speech, including tongues insofar as they have any content at all.

It was then shown that "gifts" are but one sub-category of spiritual manifestations, and that both the "gifts of healings" and the "effects of miracles" reside in the recipient of the healings and miracles. It is not the case that God has ever permanently empowered men to be spiritual super-heroes, or to exercise their power at their own discretion. Jesus, though He had the power, refused to exercise His "gifts" as He willed, and the Apostles were given powers of what might best be called "short-term status" for the purpose of validating their Apostolic ministry. It is nothing but modern mythology to believe that God designated certain men as spiritual super men with miraculous powers. Indeed, these superstatus items are not, and never have been "gifts". They were valid "effects" or "workings"; nothing more. And they passed when the need for them passed -- even before the Apostles died.

It was demonstrated that not every Christian possesses all of the spiritual manifestations. It was then pointed out that what is (or ought to be) common to all true Christians, and what lies beneath all truly spiritual manifestations is that true spirituality of divine love which never ends.

Finally, it was shown that if tongues were to be used in Church at all they were to function in the same manner as prophecy; i.e. in orderly fashion and for the edification of believers. In the case of tongues, this necessitated translation, which became the acid test authenticity. For genuine tongues function as prophecy in that they have content which can be translated, while gibberish does not so function.

But even genuine tongues, far from being a "gift", constitute a sign to unbelievers, and are therefore, not generally suitable to a church service. It is possible to distinguish between genuine and Pagan tongues, then by their function. "Speaking into the air" describes the gibberish spoken when "a god" is addressed by "speaking mysteries in a spirit." These mysteries are not to be confused with Christian mysteries, which are nothing less than God; secrets *publically made plain* as Christian teaching (making "mystery" *synonymous* with Revelation) but are tionally, it should be noted that, by way of contrast, genuine tongues are spoken through the (Holy) Spirit, and are directed toward men.

The phenomena of tongues, then comprise genuine and pagan utterances. The genuine tongues are described both in Acts, at their inception with the coming of the Holy Spirit and in I Corinthians 14:21ff. in their developed mode. Tongues are seen to be intended for use as a sign to those outside rather than within the church; hence the severe restrictions placed upon their use in the Church service.

These limitations serve to eliminate Pagan tongues and sharply limit (nearly to non-use) genuine tongues.

Yet on the other hand, as long as there existed a need for genuine sign-tongues, the use of tongues was not to be forbidden.

But consistent with good dispensational theology "The kingdom is at hand" ceased to be preached immediately after Paul got as far as Corinth. Henceforth the edification of the body of Christ (the Church) would be the function of Spiritual manifestations. Yet because Israel had not

yet been scattered by Rome, the unbelieving Jews could receive the sign promised by God and (given to "unbelievers" i.e. the sign of tongues. I Corinthians was written between the time Israel refused the Kingdom, and her judgement by dispersion. This period is the period in which the sign of impending judgement (tongues) is given to the Jews.

It is interesting that the final full turning to the Gentiles actually took place in Corinth shortly after Paul's arrival there. Doubtless, genuine tongues were performed and witnessed briefly in Corinth. And the Pagan counterpart was introduced into the Church quite soon thereafter.

In fact, after pentecost, the phenomenon of tongues may have taken on its full function as a sign to unbelieving Jews *first* in Corinth.

With the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., the destruction of the Nation of Israel, and the subsequent total dispersion of the Jews, all need for the sign of tongues ceased.

It follows from all of this, and is consistent with every page of the Bible, that spiritual enablement is always given on the basis of interpersonal relationships, (either as a sign to unbelievers, or as a means of edifying fellow believers), never for the establishment or furtherance of a man's relationship to God. But the Gospel is the single item intended by God to establish a man's relationship with himself; hence an offer of the phenomenon of tongues (even genuine tongues) is *never* a part of the gospel.

APPENDIX

What follows here is the brief treatment of other New Testament passages that are sometimes referred to in defense of the Charismatic understanding of the Christian calling. In addition, there is reference to a passage from Plato, one of many from the early Greek authors that indicates that glossalalia was a widespread pagan phenomenon.

Mark 16:9-20

This passage is simply the account of the commissioning of the Apostles, or, stated differently, the elevation of unlearned disciples to the position of duly authorized Apostles.

Note the following acts of Jesus: He

- 1) Rebuked the disciples' unbelief (v. 14).
- 2) Gave them information concerning their evangelistic mission (v. 15).
- 3) Informed them of the results of belief and disbelief (vs. 16).
- 4) Described the validating signs which would "attend" those who believe (vv. 17, 18).
- 5) Ascended into heaven (v. 19).
- 6) Worked with the disciples and *confirmed* His word *by the signs that followed* (v. 20).

It is v. 20 that determines the scope of the signs. In vv. 17 and 18 there is no time limit placed upon the validity of the signs. (Notice they are called "signs", and *not* "gifts.") They are said merely to "attend, accompany or follow" those who believe. This, of itself, could refer to all believers of all time, or simply to those with whom the Apostles worked directly. However, v. 20 is susceptible to no such ambiguity. It clearly states in simple words that the signs confirmed the word which the Apostles preached.

Once more, an ounce of context dispels a ton of speculation, wishful thinking or attempted justification of experience.

John 20:19-23

This is also an account of the commissioning of the eleven. It differs slightly in detail, because of the different emphases of Mark and John. However, there is nothing inherently inconsistent in the two accounts.

Here, the following facts should be noted:

- 1) Jesus appeared and pronounced peace upon His disciples.
- 2) He identified Himself by displaying His fresh wounds.
- 3) He again pronounced peace upon them.
- 4) He commissioned them to be His authorized representatives; just as God had empowered and sent Jesus, so He was sending the Apostles (see study of the word "Apostles") .
- 5) He breathed upon them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit.
- 6) He commissioned them to forgive or retain sins.

This, of course, can be nothing other than a commissioning exercise, and has nothing to do with the Disciples' becoming believers as many today believe. It simply does *not* refer to their salvation.

Jesus gives explicit guidelines as to the nature and extent of the new ministry of His Apostles. The breathing upon them occurred between the statements, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you," and "If you forgive . . ." As such, it may be regarded as either symbolic or literal; but it cannot be viewed in any way other than as part of the commissioning of the Apostle.

Once again, context conquers error.

Acts Chapter 2

The Neo-Corinthian movement is adamant in its mishandling of this segment of Scripture. Therefore, a few observations will be made about this chapter of Acts. This is no more to be considered an exhaustive exegesis than are the brief treatments of other passages dealt with in these appendices. But a few statements will suffice to point out the obvious errors being made with regard to the text.

It is noteworthy that those in the upper room on the day of Pentecost numbered only 12, not 120. The 120 were present when the successor to Judas was chosen; only the twelve were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

In Acts 2:4 it is said that "they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance." (R.V.) It has been urged by some that the Apostles spoke voluntarily in tongues, while the Holy Spirit "told" or "gave" them what to say. However, the phrase "*And they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance*" is something not unlike a pleonasm. It is here stated that the Spirit gave them utterance, which clearly indicates the idea of vocal sounds. Similarly, "Jesus answered and said," refers to one activity, not two. His speaking and answering were the same action. Just so, the two phrases, "They spoke," and "*as the Spirit gave them utterance*," cannot mean they spoke what the Spirit revealed to them; for it was the very "utterance" which was given them. This entire event is remarkable precisely because it was spontaneous. The disciples did not learn how to speak in tongues, nor did they begin speaking until the Spirit was upon them, "giving them utterance."

Nor can it be urged that there was no content to what was being spoken. Assuming that only those who gathered together heard what was spoken, it is unthinkable that there was no content to the speech, for they themselves translated or interpreted it. To claim that they heard what was not inherent in the speaking is simply to deny the need for tongues altogether. If the Apostles spoke gibberish, but the listening multitude heard and understood intelligible words, then no connection exists between that which was spoken and that which was heard; in which case the speaking was superfluous. God might as well have had the Apostles wiggle their ears and let the strangers hear the Gospel. But the text makes it patently clear that what was spoken was that which was heard and understood.

However, v. 13 states that some mocked, saying, "They are filled with new wine." In v. 15, Peter denies the charge of drunkenness and in v. 16, begins his sermon by drawing upon Joel the Prophet. It should be noted that only two items in the Joel passage are of immediate interest to Peter, one being the first statement concerning the last days, in which God says He will pour forth of *His Spirit upon all flesh*. This, obviously, is the way Peter interprets the events which had just taken place, particularly in light of Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8. The other pertinent item is the last verse of Joel's prophecy, in which it is stated that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Two things are exceedingly clear. First, Peter begins the Joel passage with the statement which paralleled the events of the Day of Pentecost; and he ends with that verse which gave significance to those events, i.e. the offer of salvation to all flesh.

Second, it must be remarked that *none* of the intervening statements of Joel parallel the events of Pentecost. There is no mention of dreams or visions or of the moon being turned into blood. Peter simply begins with the entrance of the Holy Spirit, quoting Joel until reaching the offer of salvation, which was the significant factor in the advent of the Spirit.

This is confirmed by the remainder of Peter's sermon, as he relates the recent history of Jesus and shows Him to be the risen "Lord and Christ" promised of old, Who had Himself both worked miracles and poured forth the promised Spirit. Jesus is the subject of the sermon.

Yet the Neo-Corinthians have urged that the question recorded in v. 37 ("What shall we do?") is inspired by the listeners' desire to speak in tongues, or at least to receive such as has been manifested. This, they argue, is shown by the fact that Peter, in answer, admonishes them to 1) repent; 2) be baptized in the name of Jesus unto the remission of sins, as a result of which they shall 3) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The problem with this argument is that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is synonymous with what elsewhere is simply said to be salvation. How would those who heard the tongues know that they *were* tongues? It was understood as a clear expression of the Gospel in their own language. Hence. They may more likely have desired to be evangelists!

Nor can it be seriously held that this baptism refers to "baptism in the Holy Spirit," since it is a standard formula for water baptism ("in the name of Christ" and "unto the remission of your sins"). In addition, this baptism is urged upon the audience, and can thus be nothing less than an appeal to the will, whereas the experience of Acts 2:4 cannot be explained in any way other than the spontaneous act of the Holy Spirit, without regard for the will or desires of those upon whom He fell.

Nor is this the end of the matter. For those who "were pricked in their heart", (v. 37) were either those who were amazed that they "heard the mighty works of God in their own dialects" (vv. 11-12) or those who mocked and called the Apostles drunk (v. 13). If they were those who marveled, it must be assumed that what they wanted had as much to do with the things they understood in their own dialects as with what they heard in Peter's sermon. This can only mean salvation, and not some esoteric experience of tongues. Hence they regarded the gift of the Holy Spirit as salvation.

Now, if those who were "pricked in their heart" (v. 37) represent those who "mocked and said they are full of new wine," (v. 13), it is equally clear that what they now sought was the promised salvation. *For they all knew how to get drunk.* It is senseless to claim that they would crave a state of seeming drunkenness, which they already abhorred. How could a salvation message result in seeking after the appearance of drunkenness? So, regardless of the identity of those who were "pricked in their heart," what they desired was the promised salvation which was the last word of Joel and the substance of Peter's sermon.

Several other reminders remain, which confirm beyond doubt the thesis presented here. First, in v. 40 is the specific admonition to "save yourselves from this crooked generation." Second, in v. 41 it is said that they who received his *word* were baptized. That is, those who believed responded as instructed. Third, in v. 42 these new converts are said to have "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' *teaching* and in the *breaking of bread*. and in the *prayers*". There is no mention of continuing in the speaking with tongues. Thus, if tongues were what they sought, they did not show disappointment in their failure to receive them, for they "continued in the things which accompany salvation." Fourth, in v. 43, it is said that many signs and wonders were done *through* the Apostles. This is entirely consistent with the idea that the miraculous deeds served to authenticate the Apostles and their ministry, while not providing a *modus operandi* for following generations. Finally, the last word of Acts 2 says that the Lord added to the Church "those that were saved," not those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit, or those who spoke in tongues. There can be no other conclusion but that salvation is the subject of this chapter, rather than an esoteric experience. Salvation was promised in Joel (recorded here in v. 21); signaled in v. 4; perceived in vv. 7-13; preached in vv. 14-36; requested in v. 37; explained in v. 41; and had its effects in v. 42. This program is said to have continued in vv. 43-47.

No wonder we are not bowled over by the false promise of being baptized in the Spirit; it is no more to be found here than anywhere else in Scripture.

The neo-Corinthian understanding of Romans 8:26 also is terribly mistaken. The context, though rather strange, definitely does not allow this verse to be forced into the "prayer language" interpretation assigned it by the neo-Corinthians.

In Romans 8:18 ff. Paul deals with the realm of nature, the whole creation, which he says was subjected in hope to futility. This whole creation "groans" or "sighs."

In Romans 8:23 ff. "we ourselves" are said to "groan" or "sigh" *within* ourselves, "having the first fruits of the Spirit" only. This condition is similar to the "subjection of (the whole) creation to futility," in that it is an abiding condition, remedied only at the final redemption of man, the revealing of the sons of God, the adoption of sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Thus, we are given a picture of an abiding condition of subjection to futility, in which not only the realm of nature groans, but man himself groans *inwardly*. This condition of "subjection to futility" for the Christian, who has only the "firstfruits of the Spirit," is to end only with his bodily redemption.

Roman 8:26 begins with the word "likewise," which intimately ties together the preceding with what follows. For the Holy Spirit is also said to "intercede with unspeakable groans." Verse 27 says that "He who searches the hearts (God) knows the mind of the Spirit," not because He understands the "groanings," but "because the Spirit petitions for the saints according to the will of God." In short, it is not even the "groanings" of the Spirit by which God understands the poor prayers of the saints, but the fact that the Spirit petitions "according to the will of God." Hence, not only is it not *our groanings*, it is not even *the Spirit's groanings* which avail. It is simply the fact that the Holy Spirit intercedes according to God. The Spirit in some way, perhaps non verbally, translates the poor prayers of believers into terms of the will of God. And as God searches the hearts, He is aware of the Spirit's activity and sorrow over our condition.

A further point revolves around the fact that a "sigh" or "groaning" is not a tongue at all. Without question, the word "tongues" means that articulation of syllables which it is the function of the tongue to produce, whereas a groan or a sigh is the simple, extended monotone emitted with the exhalation of breath. To the Neo-Corinthian question, "Where is the Spirit?" we need only reply with the question "Where isn't He?" For the fact that the Holy Spirit is *in us* does not indicate that His intercession *for us* *proceeds out of our mouths*, as will become clearer shortly. Indeed, it should be remembered that Christians are here said to have only "the firstfruits of the Spirit," rather than the full promise. When it is remembered that God searches hearts, knows all men's secrets, and has no need that any should instruct Him; when it is recalled that man cannot hide even his innermost thoughts from God, it may well be asked how it is that the neo-Corinthians feel prayer must be verbalized in any language, much less in a special or personal prayer language.

To the idea that we must pray in a manner such as will confuse Satan, we confidently reply, "Bah! So what if Satan does hear? We can confess Christ to Satan's face and let our prayers defy him." As long as we are in Christ, Satan is a defeated and powerless enemy. Even were this not so, how would he be able to prevent God from hearing our petitions? .

The irony of this neo-Corinthian error is that, as is the case with Mk. 16:16 ff., it occurs despite the fact that the KJV (based on the longer Textus Receptus rather than the more recent critical versions) is explicit in its denial of the error. Not only does the text contain the word properly translated "intercede for" or "plead for;" in addition, it contains an explicit prepositional phrase which reads "for us." . That is, the word "pleads" is followed by the phrase "for us." At no point is there the slightest intimation or basis for hope that it either says or implies "in us." The concept of interceding "within us" is sheer wishful thinking.

As has already been noted, the word translated "cannot be uttered" in the KJV ("too deep for words" in NASV and RSV) is literally "unspeakable. " Here again, the KJV is much stronger and more accurate in its flat denial of the Neo-Corinthian error.

The KJV, literally translated from the Textus Receptus, reads "intercedes for us with unspeakable groanings.." The RSV and NASV, despite their periphrastic quality, still bring out the

meaning clearly, reading "intercedes for us with sighs (NASV, "groanings") too deep for words." But the critical Greek texts are stronger than this, being literally translated "intercedes with unspeakable groanings." In short, there is neither reason to suppose, nor Scripture to support the idea of a Christian prayer language. Only paganism had special "prayer languages."

Jude 20

The phrase "in the Holy Spirit" itself has nothing to do with tongues. Indeed, *anything* that can be done morally can be done "in the Holy Spirit." But it cannot be seriously urged that it is synonymous with tongues.

In Mt. 3:11, Mk. 1:8, Lk. 3:16, Jn. 1:33 and Acts 11:16, baptism "in the Holy Spirit" is contrasted with baptism "in water." Nothing can be said of the meaning of baptism "in the Holy Spirit," beyond the fact that it is not necessarily experienced because of one's being in or near water; only that it will involve something other than the visible or tangible. This rules out tongues. It is simply a contrast between the visible, symbolic baptism of John the Baptist and the real, supernatural baptism provided by Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, which is placement (immersion) of the believer into the Body of Christ.

This very differentiation between the visible sign and the invisible spiritual reality is Peter's rationale for presenting the Gospel to Gentiles in Acts 11:16.

In Rom. 14:17, Paul distinguishes between the corporeal and the spiritual, when he says that "the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, *but* righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." That is, the Kingdom of God does not comprise the visible riches and prosperity so often sought by carnal man, but of invisible, spiritual well being.

The contrast found in Rom. 15:16 between the tangible and the spiritual, though implicit rather than explicit, expresses the fact that the Gentile's sanctification is "in the Holy Spirit" rather than in any physical mode. Paul first reminds his Roman readers (v. 14) that, despite the fact that he is convinced of their "goodness," he is writing to them with a measure of boldness, adding that he has his "glorying in Christ Jesus." Thus Paul implies a contrast between that which is essentially supernatural and that which is essentially natural.

In I Thes. 1:5, Paul compares "the word only" with the spiritual manner in which the Gospel was presented to the Thessalonians. Even the nature of Paul's life among them is thrown into the balance on the side of the supernatural and powerful.

In Rom. 9:1, Paul contrasts lying with telling "the truth *in Christ*." The expression "my conscience bear witness with me *in the Holy Spirit*" produces a corresponding contrast between an oath, which would be the natural response, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit to those of good conscience. While the truth and a lie are explicitly distinguished, the difference between a meaningless human oath and the witness of conscience "in the *Holy Spirit*" is implied by the structure of the context, which ties the witness to the truth.

Finally, in Jude 20, the strongest possible distinction is drawn between the Christian and the enemies of God. A long list of sins has been dealt with in Jude 15-19, and the ungodly ones committing such sins are said to be contemporaries of Jude's readers. They are those who 1) cause separations, 2) are sensual and 3) have not the Spirit. Juxtaposed to these deeds are Jude's admonitions to his readers to 1) edify themselves in their faith, 2) pray "in the Holy Spirit," 3) keep themselves "in the love of God" and 4) "look for mercy".

One cannot miss the obvious contradictions between the "separations" and "having not the Spirit" of v. 19, and the edification of "praying in the Spirit" of v. 20.

It must be noted that in this instance, prayer "in the Holy Spirit" is contrasted to the worldly kind of praying referred to in Mt. 6:5-6, and seen all over the world today in certain public prayers of Jews and Moslems, as well as Christians.

In conclusion, the idiom "in the Holy Spirit" means neither more nor less than that holiness which is to characterize the Christian, as opposed to the natural character of man.

The very essence of spirit is its incorporeal or intangible nature, and its power of animation. The term comes from the word for "breath" or "wind," both in Hebrew and in Greek.

Plato's Timaeus (Timaeus 71 E)

Paul and the Greek Authors: Paul's accommodation of the Gospel to the Greeks Note the parallels in teaching or vocabulary in the following Passages from Greek Authors. **Plato** -- Timaeus 71 e (cf. especially I Cor 14:1-5).

- 1) Receiving inspiration comes either in dreams or madness (distemper or possession).
- 2) Description of ecstasy as madness
- 3) Such as make such *utterances* cannot understand them without first recovering their wits, whereupon the prophecy or utterance must be interpreted.
- 4) Those speaking are considered prophets, the interpreters are judges. Cf. Tongues speaker and prophet in I Cor. 14.

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