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A Sachkritik of First Corinthians 13 Authenticity and Integrity

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A SACHKRITIK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 13:

AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY

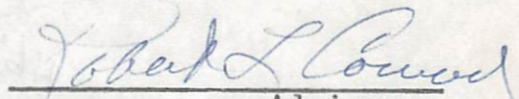
A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
E-505

by

John Hollar

February 29, 1968

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Advisor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians happens to be one of those documents of the early Christian community which was to become a subject of debate, sooner or later, for the form critical school of exegesis. Evidence for this issues from the fact that it was in 1910 when Johannes Weiss wrote what still remains as the classical form-critical analysis of First Corinthians.¹ Then in 1912 Adolf Harnack presented the second great contribution of scholarship concerning this chapter of agapē with his article "The Apostle Paul's Hymn of Love and Its Religious-Historical Significance."² From this time on it almost became a matter of whether one agreed with these two men or not. Neither, of course, had solved all the exegetical and isagogical problems of the chapter. In the process of dealing with First Corinthians 13, scholarship has variously labeled the chapter as a hymn, rhetoric, or a Gnostic Redemption Myth. An example of the evident abundance of scholarly debate on such issues are presented in the article by Jack Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War."³ In view of this abundant scholarly material, the writer of this paper

purposes to investigate the scholarly critiques of First Corinthians 13 with a view to the ultimate meaning of the content (Sachkritik). No critique of the chapter is complete without a discussion of the authenticity and integrity of the text. It is merely standard procedure to deal with this issue as one handles this particular text.

Secondly, the most respected scholarly opinions will be considered in the investigation of the historical form and content of the chapter. In short, two questions are to be held in mind through the course of the paper: What does scholarship say about the authenticity and integrity of First Corinthians 13? How does scholarship fare in the light of the text? No attempt is made to argue for or against Pauline authorship. Rather an attempt is made to present the key issues to be considered in the light of scholarship and the Biblical text. By no means is any attempt made to solve all the isagogical and exegetical problems of the text. Ultimately one is faced with a variety of conclusions.

Methodology

The methodology of the paper is simple. The subject matter is treated in four chapters. Chapter I attempts to introduce the subject and state the purpose of the study. Chapter I also attempts to explain and clarify the approach and technique involved in this study. In Chapter II the status of the argument for and against Pauline authorship is explicated. Chapter II is merely an attempt to review the scholarly arguments that have been presented on the issue

of the authenticity and integrity of First Corinthians 13. The arguments against Pauline authorship are balanced by the arguments for Pauline authorship. Chapter III looks at the text in the light of its form and theology in relationship to traditional/Pauline theology and early Christian tradition. This will be done with the aid of more recent scholarly suggestions, along with the more respected analyses, and this author's own insights. Finally, in Chapter IV, an attempt is made to state the conclusions that seem to issue from the comparison of scholarship with itself and with the Biblical texts. In the light of his research and study the author will formulate his own attitudes about the issues at hand and suggest some alternative conclusions, if any, that may appear more worthwhile than some of the more traditional conclusions.

Preliminary Suppositions

It is of the utmost importance that one should state his point of view before he attempts to make any kind of assessment concerning the subject under discussion. In the field of Biblical exegesis this is left undone at times. The bias becomes evident without any preliminary statements. Therefore, it is proper to state some presuppositions that are the point of departure for this paper. In this paper form-critical analysis is considered to be a valid and necessary methodology. Secondly, it is presupposed that form and content are related. The structure of the form can then perhaps shed some light on the content. Form-criticism is then not a license for omitting or ignoring a

section of the text because of its form. Rather, in the light of the total context the form may be justified and might form the nucleus of the central theme of the text.

In addition, the historical-grammatical-exegetical method is considered to be a valid method of exegesis. It is necessary for the historical-grammatical-exegetical method to be tempered, revised, or re-focused in the light of current philosophical and scientific methodology. Literary and philosophical analysis are co-related to the historical-grammatical-critical approach.

Finally, it is hoped that in the course of this paper it will be possible to reach a more coherent analysis of First Corinthians 13. Therefore, the perplexity of the issue involving the authenticity and integrity of the text is not meant to overshadow the theological significance of this "Hymn of Love." One just cannot confront First Corinthians 13 without confronting the issue of authenticity and integrity.

Terminology

In the course of the paper the terms "authenticity and integrity" are coeval. To ask if a document is authentic is to ask if it was written by the person with whom it is associated. In other words, to ask "Is First Corinthians 13 authentic?" is to ask if it was written by the Apostle Paul. To question the integrity of the chapter means that one perceives language, form, content, etc., that do not normally fall in line with the vocabulary and thought patterns of the whole corpus of First Corinthians

and even the Pauline Epistles. If the incongruities of the chapter are too overwhelming one might tentatively conclude that First Corinthians 13 is not necessarily a part of the whole of First Corinthians. The text is not integral.

In handling the literary style of the text the word "form" is often employed. Form designates the thematic structure, line structure, or the type of literary genre. Form designates the structure of the content.

This paper is entitled as a Sachkritik. A Sachkritik aims at the ultimate meaning of the content. This aim is accomplished with the aid of scholarly opinions that shed light on the complexities of the text with a view to relating the overall theological content of the "Hymn of Love." In the light of Pauline theology or early Christian theology such issues as authorship are diminished by the absolute worth of the content. That the content is reliable is the sure thing. Authorship is then an open-ended question in the light of the total impression of Scripture.

CHAPTER I: FOOTNOTES

¹Johannes Weiss, Der Erste Korintherbrief, in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament begründet von H. A. W. Meyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910).

²Adolf Harnack, "The Apostle Paul's Hymn of Love and Its Religious-Historical Significance," Expositor: Series 8, III (May 1912), 385-408; 481-503.

³Jack Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," Interpretation, XX (February 1966), 159-187.

CHAPTER II

STATUS OF THE ARGUMENT

In reading the Greek text of the First Epistle to the Corinthians one cannot but help note the distinctive elements of chapter 13. If one is at all attuned to the verbal and oral characteristics of the Pauline corpus it is hard to deny the uniqueness of First Corinthians 13. The high value that is placed on this chapter by the catholic church in its lectionaries (it is the appointed Epistle for Quinquagesima Sunday) and patristic writings also attests to a unique position in the church.¹ This chapter once prompted a Spanish Jewish physician to say that he wished it were written in letters of gold and "that every Jew were to carry it with him wherever he went."²

Yet, the uniqueness of First Corinthians 13 has caused as many problems for the exegete as it has benefits on the strictly analytical level. As it is, most scholars testify to the unique position and nature of the chapter. From arguments on the nature of the form, the content, and the position of First Corinthians 13 it has been argued that the chapter is either Pauline or non-Pauline. In view of this, the traditional arguments against Pauline authorship and for the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians 13 will be surveyed.

First Corinthians 13 as a non-Pauline Document

Arguments against the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians 13 are rarely found. Yet, as early as 1920 Anton Fridrichsen attempted to show that chapter 13 was really a Christian-Stoic diatribe added by a Paulinist to the original chapter.³ He later retracted his view about non-Pauline authorship. Again, out of the abundance of material on chapter 13 Eric L. Titus is one who presses for non-Pauline authorship.⁴ He suggests that First Corinthians 13 is an interpolation and goes on to demonstrate this suggestion on the basis of internal evidence.⁵ Titus deviates from the normal line of argumentation in some ways by insisting that it is the cumulative effect of his argumentation and not a single point in isolation that presses for a non-Pauline interpolation.⁶

The first argument is that First Corinthians 13 is an interpolation and therefore non-Pauline. On the basis of internal evidence there are hints that suggest such an interpolation. In 12:31 there is a transitional phrase: zēloute de ta charismata ta meizona. In 14:1 a similar phrase is employed to suggest that zēloute is used "as if to continue the discussion of gifts at the precise point where it had been broken into in order to interject the passage on love."⁷ "And yet I will show you a more excellent way" would be included as part of the transitional material along with 14:1a, "make love your aim." In this way chapter 14 would follow chapter 12. The reference to "a more excellent way;" along with the awkward transitional

phrases would suggest interpolation.⁸ In other words, because First Corinthians¹³ is out of place it is non-Pauline.

In 1911 Robertson and Plummer had suggested that this chapter is a digression.⁹ Eric Titus states, "It is to be doubted that First Corinthians 13 is typical of the Pauline parenthesis or digression."¹⁰ Normally, Paul makes abrupt changes. Then he makes his digression, and does not return to the main issue. In chapter 13 Paul does not become lost. In chapter 14 he returns to his subject matter.¹¹ Therefore, chapter 13 is a non-Pauline digression.

The next feature that presses for non-Pauline authorship is the notable absence of Christology in the chapter. There is no reference to Christ or God. "This in itself is an amazing feature to find in Pauline literature, especially in material reflecting strong emotional feeling."¹² Love has been hypostasized on the level of an ethical principle that is not related to Christ. The ethical stress of First Corinthians 13 is seen to resemble the thought of James more than that of Paul.¹³ On the basis of the lack of Christology one can conclude that the chapter is non-Pauline.

Furthermore, it is known that the concept of faith maintains a central position in Pauline thought. In chapter 13 faith and love are set in juxtaposition. In Paul's theological system faith in Christ is the key element. "The manner with which it (faith) is dealt in chapter 13 raises the question of authenticity."¹³ Since faith is not exalted above love it would seem that the chapter is not of Pauline origin.

Then too, the triad of faith, hope, and love seems to pose a problem. The triad with the concluding phrase "but the greatest of these is love" seems to be "a summary of the treatment of three distinct themes."¹⁴ However, Titus does not feel that this does justice to the chapter because faith and hope are not treated on the same level as love is. This conclusion seems to distort the preponderant treatment of agapē. Secondly, one could argue that the triad is a typical Pauline formula and is not a summary. For Titus, First Thessalonians 1:2-3 and First Thessalonians 3:6 "have little resemblance to the abstract faith, hope, and love of First Corinthians 13."¹⁵ Titus concludes that the extra Pauline usage in First Peter 1:3-22 is as bare in its Christology as First Corinthians 13 and it therefore seems unlikely that the triad of faith, hope, and love, with love being the greatest, appears to do justice to Pauline theology.

In addition to these arguments, the literary form and style of First Corinthians 13 has caused much discussion. It was noted in the opening comments that the uniqueness of the form has always been stressed. The form and style of the chapter seems to be unique. Many do not feel that it is Paul writing.

True, there are particular passages which indicate poetic sensitivity, rhythm and balance, but nowhere do we find anything approaching the sustained poetic quality of chapter 13. 16

Some would counter by noting the refined passage of Phillipians 2:5-11. Titus points out that this passage cannot be used to disprove his assertion because "it was in all probability the common property of the Christian

community and not a Pauline creation."¹⁷ Philippians, instead of an ethical exhortation, calls forth a current Christological myth. The form of chapter 13 is therefore non-Pauline. It does not use the favorite rhetorical device of Paul, the participle. Chapter 13 is too rhythmic and too balanced to reflect the normal Pauline style.

Finally, one often finds the general argument that the collection and edition of the whole Pauline corpus sheds light on the problems of chapter 13. The whole of the Corinthian correspondence has been subject to much critical analysis. It reflects possibly four instead of two letters. It is also known that Romans 16 is an apparent addition. Philippians is thought to be composite. Furthermore, the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and Colossians has been greatly suspected.¹⁸ Therefore, when one notes that chapters 12 and 14 compose a natural unit without chapter 13, that no attempt is made to relate agapē to the issue at hand in chapter 13, that spiritual gifts are minimized, and that an unnatural Pauline eschatology is present, along with all of the other arguments, it is not difficult to conclude that First Corinthians 13 is non-Pauline.

First Corinthians 13 as a Pauline Document

Now that one side of the argument has been stated, it is best to see if any arguments can be explicated in support of Pauline authorship. In other words, the second argument states that on the basis of internal evidence First Corinthians 13 is an authentic Pauline document. One is confronted with

a chapter that is out of place. He can accept the chapter. He could omit it. Not even the extremely critical positivistic exegetes did this. In 1910 Johannes Weiss called attention to the fact, in the strongest possible way, that First Corinthians 13 is out of place between chapters 12 and 14.¹⁹ In 12:31 the congregation is exhorted to be content with their various gifts. Weiss asks why Paul presents a more excellent way. Then in 14:1 Paul seemingly returns to the argument of chapter 12.²⁰ Since 13:2 seems to deprecate prophecy one wonders why the topic is resumed in chapter 14. "The connection between chapters 13 and 14 is less than enlightening than artificial," says Weiss. Weiss sees a relatedness between the material of 8:1 ff. and 13:8-13. This leads him to hold that chapter 13 followed chapter 8 where spiritually inflated people who lacked love were condemned.²¹ In short, an attempt is made to place the misplaced chapter within the context of the immediate Pauline corpus. On the other hand, some scholars presume that the chapter is not an extraneous composition.

Rather it is the unexpected and unconscious by-product of Paul's attempt to face realistically and spiritually the problem of glossalalia in the Corinthian Church. 22

What one should do with the chapter is indeed an intriguing problem. Jean Hering comments:

Chapter 13 did not originally occupy its present place in the Epistle. There is however, no valid reason to doubt its Pauline origin. Did it form part of another epistle? or was it an isolated sheet which some editor (possibly Sosthenes himself ?) may have inserted here? That is something which we shall probably never know. 23

In short, an attempt can be made to place chapter 13 in its proper context on the basis of the immediate problem (s) in First Corinthians contrary to the conclusion that Weiss drew.

Jedenfalls ist es nüsslich, einmal Kap. 13 ohne Rücksicht auf seinen heutigen Zusammenhang mit Kap. 12. 14. zu betrachten; denn es ist unter allen Umständen ein in sich völlig geschlossenes abgerundetes Stück. ²⁴

Although Weiss concluded that the chapter was a "fully self-contained unit," he attempted to relate the unit to Paul's theology. Hering just says chapter 13 is unrelated to 12 and 14. The work of Weiss set the precedent for those to follow. Significantly enough, Karl Barth, relying on "pneumatic exegesis," began to probe the issues involved in the subject matter of First Corinthians 12-14. He perceived that the chapters had something to do with the end of history: there is eschatology before chapter 15. Although there is not a consistent statement concerning eschatology in 12-14, it is chapter 13 which shows the whole section to be eschatological and answers the eschatological problems raised there. Barth concluded that materially chapter 13 is the conclusion to chapters 12 and 14. ²⁵

Although Barth did not explain the intricacies of the isagogical problems he did attempt to relate chapter 13 to the theology of Paul. Barth inspired a movement that attempted to bring critical exegesis and theological interest together in New Testament Studies. ²⁶

Rudolf Bultmann capitalized on Barth's distinctbn between Schlussgeschichte (history at the conclusion of history) and Endgeschichte (eschatology in the strict sense).

Barth had seen that chapter 13 spoke of Christian existence on a different level than 12 and 14. Bultmann challenged him on his description of that level. Bultmann perceived that "eschatology, in its meaning for present existence, is seen to be the subject matter of First Corinthians 13."²⁷ In this respect, chapter 13 is a proper climax in that First Corinthians deals with "the temporal life of believers."²⁸ In the same tradition of Barth, H.D. Wendland placed chapter 12 and 13 together as a presentation of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the congregation and, on the basis of what is said in chapters 12 and 13, chapter 14 places glossolalia in its proper perspective.²⁹ Therefore, on the basis of the immediate problem that First Corinthians 13 addresses it is possible to see a Pauline application.

In arguing against the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians 13 it was noted that no mention is made of Christ or God. Another school states that the use of en tē agapē and en (tō) Christō are often used in the same sense in the Pauline epistles. This seems to be the case especially in the use of pregnant metaphors.³⁰ For instance, Romans 13:14: "Let Christ Jesus be the armour that you wear." This recurs in Colossians 3:14, "To crown all, let love be your armour." In Colossians 2:7, "Be rooted in him," has a corresponding form in Ephesians 3:7; "With deep roots . . . in love." Nils Johansson states this case succinctly when he says,

The circumstance that the expressions "in agape" and "in Christ" are simply interchangeable in Paul's language gives us an indication of what the word we are looking for must be.

There is surely one word only that can be used as a synonym for love in translating the Greek Agape. This one word is Christ. 31

In other words, it has usually been assumed that Paul says nothing important without saying en Christō first; it is not unassumed by this chapter. For Johansson agapē is not an abstract idea. "The Agape hymn in First Corinthians 13 describes Christ and Christ's work."³² Paul introduces "a more excellent way" because he is introducing the "way" of the Gospel as a whole (cf. Acts 22:4 and Acts 9:2). First Corinthians 13 then is the "figure of Christ in the gospel tradition."³³ All one need do is insert Christō for agapē and this point will be fully elucidated. Agapē is Christ. Therefore, First Corinthians 13 is Christological.

If one says that chapter 13 is a Pauline document, the fact that faith, hope, and love are related seems to be in conflict with the idea that love is exalted above them all. The schools that propose Pauline authorship note that one must fully understand the implications of 13:10 and 12. When the to teleion comes, the to ek merous will pass away. "Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, tote I shall be known just as I am known." nuni de menei agapē finds its explanation in the light of these verses.

The sense is: in this temporal life, in which we have only partial and uncertain knowledge, which some time will be done away, we nevertheless possess something unchangeable, therefore of absolute value, namely, love.³⁴

In the light of these thoughts Harnack states that Paul wished to express the thought: "Of all our present possessions, love is the most valuable."³⁵ But yet Paul says that faith, hope, and love remain. The charismata remain but they make a partial and childish knowledge possible and in reality are no real possession.³⁶ Something remains that is not partial and childish. Harnack confronts the issue by saying,

This does not mean that to the two first (Faith and Hope), as to love, the saying oudepote ekpiptousin may be applied - for elpis blempomene ouk estin elpis (Rom.8:16), and the same applies to faith-but that their case is different from that of the gifts; for the change from faith and hope to the perfect is fulfillment, but the change from the gift-knowledge to perfect knowledge is a break; for the former is done away, and the new comes to take its place.

In this sense, the Apostle, condensing his thoughts and leaving out a middle term in the speech, speaks of the remaining of faith, hope, and love in order then to come to the conclusion which he wished, namely, that among these also love was the greatest. It is the greatest--that, too, we must supplement--because it is perfect and permanent not only through anticipation like faith and hope, but it passes over unchanged into eternity: "Love never ceases." 37

All of this then has been noted without touching upon the academic issue of what this agapē is. Clearly the issue is now stated that faith and hope are in the realm of existence. Faith and hope are in the realm of the ephemeral and love outlasts the ephemeral. Therefore, Paul does not contradict his principle concept of faith in Christ. Hering concludes along such lines when he asserts,

Perhaps the problem about faith may best be resolved by noticing that pistis does not always have the same force in the Apostle's writings. It could be argued, as Luther does, that the word can also denote the new life of the Christian reconciled to God. 38

"To have faith" would then be contrasted with "to lack faith." At any rate, Paul's theology of faith is not negated by the emphasis on love.

In addition to these arguments, some scholars affirm that the triad of faith, hope, and love is a standard formula. Johannes Weiss cites the triad along with First Thessalonians 1:2f., 5:8, and Colossians 1:4f., to show that First Corinthians 13:13 contains a standard formula which Paul quotes.³⁹ However, Weiss is reluctant to ascribe the triad to Paul.

Arguing the same way for a standard formula, both Reitzenstein and Lietzmann called attention to the passage in Porphyrios ad Marcellam 24. In this passage there are verbs that correspond to the nouns faith, gnōsis, love (eros), and hope. On the basis of this passage Lietzmann concludes:

. . .die korinthischen Pneumatiker hätten eine viergliedrige hellenistische Formel ähnlich der bei Porphyrius zitierten im Munde erfuhrt: pistis, gnōsis, agapē (statt eros), elpis.
Paulus nehme sie auf, aber streiche die gnosis.⁴⁰

That is, Paul cites a formula against the Gnostics by omitting the word gnōsis. If the argument holds Paul then refutes his opponents with their own language. Assuming that Paul is the author of Colossians we have the same phenomena there: a great Christological statement in the terms of the opponent. In the same way H. D. Wendland perceives that 13:13 is a polemic against gnosticism since Gnostics at Corinth were "deprecating and destroying" faith and hope.⁴¹ Therefore, Paul is seen to be refuting his enemies with a standard formula, perhaps a formula initially belonging to the

opponents themselves.

On the other hand, Johansson prefers to say that First Corinthians 13 is "in fact built up basically in the same way as the other hymn to Christ in the Pauline epistles, that in Philippians 2:5-11."⁴² He prefers to say this since both are related in content and style.

They were both written for the same purpose. They are intended to exhort the members of the churches to unselfishness, not to consult their own interest, to be humble and to be at peace amongst themselves. We have to follow all these counsels if we turn our gaze to Christ and follow him and obey him. In both hymns one who divests himself of everything but who is also exalted into glory when all else has come to naught. ⁴³

In summary then, Paul cites a traditional formula. The formula is quoted against his opponents. The formula may have originated with Paul or it may be quoted from some source against the Corinthian Gnostics. In Pauline fashion the triad refutes the enemy on its own terms.

Finally, the literary form and style of First Corinthians 13 does not necessarily betray the Pauline style. Without duplicating the discussion in chapter 2 the question will be answered briefly. On the basis of the work of Harnack, Lund, and von Rad it is difficult to say that First Corinthians 13 absolutely did not come from St. Paul.⁴⁴ There are instances in the Corinthian correspondence where Paul masters the Koine Greek with the use of one participle after another, with asyndeton, with chiasmus, with rhetorical devices and the like. Furthermore, von Rad and Lund try to show that the literary form of the chapter has deep roots in Hebraic literature and in the literature of the LXX and Pseudepigrapha. If the form

of the "epistle" was delivered to the gathered Christians in oral form there is no doubt that its poetic effect would have been as striking as that of Tyrtaeus.⁴⁵ In oral form as well as in written form it would call to mind the polished verse of Callimachus, Archilochus, Pindar, Horace, Tibullus, and others.⁴⁶ These then are the basic arguments that suggest First Corinthians 13 is a Pauline document.

CHAPTER II: FOOTNOTES

¹One should note the extensive notes in the critical apparatus of The Greek New Testament, edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1966). Alternate textual traditions are cited from Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Theodoret, Euthalius, Maximus-Confessor, Tertullian, and Cyprian for First Corinthians 13.

²Jean Hering, The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, translated from the Second French Edition by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth Press, 1962), p. 134.

³Jack Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," Interpretation, XX (February 1966), 159.

⁴Eric L. Titus, "Did Paul Write I Corinthians 13?," Journal of Bible and Religion, XXVII (April 1959), 299-302.

⁵Ibid., 299.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 300.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in The International Critical Commentary (Second edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 285.

¹⁰Titus, p. 300.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 300-301.

¹⁴Ibid., 301.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸All these arguments are noted by Eric L. Titus on page 299 of his previously cited article.

¹⁹Johannes Weiss, Der Erste Korintherbrief, in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament begründet von H. A. W. Meyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910), pp. 309-311.

²⁰Ibid., 309.

²¹Ibid., 311.

²²Ira J. Martin, "I Corinthians 13 Interpreted in Its Context," Journal of Bible and Religion, XVIII (April 1950), 101.

²³Hering, p. 134.

²⁴Weiss, p. 311.

²⁵Sanders, p. 172.

²⁶Ibid., 177.

²⁷Ibid., 178.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹H. D. Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther, in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), VII, 92.

³⁰Nils Johansson, "I Corinthians XIII and I Corinthians XIV," New Testament Studies, X (March 1964), 386.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 387.

³³Ibid., 392.

³⁴Adolf Harnack, "The Apostle Paul's Hymn of Love and Its Religious-Historical Significance," Expositor: Series 8, III (May 1912), 486-487.

³⁵Ibid., 487.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 487-488.

³⁸Hering, p. 143.

³⁹Weiss, p. 320. "Das Paulus die Trias Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung nicht geschaffen hat, beweist ferner die Tatsache, dass er sie z. B. I Th 1:2f.; 5:8; Kol 1:4f. als ein festes Schema seinen Gedanken zu Grunde legt."

⁴⁰Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I/II, in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Fourth revised edition by W. G. Kümmel; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1949, IX, 67-68.

⁴¹Wendland, p. 107.

⁴²Johansson, p. 386.

⁴³Ibid., 386-387.

⁴⁴Harnack, pp. 489-492.

Nils W. Lund, "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," Journal of Biblical Literature, L (1931), 266-267.

Gerhard von Rad, "The Early History of the Form-Category of I Corinthians XIII:4-7," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, translated from the German by E. W. T. Dicken (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1966), pp. 301-317.

⁴⁵Ulrich Schmid, Die Priamel der Werte im Griechischen von Homer bis Paulus (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), p. 143. Cf. Tyrtaios 9 D.

⁴⁶Ulrich Schmid has undertaken to analyze the use of the Priamel in the ancient world. A Priamel is a rhetorical device by which one argues from the lesser to the greater with a number of parallel premises. The word Priamelwerte emphasizes the climactic nature of the Priamel. It is a cognate of the English word preamble. On pages 118 ff. Schmid discusses this classical form in relation to First Corinthians 13.

CHAPTER III

ANOTHER LOOK AT FIRST CORINTHIANS 13

An Analysis of the text

In chapter II an attempt was made to show how scholarship has argued against and for the Pauline authorship of the chapter under consideration. More often than not these arguments often rely on the analysis of the text. Indeed there are volumes that attempt to solve the problems of chapter 13. Here the intention is to analyze the text and present the possible alternatives which one is confronted with. By no means is any attempt made to solve all the exegetical and isagogical problems, but rather to clarify the issues at hand. From this perspective the analysis of the literary structure, style, and theological content will naturally follow. That is, after all, the purpose of this Sachkritik: to ascertain and criticize the subject matter of I Corinthians 13.

In approaching the text it has been noted that chapter 13 is situated in the middle of a discussion on spiritual gifts. The chief object of the discussion is the "description of spiritual realities."¹ In chapter 12 the Apostle instructs the community concerning charismata. All the gifts are said to be equally necessary since their purpose is to build up the community as a whole. To prefer one

gift to another and to run down the other gifts is not proper. In chapter 14 it is seen that some Corinthians preferred the gift of speaking with tongues (glossalalia) above all others. Between the discussion of gifts in chapter 12 and speaking with tongues and prophecy in chapter 14, "Paul has inserted the song of praise to love, which interrupts the didactic exposition through its subject and its style."² Since First Corinthians¹³ is universally divided into three parts, verses 1-3, 4-7, 8-13, that division will be followed in analyzing the text.³

In 12:31 the reader is exhorted to strive for the better gifts. Chapter 12:31

gives preliminary notice of a distinction not between the more or less legitimate charisms (we have seen that they are all of the same value), but between gifts which are more or less useful for edification. It should therefore not be surprising to see the phrase continued by mallon de hina propheteute, which we find in 14:1. It is surprising to see that Chapter 13 praises not one particular charism already mentioned, but a Christian virtue which has not previously been envisaged as a charism, and which is moreover supposed to be granted to all. 4

This then sheds light on the problem of the transition from chapter 12 to 13. Ultimately one is faced with the question of the nature of the "better gifts." This question led Harnack to state that Paul intentionally writes charismata paradoxically since Paul has already at one point described the fruit of the spirit: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-

control." (Galatians 5:22).⁵ Harnack goes on to point out that these are not "gifts" in the narrow sense as they are really an expression of the Christian character. They are really "extra gifts" or "exaltations of the Christian condition."

. . . but nevertheless love, joy, peace, etc., remain the truly highest gifts because they are absolutely necessary, because it is only in them that the Christian character finds its expression, and because the eternal destiny depends on them alone. Over against the mania of religious enjoyment and the unholy eagerness which characterized the Corinthians, who attached themselves to the "gifts," the Apostle sets the simple and necessary as the greater or rather as the better thing. 6

This seeking for the "better gifts" sets the mood for the editorial linkage of kai eti kath hyperbolēn hodon umin deiknumi. The anarthrous hodon and its relationship with kath hyperbolēn is problematic, grammatically. Following the translation of Luther, Einen köstlichen Weg, the emphasis is clear. "Agape is to be placed above the charismatic gifts so much vaunted by some Christians."⁷ The connection with "way" as a terminus technicus in early Christian times in reference to the Gospel (Acts 22:4) is not to be overlooked. Significantly enough, the oldest commentator on this chapter, Clemens Alexandrinus, has the reading tēn kath hyperbolēn hodon.⁸

Therefore the Apostle is set to show a more excellent way. He immediately begins with glossalalia because the Corinthians have attached so much importance to that power.⁹ That is, "to speak with the tongues of men or of angels" is a designation of the phenomenon known as

glossalia.¹⁰ In 13:1 men and angels are contradictory terms as in First Corinthians 4:9.¹¹ Johannes Weiss notes that in Greek literature relating to philosophic order, the cosmos is defined as being composed of gods and men, a notion which is foreign in the N.T. but which has its parallel in this duality of "men and angels."¹² The same contrast is intended with the antithesis of heaven and earth. Riesendfeld then concludes that most exegetes think Paul is saying, "If I would have the capacity of speaking in earthly and heavenly language."¹³

The religionsgeschichte school produced an abundance of information concerning the instruments mentioned in verse 1 and their meaning. The chalkos refers to a gong. Alalazon "imitates loud and prolonged noise, often of the shout of victory, but sometimes of grief."¹⁴ Plummer and Robertson note that in St. Paul's time cymbals were often used in the worship of Dionysus, Cybele, and Corybantes.¹⁵ They conclude that Paul is perhaps comparing senseless tongues in Christian worship with the noises of pagan worship. Lietzmann suggests that the clanging instruments are probably meant to be related to the context of pagan cults: glossalalia is then of no more value than pagan music.¹⁶ Lietzmann also attributes glossalalia to both men and angels. Hering sheds more light on the issue by noting that the chalkos was hung in the sacred grove of Dondona. Then he notes that according to the sophist Zenobius the expression dodonaion chalkeion was used as an ironical technical term to designate "empty rhetoricians."

Eirētai de epi tōn polla lalountōn kai mē dialeipontōn.¹⁷

This metaphor emphasizes the lack of vitality in the speeches.

In addition, Riesenfeld notes that the two Greek expressions come perhaps from the school of cynics of the hellenistic period. The gong and the cymbal found their place in the oriental cults, first in Cybele. The cymbal was apparent in the cults almost to the extent that it was a sign to the audience of their own religiosity.¹⁸ Riesenfeld is convinced that when Paul uses these expressions he is using them in a pejorative sense because of their close association with hellenistic cults. They are negative characteristics which Paul is citing. The use of the cymbal is extremely striking in that they are employed "dans le culte de Cybele mais aussi dans la danse profane."¹⁹ Riesenfeld concludes:

Nous osons donc poser en conclusion que l'apotre nous donne ici un exemple de sa connaissance des usages et des espressions propres a la culture et a la langue grecques de son temps. 20

This would find St. Paul to be at his best. There are of course many instances in his epistles when he openly reflects the temper of his time both in thought and language.

Verse 2 is an intensification of verse 1, with the stress on panta.²¹ Mention is made of being able to prophesy, understand the mysteries, and knowledge.²² All these of course, which are more useful gifts than glossalalia, are not enough to turn a man into a

Christian.²³ Weiss compares the mystēria of verse 2 with First Corinthians 15:15 and Romans 11:25. This leads him to the conclusion that the reference is to revelations of an eschatological order.²⁴ However, Harnack feels that gnōsis is more comprehensive than mystēria.

The knowledge of mysteries comprehends the understanding of certain problems, namely the problems of salvation, but the gnosis comprehends the entire field of knowledge in the three realms of being sub specie dei. 25

Here, then, in verse 2 lies the crux for any discussion of the relationship of gnōsis and agapē, along with verse 13. This issue will be treated under the analysis of the theology of gnōsis in the third part of this chapter.

The apostle goes on to note that the highest faith is able to move mountains. This miracle is drawn from the Gospel tradition of Matthew 17:20 upon which Mark drew. (Mark 11:23).

If one has all this knowledge it means, "I am nothing." But it is also possible to take outhen as the adverb with the existential eimi to mean, "I do not exist at all." This would denote a negative ontological status. The abruptness of outhen eimi after the prolonged hypothesis of the three clauses is impressive and emphatic.²⁶

In verse 3 the highest good done for others without love brings no advantage or profit. The verb psomizō denotes "to give away one's property bit by bit."²⁷ This act of self-sacrifice is of no avail if one does not have love.

The meaning of the next phrase, "And if I deliver my body in order that I might be burnt," is enshrouded in many complexities, not the least being the textual variants. The most complete discussion of the issue can be found in Harnack's treatment of the chapter.²⁸ Quite simply the issue revolves around the future passive of kaiō kauthēsomai. As it stands it is a hapax legomena. The meaning is that one strives for martyrdom. The variants suggested are the aorist subjunctive kauthēsomai and kauchēsomai. Kauchēsomai is attested to by the oldest manuscripts, namely, P46, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Vaticanus. In addition this reading is attested to be the Greek Codex which Jerome knew, 17, Coptic MSS., Aethiopian MS., a Gothic marginal reference, and the Ephraem reading.²⁹ Harnack traces the reading kauchēsomai beyond Origen to Clemens Alexandrinus, and, in all probability, to Clemens Romanus. He then presents the arguments for and against kauchēsomai. One conclusion is that it is easy to see how the reading could have been changed in the time of martyrdom, in which death by fire was not rare. However, Harnack attempts to show how Paul originally used kauchēsomai.³⁰ The evidence that Paul used that verb is strengthened by the fact that Kauchasthai, (kauchēma, kauchēsis, egkauchasthai) is found some fifty-five times in Paul. Nine of these occur in First Corinthians. However, the normal meaning for the word is "idle boasting."³¹ Therefore, kauchēsomai was rejected on this basis:

The word was objectionable and by "correction" was easily eliminated. Nothing more was necessary than to change one letter, and this brought the welcome support of the passage³² in Daniel and of the records of martyrdom.

The fact that has prompted so much discussion about this textual problem is the fact that commentators doubt how far the voluntary death by fire can be considered to be a sacrifice for the good of others. In addition, the idea of martyrdom also seems to be an anachronism.

Kauthēsomai, while clear when applied to later times becomes difficult in the apostolic age, since burning of Christians at the stake about the year 57 A. D. is unknown. 33

~~None~~ Kauchēsomai is well attested and brings a more fitting meaning to the text. Namely, if I distribute all my goods and sell my body into slavery in order that I might receive glory, and do not have love, I gain nothing; nothing for myself or others.³⁴ Therefore, in the first strophe Paul has described the excellence of love. He has compared love and the gifts of the Spirit. He has shown that love gives the gifts value. Without love, the other gifts can never follow.

Strophe two, verses 4-7, constitutes a description. In verse 4 the third repetition of hē agapē is lacking in B, 17, 73, 74, etc., Vulgate, Coptic, Armenian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and many Fathers. Harnack says the copyists did not understand the effective chiasmic arrangement.³⁵ If, as with Lund, the reading is omitted the balance of the anaphora makes up for any difference of meaning.

Having described agapē as "longsuffering and kind," "the Apostle, like a good phenomenologist, characterizes Christian love by a series of negative attributes."³⁶ The two positive descriptions are balanced by eight negative descriptions. That love knows no jealousy brings to mind the attitude of the Zealots (zeloi). Perpereuomai is a hapax legomenon which means "to display," or "to make a show."³⁷ Aschēmoneo "indicates wrongs contrary to the requirements of propriety and good order, committed by some ill-mannered members."³⁸ Then love is not to seek out its own way, it is not to break out in sudden anger, and it is not supposed to keep an account of evil. Here it is worthy to note the mistranslation of ou legizetai to kakon, "do not suspect evil." Logizomai is a technical term of the book keeper's profession. It means "to charge to someone" or "to put on one's credit."³⁹

Finally, the meaning of verse 7 is highly debatable if one translates it as "Love believes all things, . . ." For Hering, verse 7 means that "the Christian holds to his faith on every occasion."⁴⁰ The object of pisteuei is not panta, he states. The immediate context sets the mood for what follows in verse 7.

13:6 briefly summarizes the emotive attitude of agape with regard to the good and evil which happen before our eyes. Neither selfishness nor any other vice will deflect the heart animated by Christian love from its normal reaction which consists in rejoicing at every occurrence of good and in being sad about evil. 41

Then follows the "impressive anaphora": panta stegeri, panta pisteuei, panta elpizei, panta hupomenei. The

first verb stego raises some problems since the alternative reading of stergo is weakly attested. Weiss notes that "endure" is not appropriate due to the presence of panta hupomenei. He concludes that agape "keeps silent." That is, love does not discuss what may be considered sinful or undesirable in someone else since it continues to believe and hope in the other person.⁴² The original meaning of stego was "to cover." Hering states that here it must mean "to forgive the faults of others" or at any rate "not to make an issue of them." By relating this meaning of stego, with pisteuo and elpizo, he concludes that it seems difficult to contest the "theological virtues of 13:13

We cannot therefore translate by "love believes all things," a statement which would be quite contrary to the precepts about judgment of spirits and distrust of false prophets. Therefore, it must refer to the power that agape derives from Christian Faith and Hope, which are never absent from it. From that point on the accusative must be translated as an accusative of "limitation," expressing for once, it is true, the absence of all limits: "at all times." Similarly panta would have to be translated as the object of stegei, and hupomenei.⁴³

This then is Hering's translation: "In all circumstances, it is full of forgiveness, full of faith, full of hope, full of patience." Hering both clarifies the grammatical problem of panta and makes sense out of a hitherto senseless translation. Love stands the test of life.⁴⁴

The third strophe, verses 8-13, now return to the comparison of gifts and treats the eternal nature of love. "Love never fails." Here Hering notes that piptein is used in the absolute sense meaning "to be abolished."

What shall be abolished, however, are prophecies and glossalalia and gnōsis. From verse 8 to the end of the chapter the Apostle is gripped by the problem of knowledge until he resolves the issue in verse 13. In verse 10 he hints that when the to teleion comes, the to ek merous will be done away. "But in any event this expression, ek merous, must explain the essentially imperfect character of our prophetic inspiration."⁴⁵

In verse 11 the degrees of progress are noted with three well chosen verbs: lalein, phronein, and logizesthai. Even the most sophisticated reasoning and thinking on the part of a grown man are eclipsed in the light of what is to come as childish and of no eternal significance.⁴⁶

Subsequently the Apostle presents a very pessimistic view of what we can know of God and the things around us.⁴⁷ He gives the reasons in verse 12. "Because in this earthly life (arti) we see only by means of a mirror, in a riddle." The phrase di' esoptrou en ainigmati has caused much discussion. In the most complete discussion on the issue Wagner notes that in the cult the mirror is related to a spiritual performance which demonstrated a transformation through drama and also the fact that in the cult of Dionysus there were Spiegelmysteriums for initiation rites in which the mirror and mask played a role.⁴⁸ Sometimes either flat or concave mirrors were used for purposes of transformation in the initiation rites. The Father Silen, a satyr type, was sometimes personified or presented with a mask. Or the model of Silen was the god Dionysus and

under that form his mask shone in the mirror. Wagner concludes that in the initiation "ihren Gott im Spiegel geschaut und seien in sein Spiegelbild hineinverwandelt worden."⁴⁹

Weiss finds the phrase to be all too frequent in the writings of Philo, where it takes on the meaning of seeing an image or reflection of something, rather than the thing itself. "Das tertium comparationis ist also: der Spiegel gibt nur ein indirektes Bild, so auch die Gotteserkenntnis aus der Welt."⁵⁰ Weiss emphasizes the reflection. Lietzmann too, takes the phrase to mean seeing "indirectly." Hering relates the use of mirrors for the meaning of the text by noting the allusion to the "magical use of mirrors."

Some sorcerers make a specialty of conjuring up in a mirror persons or scenes distant in space or time. As visions of the future are especially in question, this practice provides a metaphor which is quite in keeping with the text, in which the Apostle contrasts our present imperfect knowledge with the vision of God which we shall have later. 51

Fittingly enough, Wagner calls attention to the reference in Numbers 12:6 ff. concerning the vision of Moses. Wagner states that, just like Numbers 12:6 posits a comparison between Moses' view of God and that of the later prophets, so First Corinthians 13 posits a comparison between the view of God by the charismatic element on earth and every Christian's view of God on the day of the Lord. "By means of a mirror" in a vision corresponds to the unfulfilled vision and "in a riddle" corresponds, without speaking any other words, to the unfulfilled

hearing.

Da nun ein vollständiges Kennen sowohl die Sehphäre (das Gesicht) als auch die Hörsphäre (die Stimme) umfasst, könnte Paulus wohl gemeint haben: Jetzt erblicken wir (Gott) mittels Spiegel (und hören ihn) im Rätsel, dann aber kennen wir ihn von Angesicht zu Angesicht.⁵²

At any rate, it again seems to be clear that the Apostle has used several phrases which reflect his knowledge of the background of his times (mirror) and terminology that would strike all too close to home (in a riddle; and face to face from Numbers 12:6).

Finally, the reader is confronted with the climax of the chapter of Love. The Apostle has noted that in this temporal life, in the course of which we only have partial knowledge that will be done away, we also possess something unchangeable, Love. It is only with this thought in mind that Paul can associate faith and hope with love.⁵³

However, the perplexity of the verse is raised by the use of menei. It is generally agreed to be in contrast to the piptei of 13:8 and that it contains a future sense. While the charismatic gifts will pass away, love, faith, and hope will continue.⁵⁴ Hering then notes that the ambiguity is heightened by the nuni de. He sees no sense in speaking of the adversative use. "All the same it would be very strange to use it in speaking of the eternal permanence of agapē in the future."⁵⁵ Furthermore, Allo points out that "Nuni ici est un adverbe de temps, et s'oppose a tote de 12."⁵⁶ This idea is reflected in his translation of verse 13. "Au temps present, subsistent bien la foi . . ." Weiss states that "now abide" cannot be temporal since one would

have to say that the charismata also abide "now." The nuni intends a logical step in the argument.⁵⁷ Lietzmann takes the nuni logically rather than chronologically since faith, hope, and love abide. The charismata pass away. But he does not explain the eternal nature of love.⁵⁸ In concluding his summary of the interpretation of the chapter, Sanders notes:

Those who have taken the nuni de here to be logical rather than temporal surely have the more convincing argument, for the point of verses 8-13 is, of course, that those aspects of existence in which the Corinthians place their confidence will not abide; but they certainly will exist. 59

Therefore, as Sanders concludes, verses 10, 11, and 13 look to the Parousia. But Paul brings in faith and hope, when in verse 2 and 7 he implied that they would not last until the Parousia. Furthermore, Second Corinthians 5:7 and Romans 8:24 seem to reflect the same thought that First Corinthians 13:2,7 imply.⁶⁰

In the light of all this discussion it will do well to look at Lacan's treatment of 13:13, "Le Trois Qui Demeurent," for obvious reasons.⁶¹ "Le sens du verset depend du sens donne a la conjonction initiale nuni de."⁶² Not only the sense of the verse but perhaps even the meaning of the chapter depends on this conjunction. Lacan prefers the logical sense over the temporal. He notes that the Catholic translators have preferred the temporal approach for reasons of doctrine.

To refuse to take the conjunction in the temporal sense, one thereby admits that Paul affirms the permanence not only of love, but also of faith and hope in eternity. This is a difficult statement to make. 63

Lacan then notes a comment from the commentary of Benedictus Deus of 1336 in which it is said that Paul in the triad has defined what the constitutive essence of the child of God is and what its structure is both now and in eternity. In surveying "Le contexte large" Lacan concludes that verse 8 a, "Love never fails," is the conclusion of the second strophe. He does this in accordance with St. John Chrysostom. Strophe three begins with 8 b. He then concludes that the second strophe of the hymn is a cry of victory (un cri de victoire) especially with its conclusion, "Love never fails." In agreement with Romans 12 love wins out over evil with good.⁶⁴

When he confronts verse 13 Lacan states: "toutes trois sont a jamais inseparables."⁶⁵ All three qualities are inseparable. As the second part of the hymn shows, Love is superior to faith and hope. Without love, all of the gifts, even the most confident faith, are nothing. It is love which believes and which hopes. Yet the first part of verse 13 affirms the timelessness of faith and hope. Rather, Lacan states that it is a fact of our present and future condition. The Pauline triad, faith, hope, and love, are an indissoluble unity. The triad shows the three essential attitudes of the child of God.⁶⁶ Faith is the antecedent of agapē which is the love of a person.⁶⁷

Elpis is confident assurance. Pistis is a prerequisite of elpis. Agapē, in agreement with John 17:26, Romans 5:8; 8:32, is the love which the Spirit gives to people that they may live a new life and do things as the children of God. In concluding his consummate treatment of verse 13,

Lacan states that faith and hope are united in agapē and and dependent on agapē.

These seem to be the key issues that one must confront when he handles the text of First Corinthians 13. In many instances one is faced with opposing choices. Some of the choices have been reflected in the translation that is presented in Appendix A. Now one can proceed to see if the literary structure and style and the theological content can shed some light on some of these perplexities.

An Analysis of the Literary Structure and Style

It may be noted that until now the author of this paper has avoided attributing any literary form-title to the chapter. This issue will now be clarified. Namely, after the turn of the century Johannes Weiss noted that this hymn ranks highest in respect to its form among all the writings of Paul. "The beauty of the passage lies in the word selection, in the construction of the sentence and the rhetorical figures, and in the overall arrangement."⁶⁸

Weiss concluded that the chapter was neither a hymn, ode, nor psalm since it was lacking in meter. Soon afterwards Harnack noted:

Poetry, in the strict sense, the hymn, indeed, is not, but "speech" (rhetoric): therefore the designation "hymn" is not quite correct. Like the eighth chapter of Romans it gushes forth freely, which, however, does not exclude the use of simple artistic means. Rhythm and poetic form flowed from enthusiasm -- an obvious proof that the deepest contemplation and sensibility became, by inner necessity, poetic in their expression. Lastly, it is the subject matter which in its powerful expression gives the effect of perfect poetry.⁶⁹

Gerhard von Rad has agreed with Harnack by saying that there is nothing lyrical or emotional about the passage. It has rather "a certain rhetorical character."⁷⁰ C. Spicq, with whom von Rad would agree, states that chapter 13 is "a paranetic exhortation."⁷¹ Plummer refers to the chapter as "A Psalm in Praise of Love."⁷² Sanders states that chapter 13 is not a hymn since it does not focus solely on the redeemer, like Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:3f., it is lacking in liturgical characteristics, and there is not a single instance of the Semitic parallelismus membrorum. Besides, First Corinthians 13 is "far more description than praise."⁷³ Nevertheless, when one recognizes the chiasmic structure of the chapter, the excellent choice of words with the powerful simplicity of the syntax and the combined means of antithesis and repetition it is hard not to apply a specific label of literary genre to the chapter.⁷⁴

It is in the light of this discussion that the contribution of Ulrich Schmid is most enlightening.⁷⁵ Having treated four groups or usages of the Priamel in classical antiquity he then turns to Paul and First Corinthians 13. The Priamel is a rhetorical device by which one argues from the lesser to the greater with a given set of premises. His contribution is meant to investigate the background of his inquiry into the Greek Wertepriamel (climactic effect) and its usage to see if one can approach the question of the form of chapter 13 with a more extensive perspective.⁷⁶

Therefore, he states that the first strophe has the form of a climactic priamel. "So bin ich ein tönendes Erz oder eine schallende Zimbel, so bin ich nichts, so nützt es mir nichts." The emphasis is heightened by the anaphora and intensity of the assertion that gives a somewhat solemn, almost liturgical feeling. The passage is labeled as a "didactic exhortation" (die der lehrhaften Ermahnung) like chapter 12 with the exception that chapter 13 is solemn and full of praise. It is not in vain that First Corinthians 13 has been called a Hymnus.

Die Auflösung der Priamel ist also keine Verfallerscheinung der griechischen Priamel-einheit, sondern ein künstlerisches Mittel, das der beabsichtigten Aussage die gemässe Form verleiht. 77

In other words, Schmid sees a great deal of similarity between chapter 13 and the Priamel and/or Priamelwerte in classical literature. It is an artistic means which lends a symmetrical form to the meaning of the assertion. He states that the Greek Priamelwerte is recalled by the second strophe, although its unique element is the negative anaphora and construction of successive phrases. The panta-Werte of verse 7 reminds Schmid of the pasan doxan expression in Tyrtaeus.⁷⁸

Finally, Schmid notes that the third strophe follows a fixed schema like strophe one. Its chief rhetorical quality is the use of antithesis in kurzen und knappen Sätzen. The third strophe is also rhetorically refined. His conclusion concerning the style and form is also most enlightening.

Dies ist jedoch der paulinische Stil nicht nur in Kapitel 13, sondern in weiten Teilen des ganzen ersten Korintherbriefes, besonders in den ersten Kapiteln. Die Korinther waren Griechen, und Paulus bemüht sich, ihnen auch formal griechisch zu schreiben. ⁷⁹

On this basis First Corinthians 13 is a consummate literary product of the Apostle Paul which presents the issue at hand by arguing from the lesser to the greater. Love is the greatest of all. The form is similar to that found in ancient literature, among the best of the lyric poets. Perhaps, then, the literary genre of Priamel is the most fitting designation of the chapter that asserts the pre-eminence of agapē. Schmid's treatment, printed in 1964, also sheds favorable light on the work of von Rad, which was published in 1953.

In dealing with the form-category of First Corinthians 13:4-7 von Rad finds examples in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In the Testament of Issachar there are a series of ten clauses that describe the virtue of "single-mindedness" in impersonal terms and in almost entirely negative statements.⁸⁰ Von Rad notices that the series is brought to a close with "an emphatic affirmative statement" which is meant to sum up the numerous negative clauses.⁸¹ Then in the Testament of Benjamin there are a series of clauses concerning "the inclination of the good man," diaboulion tou agathou andros. Again he perceives that the concluding sentence, "And he rejoices always in all men," summarizes the content of the negative statements with an affirmative statement that draws the whole passage to a close. The first person singular has been abandoned

in Benjamin and has no personal reference. Therefore, a quality is described. "What was formerly a personal confession has now become the objective definition of a universalised virtue."⁸²

Von Rad says this is the precise situation that is found in First Corinthians 13:4-7. Strikingly enough, Paul uses ten clauses.

This is not to say that St. Paul has consciously adhered to this number, but rather that this was the traditional form of such a series, and that he unconsciously felt himself obliged to retain it. The inclusion of affirmative statements in the series calls for no particular comment: probably this had in the course of time become a favored stylistic device for relieving the monotony of the series of negative clauses. One is nevertheless struck by the closing formula ("all things . . . all things"), which summarises the series in an affirmative statement, and brings it to a conclusion in a manner highly reminiscent of the texts in the Testament of Issachar IV.4, and the Testament of Benjamin VI.⁸³

In concluding his study, von Rad states that this hypostasized description of love falls within the category of late Jewish paranetic instruction. Therefore, it was by way of the Palestinian Jewish tradition of preaching and teaching that the Greek literary form influenced St. Paul.⁸⁴ The form was originally a cultic confession which was continued in paranetic preaching. The form originally used the first person singular but switched to the impersonal style for instructional purposes to define virtues. Later the summarizing formula was added to draw together all of the individual clauses.⁸⁵ In noting that both in the testaments and in Paul the negative clauses as a form-category are an intrusive element, Von Rad concludes: "St. Paul has indeed re-orientated the subject matter in a most striking way,

but he has not abandoned the traditional form." In short, von Rad thinks Paul was using a traditional form that he received through Palestinian Judaism to convey an everlasting truth. Strikingly enough, at the end of his study, Lund concludes that the forms he has analyzed may be traced to Hebrew sources, but that does not minimize their literary merits.⁸⁶

In analyzing the literary structure of "Paul's Hymn to Love" Nils Lund purposes to show how "chiasmus as a literary form has shaped the structure of the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians."⁸⁷ In other articles Lund has previously undertaken to discuss instances of chiasmus in the epistles of Paul and to show that the chiasmic forms in the New Testament can be traced to the Old Testament.⁸⁸ Lund's structural analysis of First Corinthians 13 is found in Appendix B of this paper.

In recurrent refrain the "triplet arrangement" occurs. In Y there is the climactic arrangement of what we say, what we have, and what we do (ABC). Section B has the chiasmic arrangement of the two kan echō and the variation of kai eido in the middle.⁸⁹ In Z there is a positive statement of what love does in A and A' with a negative description of what love does not do in B, together three sections.⁹⁰

The third part Y' is a chiasmic arrangement of seven sections in which the numbers three and four also form a constituent part. The arrangement of the sections is chiasmic, but that of the lines within the sections is partly alternating (CC') and partly chiasmic (D).⁹¹

For instance, in B' the three temporary gifts are contrasted with the three remaining graces.

The other noteworthy contribution by Lund is that he notes the rhetorical quality of the chapter by spelling out instances of numerical symmetry, of which some have already been noted, as well as euphony and parallelism (antilogy and inversion). For instance, in the overall structure the imperative zēloute is found in the two extreme sections XX' and then in the indicative of the opening line of B and nowhere else in the form. Lund states that such a distribution of parallel ideas in the extreme and central parts of a structure is not uncommon in the New Testament. In the same way ta meizona in X and ta pneumatika in X' form a striking antithesis to ta eautēs in the central couplet ZB.⁹² For an instance of minute inversion Lund notes that ta tria tauta occurs at the end of B' and their corresponding words in B, the three eite marking the enumeration of gifts, occur at the beginning.

Likewise, the three verbs expressing the temporary nature of the gifts in B stand at the end of each line, while the single verb which described the abiding nature of the graces is placed at the front in B'.⁹³

These then are some key instances that Lund notes which reflect the consummate literary quality of First Corinthians 13. That chiasmus is the determining factor in the arrangement of material is hard to deny. The lines, the sections, and the three main parts of the chapter have been arranged according to the chiastic order. Along with antithetic parallelism, inversion, numerical interest, and euphony this chapter stands out as "an artistic piece of literature."⁹⁴ Significantly enough these features are not lacking in other

places of the Pauline corpus along with even more refined rhetorical devices, all of which seem to indicate that it would not have been impossible for Paul to have written the "Hymn to Love." Nevertheless, the polish of the form with its tradition could have come from the pen of a close friend or a Christian rhetorician.

An Analysis of the Theological Content

That First Corinthians 13 is a hymn glorifying agapē is now hard to deny. The complexities of the chapter seem to project themselves with jagged edges. Therefore, it is proper to see if the theological content of the chapter alleviates any of the unresolved questions of the textual analysis.

In 1916 R. Reitzenstein in his Historia Monachorum und Historica Lausiaca demonstrated that First Corinthians 13 is dominated by a polemical tendency. The hymn is a polemic against gnōsis. The polemic is carried on by showing that agapē has the greatest value. Like glossalalia and prophecy, gnōsis will pass away. Agapē will never pass away. Reitzenstein sees in gnosticism "certain forms of Hellenistic religiosity."⁹⁵ It was in this same line of thinking that Anton Fridrichsen first thought that chapter 13 was a Christian-Stoic diatribe added by a Paulinist to the original letter. Reitzenstein and Lietzmann agreed that verse 13 employed a formula from the Gnostic-Christians at Corinth.

In treating ginōskō in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Rudolf Bultmann says that opposition

to Gnosticism can be seen in chapter 13. In verse 8 the absolute use of gnōsis, on the Gnostic analogy, denotes "a pneumatic capacity for knowledge." The antithesis between gnōsis and agapē is noted by the fact that gnōsis is set under agapē. Gnosis is worthless without agapē. Gnōsis is described by Paul as provisional and inadequate. It will pass away. Pistis, elpis, and agapē remain. In this life there is no relationship with God on the basis of gnōsis.

When Paul uses epignōsomai for the future relationship, he is certainly adopting Gnostic usage. But the term is robbed of its Gnostic significance by the phrase kathōs and epi-gnōsthen. 96

As Jack Sanders concludes concerning Bultmann's treatment, "This understanding of the place of gnōsis in First Corinthians 13 is basic to the interpreter who wishes to explain the passage aright."⁹⁷

When one realizes that Christianity did not meet Gnosticism head on until the second century A. D. he then cannot afford to be too systematic concerning the traces of such incipient Gnosticism that is left in the documents of the New Testament. A real danger is possible: "that technical data and origins of forms and concepts will be explained but the meaning left unelucidated."⁹⁸

In his discussion of chapters 13 and 14 Nils J Johansson illustrates how gnōsis is not identical with the knowledge given by the revelation of Christ and it is not that wisdom which Paul condemns in First Corinthians 2 and elsewhere. Johansson tries to show how gnōsis

has special significance. In 1:5 the church is said to be blessed with speech and Gnōsis. In 8:1-3 those with gnōsis have become conceited. "That is what always happens when gnōsis is not qualified by agapē."⁹⁹ In 13:12 the full knowledge of God's nature and will are brought to man by agapē; something which gnōsis never brings. Gnōsis is also referred to in First Corinthians 12:8 ff. and in Second Corinthians 11:6 as a gift. On the basis of these passages Johansson draws his conclusions concerning the nature of gnōsis.

Like speaking with tongues and prophecy, it is a spiritual gift, that is, a gift granted by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit grants it, but it is clear from I Cor. 12:4 ff. that, like other gifts, it is not given to all. It is conferred only on a select few. It is clear from all the passages that it is an ability to decide what is God's will, what is right and wrong in a given situation. We may say with some justification that it is a New Testament counterpart to the casting of lots in the Old Testament. 100

Therefore, when Paul received news about the misuse of gnōsis, glossalalia, and prophecy he sets agapē, that is, Christ himself, against gnōsis. Paul then selects those characteristics of the personality of Christ that "show how far people had gone astray because they relied too much on the uncontrolled spiritual gifts."¹⁰¹ Of all this discussion it is obvious that gnōsis and agapē are opposites. Gnōsis passes away like the gifts. Agapē is the most excellent of all. For this reason Harnack states, "love and knowledge have nothing to do with one another in this hymn."¹⁰² Love does not lead to knowledge. It edifies. Knowledge does not lead to love.

It puffs up. This then is the reason why Paul relates love to faith and hope.

The nature of agapē in First Corinthians 13 has been the subject of many academic debates. The issue is always whether agapē in First Corinthians 13 means love to God or to neighbor. In the light of research it seems as if this argument has been transcended. Lacan in his discussion on verse 13 noted that agapē is the love which the Spirit gives to people so they might live a new life and do things as the children of God.¹⁰³ As he begins to analyze the chapter, Hering notes that Paul's aim is not that of his own personal feelings, but rather the description of spiritual realities. For him First Corinthians 13 is didactic.

Thus the passage contains or presupposes an analysis of agapē which we shall call phenomenological and not psychological. For it is the essence of Christian love which is studied here, independently of its more or less perfect fulfilment in the life of the Christian in general, or of such-and-such a type of Christian in particular. 104

This interpretation is quite striking in comparison to the interpretation of Albert Schweitzer who explained agape in terms of Pauline "mysticism." Agapē is:

the pre-eternal thing which man can possess here and now in its true essence. Love is for Paul something metaphysical, and nevertheless directly ethical. 105

Nevertheless, in the light of the information presented in *Layers of Gnosticism and Stoicism* merit a confrontation. Harnack attempts to show that Paul's idea of love is distinctly different from that of Stoicism.

From this discussion he strikes at the meaning of agapē.

The Stoic idea rests upon rational considerations about the equality of men and appears as the rational activity of the reasonable knowledge about the condition and end of man.¹⁰⁶

This is not Paul's idea. For him love is never separable from the love of God. "In and with the love for one's neighbor the love of God and religion itself are given."¹⁰⁷

When Robertson and Plummer accept the logical sense of nuni in verse 13 they say agapē is greater than hope because it not only outlasts them but because it is the "root of the other two." Faith and hope are human virtues. Love is divine.¹⁰⁸

In this perspective Nils Johansson has found favor in the light of scholarship by noting that en tē agapē and en (tō) Christō are used in the same sense. The description of agapē is the description of the life and work of Christ.¹⁰⁹

Having noted the relationship between chapters 12 and 14, Karl Barth is true to Paul when he defines agapē as being preeminently that which remains when all else passes away. By understanding love on an eschatological basis Barth illustrated that the distinction of love to God versus love to neighbor is purely academic.¹¹⁰ When Bultmann challenged Barth on his eschatological terminology Bultmann showed that "eschatology in its meaning for present existence" is the subject matter of First Corinthians 13.¹¹¹

Finally, when Sanders quotes Erich Dinkler's article

in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart on the Corinthian correspondence, he notes Dinkler's assessment: "Chapter 13 does not express a 'Christian ideal,' rather agapē transcends the charismata and has its reality in the life of the Christian."¹¹²

If faith and hope are purely human elements they will then pass away; this does not apply to agapē. This is the reason that love is the greatest. It transcends all the barriers of time.

Finally, in view of the analysis of the text, the form, and agapē versus gnōsis it is proper to consider whether chapter 13 confronts the theological problem that is posed. It is clear that the Corinthians are exalting Spiritual gifts such as glossalalia, gnōsis, and prophecy. They are not discerning which gifts are the most important. The subjective experiences of the Corinthians led them astray. This discussion follows a logical sequence in chapters 12 and 14. Logically it seems that the "Agape Hymn" should follow 14:40, since there is a definite movement in chapters 12 and 14 from the lowest to the highest charism. Paul concludes the discussion by saying, "Let all things occur in a dignified way and according to order" (14:40).

Is this not then where 12:31b belongs -- "And I show you a yet more excellent way"? And does not chapter 13 then precisely give an explanation of Christian existence which surmounts and surpasses the previous discussion, by showing the relativity not only of glossalalia but also of prophecy? This seems indeed the point of 13:1-3, that glossalalia is nothing without agapē: that what is far better than glossalalia,

prophecy, is nothing without agapē; . . . So, agapē is superior to the charismata of the preceding discussion. 113

On the basis of these insights Sanders goes on to state that if agapē remains always beyond the human situation one must then experience agapē as "the basic meaning and ultimate fact of existence."¹¹⁴ This is in contrast to a more eschatological emphasis on agapē. That Christ gave the command, hē entolē, to love is certain. Agapē has an imperative and indicative. In Pauline ethics, as well as in New Testament ethics, the indicative flows from the imperative. Action follows the command. When that command to love is followed one follows a way that is motivated from another source: the divine. Sanders states his conclusion more philosophically: "That is to say, my experience of agapē is my experiencing the presence of the transcendent in the sphere of the finite."¹¹⁵ That love never fails is validated by the message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ validates human existence en agapē. Jesus Christ is agapē. Therefore, human existence has an eternal dimension en Christō, en agapē.

En agapē is the way of life that Paul exhorts. Therefore, prophecies and knowledge are completely surpassed by the presence of Christ Jesus. As for tongue speaking it will not even endure until the return of Christ. Toussaint notes, on the basis of his study, that the gift of glossalalia will cease before the denouement of the church occurs.

Tongues were a temporary gift that God used in the early years of the church. They have long

since ceased because their purpose was not a permanent one. 116

The theological problem that Paul addresses seems to be a problem involving glossalalia, prophecy, and gnōsis. Therefore, Johansson concludes: "I Cor. 13 is the fundamental basis on which Paul's criticism and admonition rest, when he proceeds to deal with the church's mistake."¹¹⁷ Although chapter 13 hints at what has been said in chapters 11-12 "its main purpose is to justify what is to be said in chapter 14."¹¹⁸ In chapter 14 Paul repeats ideas, images, and expressions from the "Agape Hymn" and applies them to the situation of the Corinthian church. For example, in chapter 14 Paul mentions the sounds of the flute and lyre which are meaningless if they cannot be understood. The sounds of the flute, lyre, and trumpet are parallel to the noisy gong and clanging cymbal. The same application is used about glossalalia in both chapters. Though Paul notes that prophecy is of greater value than glossalalia, nevertheless prophecy is as valueless as glossalalia if it is not subordinated to agapē. Finally, it has been noted by Johansson that gnōsis in First Corinthians 13 was "a pneumatic ability to judge what was the will of God, what was permitted and what was not permitted." In 14:37 Paul then addresses those who presume to possess prophetic or pneumatic ability. "If anyone claims to be inspired or a prophet, let him recognize that what I write has the Lord's authority." For Johansson, 14:37 is a "complete counterpart" to 13:9-10: "For our knowledge and our prophecy are alike partial,

and the partial vanishes when wholeness comes." Whereas agapē is played off against gnōsis and prophecy in chapter 13, in chapter 14 it is the Kuriou entolē. The command of Christ was to love. This understanding of Kuriou entolē in chapter 14 is balanced by the en agapē -- en Christō motif of chapter 13.¹¹⁹

In a context in which Paul sets up Agape against speaking with tongues, prophecy and Gnosis, it is, of course, primarily the fact that Agape or Christ gives the complete revelation of what God's will is and what God commands that gives him the opportunity of using Agape. 120

In short, the interpreter is confronted with a viable choice of either accepting First Corinthians as misplaced or in its proper position. In either instance he will find that the "Agape Hymn" confronts the immediate theological problem with which the Apostle Paul is dealing.

CHAPTER III: FOOTNOTES

¹Jean Hering, The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, translated from the Second French Edition by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth Press, 1962), p. 135.

²Adolf Harnack, "The Apostle Paul's Hymn of Love and Its Religious-Historical Significance," Expositor: Series 8, III (May 1912), 385.

³Stanley D. Toussaint, "First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question," Bibliotheca Sacra, CXX (October 1963), 311.

⁴Hering, p. 133.

⁵Harnack, p. 386.

⁶Ibid., 386-387.

⁷Hering, p. 134.

⁸Harnack, p. 390.

⁹Ibid., 393.

¹⁰Hering, p. 135.

¹¹Harald Riesenfeld, "Note Sur I Corinthiens 13," Coniectanea Neotestamentica, X (1946), 1.

¹²Johannes Weiss, Der Erste Korintherbrief, in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament begründet von H. A. W. Meyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910), p. 110.

¹³Riesenfeld, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in The International Critical Commentary (Second edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 289.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I/II, in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Fourth revised edition by W. G. Kümmel Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1949, IX, 65.

¹⁷Hering, p. 136 and n. 7.

¹⁸Harald Riesenfeld, "Note Supplémentaire Sur I Corinthiens XIII," Coniectanea Neotestamentica, XII (1948), 50-51.

¹⁹Riesenfeld, Note Sur, pp. 2-3.

²⁰Riesenfeld, Note Supplémentaire, p. 52.

²¹Harnack, p. 393.

²²Instead of reading, "If I have prophecy," I am bold enough to suggest the following notion. Echo with the infinitive can mean, "I am able to, I can." Since propheteian is anarthrous I propose this translation. I undoubtedly do this to balance off the line of the strophe with the more comprehensible kai eido ta mysteria. Cf. the translation of strophe one in Appendix A.

²³Hering, p. 136.

²⁴Weiss, p. 314.

²⁵Harnack, p. 394.

²⁶A. Robertson and A. Plummer, p. 290.

²⁷Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 103. Hereafter referred to as BAG.

²⁸Harnack, pp. 395-404.

²⁹Ibid., 395.

³⁰Ibid., 401 ff.

³¹Ibid., 401.

³²Ibid., 403.

³³Nils W. Lund, "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," Journal of Biblical Literature, L (1931), 270.

³⁴Hering, p. 137, n. 11. Hering quotes The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, 55:2. Many Christians are said to have sold themselves and then to have fed the poor with the money obtained from the transaction.

³⁵Harnack, p. 404.

³⁶Hering, p. 139.

³⁷Harnack, p. 406.

³⁸Hering, p. 139.

³⁹BAG, p. 477.

⁴⁰Hering, p. 140.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Weiss, p. 317.

⁴³Hering, p. 141.

⁴⁴Lund, p. 267.

⁴⁵Hering, p. 142.

⁴⁶Harnack, p. 483.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Christian Wagner, "Gotteserkenntnis im Spiegel und Gottesliebe in den beiden Korintherbriefen," Bijdragen, XIX (April 1958), 370-381.

⁴⁹Ibid., 376.

⁵⁰Weiss, p. 319.

⁵¹Hering, p. 142.

⁵²Wagner, p. 378.

⁵³Harnack, p. 487.

⁵⁴Hering, p. 143.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ernest-Bernard Allo, Saint Paul: Premiere Epitre aux Corinthiens, in Etudes Bibliques (Paris: Librairie Lecoiffre, 1956), p. 350.

⁵⁷Weiss, p. 321.

⁵⁸Lietzmann, p. 66.

⁵⁹Jack Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," Interpretation, XX (February 1966), 186.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Marc-Francois Lacan, "Les Trois Qui Demeurent: I Corinthiens 13,13," Recherches De Science Religiense, XLVI (March 1958), 321-343.

⁶²Ibid., 321.

⁶³Ibid., 321-322.

⁶⁴Ibid., 329.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 330.

⁶⁷Ibid., 338, n. 22.

⁶⁸Weiss, p. 311.

⁶⁹Harnack, p. 489.

⁷⁰Gerhard von Rad, "The Early History of the Form-Category of I Corinthians XIII:4-7," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, translated from the German by E. W. T. Dicken (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1966), p. 301.

⁷¹Sanders, p. 159.

⁷²A. Robertson and A. Plummer, p. 285.

⁷³Sanders, pp. 158-159.

⁷⁴Harnack, p. 489.

⁷⁵Ulrich Schmid, Die Priamel der Werte im Griechischen von Homer bis Paulus (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), pp. 118-138.

⁷⁶Ibid., 118.

⁷⁷Ibid., 119.

⁷⁸Ibid., 123.

⁷⁹Ibid., 130.

⁸⁰von Rad, p. 303.

⁸¹Ibid., 304.

⁸²Ibid., 306.

⁸³Ibid., 307.

⁸⁴Ibid., 308-309.

⁸⁵Ibid., 316.

⁸⁶Lund, p. 276.

⁸⁷Ibid., 267.

⁸⁸Nils W. Lund, The Journal of Religion, Vol. X, Number 1, pp. 74-93 and The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. XLVI, Number 2, pp. 104-126. These articles are noted as such in footnotes one and two on page 266 of Lund's previously cited article.

⁸⁹Lund, The Literary, p. 270.

⁹⁰Ibid., 271.

⁹¹Ibid., 273.

⁹²Ibid., 272-273.

⁹³Ibid., 273-274.

⁹⁴Ibid., 276.

⁹⁵Nils Johansson, "I Corinthians XIII and I Corinthians XIV," New Testament Studies, X (March 1964), 383.

⁹⁶Rudolf Bultmann, "Ginosko, etc.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and translated from the German by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), I, 710.

⁹⁷Sanders, p. 166.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Johansson, p. 388.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 389.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Harnack, p. 493.

¹⁰³Lacan, p. 337.

¹⁰⁴Hering, p. 135.

¹⁰⁵Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, translated from the German by William Montgomery (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1931), p. 306.

¹⁰⁶Harnack, p. 498.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸A. Robertson and A. Plummer, p. 300.

¹⁰⁹Johansson, pp. 386-387.

- 110 Sanders, p. 174.
- 111 Ibid., 178.
- 112 Ibid., 183.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid., 184.
- 115 Ibid., 185.
- 116 Toussaint, pp. 315-316.
- 117 Johansson, p. 381.
- 118 Ibid., 390.
- 119 Ibid., 390-392.
- 120 Ibid., 392.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Authenticity and Integrity

In the light of this study it is now possible for the reader to perceive how the authenticity and integrity might be questioned. Logically chapter 13 is out of position, as Johannes Weiss perceptively noted. Significantly enough, Weiss attempted to place the chapter within an appropriate context. Some commentators have chosen to accept the misplaced chapter as it is. Some ignore the fact. Some use its misplacement as a means for showing that it is non-Pauline. On the basis of the theological problem that First Corinthians 13 confronts others accept it as belonging to Paul. Others presume that chapter 13 is in the correct place. On the other hand, some commentators prefer to show that the structure and style of the chapter is too sophisticated to belong to St. Paul. Others like Lund, von Rad, and Schmid have shown how it is not impossible for chapter 13 to belong to Paul on the basis of its traditional form. The language is surely sophisticated, but so is Paul when he squares off against the opposition. In short, Paul shows himself to be a man of his times. He seems to know his people and what they are thinking on the basis of the language he uses. By knowing his people Paul can communicate effectively.

In the midst of a culture which in its highest aims was intellectually inclined, and at the same time was occupied with mysteries and sacraments, Paul has given expression, in an entrancing manner and in a language which all could understand, to the fundamental idea of Jesus about love of one's neighbor.¹

The chapter is coherent in form. Its form is a traditional form. Traditional phrases are used within the three strophe's. It's form and content is similar to other such literary units in the New Testament. If this "Hymn of Love" did not come from the hand of Paul it at least belonged to the early Christian community as a message that it had received in line with the Apostolic tradition from the Kuriou entolē.

Form

Form criticism has offered much valuable information concerning the structure and underlying forms in the New Testament. It has not failed in respect to First Corinthians 13. Both von Rad and Lund have shown how the structural form of the "Hymn of Love" has roots in Hebraic literature and pseudepigraphal literature, upon which the early church relied so heavily. The actual form of the sentences seem to have deep roots in the pseudepigrapha, i. e., in negative anaphora. The chiastic arrangement of the hymn is a common feature in Hebrew literature and has other parallels in the New Testament and in Pauline literature. True, one can argue that chapter 13 is the exception rather than the rule in Paul. But again Paul reflects his social basis by also using a form that is prevalent in classical literature, Priamelwerte. To be sure, the form and the style is not the common style

that Paul employs. It may be striking to the contemporary readers. It was probably even more striking to those whom Paul addressed. If the form and style are not Paul's it was surely that of a close friend or an early Christian rhetorician. Nevertheless, in the Corinthian correspondence Paul matches the sophisticated form and rhetoric with the most subtle, sublime, and yet bold rhetorical devices: the stringing of participles, the use of asyndeton, anaphora, paranomasia, oxymoron, zeugma, chiasmus, ellipsis, and the like.

Theological Interpretation

It is hard to deny that the critical school of positivistic exegesis has left extremely influential information for the interpretation of First Corinthians 13. Without their contributions the previous conclusions would have been difficult to draw. Nevertheless, the conclusions of that school have often been misused because their results were either misunderstood or misapplied. It was a great day when scholarship was able to combine the results of the critical-grammatical-exegetical school with the insights of Biblical theology. In the third chapter this development was noted as especially valuable for understanding First Corinthians 13. True, there are isagogical problems in chapter 13. Some of these remain unsolved. True, there are exegetical problems in chapter 13. Some of these remain unsolved. Significantly enough, these issues fade into the background when one notes that the "Hymn of Love" fulfills its theological task. It confronts the superiority of pneumatic gifts. Love is greater than glossalalia, gnōsis, and prophecy. Therefore, whether Paul is responsible for the

form and content, and whether the chapter is misplaced fades into the background. No longer is the issue of the Love of God versus the Love of the neighbor a meaningful issue. Rather, it is agapē, Christ, that excels and outlasts the pneumatic qualities that are vaunted. A theological interpretation seems preferable to a strictly critical-grammatical interpretation.

Therefore, a theological interpretation of First Corinthians 13 will attempt to relate the contents of the chapter to the immediate context. In one instance, it may attempt to illustrate how the chapter relates to its content in the position that it has normally maintained. On the other hand, if one accepts the critical stance that the chapter is misplaced the interpreter might attempt to relate the chapter to the Corinthian correspondence and attempt to place it in a position relative to the meaning of the context. The theology of the chapter is the key issue, not its technical words, forms, or seemingly non-Pauline concepts.

Time Relationships

In relationship to the theological interpretation of First Corinthians 13 one is faced with the issue of references to time, especially in verses 9-13. It was Karl Barth who was perceptive enough to stress the eschatological emphasis of these verses. It was Rudolf Bultmann who was perceptive enough to deal with Barth and show that "eschatology, in its meaning for present existence, is seen to be the subject matter of First Corinthians 13." In other words, many commentators following on the heels of Barth interpreted

verses 9-13 in an altogether eschatological sense.

This interpretation is one-sided and in part inaccurate. It has to a large extent contributed to produce the many anachronisms which occur in modern expositions of the hymn. Verses 9-10 run: 'For our knowledge and our prophecy alike are partial, and the partial vanishes when wholeness comes.' Wholeness here is Agape and what the Apostle is speaking of is something which is already taking place in time. ²

Agapē is not something reserved for the future. Agapē is part of the present time events as well of the future events. Agape exists in time with faith and hope and pneumatic qualities. Agapē will exist beyond the end time of such qualities. Based on the cross of Christ and the Resurrection of Christ agapē is part of present time existence. One's experience of agapē is one's experience of the transcendent in life in this world. The exigent present seems preferable to a wholly eschatological emphasis;

It is at this point, however, that one sees again that the transcendent aspect of agape is only inadequately expressed in terms of futuristic eschatology; for if the most important thing about agape were that it 'abides,' Paul would have had to give expression to this fact here at the end. But the fact that he calls agape the 'greatest' shows that significance in reality lies elsewhere than in its 'abiding.' Put otherwise, Paul is in I Corinthians 13 attempting to give expression to the transcendence of agape. He does this first by stating that agape is the resurrection aspect of existence (verse 8 a); but then he relates this to his opponents in terms of futuristic eschatology, so that he at the end must express the transcendence of agape in terms of its 'abiding.' Even here, however, the existential meaning of agape is expressed by the 'greatest,' so that it is seen that agape is primarily not a trait of human character which survives the eschaton, but is, rather, the transcendent which from time to time occurs within the sphere of the finite. Or in other words, Paul is saying to the Corinthians that God is love--but the subject of the sentence is love. ³

"But now there remain for us faith, hope, love, these three; and love is the greatest of the three."

CHAPTER IV: FOOTNOTES

¹Adolf Harnack, "The Apostle Paul's Hymn of Love and Its Religious-Historical Significance," Expositor: Series 8, III (May 1912), 501.

²Nils Johansson, "I Corinthians XIII and I Corinthians XIV," New Testament Studies, X (March 1964), 389.

³Jack Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," Interpretation, XX (February 1966), 187.

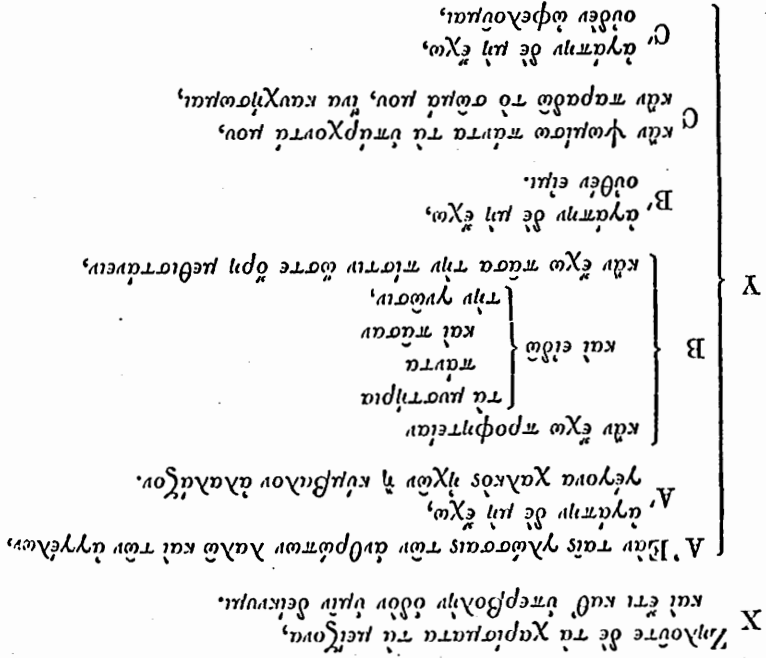
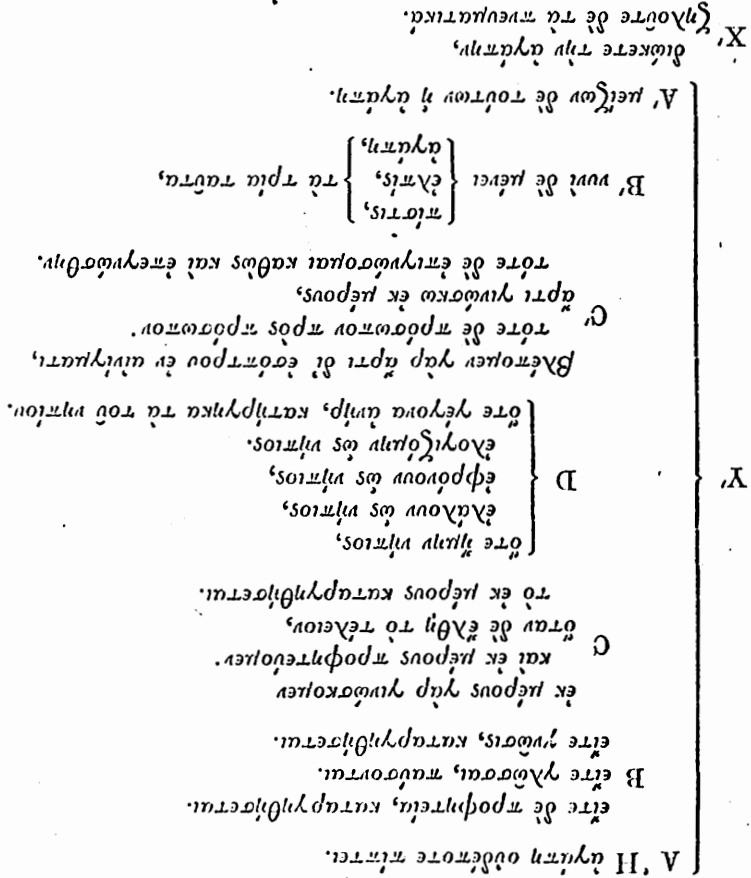
APPENDIX A: A TRANSLATION

An Ode on Love: First Corinthians 13

Editor's note: And I will show you a still more excellent way.

- str. 1. If I speak with tongues - of men or of angels
And do not have love,
I have become a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal.
And if I can prophesy
And understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
And if I have absolute faith so as to remove mountains,
And do not have love, I do not exist at all.
And if I distribute all my possessions,
And if I deliver my body in order that I might be glorified
And do not have love, I gain nothing.
- str. 2. Love is patient, love is kind,
It is not jealous, it is not boastful,
It is not arrogant, it is not ill-mannered,
It does not insist on its own way,
It does not break out in anger,
It does not keep an account of evil,
It does not rejoice at wrong,
But rejoices in the right.
In all instances it is full of forgiveness,
Full of faith, full of hope, full of patience.
- str. 3. Love never loses its standing.
As for prophecies, they shall pass away.
As for tongues, they will cease.
As for knowledge, it will be removed.
For our knowledge is imperfect
And our prophecy is imperfect.
But when the perfect comes the imperfect will be removed.
- str. 4. When I was a child, I spoke like a child,
I thought like a child,
I reasoned like a child.
When I became a man, I put away the concerns of a child.
Well, at present we see dimly in a mirror,
But then we shall see face to face.
At present my knowledge is imperfect,
But then I shall fully understand as
I have been fully understood.
But now there are faith, hope, love, these three;
And Love is the greatest of these.

In the first part Y Paul shows the excellence of Love in that even the gifts of the Spirit of God are without value, unless they are administered in love. In a series of statements, each culminating in the words, "but have not love" (A'B'C'), it is shown how futile are the gifts without love. In the recurrent refrain of these words we have the first example of the triplet arrangement of which there are several instances in this chapter. The order of the statements in the first part X is climactic, for there is a distinction in degree between what we *say*, what we *hurry*, and what we *do* (ABC). Paul himself places prophecy higher than tongues (14-5), and that he considers Christian conduct higher than either may be taken for



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