

APOSTLE PAUL'S CHARISMATISM OR PENTECOSTALISM

The early Christian Church was into charisms, miraculous powers, in a big way (Acts 2, 8).

Paul recommends and praises the charisms in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and makes regulations about them in chapter 14.

Now, a charism might have a natural explanation and still be a charism for religionists consider all things to be presents from God. But Paul probably regards his flock's charisms as unnatural when he includes the working of miracles as one of them. He says that the least charism, tongues, speaking gibberish, can be interpreted by an inspired person meaning that something supernatural is happening so when that one is a miracle so are the better ones.

Paul needed to regulate the charismatic activity to prevent chaos and confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). The hysterical nature of Paul's cult is given away by the fact that Paul needed to regulate the charisms which would not have been necessary if God was behind them all. He said that God would not send gifts that do that so are the charisms real and divine? How could they be real and divine when they confuse and cause discord? Christians say they are real for it is not the charisms but the way they were expressed that Paul is objecting to. But would God speak to somebody who was ready to keep the message to himself until the wrong time?

Another proof is in Paul's statement that the spirit of one who speaks in tongues can be praying without them knowing what they are praying about (1 Corinthians 14:14,15). He claims that this is the person praying – it is not an alien spirit praying in her or him. You cannot pray unless you know what you mean. It might be thought that the spirit was an artificial personality created by hypnosis. But it praying would not be the person praying. Paul was just being dense.

The fundamentalist anti-Charismatics lie that these people were praying in real languages that they knew (page 18, Speaking in Tongues). This lie is told for an excuse to get speaking in tongues as it is practiced today seen as heresy. Modern Charismatics cannot speak in French unless they have learned French first. Many fundamentalist bodies don't like the free-spiritedness of charismatism. They see its ways and theology as a danger to fundamentalist power.

His benightedness grows until he gets to 14:22 where he pronounces that the gift of tongues, babbling nonsense or snatching from other languages, is for impressing and converting those who do not believe. If it is for doing that then it shouldn't be. And then he forgets himself and says it should not be done before unbelievers (v23) who will scoff and say that the Christians are all mad.

Paul's Pentecostalism was heretical for the Old Testament averred that God would only speak through prophets who wouldn't misrepresent anything he said or make mistakes. Read it in Deuteronomy 18. An honest God couldn't do otherwise. But Paul's charismatic prophets could issue oracles that were not of divine origin (14:29). And yet Paul wanted them listened to. He said he believed that since God came first, God's word came before all other teachings so you have to be extremely sure that it is God's word first. That is why the rigid standard in Deuteronomy 18 makes perfect sense. He was a con. He didn't care about God. Jesus never appeared to him. Why would he waste the time?

Or does Deuteronomy refer to prophets who give revelation that counts as scripture unlike the charismatics who only give revelations in support of scripture? Paul means all prophets for it does not specify one kind of prophet. What use would charismatic prophets be if we could not listen to them until we checked them if what they said was in the Bible? It would be better to read the Bible ourselves in the first place. The testing standard used then was the Old Testament. It was not easy to derive Christian doctrine from it so there would have been little or no testing of the prophets. And it is certainly true that Jesus was not foreseen in the Old Testament and that the idea that it contains the gospel is wrong which was another complication. It is most probable that Paul never insisted that the message must be checked alongside the Old Testament. This means that all earliest Christianity had to spiritually live on was posthumous revelation from the enigmatic risen Christ whom they had never seen.

The Charismatics who admit they are not infallible when they get their revelations are heretics. They pay lip-service to the Old Testament as the word of God. Jesus would have been a fraud if he wanted a Pentecostal Church. There would have been nothing wrong with limiting the charisms to a few trustworthy souls as he allegedly did at Pentecost on a temporary basis but giving them to a lot of people is risky.

Paul knew that many who listened to the prophets would have had no way of being sure that what they revealed was already in the standard revelation they were obliged to accept that is in the Bible. They could not use the measuring standard well. If a prophet told them that Jesus was born of a virgin and they couldn't prove that it belonged to the infallible

standard then that prophet was the same to them as the prophet who writes in the Bible who received the news from God that Jesus came from a virgin and that this version of his origin must be believed.

Paul's approval for the charisms despite their errors implies that miracles justify no religious doctrine and that God is often untruthful all of which proves that his religion was one of blind faith though he despised blind faith when he condemned blind belief of various kinds. Blind faith is a great evil and a threat to all that is noble. If God is good and is truth then the Devil was behind the outbreak of Christianity and its charisms.

The Corinthians prophets even tried to block others prophesying by prophesying themselves. It is an error to tread on the toes of another prophet by prophesying too much so that that he or she cannot get their tongue in edgeways. God must be making errors then despite being all-powerful and all-knowing! Or you might want to say the conflicts are indicating that God does not approve of the prophets who have a message from God and can't get a chance to say he for he would not be preventing them if he did approve.

Paul ruled, "If an inspired revelation comes to another who is sitting by, then let the first one be silent" (1 Corinthians 14:30). This implies that God has stopped revealing to the first and has started the second. If the first says any more then it is not from God. But Paul should not allow interruptions unless the first person is finished or makes an error. His rule allows any fraud or devil-inspired prophet to extinguish a real revelation from God.

Paul reminded his followers that the spirits of the prophets among them were under their own control (14:32). Does he mean that there are spirits possessing them to speak and that they can shut the spirits up at will? The spirits are the prophets own spirits and part of them so he doesn't (14:14). He told the Corinthians to be eager to receive and follow the "spirits" (14:12). You have to dig deep to find out that Paul said spirits and not spirit for most translations hide this. Raymond E Brown has made it more known that it is spirits he said (page 107, Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine). He tries to make out however without any evidence that spirits means the manifestations of the Holy Spirit so they are the one spirit and not many though spoken of as many! It is just the one Spirit acting out different roles but remaining one spirit. That interpretation is nonsense and there is no reason to accept it. Paul was writing to the headstrong and heresy prone Corinthians who knew little about the faith so he would not have confused them. He really meant to say that there were spirits. The early Church was Spiritist or spiritualistic. The Church cannot afford for that to be known for it would mean that it was probable or possible that the apostles trained themselves to have visions of Jesus which would indicate that the resurrection belief came from unconscious fraud and self-delusion.

The Charismatic activity that got Paul's sanction was a hoax – sometimes wilful and sometimes brought on by religious madness or hysteria.