

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 81 – 1 Corinthians 13:8-14:25

Day 401: 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Verse 8

Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει. εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλώσσαί, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσις, καταργηθήσεται.

What applies at a personal level ('love never gives up', v.7) is now applied at a deeper, cosmic level.

οὐδέποτε never
πιπτω fall, fall down, collapse
εἴτε if, whether
προφητεῖα, ας f prophecy, preaching, the gift of prophecy
καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with

Cf. the use of this verb in 1:28. "The future passive does not suggest simply that prophecies melt away of their own accord as they are fulfilled, but that a cosmic, eschatological, public deed of divine judgment 'brings them to an end.' How can preachers and prophets have anything to say when the last judgment not only reveals, but evaluates and pronounces judgment upon, everything. The sermons of prophets and the 'knowledge' of theologians *are rendered redundant*, while the character and fruit of 'love does not fall apart.' To prophesy would be like switching on a torch in the full light of the noonday sun." Thistleton

γλώσσα see 12:10

παυω stop; mid stop, cease

"This must surely call into question the notion that 'tongues' are either, in Paul's view, a language of heaven, or a paradigmatic way of expressing exalted intimacy with God. If this were so, why should they cease at the *eschaton*? Rather, it confirms Theissen's view (see above on 12:10) that 'tongues' primarily (although perhaps not exclusively) serve to express inarticulate preconscious longings, yearnings, and wellings up of praise prompted by the activity of the Spirit (Rom 8:26), but as yet 'raw' and in need of communicative, intelligible, conscious communication. 'Tongues' will evaporate as readily as tears when a resurrection *σωμα* allows the believer to come face to face with God without the limitations and hidden conflicts of the mode of this present life in its earthly *σωμα*. There is no need for them to be 'brought to an end'; their cause will have disappeared." Thistleton

γνώσις see 12:8

Verse 9

ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινωσκόμεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν·

μερος, ους n part, piece, in part, partly

"*We prophesy in part* ... probably means that God does not reveal everything so that the prophet, no less than the sage, gives but a partial glimpse of the truth." Morris Thistleton suggests ἐκ μέρους means 'piece by piece' or 'bit by bit' and says, "Paul shares the view explored in the Hegelian tradition that piece-by-piece knowledge may lead to partial and mistaken judgments which set in motion endless processes of correction and recorection." He continues, "In Paul's view any 'absolute' of revelation is anchored in the cross and in the resurrection within the framework of OT revelation and further disclosures as anticipation of the End when the whole picture becomes unveiled at the last judgment. Only then does 'knowledge' become definitive, unrevisable, and no longer corrigible."

Verse 10

ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.

ὅταν when, whenever
τέλειος, α, ον complete, whole, perfect, mature

Suggests both completeness and goal.

Verse 11

ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.

ὅτε conj when

ἤμην Verb, imperf act indic, 1s εἶμι νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

Cf. 3:1.

λαλεω speak, talk

φρονεω think, have in mind

Thistleton suggests 'I had childish interests and concerns'

λογιζομαι reckon, count, reason

γέγονα Verb, perf act indic, 1s γινομαι

The perfect here stands in contrast with previous imperfects. There is no going back to previous patterns of conduct.

ἀνὴρ, ἀνδρoς m man, husband

κατήργηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1s καταργεω

'I am done with childish ways' Moffatt

Paul's analogy here applies to the Corinthians' views of special gifts (cf. 3:1 on the issue of childishness versus maturity).

"Paul is alluding not simply to the *experience* of spiritual gifts, but to how they are *expressed* (λαλεῖν), what 'opinions' are held about them (φρονεῖν), and how they are 'valued' or *evaluated* (λογιζεσθαι)." Thistleton

Verse 12

βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι· ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινωσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνωσσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνωσθην.

βλεπω see, look, be able to see

ἄρτι now, at the present

ἐσόπτρον, ον n mirror

A 'mirror' in NT times would have been made from polished metal. Corinth was famous for its mirrors. Fee suggests that Paul's use of the metaphor of a mirror emphasises the *indirect* character of our present knowledge.

αἰνίγμα, τος n dim or obscure image, puzzle

τοτε then, at that time

μερος see v.9

ἐπιγνωσκω perceive, understand

ἐπεγνωσθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1s

ἐπιγνωσκω

"*I am known* is in the aorist tense. The knowledge God has of Paul is not something growing and becoming more and more perfect... God's knowledge of his servant is complete." Morris

Verse 13

νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν) now

Not intended to be taken in a temporal sense, but in a logical sense, 'now in conclusion'

μενω remain, stay, abide

ἐλπίς, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

For the linking of faith, hope and love, see Rom.5:2-5; Gal 5:5f; Col 1:4f; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8; Heb 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:21f.

μειζων, ον and μειζοτερος, α, ον (comp of μεγας) greater, greatest

Tertulian comments "Rightly [is love the greatest]. For faith departs when we are convinced by vision, by seeing God. And hope vanishes when the things hoped for come about. But love both comes to completion and grows more when the perfect has been given." By way of contrast, Thistleton, citing Barrett, writes, "Barrett assists us here. 'Faith' ceases, he argues, if the context is that of what he calls 'miracle-working faith' in 13:2. But in the sense used when Paul asserts 'whatever is not of faith is sin' (om 14:23), 'the life of the age to come will rest on faith as completely as does the Christian life now.' Similarly, unless we conceive of heaven as a 'closed' or static state, the openness of the heavenly life towards the future maintains the relevance of hope."

Thistleton favours the 'middle view' of Barth, writing, "Barth concludes his study of these verses by taking up a closely related theme. Love is 'the future eternal light shining in the present. It therefore needs no change of form.' In one sense faith and hope abide also, but in forms in which faith becomes assimilated into sight, and hope absorbed into the perfect, even though this is an active perfection. Thus in a subtle sense love alone abides forever in the form in which Christ and the cross has revealed it: 'it is that which continues.' Thus, if there is any heavenly counterpart to the qualities and dispositions of the earthly life of the church, its worship, its understanding, its faith, and its hope will all undergo modification under new conditions. The teacher, theologian, pastor, and evangelist become redundant in the sense in which their work is currently carried out. But learning to love, to have respect and concern for the Other above the self, is grounded in the nature of God as revealed in Christ, and this will never become redundant, obsolete, or irrelevant. The future thus provides the model for the present in working out priorities at Corinth and in the church at large. *Agape* is much more than a 'moral virtue.'"

Day 402: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Chapter 14

"It appears in this chapter that Paul sees the highest expression of spiritual gifts in the free, helpful discussion of Christians together and in their contribution in thoughtful speech to each other. (It is, in fact, our impression that expressions such as "thoughtful speech", "testimony", or even "counsel" better translate the word rendered now somewhat archaically "prophecy".)" F.D.Bruner
 "Contrary to widespread popular uses of this chapter to assume an intimate connection between being inspired by the Holy Spirit and 'spontaneity,' the chapter as a whole places the issue of concern for the other and communicative intelligibility at the centre of the discussion." Thistleton

Verse 1

Διωκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε.
 διωκω seek after, pursue
 ζηλωω be jealous of, be very concerned about
 πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

In this context may mean 'spiritual utterances.'

μᾶλλον adv more, rather

Verse 2

ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλωσση οὐκ ἄνθρωποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ, οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια·

λαλεω see 13:11

οὐδεὶς no one

οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει "The issue in these verses clearly turns on intelligible communication or effective communicative action between speakers and listeners." Thistleton. Hence 'no one understands' or even 'no one learns.'

μυστήριον, ον n secret, mystery

Here 'what is unintelligible, baffling or enigmatic.'

"The reason for the inferiority of tongues is its unintelligibility." Morris

Verse 3

ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἄνθρωποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν.

οἰκοδομη, ης f upbuilding, edification
 παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, counsel

παραμυθια, ας f comfort

"Prophecy, then, is a means of building up Christian character, of strengthening men, of giving them comfort in their distress." Morris.

It is practical and pastoral in nature. "Such a pastoral concern brings together the OT tradition of prophetic contextual application to particular circumstances and claims by Hill and others that 'prophesying' has pastoral *preaching* at its centre." Thistleton concludes, "In summary, *prophesying* in Paul's theology and in his argument in this chapter is *the performing of intelligible, articulate, communicative speech-acts, the operative currency of which depends on the active agency of the Holy Spirit mediated through human minds and lives to build up, to encourage, to judge, to exhort, and to comfort others in the context of interpersonal relations.* Such a definition is not comprehensive. It allows for short utterances or, in accordance with Paul's own wishes, of longer stretches of speech to which the nearest modern parallel is probably that of an informed pastoral sermon which proclaims grace and judgment, or requires change of life, but which also remains open to question and correction by others. We may note that Zwingli (1484-1531) and Bullinger (1507-75) used the term 'prophesyings' loosely in this way, although with a greater emphasis on the place of 'Bible readings' as generating the 'prophesyings.' However, just as many unduly restrict prophecy to the 'spontaneous,' we should avoid the converse mistake of insisting that prophecy should not in any circumstance take the more 'oracular' form often identified as such today. In the end our view will be determined by a dialogue between careful exegesis and a theology of the nature of God and of God's ways of action in the world."

Verse 4

ὁ λαλῶν γλωσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ.

ἑαυτος reflexive pronoun, himself
οἰκοδομεω build, edify

Thistleton argues that the first occurrence of 'builds up' should be in quotation marks "first to indicate that Paul takes it up as a catchword for the dialogue, and second because whether this first use is positive (i.e., *edifies* the self) or negative (i.e., ministers to *self-esteem* or *self-affirmation*) remains accutely controversial." Having considered arguments for positive and negative understandings of the first οἰκοδομεῖ Thistleton concludes, "The best explanation is that while the positive evaluation adopted by Fee may apply to tongues *specifically used in private*, the *public* use of tongues becomes so bound up with perceived status and self-affirmation that *in public* (but not in private) the negative effects come to outweigh the otherwise positive."

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

Verse 5

θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλωσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μείζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλωσσαις, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομῆν λάβῃ.

θελω wish, will

Thistleton prefers the REB 'I am happy for ... but happier still for ...', θελω here being conciliatory or concessive. Cf. Numb 11:29. "Paul does not, I conclude partly on the basis of 12:29-30, *wish* that every member of the church at Corinth may speak with tongues; it is the Holy Spirit alone who wills how his gifts are apportioned, and egalitarianism is as much an undifferentiated dullness as arbitrary hierarchy ministers to authoritarianism and elitism. Paul 'takes pleasure in' the sense of intimacy, liberation, and prayerful doxology and those who speak in tongues enjoy. However, their pleasure is very solemnly and seriously constrained by two things: first, that this gift is used only *privately*; second, that proclaiming the gospel of Christ, or 'prophesying' for the building up of *others*, holds priority and privilege as an 'apostolic' of Christlike, cruciform mode of ministry."

μαλλον see v.1

μειζων, greater, greatest

ἢ or, than

ἐκτος conj ἐκτος εἰ μὴ except, unless

διερμηνευω interpret, explain, translate

Thistleton argues that the meaning here is 'put into articulate speech.' The concern is not for *someone else* to interpret the 'tongue.'
Thistleton presents detailed evidence concerning this use of διερμηνεύω, even claiming that up to three quarters of the uses of διερμηνεύω in Philo mean 'put into words.'
He concludes, "There is no 'interpreter' standing by. Paul declares that 'the person who prophesies is of greater importance than the one who speaks in tongues unless' some specific condition is fulfilled: the tongue speaker who is overwhelmed with the presence and love of God to the extent that praise and prayer flow forth in inarticulate sounds uttered by the tongue (γλώσσα) finds that, after all, he or she can 'put into words' the ground of praise, prayer, joy, or longing, and thereby 'the church community' as a whole similarly 'receive' (λαβῆ) this public ministry of 'building up' (ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομηθῆ λαβῆ)."

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

Day 403: 1 Corinthians 14:6-12

Verse 6

Νῦν δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἐάν ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς γλωσσῶν λαλῶν, τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω, ἐάν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ ἢ [ἐν] διδασχῇ;

νῦν here means something like 'well now.' It introduces hypothetical illustrative scenarios. ἐάν is used in the sense of 'suppose ...'

ἔλθω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἐρχομαι
ὠφελῶ gain, profit, achieve, benefit

A keynote in these verses.

ἢ or, (ἢ ... ἢ either ... or)
ἀποκαλύψις, εως f revelation

Cf. 1:7.

γνώσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Cf. 1:5; 8:1,7,10,11; 12:8; 13:2,8. "This term mattered greatly at Corinth. Hence Paul's insistence that inarticulate sounds could not convey γνώσις would have been especially sharp and poignant to these addressees. In this context the term denotes *cognitive* 'knowledge,' so prized in 8:1-11 by 'the strong' at Corinth, and REB's looser *enlightenment* conveys the cultural flavour." Thistleton

προφητεία, ας f prophecy, preaching,
the gift of prophecy

The precise distinction between these terms, particularly, 'revelation' and 'prophecy' is unclear – though cf. 14:3 and Thistleton on prophecy.

διδασχῆ, ης f teaching, what is taught

Verse 7

ὅμως τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν διδόντα, εἴτε αὐλὸς εἴτε κιθάρα, ἐάν διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις μὴ δῶ, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ ἀυλούμενον ἢ τὸ κιθαριζόμενον;

ὅμως even, nevertheless

Paul seems to use this adverb (here and in Gal 3:15) as an equivalent to ὁμοίως. Here then, 'similarly with reference to ...'

ἄψυχος, ον inanimate

διδόντα Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s διδωμι

τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν διδόντα 'inanimate musical instruments'

εἴτε if, whether

αὐλὸς, ον m flute

κιθάρα, ας f harp, lyre

Here the sense may be general, 'in the case of wind or stringed instruments.'

διαστολή, ης f distinction, difference

Maybe here "a musical 'interval' ... the difference in pitch between two sounds." Edwards

φθογγος, ου m voice, sound, tone

"The point is not that notes are produced badly or inappropriately, but that untuned strings or overblown wind produces mere noise where there is no 'difference' in Saussure's sense of linguistic or semiotic 'difference' as the very basis of conveying *anything* articulate or communicative... φωνή ... is regularly used of the 'voice' of musical instruments ... but an instrumental 'voice' without *intervals* ... is mere *noise* or mere *sound* (unmodulated φωνή, which is not actual 'music' at all), and it cannot be 'recognised.'" Thistleton

δῶ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s διδωμι

πῶς how? in what way?

αὐλεῶ play a flute; τὸ αὐλούμενον what is played on a flute

κιθαρίζω play a harp

"Neither flute nor harp makes sense unless there is a meaningful variation in the sounds produced. A melody played finely speaks to a man's very soul. An aimless jangle means nothing." Morris

Verse 8

καὶ γὰρ ἂν ἀδηλον σάλπιγξ φωνὴν δῶ,
τίς παρασκευάζεται εἰς πόλεμον;

ἀδηλος, ον unmarked, indistinct

δηλος (clear, evident) relates primarily or most often to *clear communication*.

σαλπιξ, ιγγος f trumpet; trumpet blast
δω see v.7

παρασκευάζω prepare; midd. prepare
oneself, get oneself ready

πολεμος, ου m war, battle, strife, conflict

The blowing of a trumpet for military signalling fails utterly in its purpose if the distinct message is not conveyed by the sounds.

Verse 9

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλωσσης ἂν μὴ
εὐσημον λόγον δῶτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ
λαλούμενον; ἔσεσθε γὰρ εἰς ἀέρα
λαλοῦντες.

The tongue has been designed and given precisely for the purpose of intelligible speech.

εὐσημος, ον intelligible, easily
understood

πως see v.7

ἔσεσθε Verb, fut indic, 2 pl εἶμι

"Communicative acts of speech entail a transactive engagement between speaker, writer or 'sender,' and addressee, hearer, or 'receiver.' If the receiver cannot comprehend (γινωσκω) the content of what is being said (το λαλούμενον), communication does not occur." Thistleton

ἀηρ, ερος m air, space

Whenever the word of God is conveyed in a manner that is unintelligible to the hearers it is no better than speaking into the air. *This principle has application not only to 'tongue speaking' but also to unintelligible preachers.*

Verse 10

τοσαῦτα εἰ τύχοι γένη φωνῶν εἰσιν ἐν
κόσμῳ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄφωνον·

τοσουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative adj so
much, so great, so large; pl so many

τύχοι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s τυγχανω

attain, experience; εἰ τυχοι if it should
turn out that way, it may be, perhaps

γένη Noun, nom/acc pl γενος

"The meaning of the whole expression is, 'there are probably ever so many languages in the world' Goodspeed" Morris

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ἀφωνος, ον without meaning

Verse 11

ἂν οὖν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς,
ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ
λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος.

εἰδῶ Verb, perf act subj, 1 s οἶδα know,
understand

δυναμιν here has the sense of 'force'

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἶμι

λαλοῦντι Verb, pres act ptc, m dat s λαλεω
βαρβαρος, ον non-Greek, uncivilized,
foreigner

There is a derogatory flavour to the term βαρβαρος. "The ecstatic speech which seemed to the Corinthians a matter for such pride turned out to be the means of making them nothing more than *barbarians*. This would be worse for a Greek than for us." Morris

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

Verse 12

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταὶ ἔστε
πνευμάτων, πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς
ἐκκλησίας ζητεῖτε ἵνα περισσεύητε.

ἐπει since, because, for

ζηλωτης, ου m one who is zealous

πνευμάτων Thistleton suggests here means
'powers of the Spirit.'

οἰκοδομη see v.3

ζητεω see 13:5

περισσευω increase, abound, excel

"Where Paul diverges from the Corinthians is in his insistence that since the Spirit is also the Spirit of Christ, and since Christ gave himself *for others*, any claims about 'spirituality' or 'powers of the Spirit' become problematic if they have more to do with self-enhancement than with the welfare and benefit of others. Hence all this 'burning concern' about 'powers of the Spirit' must be redirected into a more Christlike 'eagerness' for the 'building up' (on οἰκοδομη see above, e.g., 8:1; 14:4) of the 'church community' as a corporate whole (cf. the body-of-Christ language in 12:12-30, esp. 12:27)." Thistleton

Day 404: 1 Corinthians 14:13-19**Verse 13**

διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλωσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα
διερμηνεύη.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

προσευχομαι pray

διερμηνευω interpret, explain, translate

Cf. note on 14:5. "Paul neither criticises nor questions the authenticity of speaking in tongues (especially in the sense of v.5 above and in vv. 18-19). However, he requests *either* of *two* conditions: *either* (a) 'private' use (see exegesis of vv. 16-23), i.e., outside the context of public worship; *or* (b) effective prayer that the speaker will be able to express in articulate communicative speech the wondrous perception of God or the gospel which is otherwise 'too deep for words.' *No 'second' agent* is envisaged; *a second 'gift' is indeed needed, i.e., the gift of being able to put it into words.*" Thistleton

Verse 14

ἐὰν [γὰρ] προσεύχωμαι γλωσση, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν.

τὸ πνεῦμά μου 'my innermost [spiritual] being' Thistleton

νοῦς, νοός m mind, reason, understanding

ἄκαρπος, ον barren, unfruitful

"The Christian life is considerably more than mental exercise. But the man whose mind is *unfruitful* is not being true to his Christian calling." Morris

Verse 15

τί οὖν ἐστιν; προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι, προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῷ· ψαλλῶ τῷ πνεύματι, ψαλλῶ δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῷ.

τῷ πνεύματι The sense here is not 'in the Spirit' since v.14 refers to τὸ πνεῦμά μου, but 'with my innermost being' – unless Paul's usage here reflects a catchphrase of the Corinthians by which *they claimed* to be praying *in the Spirit*.

νοῷ Noun, dat s νοός

ψαλλῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ψαλλω
sing, sing a hymn of praise, sing praises

That which is spiritual and that which involves the use of the mind should not be opposed. Prayer and song in worship must involve the worshipper entering "into them wholeheartedly, with mind as well as with spirit. All too often prayers are offered in a kind of emotional jargon, and hymns are chosen on the basis of attractive tunes rather than sound theology." Morris
"Solos that people do not understand lose more than half their value in church worship." AT Robertson

Verse 16

ἐπεὶ ἐὰν εὐλογῆς [ἐν] πνεύματι, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιωτοῦ πῶς ἔρει τὸ ἄμῃν ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστίᾳ, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν;

ἐπεὶ since, because, for

εὐλογεῶ speak well of, bless

ἀναπληροῶ fill up, occupy

τοπος, ον m place

ἰδιωτης, ον m untrained, unskilled man

The phrase ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιωτοῦ has been given a number of interpretations. Morris tends towards the view that ἰδιωτης is here a technical term for an 'inquirer', "people who had not committed themselves to Christianity but who were interested. These had ceased to be simply outsiders, but were not yet Christians." So also Hering who says these "have a definite place in the assembly... They are not pagans present by chance, but sympathisers who are yet unbaptised, or quite simply 'ordinary' Christians who do not possess any gifts of inspiration." Could Paul's phrase here reflect some elitist division *among the Corinthians*? The NIV seems to reflect an informal use of the term. Thistleton translates, 'the uninitiated person.' Those referenced are those who, when the words are spoken in tongues, find themselves unable to understand what is said.

πῶς how?

ἔρει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s λεγῶ

σος, ση, σον possessive adj. your, yours

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

ἐπειδὴ since, because, for

"Worship and prayer, Paul emphasises, should be *intelligible and corporate*." Thistleton

Verse 17

σὺ μὲν γὰρ καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς, ἀλλ' ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται.

εὐχαριστεῖς Verb, pres act indic, 2 s

εὐχαριστεῶ thank, give thanks

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

οἰκοδομεῶ build, build up, edify

"The goal of corporate worship is not a personal thrill, but the building up of the body of Christ." Murphy O'Connor

Verse 18

εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον γλωσσῶν λαλῶ·

μαλλον adv more; rather, instead, more than that

Thistleton suggests 'more gifted in' rather than more in terms of "sheer frequency."

Verse 19

ἀλλὰ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ θέλω πέντε λόγους τῷ
νοῦ μου λαλήσαι, ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους
κατηχήσω, ἢ μυρίους λόγους ἐν γλωσση.

ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ 'in the assembled congregation.'

θέλω wish, will

πέντε (indeclinable) five

νοῦ see v.15

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

κατηχεω inform, instruct

ἢ or, than

μυριοι, αι, α ten thousand

Having repeated his understanding of διερμηνεω (see 14:5), Thistleton says, "Paul does not approve of uttering unintelligible noises in public worship, whether or not someone purports subsequently to 'decode' them. Moreover, since the 'tongue' would normally be addressed to God (14:2, 15, 16), the notion of interpreting glossalalia as a 'message' of prophecy addressed to the congregation (14:3, 'prophecies ... to other people') owes more to pietist traditions than to exegesis of this epistle. Our arguments are set forth above, and are corroborated by Paul's allusion to Isaiah in vv. 20-25."

Day 405: 1 Corinthians 14:20-25**Verse 20**

Ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσίν,
ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσίν
τέλειοι γίνεσθε.

"Nowhere does Paul state more clearly than in v.20 that the way in which speaking in tongues is used at Corinth minister to childish love of display or thoughtless self-centredness."

Thistleton

παιδιον, ου n child

The negative present imperative μη ...
γίνεσθε suggests 'do not continue to be.'

φρεσίν Noun, dat pl φρην, φρενος f
thinking, understanding

"It is indeed the characteristic of the child to prefer the amusing to the useful, the brilliant to the solid." Godet

"Children love anything that shines or moves or makes a noise... May modern Christians have the same mentality... They would rather be made to feel than to think ... fall too easily under the spell of virtuosi ... It shows lack of maturity in the things of the Spirit." Deluz

κακια, ας evil, wickedness

νηπιαζω be a child

τέλειος, α, ον complete, perfect, mature

Verse 21

ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι Ἐν
ἑτερογλωσσοῖς καὶ ἐν χερίσιν ἑτέρων
λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ, καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως
εἰσακούσονται μου, λέγει κύριος.

νομος is here used of the OT generally (cf.
Rom 3:19; Jn 10:34).

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

The quotation is from Is 28:11-12, though the wording here differs both from the LXX and the Hebrew MT.

"Paul superimposes the parallel situations of Corinth and Isaiah 28 onto one another with the effect that the genuine force of OT scripture speaks creatively to a new situation. Ronald Clements explains the situation which Isaiah addressed. 'Isaiah found himself in conflict with certain priests and prophets of Jerusalem': their self-indulgence in festivities and drink had confused their speech and their thinking, and led them to mock the serious declarations of Isaiah about divine action.

'Isaiah turns back their mockeries on their own head by warning of the way God himself will punish them (v.11)... [with] the coming of the Assyrians.' 'Whom will he teach knowledge?' (28:9) alludes to Isaiah's wasting his time because the scoffers are too drunk, confused, and self-confident to care. The Hebrew of 28:10 suggests 'onomatopoeic ...

representation of the din made by the revelers' who found Isaiah's rebuke 'foolish and childish,' while in 28:11 'the reference is clearly to the harsh-sounding Assyrian language which ... 'this people' would soon be hearing... [These foreigners] would soon be teaching them a lesson...' Bruce, Kistemaker, Allo and Schrage paint a similar background. "The two contexts match well. Those who are 'wise' and 'gifted' in their own eyes dismiss the plain message as 'childish,' when in reality it is the supposedly wise who think and act like children. Divine judgment, as so often occurs in life, has a dimension of 'internal grammar,' i.e., God permits the seeds of its own fall to operate. The disdain of plain speech comes home with a vengeance: if they want something other than intelligible speech, they can have it; however, it will serve as an uncomfortable judgment, for it will place many of God's own people for whom they ought to care in the position of *aliens and outsiders*...

"This now accounts for many of the similarities to, and apparent divergencies from, the LXX text of Isa 28:11-12, *for Paul is simultaneously quoting and applying the passage.*" Thistleton

ἑτερογλωσσος, ον speaking a
foreign/strange language
χειλος, ος n lip
λαος, ος m people, a people
είσακουω obey

Verse 22

ὥστε αἱ γλώσσαι εἰς σημεῖον εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἢ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἀπιστος, ον unfaithful, unbelieving

Tongues, in the passage quoted, are a sign of (or upon) unbelief or disobedience: a mark of the judgement of God. It is strange therefore that Christians should prefer tongues to intelligible speech.

"In the public worship of the church the transference of experience of being alien prefigured in Isaiah 28 constitutes a sign of judgment rather than of grace; it is prophetic speech which proclaims grace." Thistleton

Verse 23

Ἐὰν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλώσιν γλωσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἀπιστοὶ, οὐκ ἔροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε;

The language of vv 23f. is deliberately extravagant as Paul paints what Thistleton refers to as an 'impressionistic' scenario of the *whole* church together in one place and *all* speaking in tongues, etc.

συνέλθῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s συνεργομαι
come together, assemble, meet
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in
ἰδιωτης see v.16
ἢ or
ἔροῦσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl λεγω
μαινομαι be out of one's mind, be raving

"The term carries the double meaning of emotional lack of self-control, expressed as 'raving,' and an unattractive, even frightening loss of rational *sanity*." Thistleton

It is important to realise that Paul is here using two separate arguments to support two different points. The first, in vv 21 & 22, highlights the inappropriateness of Christians revelling in tongues. The second argument, developed in this and the following verses, shows that tongues convey entirely the wrong message to the unconverted. They might think that this "is simply one more mystery cult that whips its partisans into a frenzy of frothy enthusiasm." Hayes

Verse 24

ἐὰν δὲ πάντες προφητεύουσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δέ τις ἀπιστος ἢ ἰδιωτης, ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων,

ἐλεγχω show (someone his) fault, convince
(someone of his) error, convict

ὑπο παντων Thistleton means 'by all that is said'

ἀνακρινω examine, judge, evaluate

"As Calvin and Barrett note, the sense is closely parallel to that which John 16:8 ascribes to the work of the Holy Spirit – Paraclete." Thistleton

Verse 25

τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται, καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσει τῷ θεῷ, ἀπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν.

κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret, private
φανερως, α, ον evident, plain, visible
πεσων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s πιπτω
fall, fall down

προσωπον, ον n face

"Since this is a conscious act of worship ... this *falling down* (NIV, REB) must not be confused with neo-Pentecostalist phenomena often described as being 'slain in the Spirit.' *To throw oneself to the ground* (in prostration) was used in the OT and in the first century 'as a sign of devotion, before high-ranking persons of divine beings especially when one approaches with a petition' BAGD." Thistleton

προσκυνεω worship

ἀπαγγελλω announce, proclaim

ὄντως really, certainly, indeed

"The effect of the prophetic word is to reveal to the man his state. His whole inner being is searched out. Those things he fondly imagined to be locked within *his heart* he finds reproved and judged, and he can only ascribe this to the activity of God." Morris

"Allo suggests that the conviction brought about by prophetic speech stands in contrast to the Corinthian claim that it is speaking in tongues that provides the necessary sign of authenticity." Thistleton