

# JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 35

MARCH 1995

NUMBER 1

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## OBITUARY OF C. M. GULLERUD

“You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother’s womb. My praise shall be continually of You.” – Psalm 71:5-6

Carl Monrad Gullerud was born May 6, 1908, God’s gift to Olaf and Sarah nee Tyssen Gullerud at Tracy, MN. He was baptized into the Christian faith on May 24, 1908, and confirmed on August 13, 1922, in the Lutheran Church by his father, the Rev. O. M. Gullerud. He was a graduate of Concordia Lutheran High School and College in St. Paul, MN, and graduated from Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis, MO, in 1932.

“But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits. I will go in the strength of the LORD God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.” – Psalm 71:14-16

Carl served as pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD, and Oslo Lutheran Church, Volga, SD, from 1932-41; Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN, from 1941-59; and Salem Lutheran Church, Eagle Lake, MN, from 1942-62. While in the Norwegian Synod, he served as its vice president from 1946-50, as president from 1950-54, and as editor of *The Lutheran Sentinel*. In obedience to the word of God, C. M. left his beloved fellowship and became a founding member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In this new synod, he served as editor of the *Journal of Theology*, as professor of Immanuel Lutheran Seminary from 1959-84, and as president of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire from 1962-78.

“O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.” – Psalm 71:17-18

During Carl's retirement years he authored five family devotion books and translated several religious works from Norwegian to English. He will be remembered as a devoted family man whose primary concern was his family's spiritual welfare.

"Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails. O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!" – Psalm 71:9,12

On Sunday, January 29, C. M. Gullerud fell at his home on Grover Road and went into Luther Hospital where, even as his strength failed, God nurtured his faith and prepared him through word and song for victory over his final enemy. On February 4, the Lord Jesus returned and took to Himself the soul of C. M. Gullerud.

"Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You? You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." – Psalm 71:19-21

C. M. Gullerud left this world at the age of 86 years, 8 months, 28 days. His body was put into the ground before the memorial service on Tuesday, February 7, at Rest Haven Cemetery, there to await the resurrection on the last day.

Carl was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Ahlert; his sister, Lois Jordahl; and his first wife, Ruth nee Rodning. Survivors still in the time of grace include his wife, Martha nee Brudvig; brother Rev. Arvid, Spokane, WA; sisters Adele Pfeiffer, Charlotte, NC, and Dagny, Eau Claire; four sons, David (Marie), Mineral Point, WI; Paul (Geri), Eau Claire; James (Darla), Eau Claire; and Rev. Mark (Barbara), St. Louis, MO; five daughters, Dorothy (Harold) Krengel, Mims, FL; Mary (Robert) Harris, Theodore, AL; Annette (Martin) Albrecht, Eau Claire; Ruth, Eau Claire; and Karen (Allen) Squires, Waterloo, WI; 36 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and many friends.

"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, and my soul, which You have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long." – Psalm 71:23-24a

— Messiah Lutheran Church Bulletin

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### C. M. GULLERUD FUNERAL SERMON

*Paul Tiefel*

The Word of God which has been recorded by inspiration of the Holy Spirit for our instruction in righteousness is found in Matthew 5:20, the words of our Savior from His sermon on the mount: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

Dear friends, dear family, fellow members of Messiah, fellow members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, especially on this occasion, dear members of C. M. Gullerud's family, his children and his beloved wife: Grace and peace and hope and life be unto you from our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The world certainly would describe Professor Gullerud as a good man. The world could point to so many things and say, "He was honest, loving, patient. He was certainly devoted to family, a kind father, wonderful grandfather, wonderful husband," and one could go on and on. But we have also come to expect that the world usually gets off the track in spiritual matters. And so we seek this afternoon not to look to the righteousness that the world thinks is good, but rather turn and see what righteousness is approved by God. In our text, Jesus says to us, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Surely there is no one here today who is disinterested in the topic of going to heaven. Heaven is a topic of interest to us all. We all want to go to heaven. Then listen to what the Savior says, "Except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not get into heaven."

Take a look at the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. The righteousness of the scribes: they were fantastic in knowing the law. They were the experts in the religious law. They even had added laws beyond what were in the Bible, many, many, more laws. In fact, they had added so many, Jesus had to

condemn what they had done. They actually had made the word of God of no effect through vain traditions.

What about the righteousness of the Pharisees? The righteousness of the Pharisees was outstanding in the sense of being active and religious. The word “pharisee” means “separate.” And here was a religious group that had separated themselves and put themselves above, a step above, maybe even a couple steps above, every other person in the world. Our Savior told us the story of the Pharisee and the publican. Remember how Jesus described the Pharisee. The Pharisee was someone who fasted twice a week. I’m sure that would put most of us to shame—not fasting for the purposes of losing weight and looking fit and trim, but fasting for religious purposes twice a week. Then he gave tithes of all that he possessed, not just a portion of his possessions, but of all his possessions.

So the righteousness of the scribes: experts in their head knowledge of religious topics; the righteousness of the Pharisees: experts in the doing of things; and yet our Savior says to us, “You will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven unless you have something better than all that knowledge and all those works.” That surely presents a problem for each of us. For we would have a very hard time matching the head knowledge of the scribes and we would have a very hard time matching the work righteousness of the Pharisees. And yet the Savior says it isn’t a matter of matching it; it’s a matter of exceeding it, going beyond what they were doing. What would be the solution?

Well, Paul was a Pharisee. And you’ll recall that Paul himself described the Pharisees as the strictest sect of the Jewish religion. Listen to the Apostle Paul from Philippians, chapter 3, verse 4b to 6: “If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” It would be hard to find a man that was more religious, more zealous than the Apostle Paul. He says, “The Pharisees were the strictest of our sect, of our religion, and I was the best of the Pharisees; and when it came to all those things of their righteousness, of the law, I was blameless.” To the world, Paul must have looked superb. A shining example of what it means to be religious. And yet Paul was brought to his knees and to the conviction that all his righteousness would indeed not get him into heaven, but only get him into hell. We read on, then, in that chapter of Philippians, verse 9: “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”

So the Apostle Paul turned to a different place for righteousness so he could find the one righteousness that would exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, that righteousness which would put him into heaven. He turned away from the law, and he turned unto the righteousness that comes in Jesus Christ.

Luther comments on our text, Matthew 5: “Yes, you say, where will one find such a heart? I do not find it in me. Thou too, not in thee, what then shall we do about it? We have no high righteousness and yet we hear the judgment that unless our righteousness is better than that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. This is what we are to do . . . we are to humble ourselves before God and say, ‘Dear Lord, I am a poor sinner. Be gracious to me and judge me not according to my works, but according to Thy grace and mercy which Thou hast promised and prepared in Christ.’”

Luther also reflected that in his prayer life. Let me share with you one of his prayers. We’re picking up the middle portion of it: “As with all other men I am sin and death; You, O Lord, are life and righteousness. Together with all men I am the worst evil; You are and remain the highest good. I acknowledge and confess all this. I am led to this confession not by my reason which would rather cover up and disguise this godless condition, but through your law and promises. I want your honor to stay and increase. Lord, I am Your sin; You are my righteousness. Therefore I am glad and have victory without fear. For my sin cannot outweigh or overpower Your righteousness. Neither will Your righteousness permit me to be or remain a sinner.”

“Lord, I am Your sin; You are my righteousness.” Think of that concept. The choir sang for us the various sufferings the Savior went through and by all He did, we can say, “Who can measure that love of the Savior. He took our sin; we receive His righteousness.” In Isaiah we read the confession that every Christian must come to, that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags and yet Isaiah, too, knew that the Lord would be his righteousness. That marvelous passage from 2 Corinthians that “God made Him Who knew no sin—Jesus Who knew no sin—to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Do you want to enter into heaven? But of course! Then you must go beyond the righteousness of scribes; beyond the righteousness of Pharisees; beyond the righteousness of the best of the Pharisees, the Apostle Paul; beyond the righteousness that the world says is so great and wonderful. You must go to the only righteousness that God approves, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. On all other righteousness God stamps eternal death. On Jesus alone He stamps eternal life.

C. M. Gullerud: the world would say a good man. But his own confession was, “Lord, I am not good enough to go to heaven.” The world would say, here was a nice, righteous person, yet his own confession, “My righteousness avails nothing.” His confession? “Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress.”

There’s no doubt that Professor Gullerud preached many sermons. You heard in the obituary some of the congregations he served, even serving two at the same time. That involved him in a number of sermons. And then in the years he spent as a professor there were many chapel talks. In addition he wrote five different devotional books, several of them containing even hundreds of sermons. What was his greatest sermon of these many hundred? I would suppose that you think of his life as his one, great sermon. Not any one moment, but the sum of them all as a sermon. And what would the theme be? Can any of us gathered here today, who have sat at his feet and learned how to sermonize have any doubt? The theme: Preach Christ and Him crucified. That sermon is that same one which the Apostle Paul delivered: My righteousness is a pile of dung. I claim not the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness which comes through faith in Christ. The same sermon of Luther’s life: “I am His sin; He is my righteousness.”

On this occasion we pause to thank the LORD for the many blessings He gave to C. M. Gullerud, especially the blessing of that righteousness purchased with the blood of Jesus and imparted by God’s Holy Spirit, that righteousness by which our loved one even now lives in heaven.

May God grant to each of us that same confession of St. Paul, Luther, C. M., and every Christian—that we flee from any righteousness of our own—however great it may appear to men, either in word as with the scribes or in deed as with the Pharisees. May we flee to the cross of Christ and there find alone the righteousness which puts a sinner into heaven. Then we will indeed be ready to leave this world.

I fall asleep in Jesus’ wounds, there pardon for my sins abounds;  
Yea, Jesus’ blood and righteousness my jewels are, my glorious dress.  
In these before my God I’ll stand when I shall reach the heav’nly land.  
With peace and joy I now depart; God’s child I am with all my heart.  
I thank thee, Death, thou ledest me to that true life where I would be.  
So cleansed by Christ, I fear not death.  
Lord Jesus, strengthen Thou my faith (TLH 585).

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## C. M. GULLERUD: IN MEMORIAM I

*Daniel Fleischer*

We are reminded today that with increasing regularity, those men who were the fathers of our Church of the Lutheran Confession are being called to their rest. One of these indeed is Professor Gullerud, whose confidence was the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this righteousness he has now entered into the presence of the Father. It is indeed true that we do not praise the man, but it is appropriate that we remember his witness on this day.

Some gathered here today have pleasant memories of their acquaintance with now sainted C. M. Gullerud, remembering him as their pastor in Eagle Lake. Many here today made their acquaintance with him in the days of the Synodical Conference, having appreciated his testimony in those difficult days. We all remember him also as one of the foremost tools of the Lord in the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. It has been my privilege to know C. M. Gullerud as an instructor at whose feet I sat at Immanuel Seminary when it was in Mankato. I was a member of the class that entered the seminary in 1960, the year Professor Gullerud began his work there. I knew him as president of ILC here in Eau Claire. I knew him, after his retirement, as an advisory member of the Board of Doctrine. I knew him also as editor of and contributor to the *Journal of Theology*. Most especially I remember him as one who had the capacity to reach back through the generational gap to be a friend and advisor, and who offered personal

encouragement to one who needed it in difficult days of exercising his official responsibilities. Mrs. Fleischer and I remember with fondness the times we were entertained by Professor and Mrs. Gullerud at the cabin at the lake. Particularly I remember the discussions with him as we sat at the end of the dock at sunset.

Through the difficult waning days of the Synodical Conference affiliation, through the formation of the CLC, to his teaching and preaching, as well as in his work as a writer of devotions one thing characterized him. It was his firmness in doctrine and his evangelical and quiet spirit. He was a student of the Word who could analyze the church scene and bring the appropriate Word of God to bear. He maintained an active interest in the life of the church to the end of his life, always with humility and grace. Professor Gullerud was respected and called upon many times to serve the church. When all is said and done, we remember him best, however, if we simply remember: He was a man *born* of the washing of water and the Word, as one *saved* through the Word, which is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, and finally as one *at home* in the Word. For this extraordinary grace, we give thanks to God our Father, to His Son Jesus Christ, and to the Spirit which proceeds from the Father and the Son. We thank our God Who gave such a gift to the Church.

To those of my generation, and to the young men who have graduated and shall graduate from the seminary in the future, no better remembrance can be shown than to heed the inspired Word of the Lord, especially the last part of this verse: REMEMBER THEM WHICH HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU, WHO HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU THE WORD OF GOD: WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW, CONSIDERING THE END OF THEIR CONVERSATION.

In behalf of our church, I speak the condolences of the family of which you are part and which we know as the Church of the Lutheran Confession, to you, Mrs. Gullerud, and to all the members of the Gullerud family. As much as is possible for us, we share your sorrow, but we also share your joy and confidence, expressed in this service of victory, with thanksgiving that the Lord by His grace has delivered one of His redeemed children Home. The Lord bless you all and keep us all together in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## C. M. GULLERUD: IN MEMORIAM II

*John Lau*

I have been asked to speak on behalf of Immanuel Lutheran College, and I am honored to do so. But I hope that I may be pardoned if I speak a few words also on my own behalf. Except for members of Prof. Gullerud's family, I perhaps have been acquainted with him longer than most people here present. When he graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1932 and accepted a call to Brookings and Volga, South Dakota, I was the six-year-old son of his nearest neighboring pastor. Pastor Gullerud and my father exchanged pulpits during the Lenten season, and we were frequent visitors at the Gullerud home and they at ours. It has been a joy to me that since those early days our paths crossed on many occasions, and it was due in great measure to Prof. Gullerud's urging that I accepted the call to ILC.

In a recent ILC faculty meeting we had the opportunity to hear a devotion written by the sainted Prof. Egbert Schaller, in which we were reminded of the cry that arose from the lips of Elisha when he beheld Elijah ascending into heaven in a whirlwind and later from the lips of King Joash at the deathbed of Elisha himself: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" Both Elisha and Joash felt great desolation at the loss they and their people were undergoing. Both prophets had served their people as the equivalent of a mighty army, the entire cavalry of their nation's armed forces, in defending their people from the attacks of their fierce enemies.

And so, when word came to me last Saturday that the soul of Prof. Gullerud had been taken to be with the Lord Jesus, my first emotion was one of crying out in desolation: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" For Prof. Gullerud truly was one of our fathers upon whom the Lord had laid difficult tasks; truly, he was a warrior in God's cause. He was appointed to leadership, in earlier times, as vice-president and then president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, formerly known as the Norwegian Synod. He fulfilled that calling in most difficult circumstances at the time when the Lutheran

Synodical Conference was breaking apart. The ELS finally did not heed his word of truth and repudiated his leadership.

Prof. Gullerud was then instrumental in joining with others of like mind and spirit to establish an orthodox church body in obedience to God's Word, the Church of the Lutheran Confession, and then also to establish Immanuel Lutheran College, our beloved institution. In 1961 he was called to be ILC's first president, and he served in this capacity until 1978, although he continued to instruct and serve as Dean in the seminary until he retired in 1984.

As administrator, he led us during the difficult days of establishing and developing our school during the move from Mankato here to Eau Claire in 1963 and, later, during the construction of several new buildings on the campus.

As instructor, his influence has been deeply felt among the students who sat at his feet in the seminary department. Beginning in 1960, our seminary graduated 48 men into the public ministry of the CLC by 1984, and these graduates now comprise almost 75% of our pastors today. What a blessing the Lord has given us! He enabled Prof. Gullerud to share with others his knowledge and faith through faithful teaching during tumultuous times in the modern day history of the church.

As writer, Prof. Gullerud served from the beginning as a member of the staff of the *Journal of Theology*, an important part of the public testimony of the CLC, assigned by the church body as an editorial task of the ILC faculty. Following Professors E. Reim and E. Schaller, Prof. Gullerud served as editor from October 1971 until June 1986. It would be very difficult to enumerate the many, many articles that came from his pen, in addition to the translation of lengthy theological works from the Norwegian language into English for modern readers, most of which he did during his retirement years. In his work for the *Journal of Theology* Prof. Gullerud initiated a column titled "Panorama," in which, as God's warrior, he defended the truth of scripture in the face of much heresy. True theology is the knowledge of God which is obtained only through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In that understanding Prof. Gullerud will be remembered as a true theologian.

The feeling of desolation that sweeps over one at the death of a beloved warrior of the Lord is but a sorrow for oneself. In faith we know the Source from which Prof. Gullerud drew his strength and faith: it was the grace of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. He lovingly brought Prof. Gullerud to Himself in baptism, taught him the gospel, strengthened him through the means of grace, gave him the words of wisdom to proclaim and teach to his students. All glory be to God, Who takes us poor earthen vessels and makes us bearers of His precious Gospel, and then, when the time of our warfare on earth has finished, takes us to His eternal rest!

And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,  
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.  
But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;  
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of Glory passes on His way.

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl, streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The golden evening brightens in the west;  
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest.  
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.

Alleluia! Alleluia! (TLH 463:5-8)

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**PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

*Paul F. Nolting*

Our Lord assumed that His disciples would make such a petition. He assured them that such prayer would be answered, for if a sinful, human father would not tease his son by giving him a stone when he asked for bread or endanger him by giving him a scorpion when he asked for an egg, “how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13). Ask for the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will be given you! That is the promise of our Lord. Our Pentecost hymns reflect this instruction of our Lord:

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord! Be all Thy graces now out-poured”  
(TLH 224).

“Come, oh, come, Thou quick’ning Spirit, God from all eternity!” (TLH 226).

“Come, Holy Ghost, in love Shed on us from above Thine own bright ray”  
(TLH 227).

“Holy Spirit, hear us . . . Come to us with blessing” (TLH 229).

“We now implore God the Holy Ghost” (TLH 231).

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest” (TLH 233).

“Holy Ghost, with light divine Shine upon this heart of mine” (TLH 234).

“O Holy Spirit, enter in And in our hearts Thy work begin” (TLH 235).

But what is that work that we ask the Holy Spirit to work within mankind? John the Baptizer foretold that Jesus would one day “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11). Jesus referred to that prophecy of John on the day of His ascension. He told His followers to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Spirit. He assured them that they wouldn’t have to wait very long (Acts 1:4-8). Ten days later they “were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). What happened that day and later? What work did the Holy Spirit work in the believers? What does it mean to be “filled with the Holy Spirit,” to be “baptized with the Spirit”? Does that mean receiving both the sanctifying and charismatic gifts of the Spirit, or one or the other? Does being “baptized by the Holy Spirit” regularly and consistently manifest itself in speaking in tongues? What is meant by speaking in tongues? What about the charismatic gifts enumerated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, especially the gift of healing?

These are questions forced upon our generation by the rapidly spreading charismatic movement. Much of the evangelism being done in Central and South America, and more recently in Eastern Europe, is being done by charismatic groups. The modern roots of the charismatic movement can be traced to the Reformed tradition. In the Reformed tradition the Holy Spirit is separated from the means by which He does His work—the Gospel in simple word or combined with an element in the sacraments. Thus “water baptism” is dismissed as an act of obedience by an adult believer by which he gives public testimony of his “decision for Christ,” made by a deliberate act of his natural will. At times brief mention is made of the creative activity of the Holy Spirit, but He is soon lost in the overpowering emphasis of the altar call on the individual’s decision. Statistics of such decisions are kept and reported in the news media. If the Spirit is separated from the Word, non-Christian spirits soon vie for recognition with the Holy Spirit, e.g., Islam, Mormonism, Hinduism, and the endless varieties of the new age movement. But before the modern development of the charismatic movement there was the Papacy, the ancient mother of the charismatic movement. Remember the words of Luther in The Smalcald Articles: “For indeed the Papacy also is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatever he decides and commands with his church is spirit and right, even though it is above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word” (Part III, Article VIII, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 495). Interpretation of prophecy in the book of Revelation is not without its hazards, but a case can be made for the description of the “beast coming up out of the earth,” who “performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men” (Rev. 13:13), as being a prophecy of the modern charismatic movement, as it is being taken over by the Great Antichrist. In view of these developments we need scriptural answers to the questions asked above.

THE HOLY SPIRIT— foretold by the prophets

The fundamental prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit was made by the Prophet Joel (2:28-32):

And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall see visions; And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

When the Apostle Peter used this prophecy of Joel as the text for his message on the day of Pentecost, he added the words, “And they shall prophesy,” at this point (Acts 2:8). Prophesying or foretelling would no longer be a special gift or privilege of a select group, but would become the gift, the right, the privilege, the common property, the obligation, the responsibility of all believers. All would be “taught of God” (Isa. 54:13; John 6:45). Joel did not prophesy that the Spirit would bestow on all flesh the charismatic gift of tongues or any other charismatic gift. On the day of the beginning of the fulfillment the one hundred twenty were given the gift of tongues, but that gift was withheld from the three thousand.

The Prophet Isaiah reassured God’s people that “the Redeemer will come to Zion” (59:20), and that in those days “My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants” (59:21). The Spirit and the Word were promised the citizens of the Messianic Kingdom. It was of these gifts that our Lord spoke on the night of His betrayal when He assured His disciples, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The same Spirit, “The Spirit of the Lord . . . The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” that Isaiah foresaw resting upon the Messiah (Isa. 11:2; 60:1) would indwell all believers in the Messianic Era. The Spirit would rest upon the Messiah as He initiated the new era. The charismatic gift of healing would characterize the new era, Isaiah 29:18; 32:3-4; 35:5-6; 53:4 (Matt. 8:17).

But the gift of tongues is nowhere mentioned as characteristic of the Messianic Era, nor does any prophecy of the Holy Spirit indicate that the Holy Spirit would bestow the gift of tongues. The one passage cited in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 14:21, quoting Isaiah 28:11-12, was used by Paul to teach the Corinthians, who were misusing the gift of tongues, that other tongues, i.e., foreign languages, are a sign of judgment upon unbelievers. The reference is to the judgment that the Lord brought upon His people through the multi-tongued Assyrian hordes.

Jeremiah described the coming new era as a time when the law would be internalized, when knowledge of the Lord would be commonplace, for the forgiveness of sins will be the common blessing of the beneficiaries of the new covenant (31:31-34). The agent for all this is the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying work. Jeremiah makes no mention of any charismatic works of the Spirit for the new era.

So also Ezekiel speaks of the coming era when the Messiah would “sprinkle clean water” on His own and “put My Spirit within you” (36:25-27; 37:14). This is the indwelling of the Spirit, of which the Lord Jesus spoke when He assured His disciples that the Spirit “dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). In chapter eleven Ezekiel wrote of the indwelling of the promised Spirit who would have the effect of replacing “stony hearts” with “hearts of flesh,” and so enable sanctification (11:19-20)—a development of Jeremiah’s new covenant prophecy (31:31-34).

Repeating—All the prophecies of the coming Holy Spirit and of His glorious work revolve around the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit, not on His bestowal of charismatic gifts. When our Lord instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised fulfillment of the coming of the Spirit, they—on the basis of the prophets—were awaiting the sanctifying and enabling grace of the Spirit, not charismatic gifts, certainly not the gifts of tongues, of which no mention is made in the Old Testament. They had already exercised the gift of healing in their previous ministries.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— foretold by John the Baptizer

All the evangelists record John’s prophecy that the One coming after him would be greater than He, baptizing not only with water but “with the Holy Spirit.” That was John’s way of magnifying Jesus. He made the prophecy in various contexts. In Matthew the context is that of solemn warning against the Pharisees and Sadducees who wanted John’s baptism, but refused to heed his call to repentance. Judgment awaited them. That judgment would be executed upon them by the greater One coming after him. “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” If the “and fire” is textually valid, the “fire” would point to coming judgment, for John continued, “His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:5-12).

Mark’s account is characteristically brief. After magnifying Jesus by stating that he was not worthy to perform the slave’s task of loosing His sandals, a contrast that Matthew and Luke also recorded, Mark climaxed the contrast by stating, “I indeed baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (1:8). Mark does not add the “and fire.”



In Luke the context is the expectation and speculation of the people as to whether or not John was the promised Christ. John cut off all such speculation by contrasting himself with the One coming after him: "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (3:16). Here the addition, "and with fire," is unchallenged textually. Luke also records the salvation to be granted and the judgment to be executed by the coming One.

The Apostle John records the testimony of the baptizer concerning the coming One as part of his introducing the "Lamb of God" to his own disciples. He had been assured that Jesus was the promised "Lamb of God," for he had seen "the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him," who would one day "baptize with the Holy Spirit" (1:29-34). It is to be noted that it was not given to the baptizer to reveal the nature of baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Jesus acknowledged the prophecy of John, for he recalled it to the minds of His disciples on the day of His ascension. What John had foretold would shortly come to pass, "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:8). When Peter later had to defend his ministry to Cornelius before "those of the circumcision," he reported that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the Gentiles as it had fallen upon him and the others at the beginning, that is, the Day of Pentecost. Peter stated that he then recalled the word of the Lord spoken on the day He ascended, "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16). Thus the term, "baptism with the Holy Spirit," occurs six times, four in recording the prophecy of the baptizer, once when Jesus recalled John's prophecy, and once when Peter remembered that same prophecy. The Greek phrase is consistently "εν πνευματι αγιω," that is, a baptism in connection with the Holy Spirit—all that He is and works! Charismatics like to refer to 1 Corinthians 12:12 as a proof-text for "baptism with the Spirit," but the point that the apostle is stressing is the oneness, the unity, of the Holy Christian Church, the Body of Christ. Using the human body which has many members but still is but one body as an imperfect illustration of the Church, Paul states, "For by one Spirit (εν ει πνευματι) we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slave or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:12). The "baptism" Paul has reference to is the "baptism with water" that Jesus instituted (Matt. 28:18-20). By the creative working of the Holy Spirit all so baptized are incorporated into the one Body of Christ, for they have all "been made to drink into one Spirit," the Spirit entering them and making them His temple, even as water enters in and becomes a part of the human body. In his letter to the Ephesians when the apostle pleads for the unity of the Spirit, Paul emphasizes that there is "one body and one Spirit," also "one baptism." Charismatics have detached the Spirit from "water baptism" to their own misunderstanding of both "water baptism" and "baptism in the Spirit."

THE HOLY SPIRIT— as presented by Jesus

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me" (Isa. 61:1). So the Messiah proclaimed some eight hundred years before the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and so caused her to become pregnant with the "Holy One" who would be called "the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Thirty years later the Spirit of God descended like a dove, rested on Him, and abode with Him after His baptism (Matt. 3:16), driving Him out into the wilderness to face the foe who had undone the first Adam (Mark 1:12). The Spirit was actively with Him during His entire ministry. Part of His ministry was to testify of the Spirit, to present Him and His work to the Church that He was to build.

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews but a novice in spiritual matters. He knew of the Holy Spirit, but he knew nothing of His work in the kingdom. He knew neither the need for nor the miracle of rebirth. He knew neither the means nor the Creator of new life, without which entrance into or citizenship in the Kingdom of God is impossible. The means is "water baptism"; the Creator of new life the Holy Spirit. What Nicodemus learned that night when Jesus said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5), the Reformed teachers in their "Israel" have disavowed. For them the Holy Spirit is detached from the means by which He does His work. Baptism by water is thus made "Spiritless," an act of obedience by which a believer gives public testimony of his "Spiritless" personal decision to accept Jesus as his personal Savior. That is not what Jesus taught Nicodemus! He taught Nicodemus and all teachers in His "Israel" that baptism by water is a means by which the Spirit works the miracle of new birth.

When Jesus instructed the twelve before He sent them out for their first experience in kingdom preaching, He warned them that persecution would not be the exception but the natural experience of sheep

among wolves of all generations. They were not, however, to worry about the content of their testimony, for it would be given to them: “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Matt. 10:20). The Holy Spirit is the divine communicator. He does not bring His communication to the world directly, but rather through individual believers—through evangelists down through the ages, through godly parents speaking to their children of Jesus, through polemicists refuting error, and through martyrs bearing final witness unto the truth.

When His disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He taught them the prayer we have come to know as “The Lord’s Prayer.” It would more exactly and correctly be called “The Believer’s Prayer,” with Jesus’ sacerdotal prayer being named “The Lord’s Prayer.” Jesus elaborated on this blessed privilege of each believer speaking to his or her heavenly Father, as a child with all boldness and confidence runs to daddy and pours out his or her urgent, though childish, requests. The time may be unseasonable and the request unreasonable, but the heavenly Father responds, for He is the true friend (Luke 11:5-8). He promises receiving for the asker, finding for the seeker, and opening to the knocker. He greatly outdoes earthly fathers whose imperfect love will not permit them to tease or harm their innocent and credulous children (Luke 11:9-13). Those preliminaries are followed by the “*a minore ad majorem*”: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Luke 11:13). What does the Father give us in giving us the Holy Spirit?

Jesus gave His disciples and the multitudes a glimpse of the coming Spirit-blessing on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. That was the day when a priest would proceed to the fountain of Siloah with a golden pitcher, fill it with water, and then pour it out, together with a pitcher of wine, as a drink offering at the altar of burnt sacrifice. The trumpets sounded, and the congregation sang the words of Isaiah 12:3: “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” That salvation was in Jesus. He knew it; the multitude didn’t. So He cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of water” (John 7:37-38; Isa. 44:3). Jesus knew whom He would send after He had finished His work of salvation. He knew the divine Bestower of His salvation to individual sinners. At the time His words were a mystery to all, as John indicates by explaining that Jesus was speaking of the Spirit who would come after Jesus had been glorified.

As the day of His glorification in suffering and triumph approached Jesus concentrated His instruction on the Holy Spirit whom His Father and He would send. Jesus called Him the “Paraclete,” a wonderfully rich, descriptive term. Translators keep on struggling to find a term that will adequately do “Paraclete” justice. The KJV and Living Bible translate “Comforter”; NKJV and NASB, “Helper”; Phillips, “Someone else to stand by you”; RSV and NIV, “Counselor”; Good News for Modern Man and Today’s English Version, “Helper, the Spirit of Truth”; Jerusalem Bible and New English Bible, “Advocate”; Luther, “*Troester*.” He is the One the Lord promises will abide with believers forever (John 14:16). He is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), who “will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). “He will testify of Me” (John 15:26). “He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). “He will guide you into all truth . . . He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13-14). The upper room was the place, the night of His betrayal the time, the Holy Spirit and His gracious work the subject matter. The entire discourse of Jesus was devoted to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said nothing of charismatic gifts, specifically nothing of speaking in tongues.

On the day of His ascension Jesus commanded His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. He reminded them of the prophecy of the baptizer and applied it to them: “John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:8). What would they experience when they were “baptized with the Holy Spirit”? Jesus indicated that they would learn to know the nature of the kingdom, for they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” What would be the nature of that power? Political power? Quite the contrary! “You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Their witness would be confirmed by power acts. The Lord had conferred such power upon them when He sent them out the first time (Matt. 10:1)—power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal the sick. He had also conferred such power on the seventy when He sent them out. They had been overly infatuated with their power over demons (Luke 10:17-20). Mark reports that when Jesus gave His disciples the “great commission,” He promised that power signs would follow in the wake of believers: “In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). Even as Jesus had

confirmed His word as divine with signs and wonders, so His disciples would do likewise. And that they did, as Mark reports, “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). Luke supplies the history in the book of Acts. Before the Day of Pentecost Jesus conferred charismatic gifts upon His disciples directly. After He had finished His redemptive work, He indicated that such charismatic gifts would be given by the Holy Spirit. They were to wait; the Spirit would make the move. It is to be noted that the only recorded instance in which Jesus mentioned speaking with new tongues was in connection with the great commission as recorded by Mark. There it is linked with four other charismatic gifts—exorcising demons, taking up serpents, drinking poison, and healing the sick.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— poured out on the Day of Pentecost

The Baptizer had foretold that the One coming after him would “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16). On the night of His betrayal in the upper room Jesus had spoken at length of the coming Paraclete and His work. When He gave the great commission, He enumerated five signs that would follow the believers (Mark 16:17-18). On the day of His ascension He made John’s prophecy His own—that His disciples would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). In that same connection Jesus assured His fearful and insecure disciples that they would “receive power” that would enable them to be “witnesses to Jesus” (Acts 1:8). What form that power would take Jesus left unsaid. He made no specific mention of the gift of tongues, nor of any of the other charismatic gifts. The prophets were silent regarding charismatic gifts when they foretold the coming of the Spirit.

The Day of Pentecost came. How was the prophecy fulfilled? Luke is the divinely inspired reporter. The Holy Spirit announced His advent with “a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind” (Acts 2:2). Most appropriate, for the Greek word for spirit (πνευμα) also carries the meaning “wind.” When Jesus had instructed Nicodemus regarding the miracle of new birth created by the Holy Spirit, He used the example of the wind to make His point: “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:6). So it happened on the Day of Pentecost: three thousand experienced the gentle blowing of the Spirit and were brought to faith in Jesus, while others mocked and were eventually carried away in the blast of judgment. On Easter Sunday evening Jesus bestowed upon His disciples the power of the Holy Spirit to forgive or retain sins (John 20:22-23). He symbolized His giving them the Spirit by breathing upon them. Most appropriate, for “God is spirit” (John 4:24). Wind is a blessing for it brings rest and relief to those worn out by the heat of the day. Wind is also a symbol of potential judgment (Dan. 7:2; Rev. 7:1). It can be extremely destructive, witness Hurricane Hugo. The work of the Holy Spirit is as the gentle breeze, “the sound of soft silencing” as the Lord taught Elijah on Horeb (1 Kings 18:12). It can’t be seen, but it is effective, its effect being visible in the lives of those blown upon. On the other hand, the work of the Holy Spirit is as a hurricane that brings judgment upon those who blaspheme the Spirit (Mark 3:28-29; 1 John 5:16).

“Tongues, as of fire, sat upon each of the disciples.” The prophecy was that Jesus would “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Fire purifies! “Did not our heart burn within us” (Luke 24:32), was the experience of the Emmaus disciples. Fire destroys and so is a standard symbol of judgment in Scripture, yea of the final judgment—“the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus who is “to the one the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life” (2 Cor. 2:16).

The prophecy was that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment came with a baptism that came as a “pouring out of the Spirit” that resulted in a “filling” with the Holy Spirit, for “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). Recalling the experience, Peter spoke of it as the Spirit falling upon them (Acts 11:14). What occurred reflects what Jesus promised the night of His betrayal—that the Spirit will “abide with you,” that He “dwells with you,” that He “will be in you” (John 14:16-17). The fulfillment expressed as a “pouring out of the Spirit,” a “being filled with the Spirit,” and the Spirit “falling upon the disciples” reveals the figurative nature of the promise that the Lord would “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.” He would send the Spirit with His sevenfold graces!

The immediate manifestation of the fact that the one hundred twenty (Acts 1:15), were “filled with the Holy Spirit” was their speaking with “other tongues.” This was not meaningless gibberish, nor a specially created language of heaven, nor ecstatic speech by which a believer was to pray to his God, but rather speaking in human languages that had not been studied or learned before. The one hundred twenty spoke

in “other tongues” (ετεραις γλωσσαις) (Acts 2:4). The hearers heard the Spirit-filled believers speaking each “in his own language” (τη ιδια διαλεκτω) and “in our tongues (ταις ημετεραις γλωσσαις) (Acts 2:6 and 11). Why did the Holy Spirit manifest His “filling” or “indwelling” the one hundred twenty or “falling upon the disciples” with the charismatic gift of tongues? In the beginning all mankind spoke “one language and one speech” (Gen. 11:1). The second fall of mankind occurred at Babel when once again pride drove mankind to rebellion against the Lord God. After the flood God had repeated the blessing bestowed upon Adam and Eve: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). Though spread over the earth, mankind was to remain united by a common faith in the promise of a Savior to come made to Adam and repeated to Noah (Gen. 9:26-27). In defiance mankind was determined to maintain its unity by self-deification. The curse came in the form of the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:7), which remains as a curse to this day. Consider racism in all its forms from petty personal prejudice to nationalism that ignites the conflagration of regional war. But worse: Men, bent on self-deification, created gods for themselves after their own image (Ps. 50:21), worshiped the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25), and were determined to pursue the course of self-salvation (*opinio legis*). That was the broad road that was leading mankind to self-destruction. On the Day of Pentecost when the first-fruits of the harvest were waved before the Lord, the harvest of which our Lord spoke to the woman of Samaria (John 4:33), was begun to be gathered. The one hundred twenty spoke in the native languages of all the pilgrims of the Diaspora who had come to the Festival of Harvest. What did they proclaim? Not man-made gods nor man-devised plans for self-salvation, but “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). Thus the Holy Spirit sanctified all human languages as communications media for the saving works of God. All languages—one saving message. Now many languages—hereafter the “new song” in the common language of the glorified saints. Then Peter arose and proclaimed those same “wonderful works,” not in a Spirit-given tongue that only a few of the Pentecost worshipers could understand, but in the language of the people so that all could understand. He quoted the prophecy of Joel that the day would come when all would prophesy, preach, proclaim “the wonderful works of God.” That day had come! Peter, an unlearned fisherman from Galilee, was proof of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. He, who had denied his Lord three times and who had secluded himself with the others behind locked doors, was filled with the Spirit, given power from within to proclaim with all boldness “the wonderful works of God.” The God of their fathers had fulfilled His covenantal promises by sending Jesus of Nazareth, whom the congregation listening to Peter had crucified. That wicked action God had countermanded by raising Jesus from the dead and by exalting Him to His right hand.

What happened? Three thousand were convicted of their sins by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). Their cry, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” was evidence of their conviction. What was Peter’s response? The same message that the baptizer had proclaimed and that Jesus had made His own: “Repent . . . be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.” A short time earlier Jesus had commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all by baptizing and teaching. This was the first opportunity the disciples had to carry out that commission. They baptized the three thousand—men, women, and children—with water and the Spirit, confident that thereby those baptized would receive the remission of sins and “the gift of the Spirit.” Him they received, and what they received through Him the Spirit caused Luke to record. They received a oneness in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, a new love that moved them to share with those in need, a new joy in their hearts and praise on their lips. Luke does not add that the three thousand received the gift of tongues; he specifically does report that “many wonders and signs were done through the apostles” (Acts 2:43), the Spirit distributing such gifts “as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

The charismatics, who are for the most part of the Reformed tradition, downgrade the baptism of John and the baptism which Jesus instituted by removing the Spirit from what is referred to as mere “water baptism.” In so doing they do violence to the word of our Lord, who taught Nicodemus and all after him who would listen and learn, that the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from baptism with water, for the creative miracle of new birth is by “water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit repeated that instruction through the pen of the Apostle Paul, who testified that baptism is “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). The charismatics like to speak of two baptisms, “water baptism” and “baptism by the Spirit,” but the Apostle Paul knows of only one baptism (Eph. 4:5). In the Nicene Creed the Church confesses “one Baptism for the remission of sins.” It knows of no other baptism. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit through the gospel in word and sacrament, begun in the New Testament era on the Day of Pentecost, is made to fade in the background as of minor or secondary importance, while the “baptism with the Spirit” that allegedly manifests itself with the gift of tongues becomes the focus of attention. That is just the opposite of what the Spirit intended when moving Luke to

record what really happened. Luke's Spirit-given emphasis is on "the wonderful works of God" and their effects upon those "filled with the Spirit." The gift of tongues gave notice that these same blessings were intended for all races of people with their many tongues. Many tongues—one and the same message! Divided by many tongues—united into one Body, the Church by one and the same Spirit who works through one baptism by water and the word and one and the same message, and who distributes charismatic gifts "to each one individually as He wills (1 Cor. 12:11). That's what the Spirit taught on the Day of Pentecost!

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— "filled with"

Prophecy - fulfillment; baptized with the Holy Spirit - filled with the Holy Spirit! The verb "πληθω" or "πιμπλημι" simply means "to fill" or "fulfill," in its passive form "to be filled." It is used in a variety of ways—time fulfilled (Luke 1:23; 2:6,21,22) or a container (cup) filled (Matt. 27:48; Luke 5:7; John 19:29). It is frequently used with a person or persons or city filled with one or another emotion: filled with wrath (Luke 4:28; 6:11), filled with wonder (Acts 3:10), filled with indignation (Acts 5:17), filled with envy (Acts 13:45), filled with confusion (Acts 19:29).

Luke used the first aorist passive form—filled with the Holy Spirit— eight times, three in his Gospel and five in Acts. Gabriel described the child to be born to Zacharias and Elizabeth as one who would "be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). John's ministry was to be preparing the way for Jesus. When Elizabeth some six months later greeted Mary as "the mother of my Lord," she is described as being "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41). Before Zacharias broke his silence by prophesying the words of the "Benedictus," he "was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 2:67). The one hundred twenty on the Day of Pentecost "were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). They spoke in tongues "the wonderful works of God" (2:11), concerning the faithfulness of the Lord God to all the messianic prophecies that found their fulfillment in Jesus. Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," made his defense before the Sanhedrin, testifying that the same Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom the Jews had crucified their God had raised from the dead, adding this powerful testimony: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Confronted with the undeniable miracle of the healing of the forty-year-old congenitally lame man, the Sanhedrin had to release Peter and John, but not without first threatening them in an effort to silence them. Peter and John returned to the twelve and others who prayed for boldness to continue their testifying. That prayer was answered in that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" with the result that "they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Ananias was sent by the Lord to Saul to restore his sight and that he might "be filled with the Holy Spirit"—to begin his career of bearing witness unto Jesus, confirmed by charismatic gifts extraordinaire. When confronted with Elymas, who opposed the testimony of Paul and attempted "to turn the proconsul away from the faith, "Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit," laid a curse upon Elymas in the form of temporary blindness (Acts 13:9-11).

In summary, those who were said "to be filled with the Holy Spirit" included five individuals—the baptizer and his parents, Peter, and Paul; and two groups, the one hundred twenty on the Day of Pentecost and the twelve including members of the Jerusalem congregation. In two instances, John the baptizer and Paul, the expression is used to describe their careers as ministers of the gospel. In the cases of Elizabeth and Zacharias the term is used to introduce testimonies of Jesus not yet born. In three instances—the one hundred twenty, Peter, and the Twelve with members of the Jerusalem congregation—the term is used to denote the receiving of spiritual power to proclaim "the wonderful works of God" with boldness in the face of persecution. Once the term is used as an example of the punitive "fire" of the Spirit—the blinding of Elymas by Paul. Only once—the instance of the one hundred twenty on the Day of Pentecost—did "being filled with the Spirit" manifest itself by speaking in tongues. Since "being filled with the Spirit" was the fulfillment of the promise of a "baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire," the assertion that "baptism with the Holy Spirit" regularly or normally manifests itself with speaking in tongues is unfounded.

On the contrary, the expression, "filled with the Holy Spirit," connotes the bestowal of the sanctifying gifts of the Spirit as centered in and around Jesus Christ, with charismatic gifts being added, as the Spirit wills. This agrees with what the New Testament Scriptures say elsewhere of the Spirit. Consider Paul's prayer for the Ephesians: "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled

with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19). The "fullness of God" is even broader than "filled with the Spirit," but certainly includes the latter. Consider also Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians: "Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (5:18). How generally is being "filled" or "baptized" with the Spirit to manifest itself? Not by speaking in tongues, but by manifesting increasing sanctification: "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:19-21).

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— gift of tongues

Glossolalia is the word currently used for the charismatic gift of tongues. What is the average person, untutored in the Scripture, to understand by that word? Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, defines glossolalia as follows: "ecstatic or apparently ecstatic utterance of usually unintelligible speechlike sounds, as in a religious assembly, viewed by some as a manifestation of deep religious experience." There is no such phenomenon recorded in the Scriptures! Don Basham in a widely distributed paperback entitled "A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism" defines the phenomenon reported in the New Testament thus: "Speaking or praying in tongues is a form of prayer in which the Christian yields himself to the Holy Spirit and receives from the Spirit a supernatural language with which to praise God" (p. 86). There is no such phenomenon of speaking a "supernatural" language recorded in the New Testament! Paul does, indeed, report having heard "inexpressible words, which" he added, "it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). Paul heard such words; he does not say that he spoke such words himself.

We have already examined the first appearance of the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost. The one hundred twenty spoke "with other tongues"—other than their customary tongue. Those, who heard them, heard them proclaiming "the wonderful works of God," each "in his own language" or dialect, and again, "in our own language." No supernatural language! Rather street languages, as spoken by people inhabiting the Mediterranean rim. Acts 2: Many languages—one message! Thus the fundamental passage reveals that the gift of tongues was the gift of speaking heretofore unlearned known languages to emphasize the unity and universality of the message, resulting in unity amidst the diversity of those gathered who heard and believed the message. On the Day of Pentecost the speaking in tongues preceded the formal proclamation of the gospel, preceded the baptism of the three thousand, and was not bestowed by the laying on of hands. It was given to those who already had the Spirit, the one hundred and twenty. Thereafter the Spirit was given to the three thousand through the gift of repentance, sealed by baptism with water connected with the word for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), "for no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3), but the charismatic gift of tongues was withheld, for the Holy Spirit distributes charismatic gifts as He wills (1 Cor. 12:11).

The second occurrence of the bestowing of the charismatic gift of tongues—though not specifically mentioned—occurred with the breaking out of the gospel from its strictly Jewish environment to the Samaritans, in accordance with the Lord's instruction: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The progress of the word to Samaria occurred as a consequence of the persecution masterminded and spearheaded by Saul after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 8). It began as a lay movement of Jewish Christian refugees, but then was carried on with vigor and success by the deacon Philip. He had been given the charismatic gift of healing which powerfully confirmed his preaching of Christ. When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of the success of the Word of God in Samaria, they sent two representatives of the mother church at Jerusalem, Peter and John. They were concerned with confirming the basic unity of the Church, for there were not to be separate Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile churches. The Body of Christ is one! How would they make their point? They could but testify, but the Spirit would dramatically confirm their message. Though exercising the charismatic gift of healing with phenomenal success, Philip did not receive the gift of tongues by which the unity of the message and Church were first demonstrated on the Day of Pentecost. Peter and John prayed that the Samaritans might receive this charismatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Confident that their prayer would be answered, "they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17). Though not specifically mentioned, it seems certain that the Holy Spirit, consistent with His working on the Day of Pentecost, bestowed the gift of tongues so that the Samaritans also could proclaim in languages they had never learned the "wonderful works of God" which were intended for all nations and tongues and which have the effect of bringing those who hear and believe into the one Holy Christian Church. In this instance speaking in tongues followed

baptism and was conferred by the laying on of hands. No one can straitjacket the Holy Spirit. He always does His holy thing as the wind—unseen, yet manifest in its effects.

The third manifestation of the unity of the Church through the gift of tongues occurred in the household of Cornelius in Caesarea—in accordance with the divine program, that is, to the Jew first, then the Samaritan, and finally the Gentiles to the end of the earth. In this instance the gift of tongues followed the preaching of Peter, but preceded baptism and was bestowed without the laying on of hands. Peter had just summarized the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the universality of the gospel in these words, “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). That “whoever” includes Gentiles, but this, except for the isolated case of the eunuch of Ethiopia, had not yet occurred. As a matter of fact Peter had resisted the progress of the gospel to the Gentiles and had to be convinced and compelled by a vision from heaven (Acts 10:9-16). The Holy Spirit had to overcome the inbred prejudice of the Jews over against the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit did that in a dramatic manner by “falling” upon the Gentile hearers of the Word with the effect that they spoke with tongues, and magnified God (Acts 10:46-48). Possibly they magnified God in the Hebrew tongue, thereby solidifying the oneness of the Jew and Gentile, for the Holy Spirit thereby publicly witnessed that Gentiles also were to be added as equal members to the one Body of Christ. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he had to defend his action of going “in to uncircumcised men and eating with them” before “those of the circumcision” (Acts 11:2-3). Peter defended himself and his action by reporting what had happened—how the Lord had instructed him through a vision, how he had accompanied the emissaries of Cornelius to Caesarea, how he had preached, and that the Holy Spirit had fallen on these Gentile converts “as upon us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15), that is, on the Day of Pentecost. Then Peter said he recalled the word of the Lord, “John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). Peter realized that the “you” in the Lord’s words was not restricted to the apostles or to Jews, but was universal: “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:16-17). God had given the apostles the gift of the Spirit and with that all the blessings of the kingdom that are in Christ Jesus. All this was not the national right of men born Jews, but was meant for all, Jew and Gentile alike. This is what the Holy Spirit had demonstrated by conferring on the household and friends of Cornelius the same gift that He had given the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, that is, the gift of tongues.

To the Jews first, then the Samaritans, and finally the Gentiles. The Gentile eunuch of Ethiopia had been added to the Church through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit conveyed by the preaching of Jesus and sealed with baptism with water and the word. He did not receive the charismatic gift of tongues. The pilot project of the Holy Spirit for transferring the gospel from Jew to Gentile was the bringing of Jesus to the Gentile Cornelius and his household, confirmed by the gift of tongues. The theological battle to make Gentiles equal members of the Body of Christ was fought at Jerusalem (Acts 15), and later refought by Paul in his epistles, especially to the Galatians. But so far the Gentiles that were won lived in the land of the Jews. The next step was to extend partnership in the gospel to the Jews of the Diaspora and the Gentiles beyond Palestine. Two centers of Gentile culture were chosen, one on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea, Ephesus, and the other on the western shore in the very heartland of Greek Gentile culture, Corinth. Apollos had come from Alexandria to Ephesus. He was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, but limited in his knowledge of kingdom developments after the ministry of the baptizer. Aquila and Priscilla filled him in and rounded out his knowledge of the gospel of salvation (Acts 18:24-28). Rearmed, he pursued his career of polemics against unbelieving Jews. He had the Spirit, had no need of rebaptism, but no mention is made of his receiving the charismatic gift of tongues.

The case of the twelve “disciples” whom Paul met at Ephesus was quite different. In response to Paul’s question as to whether they had received a charismatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit, they answered, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). They had been baptized with “John’s baptism,” but after his death had become alienated from the One to whom John had pointed. They had become a sect, outside of the hope of Israel realized in Jesus. Paul preached Christ Jesus to them. They, by the power of the Holy Spirit, were brought to faith in Jesus and were confirmed in their faith by baptism in the name of Jesus. Thereafter Paul, even as Peter and John had done in Samaria, laid his hands on them, and “the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). Thus these twelve Jews—the same number as that of the twelve tribes—who had been blind followers of the baptizer and who had lost Him to whom John had pointed them were incorporated into the one Holy Christian Church. In this way the Holy Spirit gave public testimony of the fact that Jews, cut off from the mainstream of their national heritage and living in the Diaspora could be incorporated into the one Body of

Christ, and that in a congregation of both Jews and Gentiles in a Gentile metropolitan city. The Church is one; the gift of tongues testified of its unity amidst diversity. The Holy Spirit bestowed that gift or withheld it according to His purpose. When He bestowed it, He bestowed it sometimes before, sometimes after the preaching of Jesus; sometimes before, sometimes after baptism; sometimes with, sometimes without the laying on of hands. The Spirit cannot be straitjacketed, but bestows His blessings as the wind blows here and there.

Corinth was second only to Athens as the center of Greek culture. The Lord of the Church chose Corinth rather than Athens to demonstrate that His Church is to incorporate all, not only unsophisticated Jews, but also Gentiles of the most advanced culture. The congregation at Corinth was blessed above all others with spiritual gifts, but those very gifts became an occasion for a fall. The congregation at Corinth became the victim of pride in its most divisive form—spiritual pride. The very gift that the Holy Spirit had bestowed so lavishly to demonstrate unity was used to cause disunity. The pattern of misuse that Paul had to correct in regards to the Lord's Supper was repeated. The eating of many was to manifest "one bread and one body" (1 Cor. 10:17), but the abuses in the agape meal destroyed unity and replaced it with divisiveness. So also the use of tongues which was to be manifestation of universal unity became the cause of disunity and chaos in the worship service.

Paul used three chapters to correct the misuse of tongues in the public worship. Chapter twelve emphasizes the unity of the Spirit in the midst of the diversity of His gifts, which He gives "to each one for the profit of all" "as He wills." The Spirit is one. There is but one baptism, as Paul also emphasized in his letter to the Ephesians (4:5). The result of the creative work of the one Spirit through the one baptism with water and the word is one Body, the Body of Christ—His Church. As the various organs of the body serve the one body, so the diversity of charismatic gifts of the one Spirit are to profit the one Body of Christ. Easier said than done because spirit/flesh believers are tempted to use their gifts for self-glory rather than selfless service of others. The cure for such a misuse is the "more excellent way" of love, chapter 13. To drive home his point Paul does some "supposing." Suppose when I am in your midst I would speak in foreign languages. And you know that I speak in more languages than any of you (14:18). Suppose that I would be able to speak to you in the language of the angels (2 Cor. 12:2). If I would so speak but without love, I would become nothing better than a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Love always speaks for the benefit (12:7), and for the edification (14:3), of others. Love outranks both faith and hope.

In chapter 14 Paul applied the guiding principle of love to the problem of the misuse of tongues in the congregation at Corinth. Paul began with two exhortations, "Pursue love" and "Desire spiritual gifts!" Previously Paul told them that some gifts were greater or better than others (12:31). They had become infatuated with "tongues," but prophecy—preaching, teaching, interpreting the Word—outranks tongues! And for this reason: Tongues edify the speaker; prophecy edifies the church through the speaker (14:1-5). Tongues are of value in the church, but only if interpretation is available. To make his point Paul cited three examples of inanimate voices—the flute, the harp, and the trumpet (14:6-9). When an orchestra tunes up, nothing but cacophony, noise pollution! When the orchestra plays, harmony and understanding. The soldier will never know what to do if the notes of the trumpet are garbled! So if the speaker does not speak intelligible language that the hearer understands, he isn't getting through to the hearer, but is simply making unintelligible sounds. From inanimate voices Paul goes to human voices. They all have a message to convey, but the message must be able to be understood. "Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret!" To illustrate the point Paul used himself as an example. If I were to pray or sing in a "tongue," a foreign language, my spirit would be praying or singing, but my "mind" would be unfruitful. In what way? The translation "understanding" misleads as though Paul were speaking of being in a trance, not conscious or aware of what he was praying for or singing. That's not the point! His mind would be unfruitful, that is, not producing fruit because it would fail to function in its communicating capacity and ability. (Luther's translation of 1 Corinthians 14:14 is clearer than the English: "*So ich mit Zungen bete, so betet mein Geist; aber mein Sinn bringet niemand Frucht.*") That this is the meaning becomes clear when Paul abruptly shifts to the second person—the case of someone speaking a benediction in the congregation. How could the "uninformed" add his "amen," if he didn't understand what had been said? "Tongues" without interpretation are valueless! Paul scored that point with a personal statement: "I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (14:18-19). Tongues were originally given on the Day of Pentecost to reveal that the Holy Spirit has sanctified all languages for the proclamation of "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). Here is another truth that the Corinthians were overlooking: Tongues are a sign of judgment for the unbeliever, whereas prophecy is a sign of grace for



the believer and a means of grace for the unbeliever (14:20-25). How then is love to control the use of tongues in the congregation so that all are edified? Four rules for tongue speakers: (1) Only two or three, (2) Speak in order, (3) One interprets, and (4) No interpreter—no speaking in tongues. Three rules for prophets: (1) Only two or three, (2) One is to yield to the other, and (3) Exercise self-control (14:33)! “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (14:33).

Charismatic congregations invert the priorities established by Paul, placing speaking in tongues above prophesying. The result is that doctrine and confession rank low, while “spirit” is exalted. Speaking in tongues is defined as “supernatural language” given by the Spirit for praying to the Lord. Such language is unintelligible even to the person using it. Such a concept clashes with the work of the Holy Spirit whose business is to guide the believer into all truth (John 16:15). Unintelligible speech cannot guide into truth, for the truth demands intelligible language to convey it. Ecstatic “Amen,” “Hallelujahs,” and “Praise the Lords,” together with ecstatic gibberish believed to be “supernatural language,” are a poor substitute for textual preaching and the singing of hymns which proclaim the objective truths of our salvation.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— Pray for Him!

“How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Luke 11:13). Pray for the Paraclete to abide with you—in youth and old age, at work and at play, in health and in sickness, in temptation and in triumph, in both waxing and waning faith. What is one praying for when one so prays? We are praying, foremost and chiefly, for the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit, that is –

1. For the Spirit of truth, who will testify of Jesus and guide you into all truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
2. For the Helper, who will convince you that your sin is sin, that the righteousness you need is to be found in the Lord, and that Satan, your accuser, has been judged and so vanquished (John 16:8-11).
3. For the Spirit of power, who will enable you to bear witness unto the Lord with all boldness (Acts 1:8;4:31).
4. For grace to bear the fruit of the Spirit, and so walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25).
5. For grace to be filled with the Spirit—speaking, singing, thanking God our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:18-20).
6. For grace to walk according to the Spirit—freed from the law of sin and death, yet fulfilling the law by faith in love, being spiritually minded, and so alive and at peace (Rom. 8:1-11).
7. For a heart that will be a fountain of living waters (John 7:38).
8. For the gift of prophesying so that you can guide others in the truth (Acts 8:11), that you are always ready “to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet. 3:15), and that you may always “proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).
9. For the assurance “that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).
10. For the sevenfold Spirit—“The Spirit of the Lord . . . The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord”(Isa. 11:2).

Praying for the Paraclete also includes praying for charismatic gifts, but doing so with the knowledge that the Spirit distributes those gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT— The charismatics

The original charismatic is the devil who promised Eve “spirit” apart from and in disobedience to the word. The greatest human charismatic is the Great Antichrist, manifested in the reigning pope who claims to possess all truth in the shrine of his heart. The modern charismatic movement developed from the Reformed branch of Christianity, “inasmuch as they maintain that the Holy Spirit works with His saving operation immediately, outside and apart from the Word” (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p. 208). In contrast Luther: “The Holy Spirit does not work without the Word or before the Word, but He comes with and through the Word and never goes beyond the Word” (Pieper, I, p. 201).

1. Charismatics reject “water baptism” as a means by which the Holy Spirit gives Himself with all His gifts to the baptized person. Baptism with water and the word becomes nothing more than an act of

obedience on the part of the believer by which he manifests his personal decision of having accepted Jesus as his personal Savior or of having invited Jesus into his heart. What the Holy Spirit actually works through baptism with water and the word is alleged to happen immediately when Jesus baptizes the believer with the Holy Spirit. Since the charismatics separate the Holy Spirit from the means of grace, everything that the Spirit works in the believer through the gospel is attributed to the immediate “baptism in the Spirit.” Such “baptism in the Spirit” is believed to manifest itself by the charismatic gift of tongues, which is nothing more than self-induced gibberish. Thus an auto- or mass- or “spirit”-induced “baptism in the Holy Spirit” replaces the baptism instituted by Jesus whereby the Spirit creates faith in Jesus as Savior and gives Himself and His sanctifying gifts to the baptized person, distributing His charismatic gifts individually as He wills.

2. Charismatics assert that “the baptism in the Holy Spirit always results in significant changes in the theology of those who receive it, for the overwhelming reality of the Holy Spirit tends to make many previously held beliefs and doctrines insignificant” (Don Basham, *A Handbook On Holy Spirit Baptism*, p. 60). That statement in itself reveals the heretical nature of the charismatic movement, which is shamelessly but unavoidably unionistic. On the one hand it has asserted with emphasis that “**Any testimony concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit which omits glorifying Jesus Christ as Savior and Baptizer is incomplete**” (p. 151). But the Jesus Christ who is confessed is separated from His word and so becomes a figment in the imagination of the charismatics. The Jesus Christ who bids all believers to abide in His Word (John 8:31). The Spirit-filled Church at Jerusalem is described by the Spirit as continuing “in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (Acts 2:42). The Holy Spirit, whom the charismatics claim to receive from Jesus, was described by Jesus as being “the Spirit of truth,” whose work it is to “guide you into all truth” (John 14:17; 16:13)—not make you disdainful of the truth! There is ONE Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:4). There is ONE Truth: “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). There is ONE who is Truth: “I am the Truth” (John 14:6). Any spirit who leads people to consider the truth insignificant, who leads people to disobey the truth, who thus places himself above the truth is NOT the Holy Spirit, but some spirit from the abyss.

3. Charismatics detach the Holy Spirit from the word. They thereby open the floodgates for all the non-Christian spirits that Satan has bred down through the ages—Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, the New Age Movement with its endless train of gurus. It will take the evil genius of the Great Antichrist with his worldwide organization to round up all these spirits under one banner. The only remedy will be the judgment that the Rider of the White Horse will bring from heaven (Rev. 19:11-16).

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## Pantheism in the Environmental Movement

*Stephen C. F. Kurtzahn*

### INTRODUCTION

If you have listened to the radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh for any length of time, you have heard all about “environmentalist wackos.” Rush’s “Animal Rights Update” begins with the song “Born Free,” but in the background you hear the sounds of gunshots and screeching animals. In speaking of environmental concerns, Rush really inveighs against the radical views of the organization PETA, which stands for “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.”

I was unfamiliar with the extremist views of many environmentalists until I started listening to Rush. I realize that many are turned off by this radio personality’s extremism in dealing with such issues as the environmental movement. But Mr. Limbaugh is trying to be entertaining as well as make his point—along with a few bucks to boot.

I never really thought about such issues before listening to this radio program, but now I try to read between the lines of today’s headlines: Why are the jobs of hardworking men and women in the timber industry of the Pacific Northwest disappearing over an owl of all things? Why do men and women walk around wearing sweat-shirts and T-shirts which read, “Animals Are People with Fur”? Are they just trying to be cute, or is there a subtle message being proclaimed? Why is there so much talk about the pain and suffering animals endure when they are used for medical testing to find cures for human ailments, but not a word is mentioned of the agony a pre-born human endures during the abortion procedure? Why do animal-

rights activists sneak up on unknowing women wearing fur coats and drench them with paint or ink? Why is there so much concern about eating “dolphin-free” tuna? Why the bumper sticker, “Save the Whales”? The answer to many, if not most of these questions, can be found in the fact that pantheism has permeated a great deal of the modern environmentalist movement.

#### WHAT IS PANTHEISM?

“Pantheism” is a term that describes a philosophy which has been around since the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. Pantheism, put simply, is the belief that the universe and everything in it is God, and that there is no God but the “combined substance, forces, and laws that are manifested in the existing universe.”<sup>1</sup>

Listen as the Spirit speaks through Paul of the pantheism of unbelieving natural man in Romans 1:22-25:

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

From a secular perspective, Vice President Al Gore describes for us the pantheism of early humanity as he writes in *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*:

The spiritual sense of our place in nature predates Native American cultures; increasingly it can be traced to the origins of human civilization. A growing number of anthropologists and archaeomythologists, such as Marija Gimbutas and Riane Eisler, argue that the prevailing ideology of belief in prehistoric Europe and much of the world was based on the worship of a single earth goddess, who was to be assumed to be the fount of all life and who radiated harmony among all living things.<sup>2</sup>

Pantheism of one kind or another can be found in Buddhist and Hindu teachings. In fact, it is deeply embedded in the VEDAS, the UPANISADS, and the BHAGAVADGITA.

In the LOTUS “SUTRA,” Buddha is presented metaphorically as a “rain cloud,” covering, permeating, fertilizing, and enriching “all parched living beings, to free them from their misery to attain the joy of peace, joy of the present world and joy of Nirvana . . .”<sup>3</sup>

One modern Hindu environmentalist, Dr. Karan Singh, regularly cites the ancient Hindu dictum, “The earth is our mother, and we are all her children.” And in the ATHARVAVEDA, the prayer for peace emphasized the links between humankind and all creation, “Supreme Lord, let there be peace in the sky and in the atmosphere, peace in the plant world and in the forests; let the cosmic powers be peaceful; let Brahma be peaceful; let there be undiluted and fulfilling peace everywhere.”<sup>4</sup>

. . . Hinduism treats all life as sacred. Hindus refuse to eat meat or even kill flies or mosquitoes . . . [India’s] laws and traditions prohibited any action by farmers or shopkeepers against monkeys, sacred cattle and other animals that foraged on farm land or vegetable stands.<sup>5</sup>

But it was the Jewish rationalist Benedict Spinoza (1632-77) who really developed what we call modern pantheistic philosophy. He claimed that God and Nature are but two names for one identical reality.<sup>6</sup>

We need to recognize here that pantheism today goes under the guise and name of the New Age Movement. And much of what is considered “New Age” is actually just occult beliefs and practices, very often bordering on devil worship.<sup>7</sup>

#### PANTHEISM IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

No one should argue with us that pantheism has infiltrated the environmental movement. This fact seems to be accepted by people on both sides of the issue:

Last year’s three-day ‘Healing Mother Earth’ exposition in Manhattan was the biggest New Age fair east of the Mississippi.<sup>8</sup>

Animal rights proponents take a more pantheistic view of nature. They believe nature is divine and animals reflect that divinity . . . “One of the results of pantheism is the blurring of the lines between animal and human life.”<sup>9</sup>

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro . . . likely will stand as the first celebration of a new synthesis of world religions . . . Most religious input came via the conference’s Global Forum, the nongovernmental meeting held on nearby Flamengo Beach. The majority of talk there, however, sounded more like vague pantheism than Christianity.<sup>10</sup>

The leading historian of American environmentalism, Roderick Nash, finds that the “recent concern for nature” is characterized by a “quasi-religious fervor.” Contemporary “eco-theologians” preach the message of a new “gospel of ecology.”<sup>11</sup>

Many of these people have replaced religion with secular environmentalism. Some of them even worship the earth goddess Gaia. When they get together, their gatherings take on the air of a religious revival meeting.<sup>12</sup>

I used to think that environmentalists were a bunch of political liberals who were just using a different angle to advance their cause. Some of that goes on. But it goes beyond merely advancing liberalism. There are two groups of people that have made environmentalism their new home: socialists and enviro-religious fanatics. . . . The second group that has latched on to the environmental movement are people who believe it as a religion; that God is the earth and that God is nothing more than the earth. Actually, it is a modern form of pantheism, where nature is divine.<sup>13</sup>

How has this happened? How could such paganism infiltrate a cause so noble as preserving the environment? Some have blamed Christianity for the destruction of nature, because of God’s command in Genesis to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to have dominion over the animal kingdom (Gen. 1:28). And so they turn away from Christ and His Word. In reporting on the Global Forum which took place at the Earth Summit in Brazil, Loren Wilkenson of *Christianity Today* reported:

. . . the Christian presence at the forum was swamped by a plethora of feminist, universalist, and monist groups, who argued that a new religious paradigm must replace the old one, which was shaped by patriarchy, capitalism, theism, and Christianity. Many blamed the “old paradigm” for the environment’s destruction.<sup>14</sup>

Others claim that a new religion is needed to meet our global needs as we enter the 21st Century. Even Al Gore seems to support such a view:

This point was made by the Catholic theologian Teilhard de Chardin when he said, “The fate of mankind, as well as of religion, depends upon the emergence of a new faith in the future.” Armed with such a faith, we might find it possible to resanctify the earth, identify it as God’s creation, and accept our responsibility to protect and defend it.<sup>15</sup>

In speaking such words I’m surprised Al Gore can dare call himself a Southern Baptist!

But the real reason Americans, as well as others, have embraced pantheism in the environmental movement, is because of the downfall of New Testament, biblical Christianity in our mainline denominations. One example of this occurred in Brazil:

An all-night vigil held there on June 4 opened with “invocations of the sacred” by some 30 religions, and concluded with an address by the Dalai Lama and a Hare Krishna mantra. On another occasion, a large contingent from the United Church of Christ joined with members of several other religions in a demonstration, which opened with the singing of the hymn, “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”—substituting the word “earth” for “Lord.”<sup>16</sup>

This downfall has also been recognized by others:

The spiritual vacuum left by . . . the decline of mainline religion has been filled by a paganism which was never far below the surface of Western civilization—a perfect illustration of Chesterton’s dictum, “When men stop believing in God, they don’t believe in nothing; they believe in everything.”<sup>17</sup>

What is new is the lingering spiritual upheaval of the Sixties, which left a lot of traditional views in shambles, without offering much to replace them, and the American- style marketing of the occult.<sup>18</sup>

William McKibben, in his much noted recent book, *The End Of Nature*, acknowledges that a pervasive “crisis of belief” exists in our time, which has started to lead “many people, including me . . . [to] overcome it to a greater or lesser degree by locating God in nature.”<sup>19</sup>

In my opinion, at the root of the assertion that animals have rights is the belief that animals and men are equal in creation, that man evolved from apes, and that creation is an allegorical myth contained in that wonderful piece of literature known as the Bible. There is no escaping the connection between secular humanism and animal rights activism.<sup>20</sup>

As we consider such modern pagan views, it would do us good to remember these words of Holy Scripture:

Isaiah 8:19-20: “And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” [We mention this verse especially in connection with the fact that occult practices as well as New Age ideas have permeated environmentalism.]

1 Timothy 4:1-5: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” [We can especially use this verse when dealing with those fanatic vegetarians who feel we are eating our “brothers and sisters” when we consume meat.]

2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

#### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GOD AND NATURE?

God’s Word, the Bible, teaches us that the Triune God created this world and universe in six days, and that the crowning jewel of His creation was man—Adam and Eve. This universe was created perfect and human beings were made in the image of God. But man ruined this perfection and lost for himself the image of God when he fell into sin at the temptation of Satan. Our rescue is found only in the Seed of the woman, our Savior Jesus Christ, who was promised to crush the head of Satan (Gen. ch. 1-3). Cf. also Psalm 24:1-2: “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters”; John 1:3: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”; Colossians 1:16: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

After the great Flood The Lord also commanded Noah to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Animals were given a fear of men as a protective device for human beings. The Lord also gave people permission to eat meat for the very first time (Gen. 9:1-4).

Permission to eat animals was also implied when Peter was given the vision of the unclean animals being lowered on a sheet and he was commanded by God to eat. We recognize that the vision was especially given to Peter to make him understand that Gentile believers were also to be received into Christ’s Church (Acts 10:10-15).

But even though we have been given dominion over creation and have been permitted by the Creator to eat plants and animals, God still has care and concern for what He has made. Cf. Psalm 145:9: “The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works”; Proverbs 12:10: “A righteous man regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel”; Matthew 6:28-29: “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”; Matthew 10:29-31: “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows”; 1 Corinthians 9:9, “For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’”

The Bible also teaches that nature reveals to us the fact that there exists a wise and powerful God (what we refer to in dogmatics as “the natural knowledge of God”): Romans 1:19-20: “Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Also cf. Psalm 8:3-9: “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen; Even the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!”; Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork”; also Psalm 104.

As with all of God’s gifts which He has bestowed upon us, we are to be good stewards. This means that Christians are to be concerned about nature and the environment, we are to take care of the world around us, we are to make the best use of it all—for the glory of our God and Savior! Cf. Jesus’ parable on the wise and good stewards (Matt. 25:14-30).

The Bible also teaches that God is in nature—but not in the sense the pantheist thinks of. God is everywhere. He is “omnipresent.” Paul told the Greeks in Athens that “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The apostle also tells us of the glorified Christ in Ephesians 1:22-23: “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”<sup>21</sup>

But the passage which has provoked the most discussion about nature among Christians is that found in Romans chapter 8. The Spirit shows us through Paul that even nature awaits the eternal deliverance of Christ on the Last Day. This passage can offer a great deal of comfort for those who have grown close to their pets which have died. Will animals be in heaven? It appears to be implied in these words. It is cruel to tell our members who have lost pets they have loved (especially the very young and the very old) that they will categorically NOT be in heaven, simply because the Bible doesn’t come right out and comment on the subject. But let’s allow the Spirit to speak: “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:19-23.22

Nature is beautiful. The creation which God has given to us is a blessing to be enjoyed, utilized and preserved. But may we not confuse creation with the Creator! And may we end this discussion on the environment with the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 148:1-5:

“Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.”

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>2</sup> Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992) 260.

<sup>3</sup> Gore 261.

<sup>4</sup> Gore 261.

<sup>5</sup> “Ethics and Human Rights,” *Houston Chronicle* 27 July 1991.

<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. John Wauck, "Paganism, American Style," *National Review* 19 March 1990: "After the ceremonial dagger, black mass vestments, phallic candles, and human bone earrings, the black cat wasn't strictly necessary, but there it was, basking in the windowless gloom at the back of The Magickal Child, Manhattan's so-called 'hard-core New Age' store."

<sup>8</sup> Wauck.

<sup>9</sup> *Houston Chronicle*.

<sup>10</sup> Loren Wilkenson, "Earth Summit: Searching for a Spiritual Foundation," *Christianity Today* 20 July 1992: 48.

<sup>11</sup> Robert H. Nelson, "Tom Hayden, Meet Adam Smith and Thomas Aquinas," *Forbes* 29 October 1990: 94.

<sup>12</sup> Rush Limbaugh, *The Way Things Ought to Be* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992) 158.

<sup>13</sup> Limbaugh 166.

<sup>14</sup> Wilkenson.

<sup>15</sup> Gore 263.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkenson.

<sup>17</sup> Wauck.

<sup>18</sup> Wauck.

<sup>19</sup> Nelson.

<sup>20</sup> Limbaugh 104.

<sup>21</sup> For a "refresher" on this subject it would do us good to review the section entitled the "Omnipresence of God," in Franz Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950) 1: 442-445. We would especially draw your attention to the following: ". . . God's omnipresence is of such a nature that while He is present in all creatures, He is at the same time outside of the creature and never becomes the creature or even a part of the creature" (443).

"The doctrine of God's omnipresence is a practical doctrine. 1) It is revealed for our warning, for there is no place where God does not see us (Jer. 23:24) . . . 2) God's omnipresence is consoling. No place or space separates us from His loving protection. We need fear no evil in the dark valley (Ps. 23:4). Christ is with His disciples unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:20)" (445).

<sup>22</sup> A book which has become popular lately, especially among Reformed "Evangelicals," is Tony Campolo's *How to Rescue Earth Without Worshiping Nature* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992). He spends a lot of time speaking of the Eastern Orthodox viewpoint of God's plan of salvation. I cannot tell you whether or not he is representing it correctly, but it goes something like this: In John 3:16 when the Spirit says, "God so loved the WORLD," He's referring to the whole world—people as well as nature. Campolo also writes concerning the Eastern Orthodox viewpoint: "When Jesus conquered Satan, He not only provided for our deliverance from eternal death, He also initiated the freeing of nature from the evil effects of Satan's work. The ultimate result of the work of Christ is that all of nature and all of humanity will be giving God glory and worshiping Him throughout all eternity" (39). Overall, this is NOT a book I would recommend for our people. Campolo is blatantly premillennial; he appears to accept Darwin's theory of evolution, and he seems to have swallowed many of the fallacies which are being promoted by the modern environmental movement.

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## Psalm 51 Sermon Series

*Paul Fleischer*

Editor's Note. This series was originally started in the issues of March and June, 1993. We now hope to continue it to the end. We apologize for the long hiatus! — J.L.

**Psalm 51:3-4**

**“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight--that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”**

In the first two meditations on this penitential Psalm we confined our thoughts to the petitions of King David in the first two verses. In these he pleads for God’s mercy and compassion, begging God to blot out, wash, and cleanse him from his sins. David has in mind chiefly his sin against Uriah and Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, with whom the king had committed adultery.

But notice that David does not mention these specific sins anywhere in this Psalm. This teaches us that it is not necessary to enumerate or catalog our sins such as Roman Catholics are taught to do in their “auricular confession” to the priest. That is something which the conscientious, conscious sinner soon realizes is a hopeless, endless task. God too knows this, which is why He does not demand of us that we keep a running account of our daily sins. If, however, there is one whose conscience is burdened with a particular sin or sins, that one may indeed desire to confess it to his pastor and receive personal and individual assurance of forgiveness.

If it is not expected that we name or recite specific sins, it is expected that we include a confession of our sins and sinfulness in a general confession. We do this every Sunday, do we not? We confess that we are sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against God in thoughts, words, and actions. On Communion Sundays we confess that we are poor, miserable sinners and that we have ever offended God and justly deserved His temporal and eternal punishment. Such a general confession is in place. Dr. Luther explains in the catechism: “Before God we should confess all sins as we do in the Lord’s Prayer, but before the minister we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.”

Let there be no question that confession of sins is necessary before we can be assured of God’s forgiveness. Again, as Luther says, “Confession embraces two parts, the one is that we confess our sins, and the other that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the minister as from God Himself, in no wise doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven.” What we have in these 3rd and 4th verses of our Psalm is a sincere confession of sin by the penitent King. We need to study this carefully for, on the one hand, confession of sins does not come naturally to our stubborn flesh; on the other hand, we can easily lapse into some superficial ideas about confession. So let us look at

#### “David’s Confession Of Sin”

##### I. “For I acknowledge my transgressions...”

One indispensable requirement for receiving the mercy of God is a knowledge of sin. The first thing God requires and desires is that the sinner acknowledge himself to be both guilty and lost, that sin has made him worthy of punishment and that God would be entirely just to cast him away. The sinner needs to realize that by himself he cannot do anything to cover or take away his sin. Is it not the case that far too many sinners are taking pains to make themselves as pious and earnest as they possibly can in the presence of God, thus imagining that in this way they will receive God’s mercy? But no, God desires nothing more than that we acknowledge our sin and cast ourselves down before Him as guilty sinners.

That the sinner has a natural aversion to such confession is illustrated in the case of David himself. We have spoken of how it was almost a year before the king finally admitted he had committed this sin. Can’t you imagine how his human ingenuity sought to quell his anxious conscience during those months? He went about life “as usual,” so to speak, but peace with God was absent until, as he wrote in the 32nd psalm: “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” Notice the words: “I said, I will confess...” That is part of our liturgy every Sunday, isn’t it? Sin separates from God. Sin will not go away of itself. Sin must be confessed. “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov. 28:13)

A young woman who suffered a serious nervous breakdown had worshiped regularly in church. She had prayed and attended the Lord’s Supper. Nothing the physicians could do helped her. She went to her pastor for counsel. He helped her to realize that she was carrying an unrelieved burden of guilt feelings caused by sin. She had never fully believed God’s promises of forgiveness. She had accepted the reality of



sin but not the reality of grace and forgiveness. But, you see, the two belong together. Carrying a silent burden of guilt is no way of dealing with sin, neither is putting on a bold front and, in effect, denying sin. David tried both ways and found that neither one worked, but his unconfessed and unforgiven sin gnawed at his vital parts until he opened his heart wide to his forgiving God and prayed our psalm.

Earlier we used the term “conscious” sinners. Luther explains that there are two kinds of sinners, conscious and unconscious, or holy and hypocritical sinners. Conscious or “holy” sinners are those who, like David, have learned the futility of covering their sin but who acknowledge it; unconscious or hypocritical sinners are those who are smug regarding sin, seeking to hide or cover it from God. For many months David was an unconscious sinner, until God Himself made David’s sin known to him so that he acknowledged it. Beware of the danger of sin to blind the heart! Pray that God, through His Spirit, would convict you of sin. Let this be your confession, with Job: “Make me to know my transgression and my sin” (13:23).

## II. “...And my sin is ever before me...”

“**My sin is ever before me.**” It was not just the actual sins he had committed that David could not forget, but rather the fact of his sinfulness. According to our human nature we are “sinful and unclean.” We carry our sinfulness with us every moment of the day. We need to realize this well, chiefly because this is how God sees us. In every moment His holy eyes are fixed upon us, this is what He sees in us, our sin. Is it not, therefore, important that we see ourselves as God sees us!? In every prayer for grace that we make, God looks to see whether we admit our sins and sinfulness; whether we thus know how to receive and value the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Notice the personal accountability David reveals throughout this psalm: “Have mercy UPON ME, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out MY transgressions. Wash ME thoroughly from MY iniquity, and cleanse ME from MY sin. For I acknowledge MY transgressions, and MY sin is ever before ME...” There is no attempt to fault others, to excuse self, to blame the circumstances. What he had done, HE had done!

A common danger confronting us is the universality of sin, as though since all people are sinners, therefore the guilt of each individual sinner is lessened. If this is what we have in mind when we confess our sins we are being dangerously superficial. Then it is natural for us to conclude that there are others that are still greater sinners than we are and they are forgiven. So why should there not be enough forgiveness and grace also for me? That kind of thinking is common to such who are not properly conscious of personal sin, and who are likely not willing to say with David: “**My sin is ever before me.**”

## III. “Against You, You only, have I sinned...”

In this verse David confesses that which makes his sin so grievous. It was not that it was against Uriah or Bathsheba, but rather that it was against God. Isn’t it true that the thing which often makes a particular crime so hateful depends on the person against whom it is committed? The same sin is considered more wicked if it is against a master than against a servant, against a President than against a commoner. So the grievousness of sin is that it has been committed against God—the Holy and Perfect One, the King and Creator of heaven and earth. Is He not, furthermore, the One who has revealed Himself as the God of love in Christ Jesus His Son, our Savior? Is He not the One before whom we shall all stand one day face to face in eternal judgment?

In spite of the greatness of this, our God, the sinner exalts and chooses his own will above God’s. The sinner has revolted against God, the highest perfection, provoking the just wrath of God. Doesn’t this indeed make fitting the title of “worms” as we sing in the hymn: “Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?” And yet, though this is the proper indictment of our sin, how little thought is given to it. Too often, rather than weeping Peter’s tears of godly sorrow, sinners are tempted to view their sins as something they have done against their own happiness. This was Judas’ fault, wasn’t it? He sorrowed, but it was the sorrow of death which led him to suicide.

Commenting on this verse Dr. Luther says; “Only and solely against Thee do I sin. In Thy sight I am nothing but a sinner. Before Thy judgment I boast of no merit or righteousness, but I acknowledge that I am a sinner, and implore Thy mercy . . .” And he goes on: “These two principal teachings of Scripture are set

down here: first, that our whole nature is condemned and destroyed by sin and cannot emerge from this calamity and death by its own powers or efforts; second, that God alone is righteous.” Every Sunday in the Gloria in Excelsis we sing those words: “Thou only art holy . . .” If this is true, and it is, we can boast of no merit or righteousness of our own. And this is true even if it is to be granted “that you are undefiled by a certain crime,” says Luther, “. . . yet you are godless. If you have not committed the sin which another has committed, he has not committed the sin which you have committed, and so they cancel each other out.”

When I served a pastorate in Michigan some years back, I ministered to a dying man in a hospital room. I spoke to him of the full forgiveness of all his sins which Jesus had won for him on the cross. When I was finished with my message of comfort to the poor, dying soul and was preparing to leave, his wife who was with us in the room stepped to his bedside and remarked: “Don’t worry, dear, your sins weren’t all that bad.” — This really happened, dear friends. I was shocked. With one breath this wife (who was unchurched) had attempted to rob this poor husband of hers the comfort which only Jesus’ blood and righteousness can afford. I prayed that the husband, who soon died, fell asleep in the comfort of the Gospel I had brought to him.

IV. “And done this evil in Your sight— that You may be found just when You speak,  
and blameless when You judge.”

God is the final judge of all, and His judgment upon sin and unforgiven sinners must, and will, be justified. How does God judge sin: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Gal. 3:10). “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:4). “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire . . .” (Matt. 25:41). Those who know the true nature of all sin, of their own sin, know that God is perfectly entitled to condemn the sinner. So it was that David said these words, justifying God’s sentence upon him.

It is interesting to notice that David’s life, outside of this one instance of Uriah, was “right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (I Kings 15:5). Couldn’t God then have overlooked this one thoughtless sin? Must God deal so harshly with David for one lapse? Ah yes, confessed the king, I confess that I have done this that You, Lord, might be justified in your judging me. Then, but then only, did He find grace to cover all his sins and sinfulness—in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, who “was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities” as Isaiah writes.

Fellow sinners, redeemed by the blood of Christ, away then with all excuses for sin. “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one . . . that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:10ff.). Amen.

Prayer of Dr. Luther “for a true acknowledgement of sin”:

Dear Lord God, that I am a sinner before you is as real as my conception; my birth, my nature, my thoughts, words, works, and my entire being are sinful. I am a corrupt tree and by nature a child of sin and wrath. As long as this nature remains with us we are sinners and must say: Forgive us our debts. So I confess what you command, in order that you may be just when you judge. Lord, I am an evil-doer and a sinner against your divine commandment. You help me, for I am helpless. Amen.

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## **BOOK REVIEW**

*Christian Research Journal*, a quarterly publication of the Christian Research Institute, founded by Walter R. Martin (1928-1989). Address: P O Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693.

This is not a new publication, since the Spring/Summer 1994 issue is #1 of Volume 17. But we have just begun to receive it in our seminary library, and so it is new to us. The editor says that over the past four years subscriptions have grown from 5,500 to 24,000, and that the overall circulation is now around 33,000.

After examining two issues we are ready to say that the information supplied in this publication should be helpful to our pastors and teachers in discussions of various non-Christian religions and organizations. We are living in a pluralistic society where our neighbors may very well be adherents of non-Christian cults or churches on the fringes of Christianity. It is hard to keep up with all the changes. This publication should help us update our information and help prevent us from distributing outdated material.

The two issues in my hands at the moment feature research articles on the Masonic lodge, the relationship between the martial arts and non-Christian religions, the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, the Worldwide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong), Buddhism in North America, the differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, capital punishment, and David Koresh, plus book reviews, news updates, and editorial opinions.

The standpoint from which all of these things are examined is conservative Protestantism. Their masthead says: "The JOURNAL is dedicated to furthering the proclamation and defense of the historic gospel of Jesus Christ, and to facilitating His people's growth in sound doctrine and spiritual discernment." It speaks of Christians grounding "their faith and values in the objective, reliable testimony of Holy Scripture."

We cannot, of course, expect a publication such as this to be in agreement with confessional Lutheranism. Although the editor understands that Christians should not practice fellowship with non-Christians, he does not understand that the errors of "Christian" denominations are also from the devil and that therefore also such errorists are to be avoided, according to Romans 16:17-18. For further elaboration of this point consult *Concerning Church Fellowship*, a doctrinal statement of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

As an example of what we mean, let me cite the editor's viewpoint article in the Spring/Summer 1994 issue. The article has the heading: "Should Christians Join in Interfaith Communion?" The kind of interfaith communion that is discussed is communion between Christians and non-Christians. The editor concludes that "a Christian cannot in good conscience join in interfaith communion" because of the many Scriptural warnings against idolatry. We might think that no confessing Christian could answer this question in any other way. Nevertheless, the editor testifies that "at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago" "several representatives from evangelical and otherwise conservative Christian traditions participated in interfaith fellowship, both on stage and in the audience."

Does this not clearly illustrate the truth the Apostle Paul stated so clearly in Galatians 5:9 and Second Timothy 2:17? "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." "Their message will spread like cancer." Unionism, the practice of church fellowship with adherents of doctrinal error, eventually leads to syncretism and blatant idolatry. We notice that, although the editor warns against uniting with Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and "even Islam," he does not speak clearly against fellowship with Judaism.

Does this mean that he approves of interfaith communion between Christians and Jews, a practice which is becoming increasingly common? If so, we believe that the editor and his publication have already abandoned Scriptural principles on the question at issue.

Nevertheless, we believe that our pastors and teachers can profit by making discriminating use of the research and information provided by *Christian Research Journal*. I intend to make use of it in order to update the material I teach in the courses on comparative religions.

— David Lau