

THE HOLY SPIRIT
AND
HIS GIFTS

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The Holy Spirit and His Gifts

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LESSON I

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. When Jesus commanded His disciples to go into the whole world, he told them to teach and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Here we see that Jesus is placing the Holy Spirit on the same level with Himself and the Father.

The Holy Spirit is called God

St. Paul told the Corinthian Christians that they were the temple of God because the Holy Spirit was living in them (1 Cor. 3:16; read also 1 Cor. 6:19 and 2 Cor. 6:16). The Holy Spirit is clearly called God who lives in us. Do you remember what Peter told Ananias? Read Acts 5:4.

There are a number of Bible passages that speak of the trinity. These passages place the Holy Spirit at the same level with the Father and the Son as did Jesus in His mission command. Let us read some of these: 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 4:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14.

Study the Bible

Read Hebrews 9:14

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1 Cor. 2:11

What does the Holy Spirit know?

John 14:26

What would the Holy Spirit do for the disciples?

John 15:26

What will the Holy Spirit do?

John 16:7-11

What three things will the Holy Spirit convict the world of?

Rom. 8:27

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

1 Cor. 12:7-11

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

Rom. 15:30

What is another gift of the Spirit?

Eph. 4:30

What do we do to the Spirit by sinning?

Rom. 8:26-27

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

Acts 28:25

What did Paul say the Holy Spirit did?

Rev. 2:7,11,17,29

What promises did the Holy Spirit give?

Acts 2:4

What gift did the Holy Spirit give?

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1 Cor. 2:13

What did Paul teach about the Spirit's work?

Acts 13:1-4

What did the Holy Spirit order the church to do?

What do the following passages say about the Holy Spirit?

Acts 16:6-7

Acts 20:23

Acts 21:11

Acts 15:28

Acts 20:28

We can see from our Bible Study that the Holy Spirit is not only a power or emotion as some would have us believe. He is a personal being. We owe our salvation to Him. There is no better way one can summarize the work of the third person of the Godhead than in the words of Luther:

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to Him;

But the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith;

In like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on the earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith;

In which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers;

And will at the last day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life.

This is most certainly true."

Let us keep in mind these words of Luther as we continue to study the third person of the Godhead, the HOLY SPIRIT.

For Pastors

1. Why is the Spirit called "Holy"?
2. Do you know of any churches which deny the deity of the Holy Spirit? What do such churches teach about the Holy Spirit?
3. How is the Holy Spirit translated into your language? Is this an adequate translation? Explain.
4. Why is the Holy Spirit called the Third person of the trinity?.. Why not first or second? What do we mean by the term "person"?
5. What does the Athanasian Creed teach about the Holy Spirit?

LESSON II

The work of the Holy Spirit

Today we are going to discuss how the Holy Spirit does His work, and by doing so we will see what is the most important "gift of the Spirit." The Lord Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the "Counselor" (NIV) or the "Helper" (GNB; John 14:16, 26). This is because His work is to help sinners. He does this by converting the heart of the sinner from one of unbelief to one of faith. The Spirit changes a person from being an enemy of God to being God's friend (Rom. 5:10-11), yes even a child of God (Rom. 7:15-16). This work of conversion is really the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift that Charismatics do not fully appreciate, as we shall see.

In order to carry out the work of conversion, the Holy Spirit must first convict people of their sin (John 16:8). In order to convict people of their sin, the Holy Spirit uses the Law, the Ten Commandments. He uses the Law in two ways: First, He lays down God's demands, that is, what God expects of all people. Secondly, He shows how people cannot stand up to the demands of God.

Study the Bible

Read Matthew 5:48

How should man be? *perfect*

Read Lev. 19:2

What is expected of man in this verse? *holy*

This is what God expects of all people, and He threatens to punish all those who are not like He expects.

Now read James 2:10

If a man tries to keep the law but fails in one point, what is he guilty of?

Read Rom. 3:23

What are all people before God?

Read Gal. 3:11

Can any man, then, be saved by the Law?

When man realizes that he cannot live up to the standard that God expects of him, and that the Law very clearly states that he is a sinner, man is led to despair and cries out, "What can I do to be saved?" This is what we call "contrition." Contrition is the sorrow of the sinner over the fact that he has sinned and grieved God. This sorrow leads him to seek forgiveness and help.

PART II

Now we are going to see how the Holy Spirit does His work of helping. We are going to see how the Holy Spirit calls men by the gospel. We will see how he enlightens them with His gifts, that is, by working faith in their hearts. We will see how He operates.

Read Lk. 14:17

What are people asked to do here? *come*

Read Isaiah 55:3

If people listen, what is God's promise to them? *life*

Read Isaiah 44:22

What conditions are imposed on those who want to follow this invitation?

The Holy Spirit calls men by the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news of our salvation. This invitation is free, that is, it is by God's grace that we are invited. This invitation is sincere in every case, no matter who reads or hears it. Even those who refuse to accept it are sincerely called (Rom. 10:21; Matthew 23:37).

This invitation is always efficacious, that is, because of the blessings it freely offers and because of the power of God operating through it, it is always able to work acceptance in the hearts of men.

Now read 1 Peter 2:9

Out of what were we called?

Read 2 Cor. 4:6

What has God done to us?

God calls us out of darkness, that is, out of spiritual ignorance, into His light, that is spiritual knowledge and faith in His promises.

How does the Holy Spirit do the work of inviting and enlightening people? By what means does He do this?

Read John 17:17

What does Jesus call the Word of God here?

Read Rom. 10:17

How does faith come?

Read 1 Pet. 1:23

What has happened to us?

Read James 1:18

How have we been born?

Read Titus 3:5

How can one enter the kingdom of God?

Read Acts 2:38

How do we receive the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 7:51

Who do we reject when we don't listen to the words of God?

Here we see that the Holy Spirit employs means through which He works. Through these means He works and preserves faith in men's hearts. These means are the Gospel as proclaimed in the Word of God and the Sacraments. In this lesson we have seen how the helper, who is the Holy Spirit, first uses the Law to convict people of their sins. When people have a contrite heart, He then comforts them with the gospel message of forgiveness. He does this by inviting them to come to Christ and by working faith in their hearts. This is the work we call conversion. It is the greatest and most necessary gift of the Spirit!

For Pastors

1. What part does man play in the process of conversion?
2. Why do we call the gospel in word and sacraments the "Means of Grace?"
3. What is the difference between these "means?"
4. Do a word study of *paraklētos*. What is the best translation of this word in English, In YL?
5. What does it mean to be "born again" (John 3:3-8)?

LESSON III
(S. W. Becker)

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The twentieth century has seen the rise of Pentecostalism and Neopentecostalism or, as it is also called, the Charismatic movement. At first glance, it may seem that this renewed emphasis on the Holy Spirit and His work must be a real blessing to the church. We must remember, however, that the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ (John 16:3-5) and to testify of Him (John 15-26), and wherever Christ is preached the work of the Holy Spirit is being done. Moreover, it is certainly not pleasing to God when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are brought into the limelight and His really important activities are downgraded. This is exactly what happens in the various forms of Pentecostalism.

Many sincere people are impressed by the missionary zeal and the manifest piety of the charismatic Christians. But if we are to evaluate the Pentecostal movement correctly, we must judge by the standards of Scripture and not by outward appearance. Missionary zeal is not a valid basis for judgment. Jesus condemned the Jewish leaders for their missionary activity, saying that they were willing to travel around the world to make one convert, but that their converts were worse off than they had been before their conversion to Judaism (Matthew 23:15).

Neither is religious fervor a valid basis for judgment. St. Paul testifies to the outward piety of his fellow Jews, yet he says that they are wrong (Rom. 10:1-3). The Pharisees were very pious people, yet Jesus condemned their piety as outward show (Matthew 23:27). The kings of Judah who are denounced most severely in the Old Testament are those who were outwardly the most religious. Ahaz, who is characterized as one of the worst kings of Judah, built altars in "every corner of Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 28:24).

We need to keep in mind that movements in the church which appear pious and religious may actually be works of the devil. St. Paul says, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great surprise if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

We will never be able to form a correct judgment in regard to the charismatic movement unless we understand clearly what the basic gift which the Holy Spirit gives to every Christian and which must precede every other gift. It is the gift of conversion, by which we are brought to faith, made partakers of the forgiveness of sins, and enabled to love God and to serve Him with a life sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We discussed this gift in our last lesson.

This is the foundation on which the discussion of the other spiritual gifts must be based, and this is where Paul begins when he instructs the Corinthians concerning the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:14. The Corinthians had asked Paul about these spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 7:1, 12:1). In answer, Paul says first of all that the honest confession that Jesus Christ is our Lord, who has redeemed us with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, is the primary and infallible test of the Spirit's presence in our hearts and of His work in our lives (1 Cor. 12:1-3). Every other gift of the Holy Spirit follows this all-important gift, in which all true children of God share.

The other gifts of the Spirit are not given to all Christians. They are parceled out to individual believers according to the will of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-11). The Spirit who distributes to God's people of various times and places such diversities of gifts is always the same Spirit who has taught us in true faith to call Jesus our Lord and Savior (1 Cor. 12:11). And we must constantly be mindful of this that the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is the one thing that natural man, dead in trespasses and sins, cannot do. Missionary zeal can be encouraged and developed where the Spirit of God is wholly absent. Emotional outbursts of spiritual fervor are found also in heathen religions (1 Cor. 12:2). But no man can honestly say that Jesus is Lord, no one can recognize Jesus as his redeemer, without the Holy Spirit.

That fact must always be kept in prominent view if we are to evaluate the charismatic movement correctly. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that doing what Jesus commands is the best confession of His Lordship (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).

If we always remember what a miracle of grace was performed in us and for us by the Holy Spirit when He converted us and brought us to Jesus, we will not be unduly impressed by what appear to be so much more significant and miraculous things. On the other hand, if we believe, as so many Pentecostals do, that faith is a decision that we make in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit converts only those who are willing to be converted, then, without those extraordinary signs that are always sought by an evil and adulterous generation, we will have a hard time deciding whether or not the Holy Spirit has really come to live in our hearts.

Charismatics generally view glossolalia, or the gift of speaking with tongues, as the most significant of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. One Pentecostal denomination, for example, says that speaking in tongues is the "initial physical evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And it is not uncommon to read in Pentecostal literature that all those who are truly baptized by the Spirit will speak with tongues.

Yet Paul says all the Corinthian Christians were baptized by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), but that not all of them spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). Paul's discussion of this whole question in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14, makes it obvious that faith, love, and hope are the greatest and most enduring gifts of the Spirit and that speaking in tongues is relatively unimportant. In fact, speaking in tongues is mentioned in only five passages of the Bible: once, very briefly, in Mark 16, three times in the Book of Acts 2:10, 19, and once in 1 Cor. 12:14. Pentecostals insist that we must assume that every time the Book of Acts mentions that people were filled with the Holy Spirit that they spoke with tongues, but there is absolutely no Biblical evidence of any kind for this conclusion.

There is no agreement among charismatics in regard to the question of exactly what is meant by speaking in tongues. Ordinarily in Biblical usage "tongues" would mean "languages," and it is evident that at the first Pentecost, at least, Apostles spoke real human languages (Acts 2:11). Most Pentecostals will admit, however, that their "tongues" are not real languages spoken elsewhere on earth, but that they are "special" languages of the Spirit.

A former Pentecostal preacher who is now a Lutheran pastor believes that speaking in tongues is psychologically self-induced. People who accept the Pentecostal premises want to speak in tongues so strongly that finally they are able to do it, to say something strange, that is. Linguists have studied this "speech" and have concluded that it bears no resemblance to any type of "language." It cannot be analyzed and studied.

Others hold that glossolalia is really the work of the devil. Students of devil possession have noted that speaking in foreign languages is a frequent mark of such a possession. If we keep in mind Paul's statement that the gentiles are really sacrificing to devils when they worship their heathen gods (1 Cor. 10:20), we may well ask whether or not the devil has not found in glossolalia a tool to draw men away from the solid foundation of Holy Scripture. It teaches man to concentrate on externals (like the Pharisees of old) rather than on the condition of the heart.

It is difficult to judge the doctrines of the charismatic movement as a whole, for aside from the emphasis of speaking in tongues and healing there is little doctrinal agreement among Pentecostals once one gets beyond the simplest basics of Christian faith. There are even Pentecostal groups that defend the deity of Christ and yet deny the doctrine of the trinity. It should be clear, however, that Pentecostalism as a whole is a man-centered religion that lays unhealthy stress on human experience and feeling. Thus it draws men from reliance on what Luther called the "bare Word" of God.

Study the Bible

Read Rom. 8:2

What sets us free from the law of death?

Read Rom. 8:4

According to what do we live?

What does it mean to live according to the Spirit?

Read Rom. 8:5-8

On whose desires are the minds of those who live in accordance with the Spirit?

Read Rom. 8:9

How can we be sure that the Spirit lives in us?

Read Rom. 8:11

What will God give those who have His Spirit living in them?

Read Rom. 8:13

What does the one who lives according to the Spirit do to his sinful nature?

Read Rom. 8:14

Whose sons are those who are led by the Spirit?

Paul has outlined the life that one lives through the Spirit. It is a blessed life. In all this Paul does not speak about a blessing or gift of speaking in tongues neither does he speak of healing. This can only mean that speaking in tongues and healing are not the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON IV

Charismatic teaching on the Holy Spirit

The central teaching of Charismatics is baptizing in the Spirit. Take away this teaching and what you have left is no longer Charismatic. We want to study this movement because there are many Protestants and Catholics that are claiming to have received baptism in the Spirit.

Who are these Charismatics? What is their doctrinal stand? Are they a church or not? I don't know whether I will have answers to all these and other related questions. But let me begin by saying there are two streams of Christian thought: Protestant and Catholic. You can compromise about different religions. Either you have a Protestant relation to God or a Catholic. To which camp do Charismatics belong? Here I want to quote the writings of Catholics who have studied this movement:

"Although they derive from Protestant background, this movement is not typically Protestant in its belief, attitude or practices...it cannot be assumed that this movement presents an incursion of Protestant influence. The spiritual experience of those that have been touched by the grace of the Holy Spirit in this movement is in profound harmony with the classical spiritual theology of the church...The experience of this movement tends to confirm the validity and relevance of our authentic spiritual traditions...Moreover, the doctrine that is developing in this movement today, seems to be going through stages very similar to those which occurred in the early middle ages when the classical doctrine was taking shape."

We see from this that the Charismatic movement teaches no new doctrine, but is essentially a reproduction of old doctrine which is Catholic. Here I am talking about the essence and nature of their doctrine. It is not a doctrine of justification by faith.

What do Charismatics teach about Spirit baptism?

A. A. Hoekma summarizes it this way, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion in which a person receives the totality of the Spirit into his life and is thereby fully empowered for witness and service."

This, then, means that even though we believe that Jesus kept the law perfectly for us and that he died as a sacrificial lamb that takes away the sins of the world and that God has declared us righteous before Him because of Christ, we are still lacking something. The Holy Spirit has not yet come into us as a person who fills our hearts and lives completely. This means that God's act of justification is not sufficient to bring the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Who can do it? Man? By what? Good works? But the Bible says, "By the work of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

God's work for us in Christ

This is gospel. It is the declaration, not of what God will do for you, but of what God has done for you in Jesus Christ, as the Bible teaches in 2 Cor. 5:17 and Eph. 1:6-7. This work of God can also be called Christ's work for us. God in the person of Jesus came and lived here on earth. As our substi-

tute He kept the Law of God and its demands perfectly. Christ had to keep the Law for us this way because we are Law breakers. Not only that, but He went to the cross to suffer the penalty of a broken Law, which He did not break. The Law which we broke, by His active and passive obedience He gathered unto Himself the sins of a guilty world.

"Christ died for us according to the Scriptures. He rose again for our justification." The Gospel is the declaration of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. He has liberated us. He has secured our release. He did it when we were enemies, when we were sinful, when we were going from Him more and more. The Gospel is the declaration of what God has done in Christ. It is not something that God does in us. The Gospel is something that God did apart from us, outside of us, above us and beyond us.

God's work in us by the Holy Spirit

This is the fruit of the Gospel. It is the result of believing the Gospel. The person who believes God's work for him in Christ receives the Holy Spirit, and thus he is regenerated and sanctified.

"While we must be careful not to confuse God's work for us (justification) and God's work in us (sanctification), we must be equally careful not to divorce one phase of His work from the other, His work for us brings the gift and infilling of the Spirit. Indeed, this gift of the Holy Spirit is the seal, pledge and guarantee that we have been justified (Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:14-16). Consequently, where there is no renewal by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, no fruit of the Spirit, it is certain that justification has not taken place."

"Justification is the gift of God's righteousness, in all its totality, to the believing sinner. In God's act of forgiveness, the entire inheritance of Jesus Christ, the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, is given to the believer. This gift can never be superseded, for in it God gives absolutely all the accumulated treasure of eternity. So being far greater, the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit is called 'first fruits' (Rom. 8:23), guarantee or down payment (Eph. 1:13-14), of that infinite inheritance."

This is true despite the claim by Charismatics that, beyond conversion, beyond the assurance of salvation, beyond having the Holy Spirit, there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit, and every believer must seek this baptism. Is Spirit baptism necessary for salvation? Charismatics will say, "No, a person can be saved without it." Why seek a post-conversion experience then? They answer: "The baptism with the Spirit is a specific link in a chain of experience which unites the believer to Christ." The implication is that those that have not received Spirit baptism have not entered a full relationship with Christ.

To this we say, "Christian baptism is therefore the baptism of the Father. It is the baptism of Christ. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In proposing another baptism and another experience, Charismatics go beyond the Gospel of Christ and confess that neither Christ nor His justification is an adequate gift of the Father."

Study the Bible

How would you answer these arguments by Charismatics:

- 1) Jesus told the disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes in, He would testify or speak (John 15:26).

- 2) Jesus said that the Spirit would testify and that the disciples would be the ones to witness (John 15:27; Acts 1:8).
- 3) To make sure that Jesus means what we referred to above, check also Acts 2:4.
- 4) Ten years after Pentecost, the gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit also testified through them when He came in (Acts 10:44-46).
- 5) Twenty-five years later we find some people receiving the same Holy Spirit in the same way. He took over their vocal organs and spoke in another tongue (Acts 19:6).
- 6) Have prophecies failed yet - has knowledge vanished yet? No! Of course not. And tongues have not ceased either (1 Cor. 13:8).
- 7) Believers need to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2).
- 8) Acts 19:6 gives the pattern of how people are to receive the Holy Spirit.

LESSON V

(E. R. Wednland)

A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14: SPEAKING IN TONGUES

(PART I)

The subject of speaking in tongues, which is a pillar of Charismatic teaching, is dealt with most fully in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 14. This chapter is, therefore, crucial for charismatics as well as their opponents, for both seek to prove their respective positions from the same portion of Scripture. For this reason we shall study this chapter in detail in order to compare teachings. The text is divided up into portions. For each portion, we will first of all present the Pentecostal teaching as set forth by one of their chief defenders, Rev. E. Angley. We will then turn to the Scriptures to see for ourselves what it says on this subject. In this lesson we will study the first half of chapter 14; the last half will be considered in the next lesson.

Chapter 14: SPEAKING IN THE CHURCH (Memorize 14:19, 40)

The Gift of Prophecy and the Gift of Tongues
(14:1-5)

Charismatics: "The Bible teaches both speaking with tongues and the regulation of speaking with tongues. It is dangerous to make irresponsible remarks about the Holy Ghost (Mt 12:31-32). To accept the entire Bible, we must accept the teaching of speaking with tongues. The fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians implies in no way that people should not speak with other tongues, but rather it tells when and where to speak with tongues.

"Paul says that the person who speaks in tongues speaks unto God (v.2). How different Paul's teaching is from the teaching of those who say tongues were just used to preach the gospel to the various nationalities at Pentecost, or that speaking with tongues is of the devil. Paul is teaching in this second verse that if a person speaks in tongues and there is no interpretation, he speaks unto God and he speaks mysteries. In this case, speaking in tongues edifies the speaker. Paul says this helps the individual, builds him up and improves him. Speaking with tongues is a personal benefit.

"Paul in v. 5 told the Corinthian church he desired that all speak with tongues, 'but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues...' Now, this is where many people stop. The skeptics don't take into consideration the rest of what Paul has to say: '...EXCEPT HE INTERPRET THAT THE CHURCH MAY RECEIVE EDIFYING.' The church understands prophecy, and it understands when the interpretation of tongues is given. Either one edifies the church which makes them both equal."

Scripture:

1. Remember - which is the greatest gift of the Spirit (13:13)?
(Note: these are gifts to the believer. The gift of saving faith which makes conversion possible must thus be the first and foremost gift from the Spirit, as was pointed out in Lesson 2)

2. Which special gift does Paul tell us to "eagerly desire"? (All quotations in these sections are from the NIV.)
3. What is this "gift of prophecy" that Paul is speaking about? (See commentary and Good News translation.)
4. What is the problem with speaking in tongues? (v.2)
(Notice that in this whole section, Paul does not really refer to speaking with tongues with approval, much less put it on an even par with preaching God's messages. Rather, he contrasts the former with the latter throughout, for his purpose is to show that speaking in tongues is actually of very limited benefit to the church.)
5. How does the one who "prophesies" (that is, proclaims God's message) help the church? (v.3)
6. What does the word "edify" mean? (v.4)
7. What is the one possible benefit of speaking in tongues?
(But even here there is a danger. Notice that this is the only gift mentioned by Paul which really doesn't help one's fellow Christians - only one's SELF. Thus, it is basically a self-ish spiritual gift, and for this reason Paul does not encourage it. True, he does not forbid speaking in tongues, for he doesn't want to discourage new, enthusiastic Christians too much. However, he does put tongue-speaking in its proper place - a very minor place in the church.)
8. Notice the irony in the first clauses of v. 5, that is, the words do not really mean what they say. Far from encouraging the speaking of tongues, as the Pentecostals would have it, Paul is actually here forbidding this practice in the church, except under one very special - and strict - condition: what is that?
9. What do some churches that you know teach about speaking in tongues?
10. How does Paul help you to show them where they are wrong?
11. How can you tell, or know for sure, that you "have" the Holy Spirit?
(See 1 Cor. 12:3, 2 Cor. 3:3, Gal. 5:22-23.)

Mere Sounds Do Not Build Up the Church
(14:6-12)

Charismatics: "Some people have used the clause, 'They speak into the air,' to discount speaking in tongues, but Paul was talking about the value hearing an unknown tongue would be to the LISTENERS, not its lack of value to the SPEAKER. Remember, he has already stated that if a person speaks with tongues and there is not an interpretation, he edifies himself or improves or builds himself up.

"Do not use a gift for personal blessing only (v.12), but learn how to use the gift to bless the whole assembly; and you who speak with tongues, learn how you may edify the assembly when you speak."

Scripture:

1. If someone truly has the gift of speaking in strange languages, and IF there is someone present in the congregation who can interpret for him, WHAT should be the content of that person's speaking - what, according to Paul, is he/she allowed to talk about? (v.6)

2. Now if speaking in tongues is limited to preaching and teaching God's Word, a thinking person might ask, "Well then why is it necessary to speak in tongues in the first place?" That is Paul's point - though he does not come right out and say it so as not to offend the "tongue-speakers." He leads them into coming to this conclusion for themselves. Tongue speaking did have a certain confirmatory function in the church at the beginning, that is, to strengthen the faith of certain groups of believers under special circumstances (see the next lesson). However, Paul is trying to show in an evangelical way here that tongue-speaking really has no useful role to play in the church on a regular basis, least of all in a public worship service.
3. Explain the meaning of Paul's examples in verses 7 and 8.
4. Again, what is the big problem with speaking in tongues? (v.9) Paul here repeats what he said already in v.2, but in different words.
5. Charismatics like to focus upon themselves and their personal experience (read again the quotes above). Notice, however, in the whole section where Paul puts the emphasis. Where is that?
6. A language with no meaning is no language at all (v.10) - and this includes "tongues" which Christians wanted to speak in the church. In fact, Paul points to a certain danger in tongue-speaking in v. 11. How do people normally regard "foreigners"?
7. Why do you think that the Corinthians were "eager to have spiritual gifts" (v.12)? Why are the members of some churches today eager to have the gift of speaking in tongues? That is another danger of this "gift" - it can so easily be turned by Satan into a temptation to one's pride!
8. What is Paul's inspired advice in this matter? What can you do if you want "to excel in gifts which build up the church"?

Praying with the Spirit and Praying with the Mind
(14:13-21)

Charismatics: "There are those who think speaking with tongues is gibberish or chatter just because they do not know what is being said. Paul did not say unknown tongues were of the devil; Paul had the gift of discerning. He knew that the Holy Ghost was speaking, and he told them to pray that they might interpret. How could there be an interpretation if nothing were being said? Friend, don't let the devil deceive you: when the Holy Ghost is speaking, something IS being said.

"In verse 17 Paul does not say that the person speaking in tongues is not blessing with the spirit just because others fail to understand what is being said. No, Paul says, 'You give thanks well, but the person listening to you is not edified because he does not know what you have said.'

"In v. 18 Paul is saying, do not misunderstand me: I do not want you do away with tongues. It is of God and God wills for people to speak with tongues... In v. 19 Paul does not mean to make tongues look unimportant. Rather he is trying to stress the importance of edifying others when assembled together instead of each individual seeking all the blessings for self along. Again I must remind you that Paul said in v. 5 that tongues are equal with prophecy if there is interpretation.

"Verse 21 tells us that God will speak to people with other tongues through His Spirit and yet God said they would not hear Him. How true this is! Many people today reject the Holy Ghost's message."

Scripture:

1. If a person wishes to speak in tongues, what gift must he also have according to Paul? (v. 13)
2. Paul stresses the need for personal understanding in the matter of tongues in vs. 14-15 and then goes on to his main concern, namely, the need for general understanding in the worship service. Again, notice the subtle sarcasm in the example that he gives in v. 16. Praising in one's spirit cannot do what?
3. What gift did Paul have (v. 18)? Why do you think that Paul does not tell us more about this gift - in other letters, for example? Does this suggest the value and importance which he placed upon this gift?
4. What important principle of Christian communication does Paul give us in v. 19? Indeed, he makes speaking in tongues sound very un-important.
5. Paul speaks rather harshly to those who placed too much and the wrong emphasis on speaking in tongues (v.20). How were they behaving?
6. What is the purpose of the Old Testament quotation that Paul cites in v. 21 (from Is. 28:11-12; Deut. 28:49)? Does it point out the value or the futility of speaking in tongues when they try to instruct someone? Explain.

LESSON VI
(E. R. Wendland)

A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14: SPEAKING IN TONGUES
(Part 2)

Concern for the Stranger Who Visits Your Service
(14:22-25)

Charismatics: "Tongues are a sign to the unbeliever (v.22). Why would anyone be against the sign that God said He would give to the unbeliever? Fighting against speaking with tongues is fighting against God and His work.

"In these verses Paul is dealing with the CONGREGATIONAL tongue and not the DEVOTIONAL tongue. Remember, the congregational tongue is when the church is gathered together in service; the devotional tongue is when one is praying at the altar or in private."

Scripture:

1. What is the difference in function between tongues and prophecy (preaching)? According to this, which gift is more valuable and likely to be used?
2. According to Paul's example in v.23, does speaking in tongues have any real value, even for the unbeliever? What will he conclude?
3. However, what will be the result if this same unbeliever hears Christians proclaiming God's message? Notice that this passage clearly indicates that the word "prophecy" cannot be limited to telling about the future.
4. Which part of God's Word is able to convince a person of his sin? Give a Bible passage to prove your answer.
5. Why will the stranger say, "God is really among you!"?
6. Does Paul make any distinction between "congregational" tongues and "devotional" ones in this passage (or anywhere)?

The Need for Order in the Church
(14:26-40)

Charismatics: "In v.37 Paul is saying, let those who claim to have the Holy Ghost baptism acknowledge the regulation of the gifts of God to man.

"If you refuse the experience of tongues (v.39), then you are forbidding speaking with tongues and rebelling against God.

"You will need this Holy Ghost baptism to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the coming of the Lord. At no time did Paul speak against tongues in this chapter...ALL who have been baptized in the Holy Ghost have spoken in tongues. Consecrate your life to God. Yield yourself completely to Him. Rejoice in praises before Him...Remember, the disciples were continually praising the Lord at Pentecost until the Holy Ghost came in.

Scripture:

1. What is the purpose of each and every thing that is done during the worship service (v.26)? This is Paul's main point - where in this chapter has he said this before?
2. Notice the strict instructions that Paul gives to those who wish to speak in tongues. What are these? Notice also that he says "IF", not "WHEN" someone speaks in a tongue. This would suggest that tongue speaking was not to be a regular part of the worship service. Do charismatic churches that you know of follow Paul's instructions today?
3. The key to speaking in tongues is the "interpreter." What if one cannot be found? Paul's command here is quite clear.
4. What should the others do while someone is speaking God's message? (v. 29)
5. What is the purpose of all speaking in the church (v.31)?
6. What is the meaning of v.32? Do you know of churches whose worship services are characterized by "disorder" rather than "peace" (v.33)?
7. Some churches feel that women should preach and teach in the church. What does Paul have to say about that? Notice the strong language that Paul uses here (vs. 34-36). Can there be any doubt about what he means?
8. What is the meaning of Paul's two questions in v.36? Again, we can sense the sarcasm in his words. Paul addresses these same questions to all today who wish to change Scripture so that it fits in better with modern thinking and morality.
9. Should anyone doubt Paul's authority, let him read verses 37-38. What does Paul claim here?
10. Paul once more encourages which gift in v.39?
11. Why do you think that he does not forbid speaking in tongues, since it had apparently caused so much confusion in the church?
12. What principle should always guide us in our worship services (v.40)?
13. Charimatics claim that Paul encourages the speaking of tongues in 1 Cor. ch. 14. A careful examination of the text, however, reveals that far from encouraging tongues, Paul rather discourages their use. Certainly, he does not come right out and forbid this practice (v.39), and yet we have seen a number of verses which indicate that Paul was seeking to direct the Corinthians in a different direction, one which would be much more profitable for the church as a whole. What was this new direction? See if you can mention some of the ways in which Paul points away from tongues to "a more fitting and orderly way" (v.40).
14. Do you see any genuine spiritual need, whether personal or general, that speaking in tongues satisfies which is not satisfied in our worship services? Explain.
15. Instead of speaking in tongues, which spiritual gift does Paul promote in this chapter? Cite specific passages to prove your answer.

LESSON VII

What does the Bible teach about Baptism in the Spirit?

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit was going to be bestowed upon the church in the New Testament era (Joel 2:28-29). Peter's quoting this prophecy in Acts 2:16-21 shows that this prophecy was fulfilled on Pentecost Day.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be given to the church when He (Jesus) went back to heaven (John 16:7; John 14:16). John also tells us that the Spirit would not come until after Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). We see from reading these passages that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit predicted by both Joel and Jesus took place on Pentecost Day. The words of Joel and those of Jesus find their fulfillment in what we read in Acts chapter 2. I am not saying that the Holy Spirit was not present prior to this time. What I am saying is that on Pentecost the Holy Spirit was bestowed on the church in His fulness, that is, from this moment on the Spirit was to dwell in the church as His temple, meaning that He would take up His permanent residence in every member of the church.

I want to state here that expressions like "baptism of the Holy Spirit" or "baptism with the Holy Spirit" are not used in the gospels and Acts. What you find there is the expression "to be baptized in the Holy Spirit" which can be called Spirit baptism. Now we want to look at passages where the expression "to be baptized in the Spirit" is used. When you read Mark 1:8, the expression is used to show the contrast between what John is doing and what Jesus will be doing. Now read Acts 1:5. Here you see that the expression is put in the mouth of Jesus himself. And the words "not many days hence" make it clear that Jesus is talking about something that was to take place, "not many days" after Christ's ascension into heaven.

Who received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day? It was the Jews, wasn't it? They proclaimed the word of God in languages other than their own. Now read Acts 10:44-48. Here is recorded the first account of Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit. Now the question is, why was this necessary? To make this clear we should go to the words of Jesus as they are recorded in John 3:16: "God loved all the people very much, that He did not spare His only Son." This means that the Gospel is universal, for all people. But to whom did the Gospel come first? To Jews. How did a Jew look at a Gentile? He could not even eat with him. Now, again, remember that on Pentecost the 12 disciples who were Jews were given the gift of preaching the Word in languages other than their own. They preached to the Gentiles. One of those that received this gift was Peter. And yet so strong was Peter's conviction to keep his identity as a Jew that God himself had to change this through a vision (Acts 10:12-15).

Now read Acts 11:18. Was Cornelius' Spirit baptism a result of a further step of faith beyond conversion? No! We find that it was simultaneous with conversion. When Cornelius and those with him were baptized in the Spirit, they were enabled to believe, that is, they became Christians for the first time. Saving faith, worked in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, manifested itself openly in various "gifts of the Spirit." This was a special witness to Peter and his fellow Jews that salvation was for all people.

Pentecost Day was the birth of the Christian Church, the beginning of the age of the Holy Spirit. When Cornelius and his house were Spirit baptized, they received the same Spirit that was outpoured at Pentecost. This Spirit was bestowed on them for previously they were not believers in the Christian sense of the word.

Study the Bible

Neopentecostals assume that all members of the church were Spirit baptized. How does Paul call the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 3:1?

What do all believers have? (Gal. 3:2)

What does the Holy Spirit make all Christians in 1 Cor. 3:16?

What do all believers enjoy? (2 Cor. 13:14)

What is your body? (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

In whom are we made full? (Col. 2:9-10)

How does Christ dwell in us? (Rom. 8:9-10)

What is Paul saying to the Galatians? (Gal. 5:25)

What did Paul tell the Ephesians? (Eph. 1:13)

What advice does Paul give? (Eph. 5:18)

For Pastors

Charismatics point to Acts 8:4-24 as being absolute proof of their teaching that "baptism of the Spirit" is distinct from and unrelated to the Spirit's work of conversion. Now, is the Charismatic position correct? If not, can you explain what really happened here?

Read Acts 8:4-24. Would you agree with the following observations on this account?

- 1) The Samaritans believed Philip and not Jesus (8:6,12); therefore they did not receive the Holy Spirit at baptism because they did not yet have saving faith. When the Apostles prayed for them and laid their hands on them, that was the time they believed in Jesus, and so they received the Holy Spirit.
- 2) The point of the story is therefore to teach that salvation is impossible without the Holy Spirit. And when the Samaritans came to faith, then they also manifested the gift of the Spirit.
- 3) This story also shows how the Spirit worked to preserve unity in the developing church. What might have happened had the Samaritans come to faith in isolation from the church at Jerusalem? On the other hand what did the Apostles from Jerusalem need to realize? Thus, the Holy Spirit brought both groups together in a wonderful way to share in the joy of the Gospel.

LESSON VIII

(P. O. Wendland)

Water and Spirit Baptism

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul is proving to the Corinthians that they are all members of one body. As objective evidence of that fact, he says, (*kai gar eni pneumati hēmeis pantes eis en soma ebaptisthēmen*) "And in fact in one Spirit we all into one body were baptized." It is my opinion that Paul is here speaking of water-baptism which he identifies with Spirit-baptism. Paul knows of only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5); this baptism he calls in another place a "baptism in (to) Christ" (Galatians 3:27). He also refers to water-baptism as a "wash...in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). These parallels should be sufficient to establish the unlikelihood of Paul using *baptisō* in a metaphorical sense here. Add to this, then, the consideration that a reference to water-baptism would indeed prove Paul's point that the Corinthians were one, since water-baptism was something which they all had in common without exception.

Now a person could argue that there is a difference between Paul's usage here (and the usage of *baptisthenai en pneumati* in Acts). In Acts, the doer of the action is Christ (or the Father) who baptizes people with the Holy Spirit. In the Corinthians passage, the agent of the action could be the Holy Spirit. Whether that is true or not, it is clear from other passages that the Holy Spirit is not only the agent working in and through baptism, He is also the gift conveyed by it (Acts 2:38; John 3:5; Titus 3:5).

The point I am trying to make here is that there is an inseparable connection between water-baptism and Spirit-baptism since Pentecost. Since Pentecost, water-baptism is Spirit-baptism. If a person wishes to receive the Spirit of God then let him be baptized. By this I do not wish to deny the fact that the Spirit also comes through the Gospel in the Word and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Nor do I wish to imply that a believer, if he is not baptized, does not possess the gift of the Holy Spirit. I only wish to emphasize the clear teaching of the New Testament that the Spirit is given through water-baptism, connected as it is to a specific command and promise of God.

There are many texts one could cite to support this point more firmly. In Acts 2:38, the Apostle Peter does not direct the terrified hearts of his hearers to prayer as a means to receive the Spirit, he merely says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Frederick Bruner puts it well when he says:

"Henceforth, baptism is Pentecost. Peter invites no one to the upper room. He teaches no one how to speak in tongues. The exterior forms of Pentecost (wind, fire, visions, tongues) leave; the essential content remains. The content is God's free gift of the Holy Spirit. And after Pentecost this gift is offered, as here, with forgiveness, in the humble rite of baptism."

Then there is Christ's famous assertion about the way to be 'born again'. This occurs *ex hedatos kai pneumatos*, a phrase which once again emphasizes the close connection between water baptism and the gift of the Spirit. Finally, Paul states in Titus 3:5, "God saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." There can be no doubt: water-baptism is Spirit-baptism.

Now when we speak of the Spirit coming in the waters of baptism, the focus is not on the person of the Spirit as such. This would be an unbiblical emphasis, since Christ says about the Comforter, "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14). The Spirit brings us Christ with all His works and all His benefits and so the focus will always properly be in Christ. That is what Paul is talking about when he states that by our baptism we have "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). In more concrete terms, this means we receive the forgiveness of sins, from which all the other benefits of Christ flow. That is why Peter can simply say, "Be baptized so that your sins may be forgiven" (Acts 2:38) or in the words of Ananias, "(be baptized and) wash your sins away" (Acts 22:16). Since our sins are forgiven, we can stand before God as His full-fledged sons: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6).

All this is the work of the Spirit in baptism because by baptism, He works faith in our hearts. Spirit-worked faith receives the forgiveness of sins is the "new birth" (John 3:5) and the "new life" (Titus 3:5).

So then, when we look at the second use of the term 'Spirit-baptism' in Scripture, we notice that, since Pentecost, Spirit-baptism has become inseparably linked with water-baptism. What this means can best be summed up by Luther who states, "(Baptism) works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promise of God declare" (Cat. Min. Trig. p. 551, 5-6).

For Discussion

The Danger of Charismatic Teaching about Spirit-Baptism

Charismatics teach that the baptism of the Spirit is a special second blessing which a believer receives sometime after his conversion. This position is thus a denial of the truth of justification by faith. Why do we come to this conclusion? Consider these points:

1. The charismatic idea of a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit implies that God's act of justification is not sufficient to allow the believer to receive the Holy Spirit completely. The Spirit is given only in part, as it were, and it remains for the sinner to depend upon his own works (Five Steps, etc.) in order to gain full possession of the Spirit. But what does the Bible teach? (See Gal. 3:2; 13-14; Jn. 7:38-39; Eph. 1:13.)
2. The charismatic teaching implies that the experience of being "baptized in the Spirit" is something greater and beyond the justification which comes through faith. Thus one's salvation is somehow not complete until Spirit-baptism has taken place. Here we have a confusion between God's gift of righteousness (Justification) and His gift of the Spirit (Sanctification). The gift of righteousness is imputed (pronounced) for our justification; God does this outside of us. The gift of the Spirit is imparted (given) for our renewal and sanctification; God does this inside of us. See Ro. 5:1-5, 17; 8.
3. The charismatic position separates water Baptism and Spirit baptism and goes on to distinguish two classes of Christians -- ordinary Christians and Spirit-filled Christians. Both distinctions are false. Conversion and water Baptism is the same as Spirit baptism - they occur at the same time (see Matt. 28:19; Ro. 6:3-4; Tit. 3:5-7). All those who believe and are baptized are saved (Mk. 16:16); they have been justified by grace through faith in Christ; they have also received the Holy Spirit in his fulness. They form one body - the Body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5). In proposing another "baptism" and another renewing "experience," charismatics preach another gospel and await a different "spirit." This is a denial of the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ and hence also the doctrine of justification.

LESSON IX

Reasons for Speaking in Tongues

When we read in Acts 2:5-6, we see that the emphasis of this text is that Apostles spoke a language that was understandable. People were able to hear the message of God's Word in their own mother tongue. Acts 2:1 tells us that this happened at the time when the Jews far and near came for the special set time. There were lots of people in Jerusalem at that time.

To understand the setting, we need to remember what happened when the Lord was captured and was being judged. One thing that made the people who were with Peter realize that he was a follower of Jesus was the dialect that Peter spoke. From this we can see that there were many dialects that people spoke. There at least were eighteen different bodies and nationalities assembled on the day of Pentecost. Count these for yourself in Acts 2:9-11.

The Apostles on Pentecost were one body, and only spoke one natural language, their mother tongue. We read in the Bible that the Gospel is universal. It is for the whole world. Since the preachers on Pentecost Day normally spoke only one language, one can see that it was necessary that these men be empowered to speak other languages or else only a minority would have benefited from their preaching. But they preached in a variety of real languages (Acts 2:8). Where all people speak and understand the same language there is no need of a special power or gift to speak a language or tongue other than that known by all. Speaking in tongues is only one of the nine recorded gifts in 1 Cor. 12; and it is only to be used when and where there is a need. Another gift is that of healing. This reminds me of the prayer of St. Paul, where he says, "For three times I asked the Lord to heal me." But the Lord said, "No. Because in your weakness I am glorified." Here we see that there are some sicknesses that the Lord lets come to us so we learn to rely on Him and on His help alone. Can I, then, go and shout a command in the name of Jesus to remove that sickness when the Lord says it is serving His purpose? If He does not heal the sickness immediately (or ever) does that mean that we don't have enough of the Spirit, or that we lack faith? We ask the Lord to send us His Holy Spirit, but this does not mean that we can shout orders to the Holy Spirit and expect Him to do things according to our will. What did Jesus say in Luke 22:42? The Holy Spirit knows what to give to the church and will give such gifts as will benefit the church. He knows when and how to do it (1 Cor. 12:7-11).

The gift of languages in the Bible was unexpected. Where do you read that people asked for it, or were expecting it? The Spirit enabled people to speak in tongues, only where there was a necessity or a special purpose. This can be shown in every case where we have this gift mentioned in the New Testament. In Acts 2:6-8 we see that the multitude did not speak in tongues. When they heard of what happened to the 12 disciples, that is, the descent of the Holy Spirit on them in Acts 2:2-4, they came together. We are told that they were astonished because each of them heard of that saving power of Jesus in his own language and proclaimed by men who were Galileans. They were not astonished because of some strange sounds that they did not recognize, but because every man heard the Gospel in his own mother tongue (Acts 2:8).

We have already looked at several of the instances in Acts where the Holy Spirit is said to have manifested himself to people in the speaking of tongues. It is significant to note that on all of these occasions a conversion

of the Gentiles, is involved (eg. the Samaritans Acts 8, Cornelius Acts 10) as is the act of baptism. This teaches us that the outward manifestation of the Spirit is always most closely linked with the primary gift of the Spirit, which is saving faith that converts the heart of the sinner. The special gifts and abilities shown forth at such a time were undoubtedly intended to strengthen this new faith among people who previously had been regarded by the Jews as religious outsiders at best. Let us consider one more example of this nature:

Read Acts 19:1-6

Although it is likely that these people were Jews, they too were "outsiders" in the sense that they were living outside of the "Holy Land," Jerusalem in particular.

1. Why hadn't these people "received the Holy Spirit?" 2. When did they receive the Holy Spirit? 3. Again, this is in connection with which Sacrament? (See also Rom. 6:3-4.)

Thus, Paul clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is active in conversion and this is the fact which speaking in tongues bears witness to on a special occasion.

Charismatics claim that speaking in tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. Our response is, "Nowhere does the Bible teach that tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit, but those who received Him were empowered on the day of Pentecost to speak the various languages of people gathered because it was vitally necessary that the known world might know of the Gospel."

"The Word of God shows we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16, read also Heb. 10:14). The Bible standard is not to seek any specified gifts of the Spirit, but we are to seek, and receive the Gift Giver, the Holy Spirit, and let Him impart the gift that seems best in the mind of God. We are not Biblical when we demand and attempt to dictate the policies of the Holy Spirit and demand of Him to do something that is clearly out of harmony with the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit agree, and He operates in the realm of the Word. To demand any set demonstration is minimizing the power of the Holy Spirit, adding to the Bible, and nothing short of a dictation. The Holy Spirit has power enough to do His own witnessing, and never resorts to the inferior to do His convincing for Him. To demand any set sign is lowering to the inferior and the lesser, which always terminates in questioning and confusion. God's way is always clear, definite, intelligent, and understandable."

Study the Bible

- 1) Read Acts 4:31
What were the believers filled with?
What did they speak?
- 2) Read Acts 6:9-10, 7:55-56
Did Stephen speak in tongues?
Did he have the Holy Spirit?
- 3) Read Acts 9:17-18
Where in these verses do you read that Paul spoke in tongues?
- 4) Read Acts 16:14-15
Who was converted?
Did she speak in tongues?
Did she have the Spirit?
How do you know?

- 5) Read Acts 16:29-34
Who was converted?
Did he speak in tongues?
Why not?

We have Received the Holy Spirit

Read Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 12:3
What must the Holy Spirit do for us?

Read Eph. 2:1; Eph. 2:8-9
Why must the Holy Spirit do this for us?

Read Acts 11:21
What do we call this work of the Holy Spirit?

Read 2 Cor. 5:17
In conversion what does the Holy Spirit give all believers?

Read 1 Pet. 1:5
What must the Holy Spirit lastly work in us?

Read 1 Tim. 2:4
Does the Holy Spirit want to bring all people to faith?

Read 1 Cor. 12:3
Again, how do we know that we have the Holy Spirit?

LESSON X

The Evolution of Pentecostalism and Its Influence on Christianity in Africa

When we read church history and other church writings we find that Pentecostalism rests on a rich and long historical heritage in the appearance of earlier ecstatic groups. These are groups that have claimed "experience in, or guidance by, the Holy Spirit, either apart from or beyond the explicit Word of God."

Several of these groups were already active at the time of Luther. He called them "the enthusiasts." Church historians classify them as "the evangelical radicals." Such groups were the Munzerites, Anabaptists and others. These were succeeded by other radicals including Quakers, who contended for the inner light; then came the Shakers and Pietists. "The nineteenth century saw the culmination of the great 'holiness' movement, which swept America in the middle and latter part of the century, a movement arising in reaction to the formalism of the mainline Protestant bodies, which sought a deeper experience, entire holiness, victorious living, and similar expressed ends. Finally this drive toward religious experientialism emerged around the turn of the twentieth century in the modern Pentecostal movement" (New Reformation Fellowship).

Pentecostalism stresses an intense, personal experience of ecstatic pleasure, "a powerful, individual spiritual experience... Pentecostal experience, then, is distinguished by precisely the emphasis on experience... in a word, the theology of Pentecostal movement is its experience." Becker says, "It is difficult to judge the doctrines of the charismatic movement as a whole, for aside from the emphasis on speaking in tongues and healing there is little doctrinal agreement among pentecostalists once one gets beyond the simplest basics of Christian faith. There are even Pentecostal groups that defend the deity of Christ and yet deny the doctrine of the Trinity. It should be clear, however, that Pentecostalism as a whole is a man-centered religion that lays unhealthy stress on human experience and feeling. Thus it draws men away from reliance on what Luther calls the 'bare Word' of God."

The Influence of Pentecostalism on Christianity in Africa

It is good for us to know that many of the charismatic African clergy lived in the Colonial and Independence era. Many of these are members of dependent or semi-dependent churches. They serve God under the influence of a "strange spirit" which must be exorcised at one time or another. They are serving under what can be called "religious colonialism." By this I mean the Support/Mother church regulates the running of the Receiving church. The problem here is that there are two societies that are culturally different trying to do the work of the church together. The African society is more man-centered and operates as a community. The Support Society is more individualistic etc. This foreign society regulates, and rightly so, because of the support and expert personnel which it supplies for the running of the African church. The African clergy then finds himself serving in a foreign church, though it is planted in his own country. This is bound to bring resentment such as this:

"A noble missionary, who was apparently full of zeal, was heard to say during his leisure time: 'We must control the church in Africa

because it is a young church.' The problem was that he was old, and he did not realize that in the African tradition, he should now contribute to the African church by telling stories of his missionary journeys, not by controlling the progress of the African church. Why did he not have the attitude of John the Baptist, 'He must increase, and I decrease.'" (Milingo)

On the surface it seems that the Pentecostal movement is bringing what was neglected by other churches, that is, it is letting the Africans worship in a more traditional and independent way. African society is man-centered; Pentecostalism is man-centered. Pentecostalism believes in spiritual experience. The African has always been that way. Under this kind of service the African cannot say, "Iwensi will never remain spiritually stunted, no miracle of grace will touch him. He is not worth it. Of course, this is the carpenter's son. We know His brothers and sisters, they are with us. And what, of course, what good can come from Nazareth? Allow me to jump a line in logic and say: 'What good can come out of Africa?'" (Milingo)

Changes in Traditional African Spiritual Values

I want to explain what the African understanding of God was. God used to live among people, so traditional stories tell us, but because of man's sinfulness God has withdrawn Himself. God does not like evil, nor does He have anything to do with an evil doer. And yet sinful man will not have rain if God does not give it. In fact, all good things come from Him.

Now how can sinful man reach God? He must first mend the relationship which was broken by his sinfulness. How can this be done? God demands complete perfection of anyone who would approach Him. That person or thing must be as perfect a newly born child. No matter how man tries he will never attain the perfection of a newly born child, it is impossible. What should man do, give up and never try to reach God with his prayers? How will he receive the rain, harvest, children etc? So man looks for a mediator as perfect in the sight of God as a newly born child.

According to African understanding of sin, there is no original sin; all sin is actual. A person can sin while he is alive but once he dies, he is no longer a sinner. Rather, he goes back into a childlike perfection. This man who has died, and who now is in the world of the living dead, knows what it means to be a sinner, and he also knows what perfection is since he has been transformed from imperfection to perfection. This living dead can then, in an acceptable way, plead to God for man. The African does not worship his ancestors. Rather, they are called upon to carry his requests to God. Since they do that work for him, he must make them happy or else they will not be taking his requests to God, and that would mean misfortune. From this we see that the African believes that only a spirit mzimu of the living dead can reach God on behalf of man.

Are There Any Recent Changes in These Beliefs?

Here is one example. It is an example of syncretism, that is the combination of Christian and traditional religious teachings. Since the coming of Christianity, the African has followed this religion very closely. Many have become members of this religion. Christianity is growing faster in Africa than anywhere else in the world. But one big puzzle lies in the teaching of the Trinity, where it is contended that the Father is God,

the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Man can reach this three-in-one God by praying through God - Jesus. The puzzle is: How can sinful man pray/reach God through God Himself? It does not make sense. So the African says: O.K., if the living dead are not good enough, then there must be some other God. This has been, to some extent, the cause of certain independent sects. One such sect is Nzila. The word nzila means 'path' or 'way.'

"The Nzila sect believes that each individual has a guardian and guiding spirit which acts as a link between the individual and God. Any offence against God or the spirit results in the alienation of either God, the spirit, or both. This, in turn, leaves the body susceptible to disease and suffering." (Muntemba)

The Nzila sect discourages the practice of what was wrongly called ancestral worship. This must be from the influence of the Christian religion, which teaches that there is only one God. And since many people who have an Nzila spirit are members of some Christian denomination they want their teaching to be more in line with what they hear in their churches. Listen to this: *"Learn the word that the father (God) teaches, for God hears and sees all. If one is clean and pure in mind and spirit, then the continuous presence of the spirit and therefore God will be assured."* These people sort of hold onto two beliefs, one African and the other Christian. Their rules and codes of behaviour are based on the ten commandments.

The Nzila sect is an example of syncretism, the mixing of Christianity and African religion. Now we want to look at an African who would call Nzila the "worship" of ancestors. This person claims to be charismatic. I will let him speak for himself:

"Not long ago, just this year on June 15th, 1980, I celebrated my 50th birthday. The dean of the Region combined the celebration with a Parish-Confirmation day. At the time of the homily, just before calling upon the Holy Spirit, I announced to the Faithful the following: 'I believe in the reality of the Holy Spirit, that He is a living person. As such therefore, when I call upon the Holy Spirit, He will come. May I ask then that those of you who are standing should kneel down or sit down. At the coming of the Holy Spirit there may be a commotion. Hence I would like that you are seated, in case you fall if you will be standing.'

"Those who took my word seriously sat down. We went into prayers for confirmation. After the two official prayers, I went on anointing the confirmands. In the meantime, the commotion began. Some people fell down. Others cried. Still others were shaking and trembling. Those who knew what to do at such moments went round to help them by praying with them. After confirmation I announced to the people the following: 'Please, leave our friends who have been affected by the presence of the Holy Spirit to remain where they are. At the time of consecration, we shall ask the Lord Jesus to heal them all.' When the time of consecration came, I raised the Holy Eucharist, and asked the Lord Jesus Christ in His compassion and condescension to heal our brothers and sisters, which He did. But at the raising of the Host and the chalice, again many went wayward. They fell down, they shouted and cried. One just near the altar confessed: "I believe, Lord, that you are present in the Eucharist. I believe Lord."

African charismatics may use the same words used by Western charismatics, but the two probably believe two different things. If Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Helper, who should come to testify of Him, how can He exorcise Him as though He were an evil spirit, and that at a request of man? We

should protect the flock of God against falling back to idol worship. This is not only the work of a pastor, but it is for all of you who are here. This was the reason for studying this doctrine. May God protect and give us wisdom to know the spirits which are not in keeping with His Word.

For Discussion

- 1) Tell of your experience of charismatics or spiritual churches or individuals claiming to be spirit-possessed in your area, or any related cases that you know of.
- 2) Suggest ways in which Missionaries and Nationals can work together to manifest the spiritual unity which they have by faith, for the good of the LCCA.
- 3) Suggest ways in which you, the laity, can manifest the Spirit working in you through your offerings.

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