

**The Magnificent but Tragic Life of Edward Irving**  
The Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement

*The Life of Edward Irving*  
(August 4, 1792 \* December 7, 1832)

by

Arnold Dallimore

*A Brief Study of Edward Irving*

by

**Dr. Stanford E. Murrell**

Edward Irving was a Presbyterian minister who served in London from 1822 until his death of tuberculosis on December 7, 1834 at the age of 42. He was buried in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral in Scotland. What makes Mr. Irving worth knowing is that he made popular many novel concepts that have proven to be foundational to the modern charismatic movement.

**First, Edward Irving was willing to believe that God was giving new revelations.** His training as a Presbyterian minister taught him that God had provided a completed revelation in the *Scriptures*. For many years Irving believed this and defended the historic position.

But when he heard the utterance in a tongue and its interpretation into English, he became dogmatic in his assurance that this was the very voice of God. He believed that the words spoken “in power” were inspired speech and that they constituted a new revelation equal in authority to the Bible.

To the end of his life Mr. Irving never wavered from this reversed position even when one leading lady in the tongues movement confessed that she practiced what she would say in church and other leaders came to the conclusion that the utterances were of human origin.

Herein lies a most important lesson for today. Not only did the belief in new revelation ruin Irving’s career as a Presbyterian minister, when he allowed tongues to break out in the worship service, but it will mean the ruin of an orthodox faith of

any who accept it. The idea of further revelations not only robs the Scriptures of their finality and therefore of their authority, but also strikes at the very foundations of Christianity. It allows every man to become a law unto himself and to ‘do that which is right in his own eyes’, and leaves mankind without a definite ‘Thus saith the Lord!’ on any subject.

Of course, many of the charismatic people today stand firm in defense of the Scriptures. But Irving’s experience points out the grave danger of accepting even the possibility of ‘*new revelation*’ and indicates the necessity for all who believe The Book stoutly to reject all professed further revelations, whether they be in visions or dreams or the hearing of voices, and to hold solely to the finished revelation, the written and inerrant *Word of God*.

**Second, Edward Irving embraced biblically unsound ideas regarding sickness and healing.** Mr. Irving taught that “*bodily disease is the direct infliction of Satan, and that therefore faith and prayer, and these only, should be employed as the means of deliverance from it.*” Fortunately, Mr. Irving was not always consistent with his stated beliefs for when his young children were extremely sick, doctors were allowed to examine them. Nevertheless, three of his children died. Irving took this as a form of God’s judgment in his life combined with Satan’s infliction. Illness and trouble were to Irving evidences of Divine displeasure.

Not only is this position unscriptural, it is cruel. It was cruel to Mr. Irving himself and cruel to others suffering ill health or tragedy. There are many reasons why God allows pain and suffering. Divine displeasure is only one.

In regards to healing, Mr. Irving believed that healing was available in every instance of sickness provided there was sufficient faith present. Many a victim of disease must have found his pain increased by the feeling he was either suffering the angry judgment of God or the cruel wrath of Satan—especially when healing did not come and he lingered in agony.

Furthermore, if ever a man was convinced he was going to be healed it was Irving during the last months of his sickness. That part of the story is very heartbreaking. It began in this way.

One of the Prophets, so called, that Irving had come to trust and submit to, speaking 'in the Spirit', declared it was the command of God that Irving leave London and go to Glasgow and that God had a great work for him to do there. Some years earlier another man named Robert Baxter had prophesied that Edward would some day go to Scotland and there be used in a mighty way by God. Irving now united this promise in his mind with his own assurance that God would heal him and grant him all the charismatic gifts he believed in but had never experienced: tongues, healing and prophetic utterances.

With this expectancy before him, Irving set out for Glasgow. The month was September and he traveled alone. Before his journey ended Irving was to grow increasingly weak despite attempts to believe he was healed. On one particular occasion in the early hours of the morning he placed a wash basin on the floor of his room, stood in it and poured a larger pitcher of cold water over his head and let it run down to his feet. He was trying to break a constant fever. After this cold bath he told himself his fever was gone, but before an hour or two had passed he knew it was as bad as ever. His body grew weaker. The miracle of healing was denied, his life steadily ebbed away and he came down to an untimely death in December 1834. The church today should be instructed and warned by the unscripturalness of Irving's belief and its sad effect in his own darkest hour.

**Then third, there are some practical lessons to be learned from the general failure of Irving's career as a minister among which is the consequences of abandoning pastoral authority.** At the close of his first year in London, in 1822, Irving stood on the pinnacle of fame. He was only thirty-two and it seemed he could not fail to go on to a life of the greatest success. By all the contemporary accounts he was destined for greatness and magnificent accomplishments.

Members of Parliament came to hear him preach.

The highest echelon of society crowded into his church.

A larger building had to be erected to hold the people who were blessed by his eloquence and insights into the *Scriptures*. All Irving had to do was to hold to his Presbyterian beliefs and contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

But that did not happen for Irving began to listen to men such as A. J. Scott to accept the restoration of the apostolic charismatic gifts. Under Scott's influence Irving accepted the idea of two definite stages in the Christian life, the first that of regeneration and the second that of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was evidenced by 'speaking in tongues'.

From the moment Irving separated the baptism of the Holy Spirit from salvation and believed in two distinctly different levels of the Christian life neither he nor his ministry was the same. Believing, as he did, that only those who spoke in tongues had received the baptism with the Holy Spirit, Irving regarded these persons as on the higher level and therefore as much superior in spiritual power. All others he looked upon as on the lower level and as spiritually inferior.

Since he himself had never spoken in tongues Irving began to submit himself to the Prophets. Since they spoke in tongues he conceded to them a position far superior to his own, and thereafter his life came under their control. In practical terms this means that as a minister he surrendered his pastoral authority. As a person he no longer had the freedom, liberty or ambition to write or be active

or believe that the Holy Spirit could lead him too. In this manner a life that could have been so great a success came down to disappointment and failure. The Prophets dominated his life and arrogated to themselves virtually a total authority in the management of the affairs of the church, and Irving, wanting to be humble and living in the belief that they conveyed the voice of God, felt he had no choice but to submit.

The Prophets constructed in the worship area of now new Catholic Apostolic Church on Newman Street in London an unusual platform—it had six levels. The highest level was for the Apostles such as the lawyer J. B. Cardale, and slightly below that was the level for the Prophets. And then in descending order came those for the Elders, the Evangelists and the Deacons. Finally, at the lowest level, was the place for the one whom, in keeping with the designation used in the Book of the Revelation, they termed '*the Angel*' or '*the Messenger*'—this was Irving. The natural esteem and honor that the *Scriptures* instruct be given to the Elder for the office he holds was denied.

**All of this could have been avoided if Irving had not surrendered his pastor authority and embraced an erroneous view of the Christian life.** Had Irving kept on believing that the presence of the Holy Spirit is an integral part of regeneration and not something radically distinct from it, he might have joined the ranks of other men of his century. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, David Livingstone,

C. H. Spurgeon and George Muller, the German who maintained the orphan houses in England, are true examples of a holy life and the enduement with *'power from on high'* though they never spoke in tongues or prophesied. These men were born again and indwelt by the Spirit of God. For them the Christian life was one of steady increase in being *'filled with the Spirit'* and *a daily growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.'*

**Another practical lesson from the life of Edward Irving is that doctrinal error breeds more doctrinal error.** At the same time that Irving came to believe in a two-stage view of the Christian life, he embraced the idea that Jesus Christ possessed a sinful nature.

Though some within the Church have taught that Christ could sin, the orthodox position has always been that the Lord Jesus Christ could *not* have sinned. W.E. Best explains.

*"The point of view that Christ could sin is designated by the idea of peccability, and the fact that He could not sin is expressed by the term impeccability. To suggest the capability or possibility of sinning would disqualify Christ as Savior, for a peccable Christ would mean a peccable God. Holiness is far more than the absence of sin; it is positive virtue. The advocates of peccability say,*

*'Christ could have sinned, but He did not.'*

*However to say that Christ could have sinned is to deny positive holiness. To deny positive holiness, therefore, is to deny the holy character of God. Holiness is positive virtue that has neither room for nor interest in sin.” (Studies in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ)*

In discussing the Doctrine of the Impeccability of Christ, a person must remember several foundational truths. **First, Jesus could not have sinned because Christ is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies that are grounded in the eternal decrees of God.** The divine decree foreordained that the Messiah would be without sin and therefore a worthy Savior. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).* To say that Jesus could not have sinned is to say that the decrees of God could not fail as they were manifested in fulfilled prophecies.

**Second, Jesus could not have sinned because there is something called moral certitude. If someone were to give you a butcher knife and invite you to cut out the eyes of your child for the mere pleasure of it, you would recoil in horror.** You could not do that! If you were offered a million dollars for cutting out the eyes and ten million dollars more if you drove a nail into the child's brain, you could not do that! You would die before you harmed your child in such a manner.

The soul of Jesus Christ was so holy and so pure that the suggestion of any sin was just as abhorrent as the scenario set out above. Jesus could not sin.

**Third, it must never be forgotten that Jesus was not two persons in one body.** He was one Person with two natures. While He was truly human, He was altogether God, and as the God-man He could not sin.

**Fourth, the capacity to sin is not what makes man.** If there were no capacity to sin, man would still be man; there was no sin in Adam when he was first created, yet he is called man (Genesis 2:7). In resurrected bodies believers will still be human but without the sin nature. Whatever constitutes man as man does not necessitate sin or a sin nature. Therefore, it was not necessary that Jesus have the moral capacity to sin in order to be true humanity.

Finally, to embrace a concept that there was the possibility of Jesus' sinning but that He simply chose not to, might make one feel psychologically good as it makes Jesus seem to be more like "*me*." However, Jesus is not like "*me*." No one who is born of a virgin is just like "*me*." No one who is truly God is just like "*me*." Jesus did not come into the world to be just like other men. He came to rescue fallen men from the depths of sin into which they had fallen.

To believe that Jesus could have sinned if He so chose is an unworthy thought of Him, for it presupposes that there is still something in His nature susceptible to sin. Logically, this means that Christ was not and is not quite perfect.

Christ was not perfect because He consistently chose not to sin. He was perfect and therefore He was without sin. Jesus was perfect in Mary's womb. He was perfect in the hour of His birth. He was perfect as a child. He was perfect as a man in His ministry. He was perfect in His death. And He is perfect today in His glorified, resurrection body.

To say that Christ could have sinned is to say that Christ could **still** sin yet, He just chooses not to.

The peccability of Christ is unacceptable to a high view of Christology. Jesus Christ is the same today, yesterday, and forever. He did not and He could not sin. Early Church councils were called to give form to and defend this truth and they did. So did the Presbyterian church of England during the days of Mr. Edward Irving.

In April of 1832 the Presbytery ordered Irving to stand trial before them and he did. Not willing to recant his public opinion about Christ possessing a sinful nature Edward Irving was condemned for heresy. The verdict read in part: *“Therefore this Presbytery, having seriously and deliberately considered the complaint and the evidence adduced...do find...that the said Edward Irving has redendered himself unfit to remain the ministry of the National Scot Church and ought to be removed therefrom...”* And so he was.

What is to be said of the charismatic movement in whole and in part?

**First, those within the charismatic movement generally mean well.** For the most part no one should question the sincerity of those who want to believe that all the gifts associated with the early church are valid and functional today. The magnificent but tragic life of Edward Irving offers one example of a devout but deluded minister of the gospel who desperately wanted to see God give to His church the gift of tongues, healing, prophecy and apostles.

Upon hearing of Irving's death, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, who was a theological student at the time, wrote in his *Diary*, "*I look back upon him with awe, as on the saints, and martyrs of old. A holy man, in spite of all his delusions and errors. He is now with his God and Saviour, whom he wronged so much, yet, I am persuaded, loved so sincerely.*"

**Second, those within the charismatic movement are not completely wrong in everything they say and do.**

- The charismatics have called attention to the Person and work of God the Holy Spirit—and that is not wrong.
- The charismatics have reminded the Church there is a vital relationship to be enjoyed with the living Lord—and that is not wrong.
- The charismatics have reminded the Church that worship need not be dead and sterile. There are emotions to enjoy and incorporate in the celebration of God.

- The charismatics have sought after spiritual gifts—and that is not wrong to do. Writing to the saints in Corinth Paul said, “*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church*” (1 Cor. 14:12).

Having said all of that it must also be stated that the charismatic movement opens itself to doctrinal error, practical abuse, and demonic influence, which is the most frightening part of the movement.

- When Edward Irving taught a two-fold stage of salvation and separated the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from regeneration he moved into doctrinal error.
- When Irving taught the “*sinful substance of the Savior*” he embraced heresy, which is extreme doctrinal error.
- When Irving led his people to believe that the only acceptable means of physical healing was through prayer and faith he was not only in doctrinal error, he was cruel.
- When Irving insisted that only Satan was behind sickness and that all sickness was the judgment of God upon the life, he was *Scripturally* unsound and cruel.
- When individuals in Irving’s congregation began to speak in an ecstatic utterance in the public worship services in a practical way they abused whatever spiritual gift *might* have been present for they did not follow the guidelines of *Scriptures*.
  - When the genuine gift of tongues is manifested in an assembly it will not be in the voice of a woman for the Biblical command on this matter is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:34 “*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*”
  - When the genuine gift of tongues is manifested in an assembly it is not to be uttered unless there is an interpreter present and then only two or three

at the most is allowed to speak. 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 *“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”*

- When the genuine gift of prophecy is manifested in an assembly it is not to be exercised by more than two or three times at the most. 1 Corinthians 14:29-30 *“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.”*
- When individuals in Irving’s congregation suspended their intellect in order to open their mind to ecstatic utterances they became prime candidates for demonic influences. That possibility continues today. Therefore, listen to Paul as he says *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor 14:15).*

Whenever Satan can get people to suspend their intellect in order to open themselves up to channeling then he has a point of entry into the life. Those who speak in tongues do not know if they are praising God or cursing Him or just uttering childish gibberish without an interpreter. There is a naive assumption that God is being worshipped. The Biblical anti-dote for this is to try the spirits whether they are of God or not. 1 John 4:1 *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*

Why then do people express themselves in ecstatic utterances? There are two reasons. First, some really do believe they are praying a heavenly prayer language even though they cannot understand it. Secondly, there is an emotional pleasure that is derived from the experience. It is as simple as that. Religious people worship in a way that is pleasing to them and brings pleasure.

The concerned Christian will ask, “*But is it real?*” Edward Irving gave up his Presbyterian ministry and then his very life believing that tongues are real, modern day prophets and their prophecies are real, men who claimed to be apostles are real, and healings by faith alone are real.

Ironically, some of those closest to him in the early days of the charismatic awakening saw the error of their ways. Some who had believed in the manifestations found they could not continue in that belief and had come to the conviction that these things, instead of being miraculous were merely human.

George Pilkington and Richard Baxter are notable examples that not only renounced the movement but circulated publications why they had left it behind. Miss Hall, one of the six original ‘*gifted ones*’ declared she had given up all belief in the manifestations. Indeed, she even confessed she had sometimes rehearsed at home the utterances she intended to burst forth with in the Church.

When the mind is engaged and an objective examination is made of the tongues movement based on the *Word of God* the following conclusions can be drawn.

- **There is no objective evidence that tongues, apostles, prophets or prophecies, the gift of knowledge or special working of miracles exists today.** When the ecstatic utterances are manifested in worship services the practitioners tend to violate every biblical prohibition.

Instead of the gospel being clearly communicated, there is confusion.

Instead of the mind being engaged in love and adoration for God there is a suspension of the intellect in order to enjoy a moment of self-centered personal pleasure.

- The *Word of God* anticipated that the time would come when certain of the charismatic gifts would cease. Writing to the Church of Corinth Paul had this to say in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. “*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*”

The practical problem is that the Biblical commentators and teachers are not united as to the meaning of the phrase “*that which is perfect is come.*”

Some *Bible* teachers believe the words refer to the complete canon of *Scripture*. When the *Scriptures* were finally compiled and the canonical books were determined, then prophecies failed, tongues ceased, and special revelatory knowledge vanished away.

Other Bible teachers believe the words in question refer to the second coming of Christ. The argument is that when Jesus comes the second time then the charismatic gifts will no longer be needed.

A third possibility is that the reference to “*that which is perfect*” refers to spiritual maturity. The word is *teleios* (*tel'-i-os*) and refers to something that is complete—in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character. The argument would be that when the Christian reaches spiritual maturity there will be no need for prophecies, tongues, or special knowledge.

Since the Church is not united on how to understand the phrase “*that which is perfect*”, I would urge this word of caution. Let the door be closed to believing in and receiving tongues, prophecies and revelation—but not locked. In other words God can sovereignly do what He will with His church. Christians must be

careful not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit or to ascribe to Satan what might be of God. So we do not lock the door against what God might do. But for the moment we can close the door on the matters of tongues, prophecies, and special revelation for there is no evidence they exist today when examined *Scripturally* and practically.

And when someone comes knocking at the door of the Church saying, “*I can speak in tongues*” let that utterance be examined and these questions answered.

*“Is God being worshipped? How is that known?”*

*“Is the gospel being communicated? In what manner and to whom?”*

*“Can you control this experience for you are so commanded in Scripture (1 Cor. 14:32).*

*“Are there Jews present in the audience?”* That question needs to be asked for tongues are said to be a sign to **unbelieving** Jews that God’s judgment has fallen upon the nation of Israel. You will find that taught in 1 Corinthians 14:20-22 *“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...”*

When someone comes knocking at the door of the church saying, “*I have the gift of prophecy and shall now speak forth the Word of God and reveal the mind of the Lord and what shall come to pass*” let such a person be examined. When Edward Irving examined the Prophets in his congregation, circumstances arose which caused even him to question the belief that their utterances came from God.

**First, despite the claim to so high an origin, the prophetic utterances were sorely lacking in substance.** That is still true today. Very frequently the prophetic utterances were no more than ‘*The Lord cometh!*’ ‘*The Lord will speak to His people!*’ or ‘*The Lord hasteneth His coming!*’

A man named Taplin was a leading figure among the Prophets and the following utterance is typical of much that he said: “*The Lord hath come down. He is in the midst of you. His eye hath seen, His heart hath pitied the affliction of His people, and he will deliver them. He will not leave a hoof behind.*”

Utterances had broken out constantly during the service which celebrated the opening of the Newman Street Church. They had begun with the outcry, “*Oh, but she shall be fruitful! Oh! Oh! Oh! She shall replenish the earth!*” And after many similar statements they had ended with “*Ah! Sanballat, Sanballat, Sanballat, the Horonite, the Moabite, the Amornite! Ah! Confederate, confederate with the Horonite! Ah! Look ye to it, look ye to it!*”

The utterances were almost always of this meaningless nature and they provoked the question, “*Do they really come from God?*” The modern charismatic practice is still characterized by meaningless utterances. The church today should test the spirits to see if they are of God and not assume they are.

If prophecies have not failed, if tongues have not ceased, if the gift of special revelatory knowledge has not vanished away, then these charismatic gifts should be recognized and embraced today.

But if they have been withdrawn by God, then they should not be imitated and the Church should be grateful for the gifts which are clearly being manifested in the gift of pastors, teachers, helpers, giving, hospitality and all the rest.

Now my pastoral prayer is that, “*May the Lord Jesus Christ bring unity to this body of believers and never allow the charismatic gifts to become a divisive issue for us lest we too fall into doctrinal error, practical abuses, or come under demonic influences. Amen.*”

## Doctrine of the Impeccability of Christ

1. In the year AD 451 the *Council of Chalcedon* met and formulated the faith of the Church respecting the person of Christ, and declared Him, *“to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures being in no wise taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons.”*
2. The great truth enunciated is that the eternal Son of God took upon Himself our humanity, which includes making choices, and not that the man Jesus acquired divinity.
3. Vehement argument has raged around the question, *“Did the Lord's deity render sin impossible, and consequently make His temptations unreal?”* The following proposition is place for consideration: *“If, to Christ, sin was impossible, then His temptation by Satan was a meaningless display, and His victory a mere delusion, and His coronation (Phil. 2:6) a shadow.”*
4. One answer to this problem is to argue for both positions. *“We may say it was impossible Jesus would sin. We dare not say it was impossible He could not sin.”*
5. While this response would please many, for others it does not do justice to either the Scriptures or to the person of Christ. It is a matter of records that once the concept is conceded that Jesus could sin, the temptation comes to teach and believe that He did sin or that He was less than very God of very God.
6. From the very beginning, the Church has argued that Jesus was free, both from hereditary depravity, and from actual sin.
  - Jesus never offered a sacrifice for sin.
  - Jesus never prayed for forgiveness. Jesus frequently went up to the Temple, but He never offered sacrifice. He prayed, *“Father, forgive them”* (Luke 23:34), but He never prayed: *“Father, forgive me.”*
  - Jesus taught that others needed the new birth. He said: *“Ye must be born anew”* (John 3:7); but the words indicated that He had no such need. Jesus not only yielded to God's will when made known to him, but also sought it: *“I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me”* (John 5:30). It was not personal experience of sin, but perfect resistance to it that made Jesus fit to deliver us from it. The choices that Jesus made to behave and honor the will of the Father were consistent with His essence where there was nothing which sin could touch.
  - Jesus challenged others to convict Him of a single sin. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *“therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”* (Luke 1:35). *“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the*

*truth, why do ye not believe me?”* (John 8:46). *“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me”* (John 14:30). There was not the slightest evil inclination upon which temptation could lay hold of Christ.

7. Another question arises, *“If in Christ there was no sin, or tendency to sin, how could He be tempted?”*
8. The answer is that Jesus was tempted in the same way that Adam was tempted which is susceptibility to all the forms of innocent desire. To these desires temptations may appeal. Sin consists, not in these desires, but in the gratification of them out of God's order, and contrary to God's will. So Satan appealed to our Lord's desire for food, for applause, and for power (Matthew 4:11).
9. Because most temptations are addressed either to desire or fear, it can be said that Christ *“was in all points tempted like as we are”* (Hebrews 4:15).
10. The first temptation, in the wilderness, was addressed to His desire; the second, in the garden, was addressed to His fears. Satan, after the first temptation, *“departed from him for a season“* (Luke 4:13), but returned when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane.
11. Still, the Lord was able to say that *“the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me”* (John 14:30). Satan was trying to deter Jesus from His work at Calvary by rousing within Him vast and agonizing fear with which His holy soul was moved. But it did not work, *“He was without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15).
12. To press the point of the Impeccability of Christ more closely, we ascribe to Christ not only natural, but also moral, integrity or moral perfection, that is sinlessness. This means not merely that Christ could avoid sinning, and did actually avoid it, but also that it was impossible for Him to sin because of the essential bond between the human and the divine natures.
13. The sinlessness of Christ clearly testifies to it in the following passages:
  - Luke 1:35 *“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”*
  - John 8:46 *“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?”*
  - John 14:30 *“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”*
  - 2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

- Hebrews 4:15 *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*
- Hebrews 9:14 *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*
- 1 Peter 2:22 *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”*
- 1 John 3:5 *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”*

14. While Christ was made to be sin judicially, yet ethically He was free from both hereditary depravity and actual sin.

15. Part of the problem for those who do **not** embrace the impeccability of Christ is the tendency to believe that Jesus is but a man. Yet, there is at the same time a longing to ascribe to Him the essence of God. There is also the desire to affirm divinity for Christ in virtue of the immanence of God in Him, and the powerful presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The tension does not do justice to the truth of the two natures in Christ: He is both divine and human in one Person forever. (*Studies in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ*, W.E. Best).

## *The Tragic Life of Rev. Edward Irving*

August 4, 1792 \* December 7, 1832

### The Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement

#### **Introduction**

##### **I. The Novel Beliefs of Edward Irving**

- Irving believed that God was giving new revelations
- Irving believed that all sickness was of Satan or because of divine judgment
- Irving began to trust modern day 'Prophets' and "Apostles"
- Irving separated the baptism of the Holy Spirit from salvation
- Irving taught on the "*sinful substance of the Saviour*"

##### **II. Practical Lessons from the Life of Edward Irving**

- The tragic consequences of relinquishing pastoral authority
- Doctrinal error breeds more doctrinal error

##### **III. Foundational Truths**

- Because of the Old Testament prophecies Jesus could not have sinned
- Because of there is moral certitude, Jesus could not have sinned
- Jesus Christ possessed two natures in one Person; He was the God-man
- Jesus is not "*like me*"

##### **IV. Observations on the Charismatic Movement**

- Those within the charismatic movement mean well
- Those within the charismatic movement are not wrong on all points
- Those within the charismatic movement are highly susceptible to doctrinal heresy, practical abuses of the spiritual gifts and demonic influence

##### **V. The Appeal of the Charismatic Movement**

- A sincere beliefs that all the apostolic gifts are functional today
- A longing for personal joy and happiness in worship

##### **VI. Conclusions about Specific Charismatic Gifts**

- There is no objective evidence that tongue, apostles, prophets and prophecies or special revelations continue to exist
- If these are reported to be present in a congregation the church has a responsibility to test the spirits that in its midst

##### **VII. A Pastoral Prayer**