

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL



Please Don't Insult God

Have you ever been insulted? If you have, then you know how bad you felt. Someone said something to you or did something for you that was contemptible and degrading. It showed you what they thought of you and it also indicated how little they were. It would have been far better had they said or done nothing.

But if you think that is bad, then what about the way man treats God. Many deny him and a good percentage of those who do believe in him often take his name in vain. They do this through cursing or using his name along with bad language. How many sit down to eat without ever even thinking to thank God for all of the blessings that he has showered on them ?

Numerous people insult God by putting their wants and wishes above the things that he has commanded. Think about the ones

who teach that one can be saved this way or that way. What about the ones who are in all kinds of churches and proudly put the names of men before the name of Christ. They not only do that but try to justify it by saying that the name isn't important, that it doesn't matter how you worship just so long as you are sincere, that there are many roads to heaven. They even boast that one church is as good as another. Now how do you think God feels about all of this? If that is not throwing insult after insult into his face, then what would you have to do to insult him?

Man is saying in all of these things that he doesn't really need God, that he can do as he pleases and still go to heaven. He is boasting that his way is as good as God's way. How sad and foolish of man to so reason. One day his knee shall bow to God and his tongue shall confess to God. (Romans 14:11).

Christ spoke of those in his day that crossed land and sea to make one proselyte but he said that after he had become a proselyte that he had become two fold more of hell. (Matthew 23:15). He was talking about those in religious error making converts to their error. In that case they would be much more difficult to reach with the truth, and therefore they were more likely to be eternally lost than they were before.

On another occasion Christ said that it would have been better that one had never been born than to betray the Son of God. (Matthew 26:24).

Peter declared that it would have been better for one to have never known the truth than to have known it and not been faithful to the Lord. He said, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2 : 20-22).

But that is not all. What about those who belong to the Lord

and attend worship only occasionally or may be even start attending a denominational place of worship because it is nearby? How insulting that must be to God. How could he point to us with pride and say that we belong to him, that we represent him? Instead of that, he would be ashamed of us. How it must pain him to see his children acting in such a manner.

But if you think that is insulting, what about a child of God coming to the time that the collection plate is passed, and he pitches in a few coins or puts in a folded up two rupees note or a wadded up five rupee note, when he should be putting in fifty rupees or a hundred rupees or more. This happens all the time, not with a few, but with many. That's being a hypocrite. One is saying that he loves the Lord but the Lord knows better. Listen, It would be better to give nothing than to insult the Lord with such a small offering. If you are going to be a Christian then learn how to give and then give as the Bible teaches. Paul said that we should give each first day of the week, that we should give as we have prospered, as we have purposed in our hearts, and that we should give joyfully. (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6). When we give as we should then our Father is going to bless us. But when we throw a rupee or two into his face, then how can he reward that kind of giving? He can't and he won't. In that case we are insulting him. We are mocking him and making fun of what he has commanded. We had better be glad that God doesn't punish people on the spot for insulence.

My friends, and my brethren, we need to bow ourselves before our God and our Father and say, "Lord, you command and I will obey." Then we should do that. It is only when we reverence the Lord, show respect for him and his word, submitting to his will in obedience that the Lord can save us and bless us. Let me encourage you to give yourself to the Lord and let him show you what he can do for you. Those of you who have more, then give more. You will not lose, but you will gain everytime, provided you are doing with the proper attitude and the right motive.

Whatever we do in this life, we should make sure that we do not insult God. Remember that one day we will have to answer to him for all that we have said and done in this life. At that time we

will want to enter into his presence with full knowledge and confidence that we have obeyed him and worshipped and served him throughout our lives. If we had to meet him to day would we be able to do so on that basis ? If not, now is the time to begin to put things right with the Lord. Tomorrow may be too late.



**associate
editorial**

Who Is A Sinner ?

The Bible teaches that all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23). This, however, does not mean that all are born with sin or all are sinners from birth. But the Bible here is saying that all **HAVE** sinned. Some have used this verse of the Bible to prove that infants are also sinners. Another verse of the scriptures commonly used in support of this false doctrine is Psalm 51:5 where King David has said, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Now notice, David did not say that he was born with sin or that he was in sin at the time of his birth. In fact, David there was not talking about his own sin but rather he was talking about his mother who conceived him in sin. She was in sin and not David when he was born. Sin cannot be inherited. According to Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son, The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

Speaking of little children Jesus said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14). Obviously than, little children are not sinners, otherwise Jesus would not have said that. However,

when a child grows and becomes mature enough to know and understand what is wrong and what is right; when he begins to understand the difference between the good and the evil, then in God's Judgment he becomes a sinner, because he is then able to commit lawlessness. The Bible says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4). Sin is lawlessness or violation of God's law. Therefore, when we read in the Bible, "All have sinned. . ." it means then that all who are capable of committing lawlessness are sinners.

Jesus Christ, God's Son is the propitiation of the sins of the world, because He died for sinners. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 4:10). This is the Good News. The Bible says, when one believes in Jesus Christ and confesses Him to be the Son of God, and when one repents of all sins and is baptized or immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins, by faith, then he becomes a saved person, whose sins have been washed by the blood of Christ which He shed in His death for sinners. (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter wrote the saved and said in his epistle, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18,19).

This, however, does not mean that one becomes immune to sinning. One whose sins have been forgiven by faith in Christ and by obedience to His command can sin again and may lose his salvation by living in sin. The apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12). It is possible for a Christian, a child of God, to sin and be lost again. The Bible says, "For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb; "A dog returns to his own vomit;" and "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22). As long as one lives on earth it is possible for him to go back and sin. None of us can say that we have no sin in us. At one place in his epistle the apostle John wrote, "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch

him." (2 John 5:18). A true Christian, one who has been born of the water and of the Spirit, does not deliberately sins, knowing that Christ has redeemed him from all sins by his blood of the cross. But being human we always fall short of God's standard of perfection. Thus we cannot say that we have no sin in us. Again, the apostle John wrote: "This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darknesss, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sins. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, These things I write to you," said John, "that you may not sin. And if any one sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 1:5-10; 2:1,2).

So we learn from the Bible that all have sinned. Jesus Christ the Son of God is the way of Salvation. He saves us from all our past sins, and He keeps us saved, if we confess our sins to Him, and He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Is He your Saviour ?

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

WHAT CAN I DO FOR THE CHURCH?

Sometimes today Christian women seem not to be able to find work to do in the Lord's Church. Because the leadership in the public assemblies is to be taken by men. (And let a woman learn in silence with all submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 1 Tim. 2:11, 12). Many seem to think that a woman's work is simply to be present for the worship periods and to engage in worship. But does our work end there ?

No. Actually, worshipping God is the privilege of the Christian. It is not his service or work. We are allowed the honor of praising God, of drawing spiritual strength from our worship, our studies, and our fellowship with one another. But our work for God continues throughout the week.

Phil. 4:3 says, “. . . help these women who laboured with me in the gospel.” Rom. 16:13, “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea . . . for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila (husband and wife), my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life”. Verse 6, “Greet Mary, who laboured much for us.” In Acts 16:14-15, when Lydia became a Christian she opened her home to Paul and the others travelling with him. In Acts 16:26, Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and “taught him the way of God more accurately.” Acts 9:39 tells of Dorcas, a Christian woman who had been helpful to the widows in her area, stitching tunics and garments. Titus 2:3 and 4 says that the older women are to teach the younger women. Eunice and Lois (2 Tim. 1:5) made it their work to thoroughly teach the scriptures to Timothy as a child and young man in the home. Mark 15:40, 41 tells of Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James the Less and of Joses and Salome, “. . . who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee.”

So, women of the first century were busy Christians, and we must be busy if we are to please God.

What can a woman do in the work of the church? Here are some suggestions :

1. First, make sure that you and your family are always present for worship services.
2. Do not fail to properly train your children spiritually at home.
3. Teach a class for ladies or children during the Bible Study hour.
4. Volunteer to come early to prepare the Lord's Supper.

5. Stay after worship to wash the tray after the Supper.
6. Plan with the other ladies to work a few minutes after worship to straighten and leave the auditorium looking orderly.
7. Meet with the other ladies and plan together
 - (a) To visit sick or absent members.
 - (b) To meet regularly for a ladies' study class.
 - (c) To take food to some sick neighbour.
 - (d) To have a special cleaning day for the building.
8. Talk among your friends and close neighbours and encourage them to come to your house one morning or afternoon each week for tea and a period of Bible study.
9. With your husband, conduct Bible studies in the homes of nearby people who have shown interest in the church and will allow you to come.
10. Be aware of needs in your neighbourhood that you may be able to help with, emotional, physical, or spiritual.

Actually, women comprise a great part of the working force of the church. As we take advantage of our opportunities, we will see the church grow, and we ourselves will grow in the faith.

The Difference Jesus Has Made

C.L. Powell

In this modern age of hero influence it would be great to look to John 14:6 as Jesus is answering a puzzled Thomas who has just asked "And how can we know the way?" Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

It must have been wonderful to have been out there in the fields somewhere on the night that Jesus was born when the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. (Luke 2:9). An

angel announced the birth of Jesus Christ by saying, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10, 11).

HAS NOT BEEN THE SAME

In no way has the world ever been the same since Jesus came into it. No invention of man or men has ever improved the status of people as much as the life of the Son of God.

The Lord's coming cleared the mystery of Old Testament history and prophecy. God's promise from the Garden of Eden mentioned in Genesis 3:15 and the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 can now be seen clearly. The seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and in Abraham all families of the earth would be blessed.

Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, could openly say: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

BORN OF A VIRGIN

The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This can now be seen clearly as Matthew records the events in which the angel announced to Joseph the conception of Jesus by the Holy Ghost and he quotes from Isaiah 7:14.

Notice that in the Garden of Eden God said this would be from the seed of woman. Notice in Isaiah's prophecy that it would be a virgin and now the conception was with Mary who had not known man.

Paul presented this great message: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." (Galatians 4:4).

ASTONISHING TEACHING

The teachings of Christ were astonishing and yet they have

formed a great society. In a world plagued with selfishness he has told us that to find life we must lose it. (Matthew 16:25). In a world of arrogance and pride of the flesh he has taught us that greatness is not in position but service. (Matthew 23:11). In a world seething with greed and materialism he teaches us not to lay up treasures on earth. (Matthew 6:19-20). Jesus taught that life does not consist in what man possesseth. To a world saturated with hate, he teaches people to love their enemies. (Matthew 5:44). He also demonstrated the greatest love by dying for the lost. (John 3:16).

However, the great gift that he gave this world is the assurance of eternal life. In John 10:10 he says, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." From Ephesians 2:12-13 we are taught that we were without hope and God in the world, but now in Jesus Christ we are made nigh. Would to God that all people would apply the life and teaching of the Master Teacher to their lives.

What Do You Know About Demons?

Wayne Jackson

One of the most controversial topics to be discussed in recent years is that of demons. The subject has been given wide publicity by a variety of sensational books and movies, such as **The Exorcist**. Many people, upon considering this theme, have been led to believe that they are demon possessed, or else they fancy they know someone who has been taken with evil spirits.

1. What is the truth regarding this matter?
2. What were the demons of Biblical fame?
3. Where did they come from?
4. What powers did they possess?
5. Why did they enter certain persons and not others?

6. Do they still possess people today?

These questions engage the attention of thinking people.

The answers to the foregoing queries will not be found in the cheap books and shoddy movies of this perverse society. Rather, any information with which the human race has been indulged will be in the inspired scriptures.

The truth of the matter is, the Bible does not give a systematic treatment of demons. When one has examined every Biblical reference to the subject, there are still many unanswered questions.

AS RELATED TO OTHER MATTERS

The subject of demons is only introduced in the New Testament as the topic relates to other matters of importance. It is therefore incidental and so we are merely given sufficient minimal information. This information is necessary for the establishment of more important truths. The subject of demonology was thus obviously not an end within itself in New Testament doctrine.

Demon possession was a historical reality of first century society and no one, who respects the accuracy of the New Testament record, will deny this. Spiritual entities, known as demons, did inhabit and afflict human bodies during that age.

SEVERAL THEORIES

The question of demon origin is not spelled out in the scriptures. Several theories have been advanced by respectable Bible students, some of which, incidently, may be dismissed immediately.

Some, for instance, have suggested that demons were the disembodied spirits of a strange pre-Adam race of men that once lived upon the earth in an alleged "gap period" that is supposed to have fallen between Genesis 1 : 1 and 1 : 2. The problem with that theory is this : there is not a shred of Biblical evidence that any such gap period ever existed! That idea was born in the feverish minds of those who were panicked by the assertions of the evolutionists, and who thus sought to force the Bible into harmony with evolutionary chronology. How could there have been a pre-Adam race of men if Adam was the first man?! (1 Corinthians 15 : 45).

Others have contended that demons resulted from the cohabitation of angels with some of those ancient women who lived before the flood. This theory is based upon a misunderstanding of Genesis 6: 1-4. "... the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them." But this cannot be correct since Christ clearly taught that angels are sexless beings, incapable of such unions. (Matthew 22 : 30). In that Genesis context the "sons of God" were the righteous lineage of Seth, while the "daughters of men" represented the wicked descendants of Cain.

The two more plausible views of the identity of demons are as follows. First, demons may have been the spirits of wicked dead men whom God, in harmony with his divine purposes, permitted to leave the Hadean realm to indwell some people. Alexander Campbell argued this position in his lecture entitled, "Demonology," which is found in his volume, **Popular Lectures and Addresses**. Second, others have contended that demons were fallen angels who were allowed to escape their confinement to similarly accomplish some component in the divine plan. (Jude-6). Charles Hodge, in his **Systematic Theology**, contends for this viewpoint.

Regardless of the problem of origin, the New Testament clearly recognizes the fact of first century demoniacs.

THEIR NATURE

As to their nature, demons were spirits. Note how Matthew interchanges the terms: "... they brought unto him (Jesus) many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word." (Matt. 8:16). Since Christ declared that "a spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24 : 39), it is certain that demons were not physical beings. Concerning their character, demons are represented as malevolent entities. They were unclean spirits and evil—under the sway of him known as "the prince of demons," that is, Beelzebub, Satan. (Matthew 12 : 24, 43, 45).

1. Demons were quite intelligent beings, possessing true knowledge. (Mark 1 : 24).

2. They could exercise both volition and locomotion when permitted to do so. (Matthew 12 : 44, 45).

3. Demon possession frequently brought about physical and/or mental illness (though such illnesses were clearly distinguished from the demons themselves. (Matthew 4:24).

4. Demoniacs were sometimes smitten with dumbness (Matthew 9:32), blindness (Matthew 12:32), convulsions (Mark 9:18), epilepsy (Matthew 9:32), etc.

5. Occasionally demons were endowed with superhuman strength. (Mark 5:4; Acts 19:16).

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY OVER THEM

Since demons were obviously under the control of God ultimately (Luke 10:17), why were they allowed to enter into and to afflict those ancient folks? Apparently, demon possession was divinely permitted by God in order that the supreme authority of Christ might be made manifest. As the Lord revealed his control over nature (Mark 4:30), disease (Mark 1:12), material things (John 2:9), and even death (John 11:44), so also must the Son of God demonstrate his power over the spirit realm. His power over unclean spirits heralded his approaching reign. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." (Luke 11:20).

The authority of Jesus over evil spirits amazed the Jews. They exclaimed: "What is this? a new teaching! With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (Mark 1:27). The Lord also empowered his disciples to expel demons, and they did so (Luke 10:17), except on one occasion when their own lack of faith hindered their efforts. (Mark 9:28; Matthew 17:20).

CONTRAST WITH MODERN EXAMPLES

There are about eighty references to demons in the New Testament. A careful study of the details in these cases reveals virtually nothing in common with alleged modern-day episodes of so-called demon possession. A good description of purported

modern cases can be found in the article, "The Exorcism Frenzy," *Newsweek*, February 11, 1974. But note some of the contrasts between these "modern" examples and the circumstances of the first century.

1. Most demon "exorcisms" of today are secluded, back-room affairs that are only later publicized, yet when Jesus expelled evil spirits, his miracles were publicly viewed and they astonished the multitudes. (Luke 4:36).

2. Jesus and his apostles could expel demons with but a word, effecting immediate results. (Matthew 17:18; Acts 19:12). However, the Jesuit Priest, who was supposed to have exorcised the young boy who served as the main character in William Blatty's book, *The Exorcist*, was said to require two months and a ceremony employed twenty times! More recently, a Catholic Priest in San Francisco claimed that he was able to cast out a demon after only fourteen attempts!

3. The demoniacs of the New Testament era were simply afflicted, either bodily or mentally, by some malfunction of otherwise normal traits. Those cases involved no grotesque details. By way of contrast, however, Roman Catholic exorcist, Luigi Novagese, claimed: "A possessed man's skin turned white like paper, his teeth became transparent, his eyes bulged with balls of flame and fire issued from his mouth."

Modern spirits are apparently much more dramatically qualified than their first-century counterparts! It is also very significant that the New Testament record is free of the absurdities that are common to current cases.

Catholic Priest Karl Patzelt claims that during one of his "exorcising" sessions, a demon took a bite of a sandwich! A magazine photo shows a picture with a perfect set of teeth prints in the sandwich. One cannot but wonder though, how the demon could have bitten into the sandwich since spirits have no teeth (Luke 24:39), and why such a thing would have occurred in the absence of and physical appetite?!

4. Modern demoniacs are described as frequently uttering "fierce curses" and "bursts of blasphemy." In the New Testament,

however, demons were always very respectful of deity. They believed in the one God (James 2:19); they acknowledged Jesus as the "Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24), and the "Son of God" (Mark 3:11), who would ultimately banish them to torment. (Matthew 8:29). Never did they blaspheme deity.

5. It must be observed that the ability to cast out demons was a miraculous sign which demonstrated that the person with that gift was a proclaimer of God's revealed truth. The gift was to confirm the divine message. (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3, 4).

Modern exorcists are consistently contradicting themselves and their fellow exorcists, and also the written word of God. Their very testimony is a commentary upon the fact that they cannot be true servants of Jehovah God.

With the termination of the supernatural era of the early church (1 Corinthians 13:8), demon possession, and the corresponding gift of expulsion, ceased. Does it seem reasonable to assume that since there is no gift of demon expulsion available today that God would allow demons to continue to enter and afflict his human creatures? That would certainly suggest an imbalance of power and would put man at a great disadvantage. A careful study of the New Testament data reveals a gradual cessation of demonic activity as the apostolic age drew toward a conclusion.

Certainly Satan exerts great influence today. He does not, though, work miraculously. Just as God does not continue to work miracles in this age, but influences men by means of his word and his providence. So also, the devil wields his power indirectly and non-miraculously through various media.

Current cases which are associated with demon possession are doubtless the results of psychosomatic problems, hysteria, self-induced hypnosis, deception, delusion, and the like. They have natural, though perhaps not always understood, causes. In conclusion, we may confidently affirm that demons do not possess men today.

"It Makes One Happier To Give Than To Get"

Edsel Burleson

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). In his Commentary on Acts, p. 329, brother H. Leo Boles wrote: "It may be that the full truth of this statement of our Lord in all its length and breadth and height will never be fully understood by any but the redeemed, and not by them till they enter the city of the Lamb of God." Yet, there are many beautiful lessons which can NOW be learned from this "supreme beatitude."

Giving is more blessed than receiving because it enables the giver to become more like the Father and the Son. God "giveth to all men liberally" (James 1:5), but receives from no man. (Acts 17:25). He not only "gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16), but will "with him also freely give us all things." (Romans 8:32). Jesus said, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself." (John 10:18).

When we stop giving, we stop producing. And when we stop producing, we die.

The story is told about an unusual tree which grew just outside the gates of a desert city in the Middle East. It was an old tree, a landmark. But more than this, it seemed to have been touched by the finger of God—it bore fruit perpetually.

Despite its old age, its limbs were constantly laden with fruit. Although hundreds of passers-by refreshed and nourished themselves from the tree, it never failed to give freely to a tired, dusty traveler.

Then one day a greedy merchant purchased the property on which the tree grew. Once he saw that travelers were "robbing" his tree, he built a high fence around it.

Stunned, the travelers pleaded, "Share with us."

Growled the merchant in return: "This is my tree, my fruit, bought with my money."

Then early one morning as the first of the travelers passed the old tree, they were shocked to find that, after all its years of helping others, the old tree had suddenly died. When it stopped giving, it stopped bearing. When it stopped bearing, it died.

One who gives is more blessed than the receiver because he experiences inward satisfaction and happiness in being able to provide relief. It makes one "feel good all over" to participate in this kind of worthwhile experience.

There is a fable that says that once upon a time a pig was lamenting to a cow how unpopular he was. People are always talking about your gentleness and kind eyes. Sure, you give milk and cream, but I give more. I give bacon and ham. I give bristles, and they even pickle my feet. Still nobody likes me. Why?"

The cow thought a minute, and then said, "well, maybe it's because I give while I'm still living."

When we give the Lord the best we have, the best will surely come back to us.

The Work Of The Holy Spirit

Basil Overton

It is refreshing and encouraging to study what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit and his work when we compare that with the claims, assertions, and speculations that people make about unholy spirits or demons.

GODHEAD

The word "Godhead" is in the King James Version of the Bible three times, (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). A form of the Greek word that means deity or divinity is in each of these passages. The English word **Godhead** was used by the translator to express the idea in these Greek terms. **Godhead** is not in one of the passages (Romans 1:20) in the American Standard

Version. Instead the translators, used the word **divinity**. **Godhead** is the same as **Godhood** which meant the state of goodness, or the state or quality of God, or divinity. It meant the state of complete goodness. Only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in the state of complete goodness! They possess characteristics that no other beings possess. To illustrate we can say those in boyhood possess traits that others do not have; so with girlhood, motherhood, manhood, etc.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING

Perhaps there is generally a better understanding of the work of the Father and the Son, than there is of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does work, both in bringing people to Christ, and in keeping them faithful in the Lord. The Bible plainly tell us things which the Holy Spirit has done and continue to do. For all that we know he may work in other ways, but we can be certain only concerning the work of the Spirit which God had told us about in his word.

FROM THE BEGINNING

The Holy Spirit has worked with God the Father from the beginning. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:1,2).

Jesus was begotten of the Father, but the Holy Spirit worked in the conception that brought Jesus into the world. The angel said to the disappointed Joseph, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 1:20).

The Lord worked with the apostles by performing signs and wonders through them to confirm the message they spoke. (Mark 16:20). But the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit so they could speak all the truth, and perform miracles to confirm the truth. (John 16:13; Acts 2:1-4; Hebrews 2:3,4).

Jesus promised that he would build his church. (Matthew 16:18). But the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the begin-

ning day of the Lord's church and they were thus given power to speak the truth or sow the seed of the kingdom so people could enter the church.

Peter was directed by the Holy Spirit when, on the day of Pentecost, he so spoke that the throng of Jews were "cut to the heart" and asked what they should do to be saved from their sins. They were convicted by the Holy Spirit by listening to what the Holy Spirit said. After being convicted the Holy Spirit-directed preacher told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in order that their sins might be forgiven. (Acts 2:38). People refusing to do what the Holy Spirit told the people to do on the day of Pentecost have been heard to talk about what the Holy Spirit does for them! One who will not listen to the Holy Spirit should not talk about what the Holy Spirit does for him!

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIANS

The Holy Spirit not only guides those who become Christians, he also continues to guide them as long as they listen to him. One cannot be a faithful Christian without paying attention to the Holy Spirit and doing as he says in the Word of God.

1. The Holy Spirit warns Christians. In the lesson text, Paul warned the brethren in Rome that if they lived after the flesh they would die. (Romans 8:13). Obviously, he did not mean physical death, for all die in this way whether they live after the flesh or after the Spirit. Therefore, Christians who allow the flesh to be their master will die spiritually, or be lost. This warning to God's people is given more than two thousand times in the Bible. The Holy Spirit has worked much in our behalf relative to this matter.

2. The Holy Spirit leads God's people. After warning the Roman brethren of the danger and consequence of letting the flesh rule them, Paul then assured them that the Holy Spirit would enable them to put to death the deeds of the body that would ruin them, and that they would therefore live. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14).

The Spirit leads Christians by telling them what to do and what not to do. By following the instructions of the Holy Spirit Christians are allowed to say unto God, "Abba Father" or

“Abba” which means, or is interpreted, **Father**. By following the Holy Spirit Christians are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, (Romans 8:17). And they enjoy the witness of the Spirit which along with their own affirms and testifies that they are God’s children. (Romans 8:16).

When a man can cite the word of the Holy Spirit in the Bible to justify his religious belief and practice and his religious identity, he can testify concerning his religion with all of heaven backing him up. This is one of the things the Holy Spirit does for those who listen to him and do what he says in the Bible.

3. The Spirit helps our infirmities, and makes intercessions for us. “We pray indeed because we trust, and freely may we make known what is in our hearts to God, casting all care on him who careth for us in his love. But a perfect knowledge of our need belongs to God alone . . . The burdened heart may often find itself too full for speech; too much perplexed, perhaps too wearied for the ordering of its thoughts. But there is an utterance of supplication that makes no sound . . . It is the Spirit, as the helper of our infirmities, that makes these desires known to the Father of mercies. Groaning in sympathy with the tired and longing heart, he makes his intercession for the saints according to the God whose messenger he is . . . We know not indeed what we should pray for as we ought; but this very ignorance, the very imperfection and smallness of our intelligence of divine things, is made to turn to the nourishment of our faith.” (Arthur Pridham, Notes and Reflections on the Epistle to the Romans, page 184).

4. The Spirit enables Christians to bear fruit. Those who follow the Spirit will not provoke one another; they will not envy one another. Instead, those who follow the Spirit, are possessed with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, etc. “Quench not the Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

“Preach the Word”

G.H.P. Showalter, Sr.

It is a time when these memorable words of Paul to Timothy

are strictly in order for every gospel preacher. Moreover, it is decidedly opportune that all congregations of Christ demand of those who preach that they *faithfully* preach the word of GOD. There was never a time when the word of truth was needed more, and my observation leads me to conclude that the possibilities of accomplishing results for the cause of Christ were never brighter. The Christianity of denominationalism is at a low ebb. The best elements in all the churches have become weary of the studied efforts of their respective "pastors" to fence off their sect from cordial relations with "the other denominations" when they can not point out, if their lives depended on it, any essential difference in their faith and practice that would effect the salvation of the soul. Indeed they candidly admit that the things that divide them are non-essential, that they are immaterial and irrelevant, that "there are good and bad in all the Churches-" and that a man may "belong to the church of his choice and serve GOD in any of them, and at last go home to glory, irrespective of the peculiarities of his faith, or the road he has travelled. Indeed they tell us that all the roads lead alike to the grand union depot of GOD'S love and favour. They tell us that the things that divide the people up into multiple factions, sects and parties are not matters that effect salvation and yet they seek to perpetuate these differences and to divide what they think to be the elect of GOD. Sectarianism is wrong from every consideration of reason, consistency and the law of GOD. Every church, the existence of which is not essential to the life and happiness of men and women is superfluous, and should cease to exist.

The church of Jesus Christ is an institution in which there is salvation. There is some excuse for its existence. There is some reason in being a member of an institution for which the Savior shed his blood. He loved the church of God and gave his life for it. There is no limitation in the New Testament that there is salvation for any part of the human race outside of this church. Christ is the founder and its great head and ruler. There is no hint in all the New Testament that it is or ever will be necessary for men and women to belong to any other church in order to be saved. No wonder they talk about "church salvation" and ridicule the idea of belonging to "a church" in order to be saved. They

have in mind sectarian parties, and these are all confessed failure so far as salvation is concerned. Among all the proud theologians that glory in denominationalism and boast of their great churches, not one can be found that will even claim his church is necessary--that anybody must belong to in order to be saved. There is no distinctive tenet of any of the sects that must be believed in order that men may be saved.

Ask the Baptist if it is necessary to be a Baptist in order to be saved, and he will tell you "NO". Is it necessary to belong to the Baptist church in order to be saved? They themselves say "no". Is it necessary to believe the particular doctrines of the Baptists to be saved? They tell us "no". It is not necessary to believe in their doctrine or belong to their church in order to be saved. Then where is the excuse for the existence of the Baptist church? A thing not necessary to salvation or to life and godliness, is a fruitful source of contention, discord and strife. Away with such an institution from the earth. What can it be for, anyhow? Is it a sort of social affair where people may have a good time? Take the Methodists. Do they fare better under the scrutiny of logic, common sense and the Bible? Nay verily. They tell us that we need not be Methodists in order to be saved, or to belong to the Methodist church; that we can be saved just as well outside the Methodist church as in it. Surely then, this is not the church that Christ built, "*And the Lord added to them day by day those what were saved*" (Acts 2 : 47). The saved entered the church as they were being saved. As many as were saved were members of the body of Christ, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

But this cannot be said of any other institution on the face of the earth. Then let us magnify the church of Jesus Christ, which he purchased with his own blood. To be a Christian only is all that is needful. This puts me into Christ--into the church redeemed through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

The Sabbath

John G. Priola

There are those in the religious world today who teach one

should observe and keep the seventh day, the sabbath, as a day of worship. For example. "The Quiet Hour Bible Course," a Bible correspondence course of the Seventh-Day Adventists, says in lesson 23, "As a 'sign' of his creative power, God gave to mankind, when creation was over, the sabbath to be an everlasting memorial . . . God intends that the memorial which he established of his creative power is to last through all time." Please observe from these statements that according to the Adventists : (1) God gave the sabbath to mankind; (2) He gave the sabbath to mankind when creation was over; (3) the sabbath was given as sign of his creative power; and (4) it is to last through all time. Let us now examine the Bible to see if these four points are indeed true.

Did God give the sabbath to mankind ?

Where is the passage that teaches God gave the sabbath to mankind, meaning everyone? There is none. The Bible does teach that the sabbath was given to the Jews. In Deut. 5:2-3, Moses declared, "*The Lord our God made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.*" Here Moses declares God made the covenant, which included the sabbath, with the Jews. The introduction to the ten commandments is significant in informing us as to whom they were given. "*I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,*" (Ex. 20:3). Notice the pronoun "Thou" which introduces each commandment of the decalogue. This pronoun limits the ten commandments to the people named in the introduction. Who were they? Verse two says, "*those brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,*" in other words the Jews. The ten commandments were given to the Jews and not to all mankind.

Was the sabbath given when creation was over

As before, where is the passage that teaches such? Once again there is none. God appointed the sabbath as a day of rest for the children of Israel, **after** their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Prior to this time, there is no Biblical record of any man on earth observing the sabbath for any reason or purpose. Neh. 9:13-14 states when God made known the sabbath, "*Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and*

gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." If this is where God made it known unto the people to whom he gave it, then it was not made known or given when creation was over.

Was the sabbath given as a sign of God's creative power

Let the Bible answer why God gave the sabbath. In Deut. 5:15, Moses said, "*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.*" Why does the Bible say the Jews were commanded to keep the sabbath? Not as a sign of God's creative power, but as a commemoration and memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Is the sabbath to last through all time?

Where is the passage that teaches the sabbath is to last through all time? There is none. The command to observe the sabbath day as the day of worship ended when the rest of the law ended. When was that? Paul states in Col. 2:14, "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to the cross.*" Paul says it was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross. The Adventists agree that Jesus nailed the law of Moses to the cross, thus abolishing it. How is it then they can agree that the law of Moses has been abolished, but yet still believe and teach that the sabbath must be observed as a day of worship? The answer is that they do not believe the ten commandments are a part of the law of Moses. They believe that there is a difference between the law of Moses and the ten commandments. They do not believe the ten commandment law has been abolished. The ten commandments, they say, are the "law of God." This they also call the "law of the Lord" or moral law. Nothing but the ten commandments is the "law of God." The rest of the Old Testament is the "law of Moses." This they also call the "ceremonial law," containing all the ordinances, sacrifices, feasts, new moons, etc. The law of God did not contain these ordinances, feasts, new moons, etc.; it only

contained the ten commandments. It was, according to the Adventists, the law of Moses containing the ordinances, sacrifices, feasts, new moons, etc., that Jesus nailed to the cross and took away, the ten commandment law still remains. Since it was the law of Moses which was abolished and not the law of the Lord, then the ten commandments are still binding. Since the sabbath command is a part of the ten commandments, then the sabbath command remains. Is this a sound argument? Does the Bible make a distinction between "the law of Moses" and the "law of the Lord" or is this wishful thinking? Notice that according to the Adventists the law of the Lord contains only the ten commandments. Nothing else is the law of the Lord. It is the law of Moses and not the law of the Lord that contains the sacrifices, offerings, new moons, feasts, etc. According to their teaching, one should not find the Bible referring to these as the "law of the Lord." *"He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord"* (II Ch. 31:3-4). Here the Bible places offerings, new moons and feasts in the law of the Lord. But there is nothing in the ten commandments about offerings, new moons, and feasts. This proves the law of the Lord contains more than the ten commandments. Therefore, the teaching that the "law of the Lord" contains only the ten commandments is not in harmony with the Bible's teaching.

There is no scriptural distinction between the law of Moses and the law of God. The law that God gave by Moses is called God's law and Moses' law interchangeably. "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." (Luke 2:22-24). In this reading we have the law of Moses mentioned once and the law of the Lord mentioned twice—all referring to the same thing. Therefore, having proved that there is no distinction between the two, then the Adventists must see we are no longer obligated to keep the sabbath as a day

of worship because even they believe the law of Moses has been done away.

In The Land Of Wine

W.A. Holley

In the minds of many the land of France is known as the land of wine. It is said that Frenchmen consumed 4.2 gallons of alcohol in their wine, cider, and hard liquor during 1978.

The French drinking problem has become so devastating it is killing 55 people each day. According to French Government statistics every 53rd Frenchman is a registered alcoholic and that 19,000 to 21,000 die an alcoholic-related death each year. What a tragedy! What an awful price to pay!

But more. Drinking is the cause of France's biggest medical problem, costing the nation \$24 billion a year in medicine, welfare, and lost economic productivity. What could \$24 billion do to improve the lives of the French people, if spent on worthy objectives such as education, food and clothing for the poor, and medical programmes for the ill.

For generations the French have deceived themselves through delusory arguments regarding the merits of alcoholic beverages. In France, it is said, "It is part of our society." They try to excuse drinking by saying, "There are many more old drunks than old doctors." Even Louis Pasteur, the famous French Chemist, the inventor of the process by which milk is pasteurized, declared: "Wine is the healthiest of drinks." Peer-drinkers in France exert such strong pressure that even teetotalers feel compelled to order a glass of wine rather than to face the waiter's raised eyebrow.

A few years ago (1954), the French Premier, Pierre Mendes-France, tried to persuade the French people to drink milk and, as a result, lost his position. Apparently, the French do not mind their brains and livers' being destroyed by alcohol, but they will not stand for milk's doing the same thing, according to their notion. In France it is widely believed that milk damages the

liver. Oh, well, one can rationalize anything!

According to the Alabama Beverage Control Board, more than 80 million gallons of beer, canned and in kegs, were sold to Alabama citizens last year. That came from 26,559,804 cases of canned beer and 1,901,233 gallons of draft beer. Just try to estimate the cost to Alabama citizens in terms of crime and wrecks on the highway and hungry children. This huge amount of money could better have been used to relieve the needs of suffering humanity.

Most drinkers will not admit that alcohol is a drug and that this drug is stupefying, and it makes one dull and insensible to others. This drug does release inhibitions so that one will do things when he is under the influence of alcohol that he would be ashamed to do when he is sober.

The drinking of alcoholic beverages is a sin whether we wish to admit it or not. We may seek to rationalize the evils of alcoholic beverages away, but they will not go away! (Daniel 1:8; Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 31:5; 23:29-30, 31-32; 4:17; Isaiah 28:7).

One night in October
When I was far from sober,
And dragging a load with manly pride;
My legs began to stutter,
So I laid me down in the gutter,
And a pig came and parked by my side.
Then I began to warble,
"It's fair weather when good fellows get together,"
Till a lady passing by was heard to say;
"You can tell a man who boozes
By the company he chooses,"
Then the pig got up and slowly walked away.—Anon.

We suggest that the following Scriptures be read and studied: Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-32; Daniel 1:8; Isaiah 28:7.

"Save Yourselves"

Lindell R. Doty

Peter continued his exhortation and presentation of evidence

in his attempt to lead more to the Lord on that memorable day in Acts 2. His concluding remark was, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." (Acts 2:40.) Several things are implied in this statement.

First, people have a self worth saving. We are made in God's image, the offspring of God. (Acts 17:28, 29). God loves us and was willing to give his Son for us. We are valuable! Jesus loves us and was willing to come and die for us. We are valuable! Jesus implies that the soul of one person is more valuable than all the world. "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26.)

Second, there is something we can do about our salvation. People do have an active part in it in some way. Those who had heard Peter's sermon and were convicted by it asked Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?" (vs. 37.) Peter did not say, "Nothing!" nor did he say, "It's been done, you believe!" When he answered he told them, "Repent ye and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (vs. 38).

There is an obvious sense in which we cannot save ourselves. We do not forgive our own sins. God does that. We do not procure, or merit our salvation. God gives it because of his love, mercy and grace. We do not remove or take away our sins. Jesus does that through his blood. But we do accept God's unmerited, unearned gift. We do put ourselves in a position in which the blood of Jesus is applied. God has done his part but men have a part too.

Third, notice what these folks did. "They that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (vs. 41) These believers who had experienced godly sorrow (vs. 37) repented (they received the instructions of Peter, vs. 38) and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and having done so were added by the Lord, that is, saved and counted by the Lord to be his children.

To receive the gift of salvation provided by our gracious God, one must comply with the conditions, and to that extent responds to the exhortation "Save Yourselves."