

# The Reality of Demons

by Dr. Manford George Gutzke

As Luke tells the story of the public career of Jesus of Nazareth he reports remarkable occasions in which Jesus showed control over natural processes and events. The miracles He worked have been considered in their significance showing that He was indeed the Son of God in the flesh. Not only did these works of wonder manifest the power of God which He could use whenever He wanted to, but the very nature of what He did in healing, in restoring, in restraining gave clear indication of the benevolent purpose of God in blessing man through the work of Jesus. As Nicodemus said, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him" (John 3:2).

The truth is that Jesus of Nazareth saw men in their pathetic need, in their weakness, their sickness and their sin. He demonstrated his purpose to redeem, to deliver and to restore man in the grace of God, whenever any would turn to Him. He did this by showing the power and authority only God could exercise, to the amazement of all who saw Him.

**Luke's Approach.** Luke's account of the works of Jesus of Nazareth was written without explanation. Because He was a physician, Luke could be expected to offer some reason, or at least to point out some conditions which would always accompany any miracle. But he does not do this. He is content to present a simple record of the events as these occurred.

This characteristic of Luke's gospel is remarkable and shows something important about the works of God. Luke tells of the healing of the leper, but there is no discussion of leprosy as a disease nor any consideration of any means Jesus may have employed to effect a healing. He tells of the healing of the dumb man, but there is no examination of the condition of being unable to speak. Luke reports that Zacharias did not speak, but there is no clear description to show that he could not, nor is there any reference to any psychological block which rendered him speechless. Luke points out that the woman with the issue of blood was incurable, but there is no description of the flow of blood to show its nature nor to explain why the woman could not be helped by any physician. He tells the amazing story of the palsied man in simple terms but offers no explanation of what happened. He reports that Jesus stilled the storm on the sea by His personal uttered command, but there is no discussion of the physical elements involved to show how this was done. He tells of the feeding of the 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes, and while he does note the baskets filled with leftover food, which shows this miracle really happened, there is not one word of explanation that would give any clue as to any procedure. This silence as to means employed or procedures followed is actually an impressive testimony to the effect that the works done by Jesus of Nazareth were supernatural. They have the character of being spiritual in their origin and in their performance. (John 3:8).

Luke never leaves any doubt as to the reality of the situation in which Jesus did His work. The leprosy was real. The dumb man actually could not utter words. The issue of blood was treated by physicians at the cost of "all her living." The storm at sea actually threatened to sink the boat. The 5000 were fed with actual food of which 12 baskets of fragments were taken up. It is true the procedure of Jesus in solving these problems was never analyzed; the events were not described in specific detail; but there could never

be any reasonable doubt that the works of Jesus were real exhibitions of power and authority.

The record given by Luke gives no basis for the idea that anyone is to learn how to do similar works by recognizing and using the principles and the processes involved. Luke gives no instruction, offers no guidance, presents no challenge which would call for the willingness or the abilities of any person to try to do likewise. Each work of Jesus is reported as a direct exercise of the power of God to the glory of the living God. Rather, the story told by Luke seems to aim at encouraging souls to trust in the living God who alone can work, does work and will work through the Son of God to achieve the purpose of the Father.

**Truths seen in the miracles.** In all such miracles several truths are to be seen which are important for any understanding of the work of salvation. First, God is the Saviour: Man does not achieve salvation by his own efforts – it is the gift of God who is active in the whole event. Second, salvation is not the result of natural processes: the power of God controlling the natural by His will saves the man out of his distress. Finally, salvation is by the grace of God through faith: it is not necessary, nor is it possible, for man to earn this blessing by anything in himself – it is the free gift of God. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have ever-lasting life (John 3:16).*

It is important to recognize that no man can do what needs to be done in his own strength. Every human being has in himself only that which is natural and this is inadequate for living in the will of God (Matthew 16:17; Romans 8:8; I Corinthians 2:14; 15:50). Also man himself is sinful and cannot do even what he wants to do (Romans 7:14-25). There is hope for man only because God will help him through grace (James 4:6; Romans 5:20, 21).

All things done in the natural way are spoken of as the work of nature, and all that is done by the power of God according to His promises, is called grace. God made nature; He is the God of nature. There is nothing happening in the natural world but what God causes to happen. Sun, moon and stars obey His will. But the natural man is not obedient to God because of sin. Man's inward disposition is warped. Inside every man is a twisted nature. The grain of the wood in any man's soul is crooked. Put man under pressure and break him open: the crookedness will show. Man is not straight and can never straighten himself out, but God is able and God is willing to do this for man by His grace through His Son.

**Redemption out of nature.** God has always had a plan for the redemption of man out of his sinful nature. Jesus Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). It is true that man is born into the world of nature without his consent. It is also true that God sent His Son into the world to redeem without being invited. But the Gospel is presented to the consciousness of man and he is called to accept the grace of God in Jesus Christ which is able to save him. Jesus of Nazareth came into this world to show men what God could do and would do for them by His grace. He called men to trust God and to allow Him to save them through His power in His grace.

The fact that nature cannot help man out of his sin can be felt by looking at the natural world. Poets may glorify nature and artists may paint its beauty, but in nature there is no mercy to be found. Nature does not pity nor protect the bird with the broken wing: the cat gets it. The wolf easily catches the rabbit with the broken leg; nature does not pity it. The beautiful lake, which the artists was so eager to paint, will drown the innocent baby and never shed a tear. In nature men die. Amid all the beauty and grandeur of tropical forests, islands and mountains, benighted heathen live in sickness and fear. Only the Gospel of the Grace of God can bring hope of salvation.

All this seems to be implied in the account given by Luke of the works of Jesus of Nazareth. The work of Jesus is always gracious, adequate and free: it shows the benevolent love of God. But there is no hint that such works are possible in the course of natural processes, by any result of natural factors, forces or

intelligence. What Jesus manifested was none other than the wonderful works of God which are done in the natural world by the power of God who made this world and can control it by His will.

There is a type of God's grace which is manifested in kindness to mankind, a common grace in which all His creatures share. The sun shines, rain falls, food is available; but the kindness of God as shown in nature does not go beyond death. Yet in the grace of God as manifested in Jesus Christ "everlasting life" is promised. God went far beyond all natural processes in grace by bearing the sins of man in His own body. He takes away man's guilt by suffering in his place, delivering any man from the load of sin once and for all, if that man will accept His atonement through His Son.

The Lord Jesus came to bring salvation because man is in trouble. Man is not strong enough, clean enough, and cannot have an acceptable record. His intentions are usually bad, so that good purposes are not often his goal. Man is not good enough to face the issues of daily living, so man is in distress and difficulty. There is not a human being who knows his right hand from his left who does not feel guilt. Men fail to live up to their own standards, let alone God's standards, There is not a person with any sense of discrimination at all who fails to realize that within himself he is unclean. Furthermore (and this can be even worse) men are in bondage in daily living. Many times men do foolish things, even when they don't intend to. This happens over and over again.

In His public ministry, when Jesus of Nazareth began to preach and teach, He showed to men and women that God is able to set a man free from this bondage. First He showed that God can deliver man from natural troubles. He came to men who had physical limitations and helped them. He opened the eyes of the blind. This was a temporal condition, but God could restore the function of the eyes He had created, and He did so. Some had ears which had stopped functioning, and He unstopped them so they could hear again. He loosed tongues so that men could speak. He restored a withered arm. He made the lame to walk and raised the dead. All such works were in the realm of the physical.

**Miracles benefit the person.** In all that Jesus did, there was real benefit to the person in question. These works were not fantastic in any sense of the word. For the sake of illustration, Jesus did not make a blind man see with his ears or with his hands. He restored vision to the eyes which were made originally for seeing; When a man could not hear, Jesus did not touch him so that he could hear through the tips of his fingers. Ears were made for hearing. Nor did He attach another set of ears; He healed the ones that were "in trouble," as it were. He took the paralyzed, atrophied parts of the body and made them come alive again. For the sake of emphasis let it be noted that when the Lord touched the man sick of the palsy, helpless on his bed, He did not make that man fly like a bird; He simply restored him so that he could walk normally. In the works He did, Jesus restored man to God's original intent and purpose. This is a marvelous suggestion as to what He came to do for men. He restores man to what God wanted man to be.

The saving works of Jesus of Nazareth went beyond that which was physical. Luke tells of a number of occasions in which Jesus cast out demons. This may well be an area in which little is known to men, but the gospel story is quite simple and plain. There can be no question that Luke says plainly that Jesus of Nazareth dealt with demons.

Students of human nature today recognize and study conditions which they feel produce symptoms similar to those referred to in the gospel narratives. In their analysis of such conditions scholars often fail to give credence to the reality of demons. It is natural today to reach the conclusion that in the days of Jesus there really were no demons. But this is not acceptable to anyone who takes the gospel of Luke to be true.

**Who are demons?** The words *devil* and *demon* are used interchangeably in the Authorized (or King James) Version of the Bible. The text will speak of a *man possessed of the devil, or of a woman out of whom went seven devils*. In other passages the word demon is used; devils and demons are one and the

same thing. The real question is: are they real?

It will help to remember that Luke did not think of demons as being little *pixies* little brown men who sit on coat collars and whisper evil suggestions in men's ears; nor *elves* or *gremlins*. These various ideas have caught popular imagination at one time or another. But the truth to be understood in the gospel story is more. Demons are spirits. They do not have physical bodies. Men could not see them, nor hear them, nor sense their presence. However, the story told by Luke makes it clear that they are real, they do exist.

A well-educated man, a learned professor of psychology once asked a student of his, who was a Christian, how it was possible to think of God as a person. The professor admitted this was a real difficulty to him, even though he might want to become a Christian. The student asked him, "What is the idea of a person in the mind of a psychologist?" The professor replied, "You know enough psychology to know that we have no clear idea what a person is." The student then pointed out, "If you as a psychologist cannot say what is meant when anyone calls me a person, is it not natural that you certainly could not understand what is meant when I speak of God as a person?" This simply demonstrates that modern culture does not have the ideas, the terms, the language with which to grasp what is meant by a "person" in the spiritual world.

The student asked the professor, "Do you think I am a person?" The professor cordially replied, "Yes, I do." The student went on to say "Good. And I think you are a person. And I think God is a person."

There was a time when no one could say anything about electricity, because they didn't know about it. But electricity was real and working in those days. Paul would say that in those days it was a "mystery" which afterward became known. Even so with the nature of God: because psychologists do not have the language to think of Him as a person does not change the reality of God at all.

Despite the inability of men trained in social sciences to grasp the idea of person, people generally use this term and are normally understood when they talk. It may be helpful to note that there is an old classic definition of person that actually fits common sense use today: "A person is a being who can think, feel and will." Because God knows He can *think*; because God has compassion He can *feel*; and because God controls and directs He can *will*. Thus it is proper to say that God is a person.

All that has been said of God would of course apply to the Holy Spirit, who knows the needs of Christians and so can *think*; He can be grieved, so he can *feel*; and He can send out missionaries, so He can *will*. This emphasizes the fact that a being can be a person who does not have a physical body.

When once it is recognized that to be a person does not require a physical body, it is easier to think of God as a person, and the Holy Spirit as a person. A certain young couple lived in a community where they were thought of as neighbors. At a bend in the highway their white house could be seen. That house was the spot where they lived. One night their house was burned to the ground. The next day no one could see the white house. The house was gone, but the young couple were still neighbors. In time they built a new house where they now live.

Not long ago my son-in-law died suddenly. On my way to the funeral I went by the funeral parlor to look at the body. My granddaughter riding along in the car told me "You won't see my daddy in there. That is just the house he lived in." The body, the earthly house, was in the casket; but the spirit, the person, was gone. Paul would say in comforting believers that Christians will have heavenly "houses" prepared for them to live in eternally.

Just as God and the Holy Spirit are to be known as persons though they are Spirit and do not have physical bodies in which to dwell, so angels, Satan, and demons are to be known. The Bible does not say much about angels by way of identification. No description of angels is given. The word angel means messenger, and like the words doctor, farmer, or carpenter, refers to what they do, not to what they look like. Some are named: Michael the Archangel and Gabriel. But that they exist and that they act in service to God is a matter of record (Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 2:7-16).

In the light of this discussion demons are to be classed as persons. Throughout this whole consideration

it will be helpful to keep in mind that what is true of God as a person, and the Holy Spirit as a person, is to be taken as true of Satan as a person. No human being has ever seen either the Holy Spirit or Satan in any natural way. The Bible tells about both, and what the Bible says makes it clear that as one is a person so the other is a person. In the same way, as angels are living beings with characteristics as persons, so demons are living beings with characteristics as persons.

**What is demon possession?** What is meant when it is said that a person is *being possessed by demons*? It means that the victim is literally under the will of another: some other entity is in control of the man's will. Psychologically, this would be like *being filled with the Spirit*. A person who is filled with the Holy Spirit is a person whose consciousness is dominated by God in Christ Jesus. Just so a person who is possessed by a demon is one whose consciousness is dominated by Satan through one of his evil angels.

The phenomenon of one person dominating or exercising control over another is not uncommon in human affairs. Much of what happens in consciousness may have a bearing on a person's physical condition. Much progress has been made during recent years in the area of psychosomatic medicine. Today the average medical practitioner would recognize that a person's mental condition may affect his physical condition. The opposite is just as true; the physical condition may affect the mind, although perhaps not to the same extent. People can be in a state of mind which will affect them: either to making them ill or to aiding them physically. In the light of such facts, the question arises as to whether or not an evil being, influencing the mind, causing imbalance, could so disturb the consciousness and arouse the emotions to affect seriously the operation of the personality. This would actually hinder the physical processes of the body, and make the victim susceptible to sicknesses of one kind or another. Such would seem to be the implication of certain statements in the gospels. (Luke 13:16).

There is another aspect of this whole matter that could be briefly examined to advantage. No doubt everyone has heard of the phenomenon of hypnotism. In this case the mind of one person is yielded to the mind of another person. Perhaps the word *mind* is not precisely correct at this point, but it can serve to refer to the mental and spiritual aspects of the personality. A person's consciousness including his will, can be yielded, as far as his spontaneous initiative is concerned, to the control of a second person, so that he can be put under a hypnotic spell. This does not happen without the consent of the subject, but a person can agree to be hypnotized. In the state of hypnosis the person may not know what he is doing. Generally, when the hypnotist gets his subject under his control, he tells the subject what to do. It has been most interesting to note that by such suggestion by the hypnotist the subject can be prompted to do things which he would normally not do. The full significance of this phenomenon has not yet been recognized in personal conduct. The principles of hypnotism may be operating in subtle ways that escape recognition, but are nonetheless important.

I recall a demonstration put on in an advanced class in psychology. The professor announced to his class that he would demonstrate what he called *post hypnotic influence*. He explained that he would put some willing student under hypnotism. While in this condition he would tell the subject what he would do after he came out of the trance. These would be foolish things which that student would not normally do. All of this was explained to the class while the subject was out of the room, so that he knew nothing about it. He only knew that he was to be part of an experiment, but for what purpose he did not know.

The demonstration was begun, and after the subject was hypnotized he was told what he would do after he came back to normal. Said the professor: "You will go back to your desk and sit down. I will be lecturing and I will set up a certain illustration by way of experiment. I will ask for volunteers to go to the blackboard and put thereon answers to questions I shall ask. You will be one of those volunteers. I will ask every volunteer to put his name at the top of his work, so we can identify each one. You will put down the name of *Smith*. I know Smith is not your name, but it is the name you will put down. We will all see it



and we will laugh at you, but you will do it nonetheless. When I ask you why you did it, you will laugh it off and say you don't know why, you just felt like it.

"After you have completed your exercise at the blackboard and returned to your seat, you will think that the room has grown very cool. It will seem to you the wind is blowing in strongly. You will get so cold that you will go and close the window near your desk."

This demonstration was put on during a hot summer day, and the wind was not blowing. Students were reminded to note that the subject would entirely out of the hypnotized state when he would go quietly to shut that window! The professor made clear in his initial briefing of the class that though the instructions would be given while the subject was under hypnosis, he would be brought out of the trance and would *then* follow the instructions without realizing he had been so instructed.

The experiment proceeded as outlined. The student was brought out of the trance. Later the professor stopped his lecture and asked for five or six volunteers to come to the blackboard. This student came, along with the rest. "Now," said the professor, "in order that we may identify your work, write your name at the top of the blackboard where you will work." Everybody did as told, and this student wrote *Smith*. Everyone laughed. He did not know why they laughed, but thought it was because he had written *Smith*. The professor said, "Why did you write *Smith*? That is not your name." The student replied, "Oh, just for the fun of it." Everyone in the class was shocked and appalled, but they concealed their feelings. So the student went on with the exercise and returned to his seat. The professor went on lecturing. In due time the student pulled his coat together around him, rubbed his arms, and gave evidence of feeling cold. Finally he yielded to this, got up quietly and went and closed the window near his desk. A quiet hot day! Ridiculous? Unreasonable! Yes, but horribly true! That man did what he did because the idea was implanted in his mind by another person, while he was under the hypnotic spell.

Much more attention could be given to the whole phenomenon of hypnotism to learn about spiritual influences. It is common understanding that the hypnotic spell is induced by focusing all attention and interest on some one thing: a bright light, a shrill noise, etc. This seems to imply that if anyone has some one proclivity or appetite, he might be tempted to focus attention and desire in such a way as to concentrate on it to the exclusion of other ideas, and Satan could use that state of mind for his own purpose. He can make that particular idea or object so attractive that a person will be tempted to lose sight of all else, until he desires it so completely that he will lose all self-control. During that time of being entranced, it is possible suggestions will come to him, as if they were "in his bones," as it were. He wakes up in the morning, is called to breakfast, and must go about his day's work. He looks normal, and goes about his duties as if he were normal, yet a day or two later, or some time later, he will do the very thing that came into his mind days before when his thoughts were so concentrated upon that desired satisfaction. If these ideas are sinful or hurtful the thoughts did not come from God. Perhaps it could rightly be said that such a man was truly under the influence of an evil spirit. Such may well have been the case of Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast.

**How Christ Controls** When a man is a Christian the most wonderful idea he ever had is that Jesus Christ died for his sins. In the sight of that everything else can fade out. Jesus Christ dying on Calvary's cross for him entralls any soul. When a man feels afraid of God (when he is ashamed of himself), and does not have the courage to turn to God, he can look at Christ Jesus on Calvary's cross and his heart will melt. Thus he will take fresh hope, as he worships God in the Person of Jesus Christ. This is the real purpose of church worship. This is the need in church services, to focus attention upon Jesus, who loves the sinner, who gave Himself for sinners and set believers up to be a kingdom of priests unto God.

There is a good sense in which the believer, while in that state of being, is practically lifted out of himself, being enthralled as he concentrates on the Person of Jesus Christ. Something happens to this man which is like being hypnotized: the Holy Spirit coming into the inner being, prompting the person, makes

definite suggestions as to desirable future conduct.

One can always expect certain results after such an experience. There may be times when the believer reminds himself that he wants to read a portion from the Bible, even though he usually doesn't understand the portion he does read. He may feel he should pray, and so he kneels down to pray, although he may have many things to do, and actually be very weary. The believer will pray, even though perhaps he does not feel much result. The man may think he ought to talk to someone about Christ, or to invite a certain person to come, to church, or to visit a certain member of his church who is in the hospital. Such practical conduct could appear as a consequence of the soul being under the influence of the Spirit of God. With the contact set up in the worship service the Holy Spirit may move the man to some task for God. What a wonderful thing it is to be filled with the Spirit! Then one can leave the results to Him after following his leading. The Bible seems to promise this to be possible for any believer.

While the Son of God was here in the flesh He exercised his will and set men free. He is able to control evil ; He can control Satan. He can say to any evil spirit, "Come out of him," and the devil will come out. He is Lord of all, and He has complete victory over Satan and all his hordes. That is the safety of the believer. Is there danger, is there peril because of evil spirits? Yes, all men are in danger and peril! Men are always in danger of death while they live, but Jesus has won the victory over death!

**The Christian's Witness.** In Acts .26;when Paul was presenting his great defense before Agrippa, he told the king why he had been sent to preach the Gospel of Christ: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:18)*

Here then was the commission of Paul, the apostle: "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." By whom are the souls of men to be influenced? To whom are believers committed? Whom does the believer take to his heart? Are men to be deceived by some personal wish or whim, through some private yearning? through some inward desire? Are souls to be taken captive by the deceitfulness of sin so that they covet certain things, thus being actually led away from God? Or will Christians look into the presence of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, with such a plea from their hearts: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting ( Psalm 139:23, 24)*. Believers need to throw themselves upon His mercy, trusting Him to keep them, that they may say with Paul: . . . *for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (II Timothy 1:12)*.

Something of this truth can be felt when one listens to Paul, speaking again to Timothy and advising him as to his conduct concerning certain men who had gone the wrong way: *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (II Timothy 2:24-26)*.

The influence of Satan was a very real thing to Paul, and he made this clear in his instructions to the Corinthians at one point: *For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices (II Corinthians 2:9-11)*.

It would be a helpful practice for each Christian reading this to ask himself soberly, "*Am I ignorant of the devices of Satan?*"

Paul wrote that significant word above at a time when Christians were having trouble with one of their own number. He urged that believers forgive one another graciously so that the chance for alienation will

be lessened. Christians should never let hate develop, for this is where Satan comes in. Paul said, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also." One of Satan's devices is to divide and separate Christians. Wise Christians will be careful. This truth can also be heard from Peter: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world (I Peter 5:8, 9).*

In view of this peril is there any reason as to why Christians should be in despair? The answer to this lies in the area of commitment. Every believer should ask himself plainly and often: "To whom am I committed?" "No man can serve two masters," but any Christian can be sure of one thing. If he puts his hand in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will never need to fear Satan. The only time any believer needs to be afraid is when he turns his back on God, when he departs from the living God. Why would anyone do that? Why do children ever get lost? When a mother is walking through a department store, why does her little boy suddenly get lost? Is it not because he saw a toy or some other interesting object which claimed his attention so that he turned aside to look at it? Then, his eyes perhaps caught a glimpse of something else in the next aisle and his willing feet took him further and further away until he was lost. His mother had called him, but he didn't come when he heard her voice; Something else attracted him more, and so he was willingly lost. In the Book of Hebrews it is written: *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God (Hebrews 3:12).*

No, you won't ever need to be afraid, if your daily walk is close beside the Lord Jesus Christ, for Satan cannot trap those who live close to the Lord, whose hearts are in His care and keeping.

No man can serve two masters: if a man has Christ Jesus as his Master, then Satan never will gain that power over him. The devil goes about "as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," but the Christian need not fear, if the Lord Jesus Christ is his defense. The basis for confidence is expressed in a well-known couplet, which is absolutely gloriously true: *Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees.*

There seems to be no valid reason to doubt that demons are alive and active today under the control of their master, Satan. One of the common difficulties of Christians today is that when the Bible is read as the Word of God, this whole teaching about demons is overlooked as if it were not there. The result is that many persons in their naive ignorance are being brought under bondage. Christians generally do not have sufficient intelligence either to understand what is happening, or to know how to go about defeating it. All that is needed is to come to Jesus Christ. A person does not need to understand Satan and all his ways. It is important to recognize his power and to fear it, and to believe at the same time that Jesus Christ is in control.

Let me add a purely personal note to say how thankful I am to God that it has never been my disposition to take any pleasure in jokes or amusing stories about the devil. I am thankful I have never wanted to tell such a joke and I have never heard one that I felt was funny, or that I wanted to laugh at. This situation is far too serious. Do you know why I feel that way, as to the seriousness of Satan's power as a created being? Jude 9 reports: *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.*

Beloved, Satan is a powerful being, and it is disturbing to hear Christians talk so lightly and so flip-pantly about him. He is not a light person, nor is he anything like the cartoons one can sometimes see. It is wholesome to avoid having anything to do with him. The life of every believer is in the hands of the Saviour, and no Christian needs fear Satan. But a person would be very ignorant spiritually if he did not realize that Satan coveted his soul.

Luther had his experiences with Satan. Many things have been said and written about the tremendous faith and understanding of Martin Luther. According to his own testimony Luther actually had dealings with Satan. The devil was so real to Luther that one time he picked up a bottle of ink and threw it at Satan!



Some will say, There must have been something wrong with Luther. There was! He was a sinner and he knew there was a struggle going on as Satan contended for his soul. Luther was in a sinful world, face to face with the great issues of the reality of sin. His personal testimony is very significant. In his great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, Luther wrote that as far as Satan was concerned, "one little word shall fell him."

This leads the mind back to the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness; "One little word" as referred to by Luther would be the word of Scripture, and the Lord Jesus resisted Satan in the desert by quoting the Word of God to him. Any Christian who will read the Bible to get its truth into his heart and soul and mind will have a protection far beyond anything that can be described.

There are many other aspects about the truth of demons particularly along the line of their relationship to health. There is no doubt that one's mental condition has a direct bearing upon one's physical welfare. When the mind is energized, activated, inspired by an evil, malevolent, malicious being such as demons are, the result can be along the lines of actual sickness and physical bondage.

When a Christian reads his Bible and comes to passages dealing with demons or devils, it is riot wise for him to slip over such Scripture and dismiss it from the mind as just an old-fashioned way of referring to sickness of mind or personality. It is just about as old-fashioned as talking about God, heaven, the angels, the Holy Spirit. Actually, these beings exist today just as they did when Jesus walked the earth. But one can always remember that He has gained the victory over Satan, and this can give peace. The Scriptures report that at the word of Jesus Christ, Satan as the leader of demons and all his hosts, must obey. All a Christian needs to do, is to stay close to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our adequate, complete protection against all these evil forces. Apart from our Lord the picture would be a dark one for any man. With Him, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, victory belongs to anyone – "whosoever believeth in Him."