

Sin against the Holy Spirit - The Unpardonable Sin

Is it a rejection of a particular understanding of the Personality of Holy Spirit? Is it about the Work and Operations of the Holy Spirit? Or is it about something else?

A look into this topic and how it was understood during the early days within the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. With articles sourced from early SDA periodicals ranging from 1868-1918, this document is set to share information and perspective on this “fearful” topic. Hopefully one can use the statements provided as a good resource of information on this topic. ~ *Compiled by Ryan Tacklin*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Review and Herald – April 21, 1868

A. BISBEE - We understand the sin against the Holy Ghost to be attributing the work of the Spirit to the agency of Satan, for the purpose of avoiding the truth. This we learn from the circumstances under which Christ spoke the words recorded in Matt. xii, 31. Christ had performed a notable miracle. All the people were amazed. It must in some way be accounted for. It was evident enough that it was wrought by the power of God. But to acknowledge this, would he to confess Christ the Son of David, and the promised' Messiah. This the Pharisees would not do. There was no other alternative but to attribute the wonderful work to the power of Satan; and this they did, rather than to acknowledge the truth. Christ, first refutes on logical principles their impious claim, and then pronounces his fearful denunciations against the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is doing just what they had done, attributing work which was plainly enough the work of God, and which they undoubtedly knew to be such, to the agency of the Devil, in order to avoid the cross of humbly acknowledging unpopular truth.

The Unpardonable Sin, OR THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

D. T. BOURDEAU.

Review and Herald – April 21, 1874

This sin stands at the head of the sins of presumption. It is the crowning sin of rebellion against God with a full knowledge of sin and duty, and has no promise of forgiveness. It can be committed only by those who have enjoyed great light and exalted privileges in the service of God. It is not, therefore, a sin of ignorance; neither is it a sin committed through the weakness of the flesh while the mind is opposed to evil; nor is it even one of those transgressions which are common in ordinary cases of backsliding and hardness of heart.

This is a particular sin. By comparing Matt. 12:22, etc. ; Heb. 6:4-6 ; 10:26-29, which are the principal New Testament scriptures that treat on this subject, we learn that in order for man to commit the unpardonable sin, 1. He must have been once enlightened—must have seen his sins as opposed to righteousness, and understood the plan of salvation. 2. He must have tasted of the heavenly gift; by faith must have taken hold of Christ, the gift of God, the bread of life that came down from Heaven. John 4:10 ; 6:32 ; Eph. 2:8. 3. He must have been made partaker of the Holy Ghost in the special sense that the early Christians were when they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This implies more than a common blessing. It supposes a physical contact with that holy influence, that mighty agency proceeding from God; a baptism of the Holy Spirit, giving a mighty impetus to the new covenant in the way of righteousness. 4. He must have tasted the good word of God, realized its sweetness and preciousness by making experiments in living it out. 5. He must also have tasted of the powers of the world to come; have been so impressed with the power of the coming kingdom by personal experience in overcoming through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit that the powers and glories of the world to come will have become a living reality. When these blessings have been realized, then to willfully turn away from them, repulse them, fall away, and attribute the operations of God's Spirit to the devil, or to a bad influence, calling the good work of God's Spirit an evil work, would be committing the unpardonable sin. At the time that the Pharisees were accusing Christ of doing his works by the power of Satan, many who were hearing Christ and had been enlightened and felt the power of his Spirit in their own bodies removing disease, etc., were in special danger of coming under the rebellious influence of Christ's enemies and committing the unpardonable sin.

The more powerfully the Lord works by his Spirit on the earth, the greater the danger of God's children committing this sin, if they give way to a rebellious spirit. The sin of Satan and his angels in rebelling against the government of Heaven and lowering God and his blessings in their minds was irremissible, because they had enjoyed the light, power, and glory, of Heaven, and had been made partakers of the 'Spirit of God in a special

sense. When God manifested his mighty power in delivering ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage, not a few of the children of Israel committed the unpardonable 'sin; and when God, through a series of trials and by the mighty workings of his Spirit; shall fit up a people for the final conflict with the powers of darkness and for the final deliverance, many Will close their probation by sinning against the Holy Ghost.

While we cherish a tender conscience, and a fear of offending God and grieving his Holy Spirit, while we hate sin and love righteousness, while we cherish a love for God's people and delight to see his cause prosper on the earth, we may know that we have not committed the unpardonable sin. These dispositions being the fruit of the Spirit are good evidence that the Spirit of God is still striving with us and has not wholly left us. May that Spirit never take its flight from us for the last time.

The Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

Uriah Smith

Review and Herald – February 4, 1875

We have queries from several correspondents respecting what constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost. We believe that during our twenty-two years' connection with this office, more questions have come in upon this subject than upon any other single question. And perhaps there is no subject upon which the enemy seems more ready to tempt and harass exceedingly conscientious souls than upon this.

To bring no railing accusation against the prince of darkness, we may say, at least, that he is destitute of every vestige of candor, and every species of honor; and if he cannot succeed in lulling the consciences of men to sleep, and causing them to live in a state of carelessness and indifference, he will then take advantage of their awakened and watchful conscientiousness, and endeavor to drive them to despair over the supposition that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and therefore cannot be saved. If any are now tempted in this direction, we invite them to look carefully at a few facts connected with this subject.

The circumstances under which mention is first made of the sin against the Holy Ghost, furnish a key to the meaning of that expression. These are recorded in Matt. 12:22-32. Christ had wrought a notable miracle. One was brought unto him possessed with a devil; and so terribly malignant was the influence of the evil one upon the unfortunate person, that he was rendered both blind and dumb. Christ cast out the devil, and the individual was healed so that he both spake and saw. All the people were amazed, and began to give expression to their conviction that Christ was indeed the Messiah, by the question, "Is not this the Son of David?" For the impression prevailed that when the Messiah should come, he would cast out devils, and that none but he could do such a work. Christ's works testified of him, and there was enough in them to convince the most obstinate of the truthfulness of his claims.

But the Pharisees, a class, we are sorry to say, not yet extinct, ever standing around watching with envious and jealous eyes the movements of Christ, despising him in his humility, grieved and maddened that the people should be inclined to accept him, and determined at all hazards to resist and overthrow his work, now found themselves in a very critical position. The devil had been cast out, and the dumb and blind both spake and saw. None could deny that. Christ had done this good work by the power of his word. This was equally evident.

Now what were these Pharisees to do? If they admitted that Christ had wrought this work by the Spirit of God, they would admit that he was what he professed to be, and then all their opposition to him would recoil disastrously upon their own heads. Their insane hatred against Christ and his work would not permit them to acknowledge the truth. There was but one other course open to them; and that was to attribute the wonderful work which Christ had wrought, not to the power of the Spirit of God, but to that terrible embodiment of evil, the prince of darkness; and rather than acknowledge the truth, they hazarded that bold venture, and said contemptuously, "This fellow cloth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Their claim was as foolish as it was blasphemous. This Christ showed by referring to the obvious principle that a kingdom, city, or house, divided against itself, cannot stand, and that if Satan cast out Satan, he was divided against himself, and would work his own destruction.

Then comes the announcement respecting the sin against the Holy Ghost. These Pharisees had committed this sin; which was, attributing to the devil the performance of a work which, in its very nature, gave ample evidence of having been done by the Holy Ghost; and doing this to avoid an acknowledgment of the truth. This it was that called forth the denunciation of Christ, and this, then, is what constitutes that sin.

Reader, have you ever, for the sake of denying the truth, which you would otherwise be obliged to confess, attributed any work to the devil, which gave evidence of being the work of the Spirit of God? If you have, you have reason to fear that you have committed this sin. But if you have become so hardened as that, you will not have fears of anything of the kind. The Pharisees were not alarmed about themselves at all. Their consciences were utterly hardened and at ease. So will be that of every one who has committed this sin. If your sin is a burden to you, that is in itself evidence that you have not committed the sin that is unpardonable.

Ellen White

What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy's ground, standing under his black banner. {5T 634.1}

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

S. N. Haskell

Bible Echo(BEST) – February 1, 1890

...See Matt. 12:22-32 ; also Mark 3:22-30. To deliberately attribute the works of God, which are the fulfillment of his Word, to the works of the devil, is a sin against the Holy Ghost. It severs the connection that binds man to the eternal God.

Ellen White

Korah would not have taken the course he did had he *known* that all the directions and reproofs communicated to Israel were from God. But he might have known this. God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," said Christ, "it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." Matthew 12:32. These words were spoken by our Saviour when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of God were attributed by the Jews to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven. {PP 404.4}

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

Uriah Smith

Present Truth – September 10, 1891

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "A friend and myself have been talking of the sin against the Holy Ghost, he claiming it to be the act of ascribing to Satan the power with which Christ cast out devils; while I entertain the idea that it is a continual rejection of the Spirit, not allowing ourselves to accept it."

And both, we think, are correct. The particular sin for which Christ denounced the Pharisees in Matt. 12, was calling the Holy Spirit, by which Christ cast out devils, the power of Beelzebub. Consider, now, the issue involved, and the reason why they took this position. The Jews had long held and taught that when the Messiah

came, the power of God would attend Him, and through that power He would do these very works—heal the sick, cast out devils, raise the dead. Christ came, and performed before their eyes these wonderful miracles; and now this issue presented itself: either they must acknowledge that this person was the Messiah, inasmuch as these works were to constitute His sign, or else maintain that the works which they saw accomplished were wrought by some other power than that of God, by which alone the Messiah would work. **They had evidence enough that the works in question were wrought by the Holy Spirit; but they were determined not to admit that Christ was the Messiah. To extricate themselves from their dilemma they must show that the right agency was not employed in the work. They chose this latter alternative, and declared that the miracles were wrought, not by the power of God, but by the power of the Devil.** They thus destroyed their own evidence of the Messiah; for when, according to their view, the Messiah should come, and do these very works, all others might reject Him on the same ground on which they now rejected Christ.

Thus the one object they had in taking such a position was to avoid accepting the truth. And this reveals a principle which may apply in many other cases. **Whenever a person, in order to find some excuse for rejecting the truth, whatever it may be, declares that the power of God which accompanies that truth, and which should be sufficient to convince any one of its genuineness, is not the power of God, but the power of the Devil, such as one is doing the very thing which the Pharisees did, and committing the sin against the Holy Ghost.** Such an act is one of desperation and frenzy. And in this way a person may reach such a degree of condemnation as to decide at once his destiny for ever.

In the case of ordinary but incorrigible sinners, the same point is reached at last—they pass beyond the reach of forgiveness, and their destinies are decided for ever. The Spirit ceases to strive with them. But the Spirit never leaves a person to that degree that it may not be recalled, except for the sin against itself. Every lost soul may therefore be said to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. With the majority, however, this condition is not reached by one overshadowing, presumptuous act of blasphemy, but by a long series of lesser sins, denials, resistances, and rejections, of the Holy Spirit, but not to that degree that the Spirit was compelled to take its final departure. But this course of sin is simply choosing some thing else in preference to the Holy Spirit. Every man will cleave to that which he prefers. Those who reject Christ, and refuse the spiritual life of religion, do so because they consider that what the world offers them is better; because they do not believe the Word of God, which is the testimony of His Spirit, but, in opposition, give credence to what the tempter tells them, and give their preference to the service of sin. The sum total of such a life is the sin against the Holy Ghost. In this case people do not reach the terrible goal by one bound, as did the Pharisees whom Christ condemned, and as others doubtless have done, but they reach it by a position so long maintained as to become tantamount to deliberately attributing the greatest good to be obtained, to Satan instead of the Holy Spirit.

In the Question Chair

Review and Herald – March 6, 1894

366.—THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

Two correspondents, O. S. and W. C. R., write for an explanation of Matt. 12:31, on the line of the following questions: 1. Is the Holy Spirit the same as the Holy Ghost? 2. Does not the invitation of Christ, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink," cover all sin, even that of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? 3. Is it because God is unwilling to forgive, that the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven? or does man place himself in a position where he cannot be reached by God's mercy?

Answer.— 1. The words "Holy Ghost" are from exactly the same original as "Holy Spirit." Why the translators should persistently use that awkward term "ghost," instead of "spirit," must have been owing to some prevailing custom or peculiar theology of their day.

2. Christ's invitation for any one that thirsts to come to him and drink, implies a well-defined condition, and a definite action on the part of the individual accepting and receiving the benefits of that invitation. First, he must "thirst," or have a desire for the blessings which Christ has to bestow. And, secondly, he must then "come " to Christ, that his thirst may be allayed. And any one who will do this will be pardoned and accepted. **But no one who has committed the unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Ghost, will either thirst after righteousness or have any inclination to come to Christ that he may be filled. Many people are troubled, and some thrown into despair, over the thought that they may have committed the unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Ghost. But such ones need have no fears of that kind; for if they had committed that sin, they would never be troubled in regard to it nor have any desire for the grace of God. Their conscience would be utterly dead, and they past all**

feeling. It is more important to understand what the sin is, that we may guard against it, than it is to understand its philosophy. As illustrated in the case of the Pharisees whom Christ addressed, it is born of a fixed purpose, an unchangeable determination, to resist and reject the truth at all hazards. For they understood that when the Messiah came, he would do, by the power of the Holy Spirit, just the works which they beheld Christ doing. So if they acknowledged that he was doing these works by the power of God, it would be equivalent to acknowledging that he was the expected Messiah. But this they would not acknowledge. It was because he claimed to be the Messiah that they hated him, and finally put him to death. John 19:7. **The only way they could get around the matter, and avoid confessing him to be the Messiah, was to put in the desperate and dastardly claim that he did his miracles by the power of the Devil, and thus he could not be the Messiah. Thus they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, when they and all the people knew better, in order not to be obliged to confess the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. This principle would apply equally to any other truth. We may therefore describe the sin against the Holy Ghost in a very few words: It is to attribute the evident work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil, in order to avoid acknowledging and receiving the truth.**

3. **The reason why such a sin cannot be forgiven is not owing to any disinclination on the part of God to pardon sin; but, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is the only agency which God has provided to reach the hearts of sinners, when they reject that, they necessarily shut themselves off from any further connection with God and his grace. They shut up the only avenue to their hearts, by which good influences can enter, and seal their own destiny. One sinning against the Father or the Son may still be led to repentance and pardon, because his heart is still susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit; but when he shuts himself off from this agency by sinning against, and quenching that Spirit, no further means is left for his salvation. This, therefore, is the one fatal step in the catalogue of sins.**

Ellen White

...Every step of rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of the goodness of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is evident that not one who stands under the banner of Jesus Christ, who serves him as a faithful soldier, has committed this sin. The sin against the Holy Ghost is not confined to any one period of time, or limited to any one generation. The Jewish nation who rejected Christ committed the unpardonable sin, but by taking the same course that they took in refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. You offer insult to the Prince of life, and put him to an open shame before the synagogue of Satan. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." You should not delay one day. The peril is too great. You may lose your life. Satan is watching every opportunity in order that he may destroy both soul and body; but Jesus is ready to pardon all your sins, and to make you a child of God, an heir of heaven. {YI August 8, 1895, par. 3}

Ellen White

No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent. If you refuse to believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, you love darkness rather than light, you love the atmosphere that surrounded the first great apostate. You choose this atmosphere rather than the atmosphere that surrounds the Father and the Son, and God allows you to have your choice. But let no soul be discouraged by this presentation of the matter. Let no one who is striving to do the will of the Master be cast down. Hope thou in God. The Lord Jesus has made it manifest that he regards you at an infinite estimation. He left his royal throne, he left his royal courts, he clothed his divinity with humanity, and died a shameful death upon the cross of Calvary, that you might be saved. All the suffering and humiliation of the Son of God was endured that we might understand how God loved the world, how he purposed to bring moral power within our reach that we might be ennobled, elevated, and become partakers of the divine nature. By his grace, Christ enlarges and multiplies the faculties of men as they co-operate with heavenly intelligences, and transformation of character is the result. Through faith in Christ his powers of mind and heart are enlarged, and the believer is endowed with refined and holy affections. {RH June 29, 1897, par. 9}

Ellen White

"The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so," said Jesus, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. **The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.** {DA 324.2}

The Holy Spirit and Sunday.—No. 20.

BY C. H. KESLAKE

AMERICAN SENTINEL – January 26, 1899

In none of the instances cited above did Christ charge the Pharisees openly with purposing to kill him, although he knew it perfectly well. But in the seventh chapter of John it is recorded that he did this, and reference is made to it here because of the reply that the Pharisees made. Said Christ, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?" Verses 19, 20. **Christ is here charged with having a devil.** Comparing this with what is recorded in Matthew 12, we can more fully understand its significance. **There we learn that Christ had wrought his miracles through the Holy Spirit. And yet the Pharisees in the hardness of their hearts attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to that of Satan. This was the sin against the Holy Ghost.** See verses 24, 28, 31...

...Christ being, as they alleged, a Sabbath-breaker, and yet doing that which was, to say the least, superhuman, **they could easily come to the conclusion that "this man is not of God," that he has a devil, and through that devil did his wondrous works.** And so opposing Christ in the matter of the Sabbath, **they could not possibly escape attributing the work of the Holy Spirit in him to that of Satan.** Hence we see that the sin against the Holy Spirit is involved in this question of the Sabbath.

Question Corner

Signs of the Times – August 8, 1900

1072. "A Sister." Sin against the Holy Ghost.

There is but one unpardonable sin—that against the Holy Ghost. Matt. 12: 31. (2) Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was on the part of those Jews **attributing the working of the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, in Jesus to the power of Satan. Compare with Mark 3:28-30.** (3) We do not believe that those who commit that sin generally or rarely ever know it. If they did, they would not 'commit it. We may know that we have not committed it. But Satan takes delight in making some poor discouraged soul believe that he has committed the unpardonable sin when he has not. **The Spirit's power is the means by which God cleanses the sinner. Heb. 10:29; I Peter 1:2. There is no other means, no other power. If man utterly rejects that power and utterly turns from its wooing, God has no other means of working. The soul cuts itself off from God. That is the only reason why it is unpardonable—the soul will not be pardoned or cleansed in God's way.**

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDER (February 9) Lesson

Youth's Instructor – January 31, 1901

Notes: 1. **The Lord had done all he could do to show the people that Korah and his company were wrong and only wrong. He had not left it to Moses to work out; but by his own miraculous power he had finally caused the earth to open and swallow them up.** It was shown that Moses was right, and that Korah had been deceiving the people. **But instead of spending the following night in prayer to God for forgiveness,** many of the Israelites passed the time in trying to find some way to carry out the wicked plans that they had received from Korah. **That was their last night of probation. By fighting against the light, it passed away, and darkness came upon them. The Spirit of the Lord left them forever. They had come to a place where they called the work of the Lord the work of the devil; they were lost forever. They had taken the last step in their course of sin, and there was no more forgiveness. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit.**

THE SANCTUARY QUESTION. Three Ways of Sinning Against the Holy Ghost.

ELDER S. N. HASKELL.

Review and Herald – August 27, 1901

The dangers that threatened the Hebrew people just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, are in the pathway of many who now think themselves in a good cause. The apostle states three distinct ways in which the sin against the Holy Ghost may be committed. As the messages borne to that people are also borne to us, it might not be out of place to notice them.

In the sixth chapter of Hebrews we read: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." **That it may be better understood how it is done, it is illustrated by nature.** "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." **The Holy Spirit rests upon individuals,**

not because they are right, but that they may respond in Christian graces. Those who do this: are represented by the earth that bringeth forth herbs meet for man. But those who bear Only thorns, and briars, notwithstanding the rain may come upon them; are rejected, and are nigh unto cursing, whose end' is to be burned. It is utterly impossible to remain stationary in Christian experience, especially in this time in Which we live. Christ, in behalf of His people, is confessing their Sins in the heavenly courts; but if their sins are not confessed on earth, they cannot be confessed in heaven. If the heart is not daily examined and errors and sins confessed, they never will be blotted out in the court of heaven. Those who make no advancement in the divine life, becoming, no better and purer in God's sight, will in the end find themselves bearing only thorns, and will be burned. A crisis of the world is pending. The day of the Lord is, near in the valley of decision. It will come suddenly, and upon the careless and indifferent its coming will be fatal. To lightly esteem God's mercies hardens the heart and blinds the mind, and those who do this, place themselves where mercy cannot reach them.

The second manner of sinning against the Holy Ghost is described in the tenth chapter. It is sinning willfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth. To deliberately attribute the power of God to Satan is doing what the Jews did on a certain occasion. Mark 3:28-30; Matt. 12:22-32. To such there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. This was shown by those who despised Moses' law and died without mercy. But it is far worse deliberately and willfully to transgress the law of God. Such a one counts the blood of the covenant wherewith, he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. To all such the Lord says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." They who trample Under foot the blood that is offered for them in the sanctuary above by our High Priest, or even compare that blood in its saving power to any other blood on earth, count themselves unworthy of eternal life, and fall into the hands of the living God.

The third illustration of sinning against the Holy Ghost is spoken of in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, beginning with the fifteenth verse: "Looking diligently lest any man fall from the grace of God [margin]; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Bitterness permitted to exist in the heart will result in an entire separation from God. It leads to hasty words, to hasty conclusions, speaking without thought. Such are represented by Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. There were commendable traits of character in Esau, but he was a passionate man. He did not control himself. What he wanted he determined to have, at any cost. He lost all reason, so that he could see only the desire of a passionate heart, "Feed me, I pray thee," said Esau, "with that same red pottage; for I am faint." Jacob said, "Sell me this day thy birthright." Esau reasoned, "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" So the bargain was made, and the birthright was sold for a mess of pottage — for the gratification of appetite.' There are those today who, like Esau, will sell their birthright for the gratification of their appetite, or some other passionate lust. This determination to have those things that please the fancy, irrespective of what the Lord says, will seal the doom of many.

These three ways of sinning against the Holy Ghost will be committed by many of those who profess to love God at the present day. Some will walk over one of these roads, and some over another. Such dangers, with such terrible results, should arouse the feelings of every candidate for the kingdom of God. All hearts should be aroused to prepare to meet God, to watch with all faithfulness lest when their cases come up in the judgment, they be unprepared...

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

E. W. FARNSWORTH

The Bible Echo – August 18, 1902

An esteemed friend inquires of the "Bible Echo" for light in reference to the unpardonable sin. In what does it consist? Who commits it? We are glad to receive such inquiries. We may not be able to treat the subject fully at this time, but if not, more will be said in future issues. First, let us say that we do not understand the unpardonable sin to be one great act, which, in itself, is so wicked that God cannot find it in His heart to forgive if He would. Rather, we think the unpardonable sin is a consequence which comes from a long series of acts in resisting the Holy Spirit. The resistance is continued so long, and is so determined, that the heart or mind of the individual no longer responds to the pleadings of the Spirit.

Let us read the Scripture that brings this sin to view. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against

the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt, 12:31, 32. The parallel texts are Mark 3:22-30 ; Luke ii:14-26. Notice a few points that are made clear in the context found in Matthew. Jesus had cast out a devil from a person that was blind and dumb, and healed the person, so that he both spake and saw. Verse 22. The people were amazed, and were ready to receive Christ as the promised son of David. Verse 23. **The Pharisees could not deny the miracle.** They saw, and felt the influence that Christ had upon the people. They clearly perceived that if they could not break that influence, they would lose their power over the people, and they would become disciples of Christ. **Only two ways were left for them from which to choose; either they could accept of Christ and become His disciples; or they could deny the power by which He performed His mighty works. They chose the latter, and declared that Christ performed all His works through Beelzebub, the prince of devils.**

They knew better than this. They told that which their own judgment and reason convinced them was false. One of their own number, a leader and teacher, confessed to Christ in private about this time, "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2), **and they all knew the same thing; but rather than yield their opinion, and accept of Christ, they knowingly and wilfully attributed the work of the Spirit of God to the work of the devil.** Christ endeavoured to reason with them, to show how absurd their position was. If Satan should cast out Satan, how could his kingdom stand? If a house was divided against itself it must surely fall. The argument was unanswerable. The Pharisees were dumbfounded, both by the power of the Spirit that accompanied the miracle, and by the argument of the Saviour. They did not even attempt to cavil at His reply.

But still they did not and would not yield. In their wilfulness and stubbornness they said, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee" (verse 38), as if what they had already witnessed was no sign. **Had another sign been given, they would have misapplied it and attributed it to the power of the devil, and so, by attributing the work of the Spirit of God to the work of Satan, they placed themselves where the Holy Spirit could not reach them. They put themselves in an attitude of resistance to the Holy Spirit, and hence, beyond the Spirit's control, because the Spirit will not and cannot control or lead anyone who resists it, or refuses to yield to its influence. They committed the unpardonable sin.**

Why This Stupor?

G. B. THOMPSON

Review and Herald – February 18, 1904

The sin against the Holy Ghost is not some sin of such awful turpitude that God will not forgive it; for "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." But if we continue to disregard the call of duty, smother the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and refuse to give up known sins, the heart becomes hardened, and we may reach a place where it is impossible to renew us "again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:6), **having placed ourselves beyond the reach of the Spirit of God, the only thing in the earth which convicts of sin and changes the wicked, deceitful heart of man.**

Question Corner

Signs of the Times – April 4, 1906

1798.—Matt-12 :31, 32; I John 6:18. Are the-sin against the Holy Spirit and "the sin unto death " one and the same?

The words would seem to indicate that they are both unforgivable sins. Of course in that case they would be the same. They are unforgivable because they are unrepentable. **The Spirit of God is the means by which the Lord touches hearts and conscience, but he who persistently refuses to listen to that Spirit finally becomes so hardened that that Spirit can not touch his heart and can not make it repent.**

GRIEVE NOT THE SPIRIT.

Editor: M. C. Wilcox

Signs of the Times – September 6, 1905

1. **The office of the Holy Spirit is threefold: (a) It is to be a comforter of the Lord's people. John 14:16-18. (b) It is to reprove, or convince, the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Chapter 16: 7-11. (c) It is to be the teacher and guide in all things pertaining to the truth. Chapter 14:26; 16:13.**

2. It is through the Spirit that our prayers are made effectual. Rom. 8:26, 27.

3. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the Christian's only weapon of warfare. The rest of his armor is defensive. Eph. 6:13-17,

4. The only unpardonable sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit-attributing its work to the work of Satan. Matt. 12:22-32.
5. The sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable, because it is a rejection of the only means by which one may be convinced of sin and led to Christ, who alone can forgive sin. John x6: 8-9.
6. The minister, of Christ is qualified for his work by endowment with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 16-21.
7. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5 22, 23.
8. What the human race needs is liberty (Rom. 5:12, 18); Jesus Christ came to "proclaim liberty" (Isa. 61:1; John 8:36); and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17.
9. For the foregoing reasons, it is highly important that we "quench not the Spirit," and "despise not prophesyings," which are given through its dictation for our instruction. 1 Thess. 5:19, 20.
10. For the same reasons, we are enjoined to "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30.

Questions and Bible Answers
Present Truth – June 14, 1906

The Unpardonable Sin.

"Would you kindly tell me in plain words what is the meaning of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, and how can we fall into the unpardonable sin?"

This question has been answered before, but it is often being asked, and we will therefore answer briefly again. The matter is made plain enough in the words of Christ: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Mark iii. 28-30.

This warning was uttered by Jesus because some were attributing the works He did to the agency of the evil spirit. The blasphemy against Himself could be forgiven (Matt. xii. 82), but it was fatal to speak thus against the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God was working strongly on the hearts of those who witnessed the works of Christ. There was salvation in yielding to the Spirit, but destruction in resisting.

When a man knows that the Spirit of God is working with him, it is not easy to resist. If he does resist, and if, to justify himself in resisting, he attributes to Satan what he knows perfectly well to be of God, he may silence his conscience, but he does so at a fearful cost. He has deliberately set himself against God, and hardened his own heart beyond the point where the Holy Spirit can influence it. Some of those who saw Christ in the flesh passed this line. They became demons in human guise because they made their hearts hard against the Spirit's tender influence. The words of Jesus are a warning to us not to resist the Spirit of God. We may educate ourselves to do so and carry the process too far. But we may also cease to harden our hearts and allow the Lord to make them soft. Wherever there is the least disposition to yield to God, we may know that the unpardonable sin has not been committed. **Where the sin is unpardonable there will be no desire for pardon, because there will be no sense of sin.**

Those who mourn on account of their evil doings, no matter how hopeless they may feel their case to be, are happy indeed in comparison with those who feel no sadness over their transgressions. The very sense of guilt is an evidence of spiritual life: the lack of feeling is what denotes spiritual death. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The Unpardonable Sin No. 5

Robert Hare

Signs of the Times Australia – August 6, 1906

JOHN speaks of the sin that is "unto death." That sin unto death is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and the sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin for which there is no forgiveness.

We sin against the Father when we violate any of the precepts of the heavenly law. We sin against Christ when, after being cleansed, we step back, or cause others to step back into the darkness, to do evil. But the sin against the Holy Spirit is of a still different character.

Of the Holy Spirit we read, "He shall teach you all things." John 14:26. In this world, with all its darkness and ignorance, we must have a teacher. Nature speaks of God, but her voice is ineffectual without the Teacher from heaven. The world, controlled by Satan, gives knowledge of evil; the Holy Spirit must give the knowledge of good. Again we read of the Holy Spirit, "He will reprove [convince, margin] the world of sin." John 16:8. This is part of His work as the Comforter. The sin that stands between God and man must be recognised as sin, and removed before we can be at peace with God. Yet again do we read of that Spirit, "He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Without a guide man must surely stray. Numberless by paths open up before the erring feet of humanity, and, left to himself, man will thoughtlessly take some path that leads to death. **Notice, then, the Holy Spirit is to teach, then convince of sin, and then guide into all truth. This is its heaven appointed work, and this work it must do if man is to be saved.**

But if men will not be taught, if they will not be convinced of sin, if they will not be guided into the truth, what then?—They must remain in ignorance, in sin, and in error. There is no other agency that God can employ by which to secure their salvation. With the wilfully rebellious the Holy Spirit strives in vain. Speaking through Hosea, the Lord declares: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." Hosea 4: 6. Through His Spirit God tries to teach man wisdom, but man may refuse, and so remain in ignorance—in the darkness where the highways of death are found. Through that same Spirit God would convince man of sin, the transgression of His holy law; but man may refuse to be convinced, and so continue in the self-willed transgression that must forever separate between him and the God of holiness. It is also through His Spirit that God would "guide into all truth." Man may refuse to be guided into the truth, but only at the awful expense of believing a "lie."

If, then, we withstand all the efforts of the Holy Spirit, there is no other spirit that God could send that would move us to obey; **consequently, the sin against the Holy Ghost can find no pardon, for there is no other power that can come in and lead to repentance.** "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" is still the solemn warning that God whispers to the rebellious heart. **When that Spirit turns away, the man from whom it turns has committed the unpardonable sin that will never be forgiven.** Man may grieve the Holy Spirit until, as of old, the decision is given, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Hosea 4:17. **When the Pharisees ascribed the miracles performed by Christ to the agency of evil spirits, they were speaking against knowledge, for they knew better. Christ spoke of it as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,** for that Holy Spirit had often tried to convince them of sin and of Christ's divinity, but they would not be convinced. Matt. 12:24, 25, 31, 32.

Paul testifies: "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Heb. 10:26. **God's Spirit kindly pleads with the rebellious to give the knowledge of salvation, and to guide them into the truth of God. Patiently it bears with our waywardness, and pities our blindness. But if we turn away from all its promptings and its pleadings, then it must finally turn away from us. Grieved and wounded by our stubborn refusals to obey, that Spirit must at last, and forever, cease its pleadings with the rebellious and the unholy. And when finally its work for humanity is done, every soul unsaved and unforgiven will have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.** In turning against the law of Jehovah, and sinning against the knowledge it gives, the world today is fast hastening toward that dreadful crisis. Then it will be said, "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still." Rev. 22:11. As man refuses to comply with the pleadings of the Holy Spirit, he becomes more and more subject to the promptings of the evil spirit, and thus the soul temple becomes defiled.

Kind reader, God would guide you into His truth, but side by side with that truth there is the falsehood of the enemy. Beware lest the spirit of error blind your eyes, and so turn your feet into the path that leads to death. All unrighteousness is sin, but the sin against the Holy Spirit is never to be forgiven.

Question Corner

Signs of the Times – May 1, 1907

2064.—Sinning Against the Holy Spirit. Matt. 12:32. Will there be any chance for those who have not sinned against -the Holy Spirit in the world to come (Matt. 12:32), or will all who are lost have sinned against the Holy Spirit? If so, in what way? A. L. M.

The mission of the Spirit is to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16:8. No one is really convicted unless it is the Spirit that convicts him. When man rejects that Spirit he sins against the Spirit. The Lord comes, frequently, again and again, to souls who sin, and speaks in most pleading ways, sometimes by permitting affliction; but if the soul goes on rejecting the plea until the end, **God has no other means of saving**

that soul; he has rejected the very agency which God has used for his salvation, and therefore must die. So it is true that every one who is lost has sinned against the Holy Spirit. He may not have committed blasphemy, as some of the Jews did. He need not carry it so far as have defiant, blaspheming men in all ages; nevertheless he does sin against all hope in rejecting God's means of salvation.

Questions and Bible Answers

Present Truth – February 6, 1908

Unanswerable Questions. "What is meant by the Holy Spirit, and what is the sin against the Holy Ghost? Some one has asked me these questions, and I could not give a definite answer. Will you kindly reply to them in PRESENT TRUTH? "Please also explain how God could keep the Sabbath."

THESE questions might seem to demand separate treatment, but we leave them together, as the first and third must be answered in the same way. It would be as easy to say what is meant by "the Holy Spirit " as to say what is meant by "God." We find the Spirit spoken of throughout the Scriptures, from Gen. i. 2 to Rev. xxii. 17. Christ spoke of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father (John xv. 26), and John refers to "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Rev. v. 6. The Spirit rested upon Jesus at His baptism in the form of a dove, and on the day of Pentecost it descended upon the disciples in cloven tongues like as of fire. Believers are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, a recognition that the Three have but one Name. Matt. xxviii. 19.

The Spirit came upon the Church as Christ's representative, filling the disciples with His thoughts, leading them into all truth, convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment. John xvi. 7-14. By the infilling of the Holy Spirit the disciples of Christ are to be brought into the unity prevailing between the Father and the Son. John xiv. 20. Thus the Holy Spirit proceeds from God, and through the atonement of Christ (John vii. 39), which alone makes the process possible, enters into surrendered hearts to fill them with all the fullness of God. Eph. iii. 16-19. Christ purchased us by His blood ; by the Holy Spirit He enters into possession of that which He has purchased.

To sin against the Holy Ghost is to deny and blaspheme the gracious work it carries on. When the Jews attributed to a Satanic source the healing power of the Holy Spirit manifested through Jesus, He warned them against the possibility of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, and committing a sin for which there was no forgiveness. Matt. xii. 32. If, by entertaining the falsehoods of Satan, the heart is wilfully closed against the Holy Spirit, there remains no hope. The Holy Spirit is given freely to all who seek it, but it is forced upon none.

The Unpardonable Sin.

By C. M. Hicks

Signs of the Times – November 18, 1908

What is the unpardonable sin? When and how is it committed? These questions have often been asked, and demand a Scriptural answer. It is very evident that there is an unpardonable sin, for in 1 John 5: 16 we read, "There is a sin unto death." And also we read in Matt. 12:31 of a sin against the Holy Ghost. Christ visits His people in the form of the Holy Ghost. John 14:16 ; 16:7, 13.

The unpardonable sin is not a specific sin, for do we not read in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"? In this we do not see any limitations to God's forgiveness, but that it may appear stronger; in Isa. 1:18 the Lord says, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: tho your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; tho they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And we are promised in Zeph. 2:3, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Also we read in Eze. 33:13-16 that repentance brings forgiveness. But God will not admit of any half-hearted work. "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye search for Me with all your heart." Jer. 29:13.

It may seem to some that in these texts we have a direct contradiction, but in the light of God's word we hold to the text, "Ye shall know the truth," and believe it still rests with man whether he will be saved or not, for God is still stretching out His hand to Israel. Rom. 10:21. Christ has said, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." John 5:40. And His pleading voice is still heard, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23:37. Also please read Luke 14:16-24. God's commission to all is: "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. Let us heed the admonition of Paul in Phil. 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." But how can we let this mind be in us?

In the state of Nevada the great irrigation system is used. After returning to the house one morning, my little daughter asked me where I had been. I told her, "To let the water into the ditch," and explained to her how, by raising the flood-gate, I let the water flow in. Just so we let the mind of Christ flow into our hearts. What is the flood-gate that is keeping Him out? — Sin. Isa. 59:1, 2, "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it can not save; neither His ear heavy, that it can not hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

Therefore with all the heart let us heed the injunction of Isa. 55:6, 7, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." **Thus we believe that the unpardonable sin is the final and lasting rejection of Holy Spirit; the final, "I will not" that the individual gives to God's pleadings.**

The Sin against the Holy Ghost
Questions and Bible Answers
Present Truth – January 27, 1910

"In Matt. xviii. 22 we are taught to forgive our offenders until seventy times seven. This, so I have been taught, means that every time we are offended in any conceivable manner we are to forgive the offender. In Matt. xii 31 we are taught that if we commit one sin against the Holy Ghost, we shall never be forgiven. This to me at present seems quite inconsistent. How can God expect me to forgive every offence, when He Himself will never forgive a particular offence, concerning which no two theologians agree as to what it is?"

In asking us to forgive those who trespass against us, even though they offend seventy times seven in one day, **God is not requiring us to manifest a more forgiving spirit than that which characterizes Himself. It is His nature to forgive.** "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy." Micah vii. 18. **Since God delights in mercy, we may be sure that He will never withhold pardon from the transgressor when it is at all possible to extend it. Any sin that God does not forgive must be a sin for which there is no possible forgiveness;** "for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." Ps. cxiii. 11. Out of the fullness of His pardoning love God proclaims to all the people of the earth: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Is. iv. 7. No limits are affixed to the offer of pardon; it is to be had to the full by all those who seek it " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Is. i. 18. **In view of these gracious assurances, it is certain that no one who seeks pardon while the door of mercy is still open will ever be sent empty away. If, then, there is a single sin for which God has no forgiveness, that sin must be one which by its very nature takes away from man the desire for pardon.** Whatever the sin against the Holy Ghost may be, it clearly must have this effect, that the man who has committed it thereby loses all capacity for repentance and all desire for forgiveness.

That this is the real reason why there is no forgiveness for the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost seems to be implied by the record of Christ's language concerning that sin. Matthew's gospel shows that the words of Jesus were spoken just after He had been charged by the Pharisees with casting out devils by the aid of the prince of the devils, and in Mark's gospel we are told that it was this charge that led Christ to speak as He did about the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Mark iii. 28-30. These words emphasize the thought that there is no disposition on the part of God to withhold forgiveness for any offence. **The assurance is that "all sins shall be forgiven." But when the very agency which convicts of sin and reveals righteousness (John xvi. 8), the Spirit of God, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, is not only resisted, but wilfully, insultingly, perversely, stubbornly charged with being a manifestation of the spirit of Satan, then the one who makes this charge sets himself in deliberate hostility to the very power which is at work for his salvation.**

As Jesus went about doing good, exerting a holy influence, manifesting in its perfection the life of His heavenly Father, He came in contact with those who selfishly strove for their own glory and refused to receive correction. He saw these turn away from truth when it condemned themselves, and resist the conviction of the Spirit of God. As they continued in this course, the Spirit of Satan gradually took possession of them, and led them into deeper

and deeper darkness, until they were prepared to go all lengths in their blind hatred of Christ. They called light darkness and darkness light. The Saviour saw the terrible danger that yawned like a bottomless pit before these unhappy souls; His heart of mercy yearned to save them from the awful fate they were bringing upon themselves; and in His love He faithfully warned them that the course they were taking would lead to an irrecoverable fall, a hopeless perdition.

Men might sin, He told them, against the law of God, and find forgiveness for every transgression; but when they proceeded to put out their own spiritual eyes, and preferred to walk in darkness rather than acknowledge unwelcome truth, they were condemning themselves to certain destruction, sinning against the Holy Ghost, ranging themselves deliberately and definitely on the side of the great adversary of God, and placing themselves finally and irrevocably under his control. From such a course, deliberately entered upon, and persistently pursued, there was no recovery.

Such presumptuous sin partook of the nature of Satan's rebellion against God, conceived and carried out amid the light and glory of heaven and in the very presence of the great Creator. There was but one way to deal with such purposed, defiant rebellion. No display of the goodness of God could lead such rebels to repentance, for their warfare was against the very goodness of God itself. They had come to hate righteousness for its own sake, and their perverted natures rejoiced in iniquity. Such a dread possibility, says the Saviour, lurks in the pathway of men and women. **To such a state may those come who neglect to yield to the voice of Conscience, and stifle the convictions of the Holy Spirit. There is a fall from which no recovery is possible, a spiritual suicide from which there is no revival.**

Even though men may not agree as to what constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet it is well to remember that such a sin is possible. Realizing this awful possibility, how carefully and earnestly we should seek rather to honour the Holy Spirit by listening to its voice, accepting its rebukes, and conforming our lives to its teaching.

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES"

W. H. THURSTON

The Kansas Worker – March 2, 1910

The texts of Scripture, viz. Matt. 12: 31, 32; Heb. 6: 4-6; 10:26; 1 John 3:9, have been sent in by one of our churches for explanation, and we will give some consideration to them, respectively.

(1) Matt. 12:31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto man. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." **This scripture shows clearly that there is a sin which will not be forgiven, —the sin against the Holy Ghost.** This is a sin unto death, as mentioned in 1 John 5:16, and when committed there is no forgiveness. **It will be seen by the context that the sin against the Holy Ghost, is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan.** Verses 22-32. Just previous to this Jesus had healed a man possessed, blind, and dumb; and the charge was reiterated by the Pharisees, "He casteth out devils by the prince of devils." Matt. 6:34.

In this they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, and thus cut them selves off from the fountain of blessing. When men wilfully reject the Holy Spirit, they cut off the channel of communication with God, and there is no more that God can do for them...

Question Corner

Signs of the Times – October 15, 1912

3882 — Sinning Against the Holy Ghost Can you tell me what sinning against the Holy Spirit is, as given in Matt. 12:31, 32; also in Luke 12:10? L. R. B., R. W. B.

Compare these two scriptures with Mark 3:28-30. It will be clearly seen by this comparison with the words found in Mark, that the sin against the Holy Spirit on the part of the Jews was attributing the power by which Christ wrought miracles, to Satan. Jesus was working miracles that only Divinity could work. It was a strong, clear manifestation of the Spirit of God in Him. His teaching was in harmony with those miracles. He taught also the things of God. **To declare, as the Jews did, that He cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, was utterly to turn away from the only power that could save them, the power of the life and Spirit of God. This is the teaching of Jesus, and this will serve to show what the sinning against the Holy Spirit is. The only, reason why a**

sin is unforgivable is that it is unrepentable. God has but one power to save His people, one means of cleansing. He cleanses by the blood of the Lord Jesus. He gives life and power by His Holy Spirit. See Heb. 10:29. When, therefore, the soul rejects the only means by which God can save him, when he continues to reject that, when he counts the thing which will make him holy an unholy thing, when he declares that the very Spirit which would woo him to repentance is not of God, but a mere delusion or a cheat, he puts himself in a place where God can not reach him, because God will not compel acceptance. The sin, therefore, against the Holy Spirit, is the attributing to the enemy the work of the Holy Spirit, or in other words, it is denying the Spirit in its working. The unforgivable sin is therefore not one which God is not willing to forgive, but of the forgiveness which man can not receive, because he does not know it when it is offered.

An Unpardonable Sin

J. S. Washburn

Present Truth – January 30, 1913

The question is sometimes asked, "If an individual who has committed the unpardonable sin should come to God and ask forgiveness, would God refuse to forgive him? Would He break His promise, would He cast him out?"...

God will never refuse forgiveness to any man who truly comes to Him Confessing his sin. Therefore it must be true that he who has committed the unpardonable sin will never come to God for forgiveness. This is true. He who, has committed the unpardonable sin is hardened, impenitent, and either indifferent to the mercy and love of Christ find His tender pleadings, or filled with malice and hate toward God and His truth.

For the unpardonable sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Note the following scripture, Matt. Xii. 22-32... Note (1) Jesus had performed the miracle of casting out a devil by the Spirit of God. Verse 28. (2) The Pharisees called the Spirit of God the spirit of the devil ; and this they did knowing perfectly well that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He fulfilled the prophecies of the Scripture in every way. For the Pharisees, knew their Scriptures thoroughly. Many could repeat every word of the Old Testament.

And when the religious leaders, and teachers of the Jews had thus wilfully and knowingly called the Spirit of God the spirit of the devil, then Jesus uttered these most terrible words ever spoken to man: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men : but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be 'forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

The key text to this great and solemn question is found in Mark iii. 28-30. "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme : but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost bath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Note that Jesus stated to them that they had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit "because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Then for a man to say that the Spirit of God is the spirit of the devil—thus to call the truth a lie and a lie the truth—and to do this after knowing the truth is to commit the unpardonable sin. The philosophy of the unpardonable sin is perfectly simple and plain.

The Spirit of God is the only means by which we may know sin. It is true that by the law is the knowledge of sin. But the law is spiritual, the law is empty and powerless without the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit brings the law before the heart and conscience and reproveth (convince) every man of sin, and also of righteousness: John xvi. 8-10. "And when He is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me ; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more."

Then he who has persistently resisted the Holy Spirit until He comes no more, until His voice is no longer heard speaking to soul and conscience, cannot know what sin is or repent of it, and of course. for that reason can never be forgiven. For the Holy Spirit is Christ's representative on earth, the connecting link between God and man. He who drives away from him the Holy Spirit cuts off the connection between himself and God.

If a man were suspended by a cord, and should himself cut the cord that bound him to life and safety, we should describe his act as suicide. He who has finally grieved away the Spirit of God has committed spiritual suicide.

The Unrepentable Sin

ELIZAH. MORTON

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The sin that admits of no repentance admits of no pardon. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and convince the heart of sin. If the Holy Spirit is repudiated, there remains no repentance for sin. The unrepentable sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost. He who cuts off the channel through which God would speak to him is sorrowless and defiant, and the Spirit cannot do its work. He who continually refuses to respond to the influences of the Holy Spirit grieves it away, and places himself beyond the limits of God's grace. The unpardonable sin is the willful setting at naught of God's Holy Spirit.

Questions and Answers

Signs of the Times Australia – July 1, 1918 / Editor: C. M. Snow

502—Sin Against the Holy Ghost / 1. What is the sin against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven?

1. The unpardonable sin, as it is frequently called, was the sin of attributing to the devil the work of the Holy Spirit. Read the connection in Matt. 12:22-32. Jesus had been casting out devils from some who were demon possessed, and the Pharisees said, " This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." Jesus replied: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? . . .But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of, God is come unto you." Then He made the declaration that whosoever spoke against, or blasphemed, the Holy Spirit should never be forgiven. It is very plain, therefore, what the sin against the Holy Spirit is; and it is made still more plain when we study this in connection with Mark 3:22-30. Verses 29 and 30 of Mark 3 read: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost or Spirit— the word for both is the same in the original] hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." He claimed to be casting out devils by the Spirit of God. They said, No; the Spirit by which You work Your miracles is Beelzebub, the prince of devils. By that accusation they called the Holy Spirit the prince of the devils; and for that sin there was no forgiveness either here or hereafter. Many persons give themselves a needless amount of worry and grief, fearing that they have committed the unpardonable sin because they have resisted the Spirit's pleadings; or because they did not give their hearts to the Lord on a certain occasion; or because they not only did wrong themselves but influenced someone else to do wrong, etc., etc. But such things are not sins against the Holy Ghost. There is only one such sin, and that is pointed out in the foregoing. No one who truly and conscientiously believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ ever can commit that sin.

It can be seen from what has been presented that the unpardonable sin, is a result of persistent rejection of the invitation to repent, and attributing the office work of Holy Spirit to the work of the devil. Sin against the Holy Spirit, is not really about not accepting any particular narrowed view on the personality of the Holy Spirit, which some today, do try to include as being the unpardonable sin. It's about rejecting the work in which God does through His Spirit, and this is what inspiration and early Adventist taught on this subject. May we look to Christ always, be open to the truth given to us, and believe in the work performed by God in all His ways, so that our hearts will always be softened to His presence and not sin against the Holy Spirit.