

~Other Speakers G-L: Jessie Penn Lewis:

Deception and possession

To be deceived by lying spirits does not mean that the believer is necessarily possessed by an evil spirit; and a person may be "possessed" without having been deceived. For instance, a believer may be misled in guidance, or be deceived by counterfeit visions and manifestations, without these deceptions leading on into possession; and where there is yielding to sin, either known or unknown, even by a believer, an evil spirit may take possession of the mind, or body, without there being any experience of deception (1 Cor. 5: 5).

The faculties may become severally held, or possessed, by evil-spirits, by (1) yielding to the sin of passivity--passivity is the sin of omission, for God does not give a faculty either for misuse, or non-use, or (2) yielding to sins of action, e.g., if the tongue lends itself to slander or foul language, it lends itself to sin; and becomes liable to possession. And so with the eyes, ears and other parts of the body; the lust of the eyes in seeing, and looking at vile things; the ears by wrong listening--eaves-dropping is lending the ears to the emissaries of Satan--or, on the other hand, evil spirits may take hold of the nerves of the ear, so that the person cannot hear what he should, yet is permitted to be alert enough in bearing all that he should not hear.

DEGREE OF GROUND NEEDED FOR, EVIL SPIRIT TO POSSESS CANNOT BE DEFINED

The needed degree of ground given to an evil spirit in order to possess, cannot be clearly defined, but that there is (1) sin without evil spirit possession; (2) sin which opens the door to possession; and (3) sin which is unmistakably the result of Satanic possession (John 13: 2) is beyond question. If the man, be he unbeliever or believer, sins so as to admit an evil spirit, the ground given may be deepened without measure. (1) the ground given admits the demon, (2) the "manifestation" of the evil spirit takes place, (3) then the misinterpretation of the manifestation again gives further ground, because he believes, and admits still more of the lies of the evil one.

It is possible, also, for deception and possession to come about, and pass away without the man being conscious of either. He may yield to sin which gives access to an evil spirit, and then take the position of death (Rom. 6: 6, 11) to the sin or its ground, when, unconsciously to himself, the possession passes away.

Multitudes of believers are "possessed" in various degrees but do not know it, as they attribute the "manifestations" to "natural" causes,note 1 or to "self" or "sin," and they put them down to these causes because they do not appear to bear the characteristics of demoniacal possession.

There is also a degree of deception by deceiving spirits, in connection with counterfeits of God and Divine things, which leads on to possession; and this too, depends upon the extent of the counterfeits which have been accepted by the believer. Through "possession" by accepting the counterfeit of the workings of the Holy Spirit, believers can, unknowingly, be brought to (1) put their trust in evil spirits, (2) rely on them, (3) surrender to them, (4) be guided by them, (5) pray to them,note 2 (6) listen to them, (7) obey them, (8) receive messages from them, (9) receive Scripture texts from them, (10) help them in their desires and working, (11) stand by them, and (12) work for them; believing they are in these attitudes towards God, and doing these things for God.note 3

In some cases, the counterfeit manifestations have been accepted with such reckless abandonment, that deception has quickly developed into possession in a most acute, yet subtle, and highly refined form; giving no apparent trace of the presence of evil, yet the peculiar double personality, characteristic of fully developed "demon possession," is easily recognizable to trained spiritual discernment; although it may be hidden under the of the most beautiful "angel of light" manifestation, with all the fascinating attraction of "glory light" upon the face,note 4 exquisite music in song, and a powerful effect in speech.

THE DUAL PERSONALITY OF DEMON POSSESSION

The dual personality of fully developed demon possession is generally only recognized when it takes the form of objectionable manifestations; such as when a distinct other-intelligence obscures the personality of the possessed one, and speaks through the vocal organs, in a distinctly separate or altered voice, expressing thoughts or words unintended, or only partially volitioned by the subject; the victim is compelled to act in ways

contrary to his natural character, and the body is manipulated by a foreign power, and nerves and muscles are twisted in contortions, and convulsions, such as are described in the Scripture records (Luke 9: 39). A characteristic of the dual-personality of demon-possession also is that the manifestations are usually periodical, and the victim is comparatively natural, and normal, between what are described as "attacks," but which are really periods of manifestations of the intruding power.

DUAL PERSONALITY OF EVIL SPIRIT POSSESSION IN CHRISTIANS

Evidences are now available, proving that this dual-personality of possession in its fullest degree, has taken place in believers who are not disobedient to light, or yielding to any known sin;note 5 but who have become possessed through deception in their abandonment to supernatural power, which they believed to be of God; such cases having all the symptoms and manifestations described in the gospel records. The demon answering questions in his own voice, and speaking words of blasphemy against God through the person, whilst he is, in spirit, in peace and fellowship with God; thus evidencing (1) the Holy Spirit to be in the spirit, and (2) the demon, or demons, in the body, using the tongue, and throwing the body about at their will.note 6

This same "dual-personality," under entirely different manifestations, is easily recognizable by any who have the "discerning of spirits." At times the environment of the subject is more favourable than others for the spirit manifestations, and then they can be detected in both beautiful and objectionable forms.

The fact of the demon possession of Christians destroys the theory that only people in "heathen countries," or persons deep in sin, can be "possessed" by evil spirits. This unexamined, unproved theory in the minds of believers, serves the devil well as a cover for his workings to gain possession of the minds and bodies, of Christians in the present time. But the veil is being stripped off the eyes of the children of God by the hard path of experience; and the knowledge is dawning upon the awakened section of the Church that a believer baptized in the Holy Ghost, and indwelt by God in the inner shrine of the spirit can be deceived into admitting evil spirits into his being; and be possessed,note 7 in varying degrees, by demons, even whilst in the centre he is a sanctuary of the Spirit of God; God working in, and through his spirit, and the evil spirits in, or through, mind, or body, or both.

DUAL STREAMS OF POWER

From such possessed believers there can proceed, at intervals, streams from the two sources of power; one from the Spirit of God in the centre, and the other from an evil spirit in the outer man; and with the two parallel results to those who come in contact with the two streams of power. In preaching, all the truth spoken by such a believer may be of God, and according to the Scriptures, correct and full of light--the spirit of the man right--whilst evil spirits working in mind or body, make use of the cover of the truth to insert their manifestations, so as to find acceptance with both speaker and hearers. That is to say, there may pour through a believer at one moment, a stream of truth from the Word, giving light and love and blessing to receptive ones among the listeners; and the next moment, a foreign spirit, hidden in mind or body, may send forth a streamlet through the soulish or physical part of the man, producing corresponding effects in soul or body among the listeners, who respond in their soulish or physical part to the Satanic stream, either by emotional or physical manifestations, or in nervous or muscular actions. One or the other of the "streams" of power from the Holy Spirit in his spirit, or from the deceiving spirit in mind or body, may predominate at different times, thus making the same man appear dual in character, with short intervals, at different periods of time. "See how he speaks! How he seeks to glorify God! How sane and reasonable he is! What a passion he has for souls!" may be said with truth of a worker, until some moments later some peculiar change is seen in him, and in the meeting. A strange element comes in, possibly only recognizable to some with keen spiritual vision, or else plainly obvious to all. Perhaps the speaker begins to pray quietly, and calmly, with a pure spirit, but suddenly the voice is raised, it sounds "hollow," or has a metallic tone;note 8 the tension of the meeting increases; an overwhelming, overmastering "power" falls upon it; and no one thinks of "resisting" what appears to be such a "manifestation of God!"

MIXED MANIFESTATIONS

The majority of those present may have no idea of the mixture which has crept in. Some fall upon the ground unable to bear the strained emotion, or effect upon the mind; and some are thrown down by some supernatural power; others cry out in ecstasy; the speaker leaves the platform, passes by a young man, who becomes conscious of a feeling of intoxication upon him, which does not leave his senses for some time. Others laugh with the exuberance of the intoxicating joy. Some have had real spiritual help and blessing through the Word of God being expounded ere this climax came, and during the pure outflow of the Holy Spirit; consequently they accept these strange workings as from God, because in the first stage of the meeting, their needs have been

truly met by Him; and they cannot discern the two separate "manifestations" coming through the same channel! If they doubt the latter part of the meeting, they fear they are untrue to their inner conviction that the earlier part was "of God." Others are conscious that the "manifestations" are contrary to their spiritual vision, and judgment; but on account of the blessing of the earlier part they stifle their doubts, and say "We cannot understand the 'physical' manifestations, but we must not expect to understand all that God does. We only know that the wonderful outpouring of truth and love and light at the beginning of the meeting was from God, and met our need. No one can mistake the sincerity, the pure motive of the speaker . . . therefore, although I cannot understand, or say I 'like' the physical manifestations, yet--it must be all of God . . ."

TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT ACCEPTED TOGETHER

Briefly put, this is a glimpse into the mixed "manifestations" which have come upon the Church of God, since the Revival in Wales; for, almost without exception, in every land where revival has since broken forth, within a very brief period of time the counterfeit stream has mingled with the true; and almost without exception, true and false have been accepted together, because of the workers being ignorant of the possibility of concurrent streams; or else have been rejected together by those who could not detect the one from the other; or it has been believed that there was no "true" at all, because the majority of believers fail to understand that there can be mixed workings of the (1) Divine and Satanic, (2) Divine and human, (3) Satanic and human, (4) soul and spirit, (5) soul and body, (6) body and spirit; the three latter in the way of feelings and consciousness, and the three former in the way of source and power.

There must be more than one quantity to make a mixture; at least two. The devil mixes his lies with the truth, for he must use a truth to carry his lies. The believer must therefore discriminate, and judge all things. He must be able to see so much to be impure, and so much that he can accept. Satan is a "mixer." If in anything he finds ninety-nine percent pure, he tries to insert one percent of his poisonous stream, and this grows, if undetected, until the proportions are reversed. Where there is mixture acknowledged to be in meetings where supernatural manifestations take place, if believers are unable to discriminate, they should keep away from these "mixtures" until they are able to discern.

In accepting the counterfeits of Satan, the believer thinks, and believes, he is complying with Divine conditions in order to ascend to a higher life; whereas he complies with conditions for Satanic workings in his life, and thereby descends into a pit of deception and suffering, with his spirit and motive pure.

How evil spirits gain access to the believer, is the next question we need to consider; and here we give in column form, six concise lists of (1) how they deceive; (2) the ground given for deception; (3) where they enter; (4) the excuses the spirit makes to hide the ground, and keep the believer in ignorance of his presence and the ground he holds; (5) the effect on the man thus deceived; and (6) the symptoms of the possession.

See chart on page 102.

COLUMN 1: HOW EVIL SPIRITS DECEIVE

Taking the columns one by one we shall see how subtly the evil spirit works, first to deceive, and then to gain access to the mind or body, or both, of the believer. One principle governs the working of God, and the working of Satan in seeking access to a man. In the creation of a human being with a free will, God, Who is Sovereign Lord of the Universe, and of all angelic powers, has limited Himself in that He does not violate man's freedom in obtaining his allegiance; neither can Satan's evil spirits enter, and obtain possession of any part of the man apart from his consent, given either consciously, or unconsciously. Just as a man "wills" a good thing, and God makes it fact, so when the man "wills" an evil thing, evil spirits make it fact. Both God and Satan need the will of man for working in man. note 9

In the unregenerate man the will is enslaved to Satan, but in the man who has been regenerated, and delivered from the power of sin, the will is liberated to choose the things of God. In one who has thus been brought into fellowship with God, Satan can only gain ground by stratagem, or, in Bible terms, by "wiles"; for he knows he will never get from a believer deliberate consent to the entry, and control of evil spirits. The Deceiver can only hope to obtain that consent by guile: i.e., by feigning to be God Himself, or a messenger from Him. He knows, too, that such a believer is determined to obey God at all costs, and covets the knowledge of God above all else on earth. There is, therefore, no other way to deceive this one, but by counterfeiting God Himself, His presence and His workings; and under pretence of being God, to obtain the co-operation of the man's will in accepting further deceptions; so as eventually to lead to "possession" of some part of the believer's mind or body, and thus injure or hinder his usefulness to God, as well as that of others who will be affected by him.