

**~Other Speakers G-L: Jessie Penn Lewis:****Counterfeits of the Divine**

In seeking to obtain full control of the believer, the first great effort of evil spirits is directed toward getting the man to accept their suggestions, and workings, as the speaking, working, or leading of God. Their initial device is to counterfeit a "Divine Presence," under cover of which they can mislead their victim as they will. The word counterfeit meaning the substitution of the false for the true.

The condition on the part of the believer, which gives the deceiving spirits their opportunity, and the basis of this counterfeit, is the mistaken location of God; either (1) in them (consciously); (2) or around them (consciously). When they pray they think of, or pray to God in themselves, or else to God around them, in the room, or atmosphere. They use their imagination, and try to "realize" His presence, and they desire to "feel" His presence in them, or upon them.note 1

**THE LOCATION OF GOD BY BELIEVERS**

This locating of God, in, or around the believer, usually comes about at the time of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost; for up to that time of crisis in his life, he lived more by the acceptance of facts declared in the Scriptures, as understood by his intelligence; but with the Baptism of the Spirit he becomes more conscious of the presence of God by the Spirit,note 2 and in the spirit, and so begins to locate the Person of God as in, around, or upon him. Then he turns inward, and begins to pray to God as within him, which in time, really results in prayer to evil spirits,note 3 if they succeed in gaining admittance under counterfeit.

The logical sequence of prayer to God as located within, can be pressed to absurdity, i.e., if the soul prays to God in himself, why not pray to God in another elsewhere? The limitation of God as a Person within, and all the possible dangers arising from this misconception of truth are obvious.

Some believers so live inwardly in communion, worship and vision, as to become spiritually introverted, and cramped and narrowed in their outlook; with the result that their spiritual capacity and mental powers become dwarfed and powerless.note 4 Others become victims to the "inner voice," and the introverted attitude of listening to it, which is the ultimate result of the location of God as a Person within, so that eventually the mind becomes fixed in the introverted condition with no out-going action at all.note 5

In fact, all turning inwards to a subjective location of God as indwelling, speaking, communing, and guiding, in a materialistic, or conscious sense, is open to gravest danger; for upon this thought and belief, sedulously cultivated by the powers of darkness, the most serious deceptions, and final out-workings of deceiving spirits have taken place.

**THE ULTIMATE RESULT OF MISTAKEN LOCATION OF GOD**

Upon this principle of the mistaken location of God; used by evil spirits as the ground work for manifestations to support and deepen this belief; has come about the delusions of believers during past ages, and of recent years, who assert themselves to be "Christ." On the same principle will come about the great deceptions at the end of the age, foretold by the Lord in Matthew 24: 24, of the "false Christs" and false prophets; and the "I am the Christ" of the leaders of groups of side-tracked believers; and the thousand others who have been sent to asylums, although they are not monomaniacs at all. The devil's richest harvest is from the effects of his counterfeits; and unwittingly, many sober and faithful teachers of "holiness" have aided him in his deceptions, through the using of language which gives a materialistic idea of spiritual things, and which is eagerly laid hold of by the natural mind.

Those who locate God personally, and wholly in themselves, make themselves, by their assertions, practically, "divine" persons. God is not wholly in any man.note 6 He dwells in those who receive Him, by His own Spirit communicated to them. "God is Spirit," and mind or body cannot hold communion with spirit. Sensuous feelings, or "conscious" physical enjoymentnote 7 of some supposed spiritual presence is not true communion of spirit with spirit, such as the Father seeks from those who worship Him (John 4: 24).

God is in heaven. Christ the Glorified Man is in heaven. The location of the God we worship is of supreme

importance. If we think of our God as in us, and around us, for our worship, and for our "enjoyment" (?) we unwittingly open the door to the evil spirits in the atmosphere which surrounds us; instead of our penetrating in spirit through the lower heavens (see Heb. 4: 14; 9: 24; 10: 19, 20) to the throne of God, which is in the highest heaven, "above principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come" (Eph. 1: 21, A.V.).

### THE TRUE LOCATION OF GOD

The Word of God is very clear on this point, and we need only ponder such passages as Heb. 1: 3; 2: 9; 4: 14-16; 9: 24; and many others, to see it. The God we worship, the Christ we love, is in heaven; and it is as we approach Him there, and by faith apprehend our union with Him in spirit there, we, too, are raised with Him and seated with Him, above the plane of the lower heavens where the powers of darkness reign, and seated with Him, see them under His feet (Eph. 1: 20-23; 2: 6).

The Lord's words recorded in the gospel of John, chapters 14, 15 and 16, give the truth very clearly concerning His indwelling in the believer. The "in Me" of being with Him, and in Him, in His heavenly position (John 14: 20), being the fact for the believer's faith, and apprehension; and the "I in you"--spoken to the company of disciples, and hence to the Body of Christ as a whole--following as a result in the individual life of the believer. The union with the Person in the glory, resulting in the inflow and outflow of His Spirit and life, through the believer on earth (see Phil. 1: 19). In other words, the "subjective" is the result of the "objective." The "object" of Christ in heaven, being the basis of faith for the subjective inflow of His life and power, by the Holy Spirit of God.

### CHRIST AS A PERSON IN HEAVEN

The Lord said "If ye abide in Me (i.e., in the glory), and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will. . ." (John 15: 7). Christ abides in us by His Spirit, and through His words, but He Himself, as a Person, is in heaven, and it is only as we abide in Him there, that His Spirit, and His life, through His Word, can be manifested in us here.

"Abiding" means an attitude of trust, and dependence on a Person in heaven; but if the attitude is changed into a trust and dependence upon a Christ within, it is really a resting upon an inward experience, and a turning from the Christ in heaven, which actually blocks the avenue for the inflow of His life, and disassociates the believer from co-operation with Him by the Spirit. Any manifestation therefore of a "presence" within, cannot be a true "manifestation" from God, if it uncentres the believer from his right attitude toward the Christ in heaven.

There is a true knowledge of the presence of God, but it is in the spirit, when joined to Him Who is within the veil; a knowledge of spiritual union and fellowship with Him which lifts the believer, so to speak, out of himself to abide with Christ in God.

The counterfeit "presence" of Godnote 8 is nearly always manifested as love,note 9 to which the believer opens himself without hesitation, and finds it fill and satiate his innermost being, but the deceived one does not know that he has opened himself to evil spirits in the deepest need of his inner life.

### COUNTERFEIT PRESENCE OF GOD

How the powers of darkness counterfeit the presence of God to those ignorant of his devices may be somewhat as follows. At some moment when the believer is yearning for the sense of God's presence, either alone, or in a meeting, and certain conditions are fulfilled,note 10 the subtle foe approaches, and wrapping the senses round with a soothing, lulling feeling--sometimes filling the room with light, or causing what is apparently a "breath from God" by a movement of the air--either whispers "This is the presence you have longed for," or leads the believer to infer that it is what he has desired.

Then, off his guard, and lulled into security that Satan is far away, some thoughts are suggested to the mind, accompanied by manifestations which appear to be Divine; a sweet voice speaks, or a vision is given, which is at once received as "Divine guidance," given in the "Divine presence," and hence beyond question as from God. If accepted as from God, when from the spirits of evil, the first ground is gained.

The man is now so sure that God has bidden him do this or that. He is filled with the thought that he has been highly favoured of God, and chosen for some high place in His Kingdom. The deeply hidden self-love is fed and strengthened by this, and he is able to endure all things by the power of this secret strength. He has been spoken to by God! He has been singled out for special favour! His support is now within upon his experience,

rather than upon God Himself, and the written Word. Through this secret confidence that God has specially spoken to him, the man becomes unteachable and unyielding, with a positiveness trending on infallibility.<sup>note 11</sup> He cannot listen to others now, for they have not had this "direct" revelation from God. He is in direct, special, personal communion with God, and to question any "direction" given to him, becomes the height of sin. Obey he must, even though the direction given is contrary to all enlightened judgment, and the action commanded opposed to the spirit of the Word of God. In brief, when the man at this stage believes he has a "command" from God, he will not use his reason, because he thinks it would be "carnal" to do so--"common-sense" is lack of faith, and therefore sin--and "conscience"<sup>note 12</sup> for the time being, has ceased to speak.

Some of the suggestions made to the believer by deceiving spirits at this time, may be: (1) "You are a special instrument for God," working to feed self-love; (2) "You are more advanced than others" working to blind the soul to sober knowledge of itself; (3) "You are different from others," working to make him think he needs special dealing by God; (4) "You must take a separate path," a suggestion made to feed the independent spirit; (5) "You must give up your occupation, and live by faith," aiming at causing the believer to launch out on false guidance, which may result in the ruin of his home, and sometimes the work for God in which he is engaged.

All these suggestions are made to give the man a false conception of his spiritual state; for he is made to believe he is more advanced than he actually is, so that he may act beyond his measure of faith and knowledge (Rom. 12: 3), and consequently be more open to the deceptions of the beguiling foe.

Upon the basis of the supposed revelation of God, and the special manifestation of His presence, and the consequent full possession of the believer by Him, the lying spirits afterwards build their counterfeits.

#### THE COUNTERFEIT "PRESENCE" IS SENSUOUS

Counterfeits of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are recognizable by the manifestations being given to the senses;<sup>note 13</sup> i.e., in the physical realm; for the true indwelling of God is in the shrine of the spirit alone; and the soul vessel, or personality of the believer, is purely a vehicle for the expression of Christ, Who is enthroned within by His Spirit; whilst the body, quickened by the same Spirit, is governed by God from the central depths of the human spirit, through the self-control of the man;<sup>note 14</sup> acting by his renewed will.

The counterfeit presence of God is given by deceiving spirits working upon the physical frame, or within the bodily frame, upon the senses. We have seen the beginning of this, and how the first ground is gained.<sup>note 15</sup> It is deepened by these sense-manifestations being repeated, so gently, that the man goes on yielding to them, thinking this is truly "communion with God"--for believers too often look upon "communion with God" as a thing of sense, and not of spirit--and here he commences praying<sup>note 16</sup> to evil spirits under the belief that he is praying to God. The self-control is not yet lost, but as the believer responds to, or gives himself up to these "conscious" manifestations, he does not know that his will-power is being slowly undermined.<sup>note 17</sup> At last through these subtle, delicious experiences, the faith is established that God Himself is consciously in possession of the body, quickening it with felt thrills of life, or filling it with warmth and heat, or even with "agonies" which seem like fellowship with the sufferings of Christ,<sup>note 18</sup> and travail for souls, or the experience of death with Christ in the consciousness of nails being driven into the bodily frame, etc. From this point the lying spirits can work as they will, and there is no limit as to what they may do to a believer deceived to this extent.

#### COUNTERFEIT MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE WORKINGS IN THE BODY

Counterfeit manifestations of the Divine life in various ways now follow quickly; movements in the body, pleasant thrills, touches, a glow as of fire in different parts of the body; or sensations of cold, or shakings, and tremblings; all accepted by the believer as from God, but showing what a full entry the deceiving spirit has obtained to the bodily frame; for there is a distinction between the manifestations of evil spirits "with"<sup>note 19</sup> and "in" the body and mind of the believer; although when they are really inside, they can also make it appear as if they were outside, both in influence and action.

When evil spirits are really outside, and desirous of entry, they work by sudden suggestion, which is not the ordinary working of the mind, but suggestions which come from without; "flashes of memory," again not the ordinary working of the memory, but coming from without; touches and twitches of the nerves; feelings of draught and sensations of wind blowing on the circumference,<sup>note 19</sup> etc.

## EFFECTS OF EVIL SPIRIT ENTRY TO THE BODILY FRAME

When the evil spirits are inside, the whole frame is affected, at times with the pleasant sensations referred to, but at others with pains in the head and body which have no physical cause, or else so working with the "natural" that the supernatural cannot easily be distinguished from it; such as accelerating the heartbeat so as to appear palpitation, and in other ways working with the physical causes, so that part has natural ground, and part is from the accentuating force of evil. Depression then ensues in proportion to the previous exhilaration; exhaustion and fatigue in reaction from the demand upon the nervous system in the hours of ecstasy; or else a sense of drainage of strength without any visible cause; grief and joy, heat and cold, laughter and tears, all succeed each other in rapid changes, and varied degrees--in brief, the emotional sensibilities seem to have full play.

The "senses" are aroused, and are in full mastery of the person, apart from the man's volition; or they may be apparently under control, so that the evil spirit's presence may be hidden from the knowledge of the believer, his workings being carefully measured to suit the victim he has studied so well; for he knows he must not go a shade too far, lest he awaken suspicion of the cause of the abnormal movements of the emotions, and of the sensitive parts of the bodily frame.

It can easily be seen that in time the health of the deceived one must be affected by this play upon mind and body; hence the "breakdown" that so often follows experiences of an abnormal kind, or else a snapping of the tension, by a sudden stoppage of all conscious feelings, and the apparent withdrawal of the "conscious presence of God;"note 20 followed by an entire change of tactics by the deceiving spirits in the body, who may now turn upon their victim with terrible accusations;note 21 and charges of having committed the "unpardonable sin," producing as acute anguish and real suffering, as he once experienced of the bliss of heaven.

## COMPULSORY "CONFESSIONS" OF SIN

Here the evil spirits may push the man to "confessions" of all kinds, however public and painful, which he hopes may result in regaining the "experience" apparently lost; but all in vain. These confessions instigated by deceiving spirits may be recognized by their compulsory character. The man is forced to "confess" sin, and oftentimes sins which have no existence, but in the accusations of the enemy. As it does not dawn upon him that evil spirits will push a man to do what looks like the most meritorious thing, and which the Scriptures declare is the one condition for obtaining forgiveness, he yields to the drive upon him, simply to get relief. Herein lies the danger of widespread "confessions of sin" during times of Revival, when almost a "wave" of "confession" passes over a community, and the depths of sinful lives are exposed to the gaze of others; through this enabling the lying spirits to disseminate the very poison of the pit into the atmosphere, and into the minds of the listeners.

## TRUE CONFESSION OF SIN

True confession of sin should come from deep convictionnote 22 and not compulsion, and should, be made only to God, if the sin is one only known by God; to man personally, and in private, when the sin is against man; and to the public only when the sin is against the public. "Confession" should never be made under the impulse of any compulsory emotion, but should be the deliberate act of the volition; choosing the right, and the putting things right, according to the will of God.

That Satan's kingdom gains by public "confessions" is evident by the devices of the enemy used to push men into them. Evil spirits drive a man into sin, and then compel that man publicly to confess the sin which they forced him to commit--contrary to his true character--in order to make the sin which they forced him into, a stigma upon him for the remainder of his life.

Oftentimes the "sins" confessed have their rise in the believer, from the insertion by wicked spirits, of feelings as consciously abhorrent and loathsome, as were the former "conscious" feelings of heavenly purity and love; when the man who experienced them, declared that he knew of no "sin to confess to God," or "no rising of an evil impulse" whatever; leading him to believe in the complete elimination of all sin from his being.