

~Other Speakers G-L: Jessie Penn Lewis:**War upon the Powers of Darkness**

In the path to freedom from deception and possession, the believer discovers the need of **MAKING WAR AGAINST THE POWERS OF DARKNESS**, for the undeceiving and the dispossession which follows, reveals to him the depths of the wickedness of Satan and his hosts of wicked spirits. The believer sees that he must (1) make war against their possession of him; (2) against all their works; and (3) against their deception and possession of others, as well as the need of a perpetual daily fighting against all their onslaughts, which come upon him apart from his giving them ground. The believer who is dispossessed is born into the war, and compelled to fight to maintain his freedom. Just as a child is born into the natural world, and must breathe to maintain life, so there is a birth into the warfare through the sufferings and pains of being undeceived, and delivered from the thralldom of Satan.

Through his aggressive warfare against the foe, the believer understands the systematic workings of the forces of Satan. Through the knowledge gained by reading the symptoms of deception and possession in his own case, he is now able to read them in others, and see their need of deliverance, and finds himself compelled to pray for them, and work toward that goal.

AGGRESSIVE AND DEFENSIVE WARFARE

In war, whether natural or supernatural, there are two principles governing the warfare, viz.: aggressive and defensive, i.e., the attacking force must be able to defend itself as well as to take the aggressive against the enemy.

Between the period of undeceiving and dispossessing, the believer learns to know his weak points, and vulnerable parts; and becomes able to recognize the methodical, planned and systematic attacks of the forces of the enemy upon those points. By these attacks, the knowledge of the active operations of the lying spirits, and of the need of unceasing warfare against them, is deepened in him. He knows that he must stand against them daily, or again be entrapped by their wiles, and fall a victim to their wicked devices; for he discovers that even the lesser attacks, which, before the time of his deception and possession, would be unfelt, quickly overwhelm him, and cause him to lose his equilibrium, or spiritual balance, immediately. He knows, therefore, by the lessons of his fight to freedom, that he must ever after be on his guard, note 1 and watch against the attacks of the subtle foe, whether they come through things around him, or directly--or indirectly--through others, the indirect onslaughts being often the most violent.

During the period of his undeceiving, the eyes of the believer also become open to the supernatural operations of the forces of evil; for just as God is seen by His workings (John 14: 10, 11), so the powers of darkness are to be recognized by their activities. Both the Divine and Satanic workings are invisible to the physical eye, but the effects are perceptible to him who has the power to read the signs. The one who has been dispossessed, can see how much that others attribute to God's sovereignty is nothing else but the results of the Satanic world-rulers' work. He sees that the primary cause of the apathy and deadness of the Church is Satanic, and that much which has been put down to sin, or the evil nature, is nothing but the work of evil spirits. Hence he must war against the false teaching, which settles down to accept Satanic workings in the world as the "operations of God." Through his own undeceiving his old thoughts about things connected with God, and with Satan, fall to the ground as untested theories, and he receives two blessings through his undeceiving; i.e. (1) a purified "theology," (2) and a true demonology.

SOME OF THE RESULTS OF THE UNDECEIVING

The undeceived and dis-possessed believer also becomes intensely practical. He finds that God is "practical." The devil is practical, and man must be practical to join with the One against the other. The believer sees that one of the ways in which the Son of God destroys the work of the devil, is through the instrumentality of prayer, and that he must now live a prayer-life, since prayer is the mightiest weapon against the foe.

Through his undeceiving, the undeceived believer has been made conscious of the actual force which the powers of darkness bring to bear upon and against his tripartite being, and thus learns that all the strength of his redeemed, renewed, and liberated powers--mental, spiritual and physical--must be set against them in order

that he may keep at liberty. In the experience he has gone through, he has become more and more conscious of his own spirit, and the need of using it in strength, purity, and power against them. He has also discovered that in the perpetual war which the deceiving spirits wage against him, neither time, place, nor season, are exempt from their attacks. Therefore, wherever he is, whatever he does, whatever state he is in, he must wage equally persistent war upon them. If he finds himself in keen suffering and anguish, he knows that it is "the hour and power of darkness"; and learns by the suffering they cause that they are unmerciful, as well as evil; intensely evil; nothing but evil; aiming at nothing but evil, and with all the power they are able to wield, endeavouring to draw him into evil, doggedly, silently, persistently, wickedly, always at work; actuated by undying hatred and malice against the human race.note 2 Enemies they are, and will be. What they are they were, and what they were, they are still--evil, and evil only. Thus he learns and knows that he must resist them and, that the fight to keep his spirit strong, pure and buoyant for victory over them needs all the force of his being, in the power of God, to enable him to be victorious.

THE BELIEVER FINDS HE IS AT WAR WITH ALL HELL

In the discovery of the wickedness and hatred of the supernatural powers of evil against him, the believer learns he is not fighting against the intelligence of one supernatural being, but against principalities and powers, with vast resources at their command, and that **IF HE STANDS VICTORIOUS AGAINST THEIR WILES, HE HAS CONQUERED, NOT ONLY ONE EVIL SPIRIT, BUT ALL HELL.** He finds that the powers of darkness will not allow one single believer to be victor over them, until they as a whole (Ephes. 6: 12) have failed to conquer him. Hence their onslaught on him who elects to be victorious over them all, in vital union with the Victor Lord, Who put them to open shame through His death on the Cross of Calvary.note 3

The believer is called to triumph over all the powers of darkness, but to reach the goal he must put on the whole armour of God, and lay hold of Divine strength, truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the mighty sword of the Scriptures, watchfulness and prayer. This armour, and the weapons belonging to it, will enable him to "stand against all" the wiles of Satan. If he stands, all heaven sees it; if he is defeated, all hell knows it. If he triumphs, the hosts of darkness are not only conquered, but discouraged, and rendered less effective in their schemes. The believer who would overcome such a disciplined and pertinacious foe, will never dare put his armour by, or give himself to careless work, for he finds that the foe is as tenacious and desirous to conquer as he himself is. But he who fully knows the foe and the warfare, and its eternal issues, finds his joy in the joy of war against an enemy devastating the earth, and the joy of victory, as a foretaste of the future triumph with the Lord Christ over all His foes. (Heb. 10: 13; 1 Cor. 15: 25, 26).

It is essential to study the powers of darkness from the point of view of their depraved nature.note 4 To be conquered, or to lose a point, is torment to them, for the fallen nature, both of men and angels, rebels against confessing itself vanquished. In the days of Christ, to be driven out of their hiding places, commanded to go, and thus be deprived of rest, was to demons "torment" before their time (see Matt. 8:29). They are being thus tormented by any truth made known about them to-day. The truth concerning them and their workings, with its consequent liberation of men from their power, is disturbing their rest at the present time, and what happened when Christ was on earth, will happen again when the casting out of evil spirits will become a recognized part of all Christian and ministerial activity.note 5 The Gospels record how Satan and his minions objected to Christ's presence on earth, for He moved about as the Victor, and they were shown to be the vanquished ones.

THE USE OF CHRIST'S AUTHORITY OVER THE POWER OF THE ENEMY

The believer who has thus learnt, through fire, the real schemes and workings of the Satanic forces, and realizes that he must make war upon them for his own defense, as well as for the liberation of others, now discovers that Christ has given authority over "all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10: 19) to all who will lay hold of it, as part of the finished redemption of Calvary. That in union with Him He gives the believer power to wield His Name, and in His name to have authority to cast out demons. This was one effect of the enduement of power upon the believers of the early Church. Christ said, on the eve of His Cross, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name. " But after Pentecost they wielded the Name, and found the Spirit of God witness to its authority. "Such as I have, I give unto thee. In the Name . . rise . ." said Peter. "I command thee in the Name of Jesus . . come out . ." said Paul to the evil spirit (Acts 16: 18). "In My Name shall they cast out demons . ." said Christ of His followers.note 6 "The spirits are subject to you . ." (Luke 10: 20) must be true of all who are in actual experience "one spirit" (1 Cor. 6: 17) with the Lord.

The authority of Christ is, therefore, open to the faith of all His children who are united to Him in spirit, even though they may not be wholly free, through ignorance, from the power of deceiving spirits in their outer man.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IS NOT INHERENT IN THE BELIEVER

This is reasonably so, because the authority of Christ as Conqueror over the evil hosts of Satan, is not inherent in the believer, but is laid hold of by him through the power of the Holy Spirit, and is borne witness to by Him only in response to faith. Should, however, a believer by faith thus command evil spirits to depart they will make the most of any occasion he may give them, after he has dared to assert the authority of their Victor's Name.

This is to be explained by the facts dealt with in earlier pages of this book, that it is possible for the believer who is fully joined to Christ in spirit, and in whose spirit the Holy Spirit dwells, to have foreign spirits located, unknowingly, in mind and body, who have obtained a footing by deception.note 7 The Holy Spirit does not give up His Place in a child of God who has received Him, because an intruder, against the man's real desire, and by guile, has gained admission. The entrance of a demon to a man, in any part of him, does not make him a demon, any more than the entrance of the Holy Spirit makes a man God. It is when the believer knows the truth, and will not take an attitude of refusal to the ground giving place to the enemy, and thereby clings to known sin and gives known ground to evil spirits, that his innermost life becomes seriously affected, just as known sin which the man will not part with, brings a cloud between him and God. God uses a man, so long as he is honestly true to known light, whilst glaring inconsistencies--unknown to himself--may stumble others.

DEGREES IN THE RESULTS OF USING THE AUTHORITY OF THE NAME

There are degrees in the manifestation of Christ's authority through the believer, over the spirits of evil, according to the degree of his personal victory described in our last chapter. Two believers may have faith to wield the authority of Christ, and have different results because of the difference in their knowledge of the workings of the powers of darkness, and hence a difference in their discernment, and consequent diagnosis of the case before them; that is, if one believer apprehends that he can cast out evil spirits by "commanding" only, and he does not know how the GROUND should be dealt with, he will not find the same results as the one who knows that the ground must be dealt with, before the evil spirits are really cast out.

Knowledge and discernment enables the believer to see where the Spirit of God would have him lay hold of the authority of Christ, and when to do so. For instance, authority over evil spirits to cast them out, is of no use in meeting their lies. Truth is the weapon of authority then. The truth of God, spoken with the authority of knowledge that it is the truth, will set the soul free.

KNOWLEDGE A FACTOR IN AUTHORITY

The degree of authority over evil spirits, then, depends not only upon personal victory, but also upon knowledge, and the believer who desires to know how to lay hold of the fullest authority over evil spirits for the sake of the deliverance of others, must set himself to understand their workings, as well as to be VICTORIOUS IN ALL, AND OVER ALL HE PASSES THROUGH. Let him note how much is said in the Scriptures about knowledge and understanding. The Apostle wrote to the Colossians about their being filled with "the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual understanding" (Col. 1: 9), and the Lord said "This is life eternal, to know Thee. . . ." (John 17: 3); "If we walk in the light ... fellowship." To walk in the light is to know God, and knowing God, we in relative degree know the powers of darkness; for light makes manifest the works of darkness (see Eph. 5: 11-13). Those of full age in the spiritual life, have by reason o use, their "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5: 14, A.V.).

The believer must be willing for the price of the knowledge necessary for discernment, for he cannot take an attitude of resistance to a thing he believes is of God, or is good, or towards which he is neutral. He must KNOW whether a thing is of God or no, therefore the degree of knowledge he has about the workings of the spirits of evil determines the degree of his (1) discernment, (2) resistance, and (3) authority over them in wielding the Name of Christ, whether exercised in "casting out," commanding to leave a person, or dispersing them by the light of truth. The believer must know their wiles, schemes, methods and accusations, weights on the spirit and their causes, and when hindrances and obstacles are brought about by the enemy, so as to be able to discern all these things, and resist them.

EVIL SPIRITS SUBJECT TO THE BELIEVER JOINED TO THE LIVING CHRIST

Knowledge also affects faith. The believer must KNOW that it is God's will that evil spirits should be, not only potentially, but actually subject to him as one joined in vital union to the Holy One of God, Who was Victor over them all when He walked on earth, and gave His messengers authority over them through using His Name (Cf. Luke 10: 17 to 24).

Some of the expressions used in Scripture describing the attitude of the Church, and of individual members of Christ toward the powers of darkness, clearly show God's will and purpose for His people. Paul said that God would "bruise" Satan under the feet of His children (Rom. 16: 20); the principalities and powers were to be "wrestled against" (Ephes. 6: 12)note 8--surely not with a view to their triumph over the Christian; to be "resisted" by a steadfast attitude of faith (1 Peter 5: 8-9)--surely not by ignoring their presence and workings; "withstood" (Ephes. 6: 13), in their onslaughts-- surely not by ignorance of such attacks; "devices" recognized to be guarded against (2 Cor. 2: 10-11); and "cast out" with the word of command by the authority of the Name of Jesus (Mark 16: 17), as those who were compelled to go, when a believer identifies himself with their Conqueror, and acts in reliance upon the authority of His Name.note 9

Knowledge again affects the use of the will, in resistance to the enemy. How can the believer take an attitude of resistance to evil spirits in a meeting, unless he has knowledge whether the power in that meeting is Divine or Satanic? The senses also, when acute, are factors in knowledge. If they are dulled by possession, the knowledge necessary actually to read and discern the workings of the powers of darkness is hindered.

KNOWLEDGE GOVERNS PRAYER. Abraham was seeking knowledge as to the conditions upon which God could spare Sodom, when he reverently questioned the Lord about the doomed city. He wanted to know God's conditions, before he was able to pray for Sodom.