

Introductory Chapter.

IN COMMON with the physical and mental realms of human experience, the spiritual sphere has its freaks and diseases; and this book is a "Text book on the work of deceiving spirits among the children of God, and the way of deliverance."

It is no more a book for the general reader than is either a medical work on cancer, or a text book on mental disorders. It should never be read for curiosity nor from mere academic interest. In her foreword to the first edition Mrs. Penn-Lewis wrote: "To the natural man, who has but a mental grasp of spiritual things, the language used may be meaningless, but Christians of all stages of growth in the spiritual life, who simply take what they can understand and leave the remainder for those who are in deeper need—and until they themselves are in deeper need—will obtain much light *on matters within* their horizon."

Its main appeal will be to two classes of reader. The first consists of those, who have become involved in some false system of religious teaching drawing its inspiration from satanic lies instead of from the sane balanced truth of the Word of God, and who have thus opened themselves to abnormal spiritual experiences which often result in demon possession. The suffering endured by these dupes of the powers of evil is intense; and since the first edition of this book was printed in 1912 there have been many testimonies to deliverance and help received through its pages from such readers. Eternity alone will reveal the ministry it has already exercised and will yet, by the mercy of God, fulfil in restoring such to hope, peace, and sanity.

The second type of reader, to whom this book is of immense value is the Christian worker who finds himself or herself faced with cases of spiritual abnormality, of which there seem to be an increasing number in these days of intense satanic activity. To such readers these pages will bring light and guidance, and it is perhaps striking that in recent months a magazine as well informed of Christian work in many lands as *The Alliance Weekly of America*, should feel it necessary to publish some very able articles by The Rev. J. A. Macmillan dealing with demon possession. A paragraph from one of these articles reads as follows: "Upon pastors and evangelists rests the greatest measure of responsibility for the instruction of the flock of God. It is in a special way theirs to discern the signs of enemy-working and to deliver their people. It is theirs also to teach and to warn of the perils which threaten the spiritually minded. It must be realized that the "heavenlies," into which the saints are introduced by divine wisdom and

grace, are in this present dispensation the habitat of "the power of the air." The believer who seeks the deepest experiences of the spiritual life may fall under deception unless he knows that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" at times, and that the arch-enemy is at home in religious gatherings where earnest leaders are "ignorant of his devices."

Full "abandonment to God," unless guarded by the knowledge of the methods by which the Spirit of God reveals Himself, may open the life to the invasion of spirits of darkness. This statement should be pondered carefully in desiring gifts and manifestations. The distribution of such is strictly the function of the Holy Spirit, who divides "to each one severally (individually) AS HE WILL." The seeking believer should have his eyes upon the Throne, disregarding specific gifts (unless these are revealed as things which he should "covet"—1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). What the surrendered soul must pursue is the will of God as his chief and only aim, being watchful lest his mind be set on things which might promote carnality and be the issue of self-will. Many, many are the earnest souls who have unconsciously given themselves over through an unrecognized envy to grasp after what they have seen in the possession of others."

Demon possession is as a rule understood by the worker in heathen lands; and we must bear in mind that most civilised countries to-day have become strongholds of paganism. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to expect that spiritual phenomena usually associated with heathendom will manifest themselves more and more in the midst of the so-called culture, and pseudo-Christian paganism of our modern world.

In our mechanical age, in which liberty and private judgment are so often sacrificed, and in which dictatorship and mass propaganda have become such powerful forces, the chapter dealing with "passivity" should be read and re-read. "The powers of darkness" runs one passage from this chapter, "would make man a machine, a tool, an automaton, the God of holiness and love desires to make him a free, intelligent sovereign in his own sphere—a thinking, rational creature created after His own image (Eph. 4.24). Therefore, God never says to any faculty of man "Be thou idle." " It does not seem possible to exaggerate the danger of slipshod thinking concerning spiritual things, and unreasoning abandonment to experiences not founded on a clear understanding of the broad principles of Scripture, and clear teaching along this line is necessary if a healthy advance is to be seen in the life of the Christian Church.

"War on the Saints" may well prove invaluable should God grant a true spiritual revival in answer to the many prayers which are going

up from His children throughout the World. At such times satanic opposition stiffens, and many hidden workings of evil are brought out into the open. *Then* those, who have the responsibility of dealing with souls will need all the light they can obtain on the abnormalities caused by the hold of evil spirits gained either through acceptance of false doctrines, or by tampering with the supernatural.

A paragraph from a recent article by a medically qualified missionary working in China, and familiar with cases of possession by evil spirits, will be of value in maintaining a balanced view of this difficult subject. "A word of warning about mis-diagnosis and lack of balance in spiritual warfare. The exercise of our authority in CHRIST is not a cure for all ills. It has been said that "War is 99% waiting," and the soldier of JESUS CHRIST will not be required to spend his whole time in the front-line trenches. There were times when it was not for Moses to hold the rod of God aloft, but to get down to the hard toil of intercession, and times when his work was to trudge in the wilderness with his people. A Mrs. Yellow was brought by her heathen relatives day after day to the Mission compound because they said she was quieter there. (We took their word for it, but wondered whatever she was like at home!). We labelled her as demon-possessed, and took up our stand against the enemy with no effect whatsoever. It was months before we obtained a full history and found she had a common type of temporary insanity! To attribute troubles indiscriminately to the devil does not make for a healthy atmosphere. We do need balance, and, above all, we need to be so in touch with our Lord that He can give us spiritual perception."

Finally may we again quote from the foreword to the First Edition: "With the publication of the book six years of prayerful *testing* of the truth here given, and three years of toil in placing these truths in writing, in the face of unceasing attacks from the unseen realm, now draw to their close. The issue lies with God. He who has sustained, and given countless proofs of His protecting hand in a "thus far and no farther" to the attacking hosts of darkness, will carry through His purpose to the end. The light will reach those who need it. Let God fulfil His Will."

Those of us responsible for launching this 7th edition of War on the Saints, can only say "Amen" to that final prayer. We dare not withhold from publication a message which, as it has done in the past, will undoubtedly bring freedom from the torturing grip of the evil one to many in need. May the Spirit of God to whom "all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid" so guide, that every copy may fall into the right hands, and may He also give all who read discernment to grasp the truth, which will meet need, without involving themselves and others in a maze of unnecessary complication.