

## CHAPTER IV.

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*Passivity the chief basis of possession.*

**T**HAT believers—true, fully surrendered children of God—can be deceived, and then UP TO THE DEGREE OF DECEPTION, “possessed” by deceiving spirits, we have seen in the preceding chapters. The primary cause must now be made clear, and the conditions for deception and possession resulting therefrom; apart from the possession which is the outcome of yielding to sins of the flesh, or any sin which gives evil spirits a hold in the fallen nature.

It is first important to define the meaning of the word “possession”: for it is generally thought to cover only cases of possession in the acute, and fully developed degree of the cases given in the gospel records. But even then it is overlooked that many degrees of possession are referred to in the gospels, such as the woman with the “spirit of infirmity”; the man who was apparently only deaf and dumb; the little girl with the demon which terribly vexed her; the boy who gnashed with his teeth, and was sometimes thrown on the fire, and the man with the legion, so wholly mastered by the powers of evil that he dwelt outside the abodes of men.

### THE MEANING OF “POSSESSION” DEFINED

Such cases as these are known to-day, amongst even true believers in Europe, as well as in heathen China, but “possession” is much more wide-spread than is supposed, if the word “possession” is taken to mean just what it is, *i. e.*, A HOLD OF EVIL SPIRITS ON A MAN IN ANY SHADE OF DEGREE; for an evil spirit “possesses” whatever spot he holds, even though it be in an infinitesimal degree, and

from that one spot, as a spider finds his base ere he weaves his web, the intruder works to obtain further hold of the whole being.

Christians are as open to possession by evil spirits as other men, and become possessed because they have, in most cases, *unwittingly fulfilled the conditions upon which evil spirits work*, and, apart from the cause of wilful sin, given ground to deceiving spirits, through (1) accepting their counterfeits of the Divine workings, and (2) cultivating passivity, and non-use of the faculties; and this through misconception of the spiritual laws which govern the Christian life.

It is this matter of ground given which is the crucial point of all. All believers acknowledge known sin to be ground given to the enemy, and even unknown sin in the life, but they do not realize that every thought suggested to the mind by wicked spirits, and accepted, is *ground given* to them; and every faculty unused invites their attempted use of it.

The primary cause of deception and possession in surrendered believers may be condensed into one word, **PASSIVITY**; that is, a cessation of the active exercise of the will in control over spirit, soul and body, or either, as may be the case. It is, practically, a counterfeit of "surrender to God." The believer who "surrenders" his "members"—or faculties—to God, and ceases to *use* them himself, thereby falls into "passivity" which enables evil spirits to deceive, and possess any part of his being which has become passive.

The deception over passive surrender may be exemplified thus: a believer surrenders his "arm" to God. He permits it to hang passive, waiting for "God to use it." He is asked, "why do you not use your arm?" and he replies "I have surrendered it to God. I must not use it now; God must use it." But will God lift the arm for the man? Nay, the man himself must lift it,\* and use it, seeking to understand intelligently God's mind in doing so.

\* See Mark iii. 5. The Lord did not stretch out the man's withered hand. The man himself had to act, although it looked a natural impossibility.

THE WORD "PASSIVITY" DESCRIBES OPPOSITE  
CONDITION TO ACTIVITY

The word "passivity" simply describes the opposite condition to activity; and in the experience of the believer it means, briefly, (1) loss of self-control—in the sense of the person himself controlling each, or all of the departments of his personal being; and (2) loss of free-will—in the sense of the person himself exercising his will as the guiding principle of personal control, in harmony with the will of God.

All the danger of "passivity" in the surrendered believer, lies in the advantage taken of the passive condition by the powers of darkness. Apart from these evil forces, and their workings through the passive person, "passivity" is merely inactivity, or idleness. In normal inactivity, that is, when the evil spirits have not taken hold, the inactive person is always holding himself ready for activity; whereas in "passivity" which has given place to the powers of darkness, the passive person is *unable to act by his own volition*.

The chief condition, therefore, for the working of evil spirits in a human being, apart from sin, is passivity, in exact opposition to the condition which God requires from His children for His working in them. Granted the surrender of the will to God, with active choice to do His will as it may be revealed to him, God requires co-operation with His Spirit, and the full use of every faculty of the whole man. In brief, the powers of darkness aim at obtaining a passive slave, or captive to their will; whilst God desires a regenerated man, intelligently and actively will-ing, and choosing, and doing His will in liberation of spirit, soul and body from slavery.

The powers of darkness would make a 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, renewed creation created after His own image (Eph. iv. 24). Therefore God never says to any faculty of man, "Be thou idle."

God does not *need*, nor demand *non-activity* in the believer, for His *working in*, and through him; but evil spirits demand the utmost non-activity and passivity.

God asks for intelligent *action* (Rom. xii. 1-2, "Your reasonable service,") in co-operation with Him.

Satan demands passivity as a condition for his *compulsory action*, and in order compulsorily to subject men to his will and purpose.

God requires the cessation of the *evil actions* of believers, primarily because they are sinful, and secondly because they hinder co-operation with His Spirit.

Passivity must not be confused with quietness, or the "meek and quiet spirit," which, in the sight of God, is of great price. Quietness of spirit, of heart, of mind, of manner, voice and expression, may be co-existent with the most effective activity in the will of God (1 Thess. iv. 11, Gr. "Ambitious to be quiet.").

#### THE CLASS OF BELIEVERS WHO ARE OPEN TO PASSIVITY

The persons open to "passivity," of whom the evil spirits take advantage as ground for their activity, are those who become fully surrendered to God, and are brought into direct contact with the supernatural world by receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. There are some who use the word "surrender," and *think* they are surrendered fully to carry out the will of God, but are only so in sentiment and purpose, for actually they walk by the reason and judgment of the natural man; although they submit all their plans to God, and because of this submittal sincerely believe they are carrying out His will. But those who are really "surrendered," give themselves up implicitly to obey, and carry out at all costs, what is revealed to them *supernaturally* as from God, and not what they themselves plan and reason out to be the will of God.

Believers who surrender their wills, and all they have and are to God, yet who WALK BY THE USE OF THEIR NATURAL MINDS, are not the ones who are open to the "passivity" which gives ground to evil spirits, although

they may, and do, give ground to them in other ways. These we may call Class No. 1, as shown in the following table.

## THREE CLASSES AMONG BELIEVERS.

I. <i>Unsundered.</i>	II. <i>Sundered, Deceived, Possessed.</i>	III. <i>Sundered but Undeceived, Dispossessed and Victorious.</i>
These use the word "sunder," but do not really know it, and act it out in practice.	These seem more "foolish" than those in Class 1, but in reality are more advanced.	The mind is liberated, and all the faculties are operating.
Believers in this stage are more reasonable than those in No. 2, because their faculties have not been yielded into passivity.	In order to understand the actions of No. 2, it is needful to read them from their inner standpoint, for to them all that they do seems right.	These are open to light and all that is Divine, but they seek watchfully to close themselves to all that is Satanic.
These believers call those in the next class "cranks," "faddists," "extremists," etc.	These are open to both Divine and Satanic power.	No. 3 can read Nos. 1 and 2 intelligently.
	Are liable to be "puffed up."	

Class No. 1 are "sundered" in will, but not surrendered in fact, in the sense of being ready to carry out "obedience to the Holy Ghost" at all costs. They consequently know little of conflict, and nothing of the devil, excepting as a tempter or accuser. They do not understand those who speak of the "onslaughts of Satan, for, they say, they are not "attacked" in this way. But the devil does not always attack when he can. He reserves his attack until it suits him. If the devil does not attack a man, it does not prove that *he could not*. Another class among believers—Class No. 2—are those who are surrendered in such a measure of abandonment that they are ready to obey the Spirit of God at all costs, with the result that they become open to a passivity which gives ground for the deception and possession of evil spirits.

These surrendered believers (Class No. 2) fall into passivity after the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, (1) because of their determination to carry out their "sunder" at all costs; (2) their relationship with the spiritual world,