

CHAPTER VII.

Ground and Symptoms of Possession.

IN Column II of the summary given on page 102, the various ways in which ground is given for the deception and possession of evil spirits are briefly summarized. Communication is possible with the believer without ground being given, but evil spirits CAN NEVER INTERFERE WITH THE FACULTIES OF BRAIN OR BODY, UNLESS SUFFICIENT GROUND FOR POSSESSION has been obtained by them. Satan had power to communicate with Christ in the wilderness, for the Devil spoke to Him, and Christ replied, yet the Lord Himself said later on (John xiv. 30) that although the prince of this world came to Him, he could find nothing in Him for his working.

The devil also communicated with Eve in a state of innocence. It is therefore no proof of ground, or sin in mind or life, that Satan is able to *communicate* with believers. But there is a certain class of "communication" which cannot be carried on without ground having been given. There is a difference, also, between "communication" and "communion"—communication is with the mind, as evil spirits suggest thoughts to it, but they have "communion" with the man through the senses, as these respond to "feelings" given by them to the senses. Delicious, lulling, exquisite sensations in the body, arising from *spiritual* causes, may always be attributed to deceiving spirits, for they *feed the sensuous*,* and nothing that comes from God in purity does this; nor does He in any degree by His manifestations, minister to a self-indulgent, self-satisfied, sensuous condition of the mind, or body of His redeemed ones; but on the contrary, the

* Page 108.

operations of God in man, are directed to the elimination of all that feeds the senses, and the invigoration of spirit, soul and body, for the keenest activities of life.

The satiety of the senses, however, caused by evil spirits, sooner or later changes in manifestation, and the true character of the source stands revealed when irritable and disagreeable feelings take the place of the soothing influences hitherto given, to the horror of the one who had revelled in the exquisite "waves" of peace, thought to have come from God, and who is now convinced that he has lost God's presence and power.* Where the disagreeable takes place now, may have been the place where an agreeable manifestation occurred in the past.

GROUND TO EVIL SPIRITS IN THE MIND

In the list of various ways by which ground is given to evil spirits, the first is by means of suggestions or thoughts admitted to the mind. Thoughts manifestly from Satan every believer rejects at once, when he becomes conscious of them; but thousands of "thoughts" come without any volition of the person, for few understand control of the mind, and how to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5). One of the symptoms of demon possession is absolute inability, even after volition, to change the course of thinking, or subject of thought, for the mind appears stiff and laborious in action. The man cannot let a specific thought go from his mind, even after he wills to.

The chief faculty open to the access of deceiving spirits, is the mind, especially before the believer apprehends the need of a "renewed mind" (Eph. iv. 23), and realizes that his mind can be open to, and used by evil spirits, notwithstanding the Divine operation of God in the innermost shrine of his being. Also before he realizes what he has admitted as *ground* for evil spirits in his past life, for all the "thoughts" inserted by the god of this world blinding

* See pages 112, 132. Also Appendix.

the mind (2 Cor. iv. 4; Ephes. ii. 2), form material for his later working; such as "thoughts" lodged there unconsciously, perhaps years before; mental conceptions admitted without examination; floating ideas which have drifted into the ground of the mind, the believer knows not whence; a sentence in a paper, a word dropped in his hearing; the flotsam and jetsam of the mental world, leaving unthought of effect upon him, colouring Scripture, and placing the mind almost at the mercy of any suggestion of evil spirits, under certain conditions, later on.

HOW TO DETECT EVIL SPIRITS' INTERFERENCE WITH THE MIND

To detect the working of evil spirits upon the mind, let the believer note the way in which his "thoughts" come. If the mind is working easily, quietly, in normal action in the duty of the moment, and sudden "flashes," "suggestions," or apparent "thoughts" arise, not in sequence, or in orderly connection with the work he has in hand, then the enemy may be counterfeiting the operation of the person's own mind, and trying to insert his suggestions into it as if they were the outcome of the man's own thinking; for when he is in the process of thinking, the lying spirits seek to inject some thought, suggestion or feeling—the first into the mind, and the last into the spirit.

The danger at this point is for the believer to be ensnared by the simultaneous working of his own mind, and the presentation to *the mind* of the evil spirit's "pictures" or visions, which he thinks come from his own "imagination";* or very subtly refined suggestions which have no appearance of being supernatural, or even distinct from the person at all. Many think all that is "supernatural" is of necessity strikingly marvellous, and awesome, whereas the enemy's working is very ordinary—so ordinary that he is unrecognized, and the operations of the supernatural appear so "natural," that they are not looked

* See "passivity of imagination," page 76.

upon as supernatural. The Scripture statement of "the whole world lying in the evil one" is so true, that his speakings and workings are accepted and followed and yielded to, as the "ordinary" things of life, and as the ordinary operations of the mental faculties. The kingdom of darkness is near and "natural" to all the world under the rule of the prince of darkness.

SYMPTOMS OF INTERFERENCE WITH THE MIND

It is best to be suspicious of the *abnormal* in every shape and form. God does not interfere with the natural operations of the faculties. A sudden stoppage of thought, or sequence in the action of the mind, in thought or memory, as well as acute loss of the use of either, may *indicate the interference of evil spirits*. The spirits of evil, in possession of some faculty of the mind, can either hold it, or suddenly release it for action—this holding or releasing power explaining much that is unaccountable in suddenness of action, or "change of mind" which, like much else, is left in obscurity as "unexplainable." "I can" one moment, then "I cannot" the next, generally being put down to an "erratic temperament," or other causes. The believer, however, may be *unable* to act, because of the interruption, or interference of the enemy, but he really *has* the ability for action, if the faculties were free.

Others whose lives are spent in the bondage of a "spirit of infirmity," are only conscious of a sense of inability, they are always "too tired," and have "no spirit," "no energy" for the ordinary demands of life, yet with no disease, or reasonable physical ground for their chronic inertness and feebleness. A sudden inability to listen, described as "absent-mindedness" or "preoccupation," when the person is **COMPELLED** to follow some "thought" suggested, or picture presented to the mind, or to follow the words of another, are all indications of the interference of evil spirits—the *compulsions* especially being a mark of their workings—when the person is in a normal condition of health, and the brain is not diseased.

For instance, in spiritual meetings, when people seem hardly able to listen to a vital truth, how many recognize the work of the prince of the power of the air taking away the Word (Matt. xiii. 19), by the suggestion of other things, not appropriate to the moment, and by the mind being unable to follow the speaker's words, and to grasp and apprehend? Streams of "texts,"* also, pouring through the mind, apart from concentration, and the volitional action of the mind, may overpower all that the speaker is saying, and "carry away" the hearer into far away thoughts, and "day-dreams," which appear so beautiful and "divine," yet after the "meeting" is over, have no solid result in practical life. Any admittance of these sudden suggestions, or passing thoughts, means ground given to the enemy.

TWO WAYS THAT THE ENEMY PUTS THOUGHTS INTO THE MIND

The Deceiver has two ways of putting thoughts into the mind: (1) By direct communication to the mind, and (2) indirect, by attacks on the spirit, causing undesirable feelings there, such as impatience through the attacks, which produce impatient thoughts in the mind, followed by impatient words. The believer has a sense of being hindered persistently by some unseen obstacle, for the evil spirit beings suggest a certain action to him, and then when he attempts it, he is hindered, causing in him a sense of irritation for which he cannot account. Nothing he does seems to "go right," and his life seems made up of "pin-prick" troubles, too much for him to bear, causing a sense of moroseness and discontent which grows upon him in spite of himself.

Feverish activity which accomplishes nothing is manifested occasionally, or else perpetual occupation which gives no moment of rest; difficulty with work in the day time; "dreams" at night, † with no sense of rest or leisure at any time; suffering, confusion, difficulty of

* Pages 18, 74, 139, 140. † Page 152.