

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Path to Freedom.*

IT has been thought almost universally that the only way to deal with demon-possession is by the casting out of the evil spirit,\* by some Divinely equipped believer. But facts prove that this method is not always successful, for though the diagnosis of the intruder's presence may be correct, yet the *ground* that gave it occupation cannot be cast out; and unless the ground is dealt with, no full relief can be obtained, or change seen, in the majority of cases. In others, when the evil spirit apparently departs, it must not be concluded that the person is entirely free, for it may be that what has occurred is only that a particular manifestation has ceased, and it is not unlikely that another manifestation may appear; possibly not a visible one, or one easily perceived or detected, but recognizable by any who have learned to discriminate between the workings of evil spirits, and those which are human or Divine. It is possible also to suppress a certain manifestation for a time, and not entirely get rid of it; and the same manifestation may return again and again in different guise, unless the ground is dealt with. In some instances, where the possession is so manifest that the true inner personality† of the victim is almost entirely lost sight of, the relief may be immediate: but where the intruder hides himself so subtly in the mind, or body, as to be indistinguishable from the operations, or actions of the person‡—hidden in some state, or form, apparently natural or physical—the deliverance will not be obtained by "casting out" only, but by the truth being given to the mind,§ and the volition of the person actively refusing and disowning the ground.

\* Pages 92, 110, 112: see also Chapter XI. on "Casting out."

† Pages 96, 110, 145.

‡ Cf. "Substitution," pages 120-122, 138.

§ Pages 58, 92, 110.

The very first step to freedom is the knowledge of the truth as to the source and nature of experiences the believer may have had since his entrance into the spiritual life, which possibly may have been perplexing, or else thought with deepest assurance to be of God. There is NO DELIVERANCE FROM "DECEPTION" BUT BY THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRUTH. And this *facing of truth* in regard to certain spiritual and "supernatural" experiences, means a keen edged knife to the man in his self-respect, and pride.

#### THE HUMILIATION OF THE UNDECEIVING PERIOD

It requires a very deep allegiance to the truth which God desires should reign in the inward parts of His children, for a believer to accept truth which cuts and humbles, as readily as he accepts that which is agreeable. The "undeceiving" is painful to the feelings, and the discovery that he has been deceived is one of the keenest blows to a man who once thought that he was so "advanced," so "spiritual," and so "infallible,"\* in his certainty of obeying the Spirit of God.

"*Was he not advanced?*" Yes, to a degree above the "man of soul," but he had not reached the goal as he thought, for he had but begun the journey in the spiritual plane. The end of standard one is but the beginning of standard two. So after all, he believed a lie about himself and his experience. He was not as "advanced" as he thought. Thus the truth breaks upon his mind, and its entrance is not agreeable. It is not easy to disbelieve absolutely, what he once believed so thoroughly.

Then "*Was he 'spiritual'?*" He may have had spiritual experiences, but this does not make a man "spiritual."† The spiritual man is a man who lives in, and is governed by, and understands his spirit, and co-operation with the Spirit of God. A great experience accompanying the ENTRANCE INTO THE PLANE OF THE SPIRIT does not make a believer "spiritual."

\* Cf. page 76. † Pages 83, 116.

## THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH OF DECEPTION

The deceived believer laid claim to positions to which he had no right, for with the entrance of truth he discovers that he was neither so advanced, nor so spiritual, nor so infallible as he had thought. He built his faith about his own spiritual condition on assumption, and left no room for doubt, that is, true doubt, such as doubting a statement that afterwards turns out to be a lie, but in due season doubt finds an entry to his mind, and brings his house of infallibility to the ground. He knows now that what he thought was an "advanced" experience, was only a beginning, and that he is only on the fringe of knowledge. This is the operation of truth.\* In the place of ignorance is given true knowledge; in the place of deception, truth. Ignorance, falsehood and passivity; upon these three the enemy silently builds his castles, and unobtrusively guards and uses them. But truth pulls his strongholds to the ground.

By the entry of truth, the man must be brought to the place where he acknowledges his condition frankly, as follows:-

- (1) I believe that it is POSSIBLE for a Christian to be deceived and possessed by evil spirits.
- (2) It is possible for ME to be deceived;
- (3) I AM deceived by an evil spirit;
- (4) WHY am I deceived?

Then comes the facing of the fact that (1) "ground" does exist; and (2) the seeking for knowledge as to what the ground is.

In order to discover the ground, the believer must first, in a general sense, get a fair conception of what ground is; † for he is liable to be deceived in (1) putting down to "possession" what belongs to something else, and (2) placing to something else what belongs to possession. He may confuse ordinary conflict, *i.e.*, the perpetual battle in spirit against the powers of darkness, ‡ with conflict which comes from possession. And when the deception and possession are of long standing, the spirits of evil may

\* Cf. page 58. † Cf. page 68, 70, 111. ‡ See Chapter X.

get the believer himself to defend their work in him, and *through him* fight tenaciously to guard the cause of his deception from being brought into light, and exposed as their work.

They thus get the believer himself, in effect, to take their side, and fight *for them* to keep their hold, even after he has found out his condition, and honestly desires deliverance; one of the greatest hindrances being the effect of an *assumed position* concerning spiritual experiences, which believers are loth to examine, and part with.\*.

#### THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF DELIVERANCE IN CALVARY'S VICTORY

The Scriptural ground for obtaining deliverance is the truth concerning Christ's full victory at Calvary, through which every believer CAN BE DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF BOTH SIN AND SATAN, but in actual fact the victory won at Calvary can only be applied as there is conformity to Divine laws. As the deceptions of Satan are recognised, and the will of the person is set to reject them, he can, on the basis of the work of Christ at Calvary as set forth in Rom. vi. 6-13; Col. ii. 15; 1 John iii. 8, and other passages, claim his deliverance from these workings of the devil in deception and possession.

Just as there are various degrees of deception and possession, so there are degrees of deliverance according to the understanding of the believer, and his WILLINGNESS TO FACE ALL THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF, and all the ground given to the enemy.

In doing this the believer needs to have a steady grasp of his standing in Christ as identified with Him in His death on the Cross, and his union with Him in spirit in His place on the Throne (Ephes. i. 19-23; ii. 6), and he must "hold fast" with steady faith-grip, the "Head" (Col. ii. 19) as the One who is, by His Spirit, giving him grace (Heb. iv. 16), and strength to recover the ground in

\* Cf. pages 56, 84.

mind and body which he has ignorantly yielded to the foe. For the man himself must ACT to get rid of passivity; he must revoke his CONSENT given to evil spirits to enter, and by his own volition insist that they retire from the place (Ephes. iv. 27) they have obtained by deceit. Since God will not act for him in regaining the normal condition of his outer man, nor exercise his choice for him, he must stand on the vantage ground of the Calvary victory of Christ, and claim his freedom.

Assuming, then, that the believer has discovered that he is a victim of the deceptions of deceiving spirits, what are the subjective steps in the path of freedom? Briefly, (1) acknowledgment of deception; (2) refusal of ground; (3) steadfast fight against all that possession means; (4) being on guard against excuses; (5) the detection of all the effects of possession; and (6) a discerning of the *result* of these actions. For the believer must learn to read the signs of dis-possession, as well as the symptoms of possession, lest he be deceived again by the Adversary.

We give in column form a complement to the column lists in page 102. The first treated of the way the believer has been deceived; this one of the way of deliverance.

#### COLUMN I. DOUBT OF EXPERIENCE

Taking first for consideration the list in Column I.

(1) *Doubt of the experience*, or "manifestation" being of God. We cannot emphasize too strongly the need of not quenching, and not ignoring the first doubt, for the "doubt" is actually the initial penetration of truth to the mind, and hence the first step to deliverance. Some have instantly quenched the first doubt, fearing to "doubt God," and in doing so, closed the mind to the first ray of light which would have led them into liberty. They have looked upon doubt as temptation, and resisted it, overlooking the distinction between true and evil, right and wrong "doubt." This has its root in the mind of most Christians, in associating only evil with such words as "judging," "criticising," "doubting," and "enmity," "hatred," "unbelief," etc., all of which dispositions and