

## The Power of Fasting

What I related last, happened in August of 1842. During the course of the following days it became evident that by far not all the demons had been removed from the patient. The time spent in this case seemed to be very much to me now. Especially since I was pressed for time because of much work to which I had promised myself beside my ministry. A faithful friend in a neighboring state to whom in that time I had the opportunity and courage to tell my difficult position, finally pointed me to the word, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." [Matthew 17:21] And when I thought more upon this, I came to the point of giving more importance to fasting than one usually does. Fasting is an actual proof before God that the matter of prayer is a true and urgent one to the believer. It reinforces the intention and strength of prayer to a high degree. It even represents a continual prayer without words. Because of this, I could believe that it would have effect, especially since in the case in which I stood, I had a special word from the Lord. I tried fasting without telling anyone about it. I must confess that the following battles were made extraordinarily easier because of it. I especially gained from the fact that I could talk much more quietly, firmly and determinedly and did not have to spend as much time as before. I felt that I could, without being present, have a strong effect upon the case. When I came, I realized great results in a few moments. That was especially the case after the attack in August when the patient felt more strongly a demon of the worst kind in her.

She would often lie as dead while her breath was held from within her. She was also stung and pressed in many ways in her insides. Also, sometimes, she was so paralyzed that she could hardly move a member of her body by her own will. During that time she was extremely surly and repulsive and visits by me became especially repugnant to her. But the worst was that again blood was forced from the inside against the outer skin, as with pricking instruments. Hemorrhages began anew although the cause seemed to be a different one from before. I fasted, but found circumstances worse than ever on that day. However, through prayer the hemorrhages stopped. But the demon spoke so defiantly, sneeringly, and blasphemously out of her, that I remained completely quiet and

made ready to leave, trusting in the power of silent prayer. Then the demon tried to stop me from leaving, but obviously in such a way as to make fun of me. I left. Whatever raged and raved in Gottlieb, even though I was called by someone out of fear for the life of the patient, I did not allow myself to visit her again that day. And in reality, the power of the demon broke during the following night and on the third day it fled from my side nearly without a word, although not without having almost totally burned her throat. This caused her pain and much trouble for a long time.

I can no longer give a coherent story until February of 1843. I only remember that I felt a constant burden and need, although always sustained by the hope that finally the end would come. Therefore, I add several general remarks here, although I admit with unfrightened openness, that all sorts of considerations advise me to be reticent.

It turned out more and more that a great change had taken place with the demons which had come to the fore. There were many of them which had returned several times, but returned no more. Nevertheless, Gottlieb saw me swarmed round about in a terrible way by demons when I was in church, standing in the pulpit. It seemed as though all of them tried to do me harm. I cannot say that I did not feel their effect even during the time when I did not know this yet, for Gottlieb had held it back from me for a long time out of consideration for me. But neither can I say that the effect was so strong that it would prove the statements of Gottlieb. Especially in my sermons, I felt more strengthened than weakened. That is why I cannot say anything definite.

With other spirits which identified themselves from then on, there seemed to be a question of what was going to happen to them. It was peculiar that from the beginning Gottlieb was constantly in the company of these demons either in her sleep or when she was not in her right mind. She knew many of them but did not know anything about that which occurred between the demons and me. Furthermore, she always saw the demons which were driven out for some time after in the room, especially the last one which appeared as the head over many. It always appeared with an immense book into which it reportedly wrote the names of all those subject to it. Gottlieb perceived it in a peculiarly bordered and precious garment which pointed to a very ancient time. The demons them-

selves appeared quite different to Gottlieb in reference to their character. Some of them she always found full of wrath and rage, and always in deliberations as to how to protect themselves against attacks made against them through the Word of God. The others seemed to be held by force by the former. The difference could be noted also in those demons which spoke out of her. Some were defiant, full of hate against me and often spoke words which were worthy of being recorded. They had a terror of the abyss which they felt near now and said, among other things, "You are our worst enemy, but we, too, are your enemies. If only we could as we would!" And then again, "Oh, if only there were no God in heaven!" Beside that they ascribed all guilt for their destruction to themselves.

The behavior of one demon which Gottlieb had seen before in her house and which identified itself now as a perjurer was horrible. It called out repeatedly these words which were painted on a window shutter,

"O, Man, think of eternity, don't miss the  
time of grace for judgment is not far."

Then it fell silent, made a grimace and lifted up three fingers high in a stiff way, suddenly shivered and groaned. I would have liked to have had more spectators for these scenes which occurred often. The greatest number of those demons which identified themselves between August of 1842 and February of 1843 later belonged to those which languished with burning craving to be free from the bonds of satan. The most varied languages with strange accents occurred, mostly such as I could not compare to any European language, except for Italian and French according to the sound. The attempts of such demons to speak German, especially when they circumscribed concepts whose German meaning they seemed not to know, were peculiar and sometimes comical. In between I could hear words which I could not put into either of these categories of demons, but which sounded as if they came from a higher region.

To that category belong quotations, frequent above measure, of Habakkuk 2:3,4. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which

is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." Then it was again as though the same higher voice were trying to turn to the demons by quoting a verse which I could not find for a long time, until I finally recognized it in Jeremiah 3:25. Instead of the first person "we" the second person "you" was used. "You lie down in your shame, and your confusion covereth you, for you have sinned against the Lord your God, you and your fathers, from your youth even until this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God." This and other verses from the Bible I did not understand for a long time, but slowly I learned to pay more attention to them and to see more meaning in them. In such quotations, which at times came at the end of a battle, I felt as if strength was offered me from on high.

At the same time I cannot but look with the most moving gratitude upon the many preservations and deliverances which were accorded to me, amid horrid scenes, again and again. The patient was tortured incessantly. Her body would often swell extraordinarily and she would vomit whole buckets of water. This seemed so strange to the doctor, who was always present, as one could not understand where all that water came from. She also received frequent blows on her head, knocks in the side, and in addition suffered from heavy nose bleeding, constipation, and other things. And with all the things going on in her, it seemed to be heading for a fatal turn. But through prayer and faith the attacks were made harmless and pushed back.

From that period I want to mention something more about the demons that yearned for liberation. For a long time I did not listen to their talk and was often pressed upon when I saw the painful expressions of their faces, their hands lifted in imploration and the streams of tears which flowed from their eyes, and heard the sounds and sighs of fear, despair and begging which could have moved a stone.\* I was much against talking with them about salvation because in all that was happening I always thought first of the possibility of dangerous and fatal deception of the devil and because I feared for the sobriety of my evangelical faith. But finally I felt I had to make an attempt, especially since those very demons which seemed to have some hope for themselves, could not be dislodged either by threats or by admonitions. The first demon with which

\*See Note.

I dared to deal was, as far as I remember, the woman through whom the whole thing got started.\* She showed herself again in Gottlieb and cried with a firm and decided voice that she wanted to belong to the Savior and not to the devil. Then she said how much had been changed in the world of spirits through these battles up to now. She said that my good fortune had been that I had remained solely with the Word of God and prayer. If I had tried anything else and even taken refuge in secretly working means, as they were frequently used among the common people, and to which the demons had tempted me, I would have been lost. She said this to me with an ominously raised finger and concluded with the words, "That was a horrible battle which you have undertaken." Then she begged and implored me that I might pray for her so that she would get completely free from the power of the devil into which she had come nearly ignorantly through idolatry, sympathy, and magic; and to pray that she might find a place of rest somewhere. I had known that woman well during her lifetime and she had shown a desire for the Word of God and for consolations I had not seen easily in others. Hardly a week passed that she did not come twice or thrice to my house to visit me. She had especially desired the song, "Rest is the best possession," from me. Now my heart wanted to break for her and looking to the Lord in my heart, I asked her, "Where do you want to go?"

"I want to stay in your house," she responded.

I was frightened and said, "That can never be."

"Can't I go into the church?" she continued.

I thought a while and then said, "If you promise me that you won't make yourself visible and won't disturb anybody and under the condition that Jesus gives you permission, I have nothing against it."

It was a risky undertaking on my part, but I relied on the Lord that he would make everything right. I did not feel I had gone into presumption before Him. She seemed contented, mentioned the farthest corner where she would go and then went out, easily and of her own accord, as it seemed. Nothing of all this was told the patient, and yet to her great horror, she saw the woman at the designated place in the church. But no one beside her noticed any-

\*See Note.