

DEMON EXPERIENCES

in Many Lands

by

Various Contributors

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

UNDER THE CURSE

She was not under the curse when I first knew her. I lovingly called her “my mother in Israel.”

Me Thone was widowed early, with three children to love, nurture and influence in the things of God. One might think that hers was a rugged life, but she always had a word of encouragement to the downhearted, coupled with a twinkle of the eye, and a smile.

Daily she sat in the market with all the Laotian women in that small Far Eastern country, though she had pitifully little to sell. There might be some herbs, perhaps a bundle of bark, or some wild bananas. I remember the “tithe” bunch that always found its way to the home of the missionary.

It was when Me Thone would ask, “Are you going to be very busy this afternoon?”

I knew she had met a new friend in the market, from a village we had not yet visited, and together we would plan a visit. Over the rice fields we trudged to find the new friend. Wet feet never bothered my little lady. Her feet never walked with shoes or sandals.

She was careful, though, to lift the ankle-long, sheath-like skirt, for the gold embroidered hem was a precious possession.

The sun beat down unmercifully, the lazy water buffalo lifted his head in momentary challenge, but Me Thone sauntered on, chattering gaily until we reached the edge of the village where we were headed.

Her culture influenced her thinking, and now she quickly slipped in step behind me, whispering, “See that large house over there across the clearing? Go to that house first. It is the home of the village chief.”

I obeyed. Reaching the foot of the slender ladder, stretched from ground to veranda, I called, “May I come up?”

There was a heartening response from the lady of the house, seated behind her basket of beetle nut and lime, so I turned for Me Thone to join me. But she was not there. I caught only a glimpse of her, hurrying up under the steep, slanting thatched roof of the third house beyond, on her errand of gathering villagers to come and see the pictures of Jesus Christ and to hear His message that her missionary friend brought to their village.

So intent was Me Thone on witnessing, that when the time came to enroll for Short Term Bible School she was one of the first. She begged to attend. She knew she could not read, and neither could she write, but her mind was a tablet. She remembered everything. Didn't she have to do her market accounts without the aid of pencil and paper?

One week of the school session had finished. Classes were dismissed early that weekend, so that the students could get caught up with home work and be all set, ready for worship service on Sunday morning. All the students gathered early for that service. It was quite an honor to go back to school, and Bible school at that. The students sat quietly on benches or floor mats, reading their Bibles, waiting for the service to begin. Everyone, that is, but Me Thone.

We were a bit surprised and rather perturbed. She was usually the first one to church. The service started. A hymn was sung. Then, the noise! A distinct clump, clump, clump coming from the hallway and now right up to the door. Me Thone came bolting into the room, her huge bamboo umbrella shattering the great hush of the room. Her eyes glared with an intense diabolical expression. She was demon possessed.

After weeks of prayer, fasting and tender care, Me Thone came slowly back to her right mind and told the story.

She harbored two great secret sins in her heart that afternoon of the Short Term Bible School recess, as she wended her way to the Buddhist temple in her village. For that old priest in the temple needed someone to tell him how wrong he had been in disbelieving her faith in the living God. Had she not attended five days of Bible School session already? Pride ruled her heart. Its influence was hideous, and so ironical after days of studying God's Holy Word and witnessing His presence in the midst of those discussion groups.

Me Thone walked defiantly through the temple yard. In her hand she carried meaningful Gospel tracts.

The old priest, seated deep in the shadows of the inner court, saw her come. Their feud over religion stirred tempers deeply. No woman in this land, whose entire culture moved at the influence of the temple gods, would dare enter its courts with such haughtiness, boldness and pride and speak thus with its priest.

In recounting the story, Me Thone would pause and reflect, "Had I only prayed first, I would never have done such a foolish and evil thing. I truly stepped on the Devil's territory."

The yellow-robed priest received the first tract she flauntingly thrust at him. He tore it into a thousand bits and told her to be gone. The second tract received much the same treatment.

Again and again this was repeated until the enraged priest cursed her actions and called on the evil spirits of a distant village to inhabit this infidel. Me Thone staggered from the temple. She never really knew how she reached home. A neighbor found and helped her.

She knew the terror, the influence and hold of evil spirit worship in her land of Laos. Me Thone had been delivered from much fear when she first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. In this land existed the belief of the *phi* (evil spirit) of the house, of the village. One spirit honored each marriage ceremony, supposedly bringing happiness to this marriage and surely evil if not given proper recognition.

For years she had known of the garden houses, built temple style, and dedicated as the habitation of the family spirit. Humbler homes might dedicate a post of their own house, or a rafter, or an enclosed small statue. A stone might serve as the dwelling place for another family spirit. The very air breathed might be honored as the home of the protecting family spirit.

Me Thone had been delivered from the terror of that tiny altar found in every Laotian home. The pungent odor of incense filling the house, the burning candle flame, the fresh flowers on the altar were not for her Christian home. As a young girl, her parents had tied the spirit-strings around her wrist, or circled the house with them when sickness visited the family, to appease the evil spirits.

In the market, Me Thone had looked longingly at the *phi phap* family in their loneliness, and tried to comfort them. They had done no wrong. It was their village sorcerer who had indicated that this family had displeased the village spirit, and he had named them the *phi phaps*, which brought utter isolation, not only from their own village, but from every neighboring village who knew their fate.

“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve,” guided Me Thone’s thoughts often. Her neighbors complained of the burden of the curses that had been pronounced against them by some enemy, perhaps a witch doctor. She saw them feverishly weave bamboo fetishes and attach paper money to its branches, an offering to the spirit they had disquieted. It might appease or even distract the spirit and thus evade sure disaster.

During those many days of living under the curse of the old temple priest, Me Thone knew the torment of spirits beating her body until the pain was unbearable. She would cry out with anguish of thirst, “I’m burning! Give me some water!” Given a cup of water, she took one gulp and immediately spat it out. If she could but hit the missionary’s face; a shrill, cold laugh of Hell, it seemed, came from the depth of her being. “They are choking me!” Me Thone screamed. “Help me, help me!”

The praying friends pleaded the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The missionary quietly coaxed, “Me Thone, repeat this after me,” and prayed, “O God, cover me with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!”

Eagerly, Me Thone tried to repeat word for word after the missionary, and momentarily she would return to her right mind and know her friends were there praying. She cried from the depths of despair, "O my God, have mercy on me and cover me with the blood . . ." She could say no more. Her spirit turned hard and cold, and with a scream ended, "No, no, I will not ... I cannot!" Prayer was made that God would spare that body and not let her go into eternity under this awful curse.

Weeks later, her spirit gradually became more tender. The presence of praying friends seemed more tolerable, and now she called for prayer. She tried to pray, but many times her tongue seemed to be tied. Only her spirit longed for the Word of God, for praying friends and restored fellowship. It was at one such visit in her humble home that she confessed to the hidden jealousy and bitterness she had secreted away against the national pastor and members of the congregation.

He had not seemed to appreciate her witness at the market, she thought, nor her faithful attendance at church services and prayer meeting. The pastor, to her thinking, had even resented her village visitation work with the missionary. Her spirit was truly not of Christ.

With such sin in the heart, she had walked right into the enemy's territory that afternoon of Bible School week. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, she reasoned afterward, would have washed her sin of pride, jealousy and bitterness and cleansed her, covering her completely, had she only prayed before going on that awful errand.

Me Thone has gone to be with the Lord. It was a fearful thing, the day darkness gathered around her soul and she could not throw off the attack of the curse, and the evil spirits took possession. But the ministry of the Word and prayer brought back light and lifted the darkness until the Lord took her home.

Mrs. Naomi Whipple

~ end of chapter 16 ~

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