

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

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About this time the Sterritts came to Altona. The first mud brick Church was built. My wife went to their services.

Just after they arrived I decided to become a Christian. After hesitating for some time, I told my wife. Here is what she said:

"You are going to become a Christian?"

"Yes, I'm going to be a Christian."

"WELL!!!"

A few days later I told my wife I was going to tell my brother. My wife said: "You going to tell your brother?"

I said: "yes, I'm going to tell my brother."

(It's the Zulu custom to tell the head of the kraal, or ask permission).

I arrived at my brother's kraal. I said to my brother: "I am going to be a Christian."

He shouted back at me: "YOU going to be a Christian???"

I meekly replied: "YES".

(Listen to this heathen's advice to his brother!!)

"ZEBULON! If you are going to be a Christian, you must leave your heathen ways. You must never come back to them. Be a good Christian. Be an out-and-out Christian." (A good statement from a heathen.)

(ZEBULON'S stand resulted in his brother becoming a Christian and most of the family. Most of them belong to the CUSH church).

Some days later my wife suggested that I give myself to Christ. Give myself to Christ! How can I do that?

Wife said: "Come to church Sunday and I will tell you when and how."

The following Sunday found me at church. One of the Sterritts preached. I can't remember which. At the end of the sermon opportunity was given for those who wished to give themselves to Christ.

My wife who was on the other side of the church, got up, came over and spoke to me.

"Now is your chance. Stand up and tell the people."

She goes back and sits down.

A moment or two later I got on my feet and said:

"I LOVE JESUS and I GIVE MYSELF TO HIM."

Everybody seemed to say, "AMEN! AMEN!!"

From that day on Zebulon has remained faithful to God. At the age of 65, or thereabouts, he still has this said, about him, (by an unsaved man) "Zebulon is a real Christian gentleman."

Zebulon can say with the Psalmist, "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Zebulon is our Deacon here at Altona.

I have found out since our interview with Zebulon that in the old days he was a great fighter. Dressed in his heathen clothes, on one arm a shield, in the other a spear, he met all comers. When he would meet anyone on the path he was in, a fight usually followed. Shields would clash and knobkerries would descend upon heads. Zebulon has many scars to show for his many clashes. If you could see him you would say: "how could he fight?" You see Zebulon is a little man. He would weigh about 90 or 100 lbs. From what I can find out he was all wire and spring steel, when younger.

All this is in the past, for today Zebulon serves Christ. His testimony is: "I'M GOING ON".

Save an old man and you save a unit but save a boy and you save a multiplication table.—Selected.

The King's Highway

Think of God's dealing with an unconverted person. The focus is upon the deeds of his life, and his character as a sinner. God is asking, "What are you doing?" But His dealings with a Christian person may be different. He is likely to ask, "Why are you doing it?" The focus is on the motive of the heart.

It is important to understand clearly that sin is not a thing. Its seat in human life is not the body, but the soul. If the body were sinful in itself, there could be, of course, no complete deliverance from sin in this life. But Dr. Turner shows conclusively that in the New Testament, "flesh" often has a moral rather than a physical meaning, and that the body itself is not sinful.

The heart of the Christian may be compared to a piece of spring steel. It may be uncoiled, and held out flat, but by its very nature it wishes to return to its original shape. If the pressure is released, it will do so. So there seems to be in the heart of a Christian something belonging to its original fallen nature which wishes to return to that state of living. The conflict lies in a deep-seated selfishness of desire and motive.

But if sin and selfishness lie in the heart, there is assuredly deliverance from it, for in Acts 15:8 Peter says that the gift of the Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts by faith. The "bent to sinning" may be cleansed. The civil strife of indwelling selfishness may be brought to cessation. As spring steel, when heated, loses its tension, so the human heart, under the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, is purged of self, and then filled with love for God and others. The divided heart is no more, and perfect love becomes the motivating force for all of life.

"Oh, that in me the sacred fire

Might now begin to glow!

Burn up the dross of base desire

And make the mountains flow!"

In Acts 1:8 there is another phrase about the Holy Spirit and His relationship to you. Jesus said, "And ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you . . ." What is the meaning of these words, The Holy Spirit comes upon you?

This is a phrase with a long and distinguished history. The Old Testament has many examples of persons upon whom the Spirit of God came. The Book of Judges is especially rich in such instances. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, and he judged Israel, and went out to war. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet. And upon Samson, the best-known judge, the Spirit of the Lord came at least three different times. Once Samson killed a lion, again he slew thirty men, and again he snapped the cords with which his enemies bound him.

The prophets, too, received unique endowments of the Spirit of God, that they might discern God's message, and deliver it fearlessly. Ezekiel even said that the Spirit of the Lord set him upon his feet!

The general implication of these illustrations is clear: The Holy Spirit came upon people in order that they might do some special work for God. It was an endowment of power for service. It suggests action, success, accomplishment.

And this seems to be exactly what Jesus had in mind. It has been said that the Holy Spirit is never given to a people who do not intend to do something. The special service which God wants His people to render through the power of the Holy Spirit is made abundantly clear in this same verse. Jesus said, ". . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . ."

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