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HOW THEY ENTERED CANAAN
(A Collection of Holiness Experience Accounts)
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

SAMUEL ASHTON KEEN (*3 Items)
(Methodist)

*Item 1

In my twenty-sixth year I became a member of the Conference. I was at once given a better place and more responsible work than I deserved; for I knew I did not measure up to what I ought to be. For the first three months of my ministry I earnestly sought for the equipment which I knew I needed if I would be a success for God; but I had no help, and so made no progress.

With the incoming of the new year I began a meeting; had large congregations and good interest, but no souls saved. I worked on until the second Sunday, and I thought surely someone would come that day. God helped me to preach, and I presented the altar, but no one came. My heart was almost broken. I did not go about shaking hands as usual, but stood alone within the chancel-rail until all were gone, and then went home in the darkness alone, searching my heart as I went. To the question, 'Why is it that sinners are not saved under my ministry?' the Spirit gave this answer: 'You can not expect sinners to act up to their convictions when you don't do it yourself?' I went home and told my wife that I had found out what was the matter with the meeting. She asked: 'What is it?' I replied: 'It's the preacher; I want entire sanctification.'

Well, wife and I were the first seekers in that meeting. Every time I presented the altar I would leave the pulpit and go outside the rail, and kneel at it myself, and my wife would come and kneel by my side. Over and over I would say: 'Lord, I am Thine, wholly Thine, forever Thine.' But I was so dull that I didn't know that that was faith; but soon I could not do any more praying. Every time I went to prayer the same thing happened. I could not pray for this blessing any more.

Then one day I went to my room just to pray for help in preaching, and there I got the full assurance. I was all melted down; tears flowed in streams; and as I went up the aisle of my church that night I just 'blubbered' like a baby. I tried to tell them what had come to me, but I couldn't for 'blubbing'. But sixteen men were converted that night, and one hundred and sixty were saved in

all in the meeting; and from that day to this God has not left me a single year without a great revival.

For twenty-five years I have preached a gospel of full salvation in the Churches to which I have been sent. I have shouted it in the ears of thirty-two Annual Conferences, and for three weeks in the General Conference, and in almost numberless camp-meetings and revivals; and I am here tonight in the strength of it to invite you to bring in your 'tithes' and get the 'abundant' blessing."

For a more complete account see "Praise Papers," which embraces his autobiography and a chapter by his wife on his triumphant translation, November 11, 1895.

Source: "The Better Way" by Beverly Carradine

*Item 2

Dr. S. A. Keen relates his seeking and obtaining holiness of heart. He says:

"I struggled against doubt, caught a glimpse of holiness, then let go my confidence and turned back into the wilderness of legalism -- 'Do the best you can,' and work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' -- where I wandered for almost eleven years."

After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1868, he entered upon his first pastorate at Chilicothe, Ohio. Here he says: "I had come again in sight of Canaan. I hungered for its generous fruits. The first quarter in my pastoral charge was one of great longing to be made free from sin in my soul."

Early in January he began a protracted meeting in his church, in which, though it increased in attendance, there were no conversions. As he left the pulpit on Sunday evening, January 3, 1869, the Holy Spirit spoke to him, saying, "How can you expect sinners to act up to their convictions when you do not act up to your own?"

"That arrow slew me," says Dr. Keen. "I saw in an instant what was in the way of the revival. It was the preacher himself. My heart was broken. I then and there began to seek the best I knew. I cried out, 'Lord, I am thine, entirely thine' -- words I had used a hundred times, but now they came with this thought, 'Lord, I am thine entirely thine for you to do this thing for me.' They were scarcely off my lips until a peace inexpressible was in my heart. I arose from my knees, my praying was done.

"I did not recognize that the blessing of sanctification had come. All I knew was that a blessed soul rest had come. I went about my pastoral work, my feet were light, my steps were alert, my heart was joyous ... The peace seemed even deeper. I slept very deeply. Sunday morning came. I arose and again kelt in prayer, but could say nothing but 'Lord, I am thine, entirely thine,' accompanied with a still sweeter sense of rest in my soul.

"Having finished my preparation to preach at about ten minutes before 11 o'clock, I knelt down to ask God not for full salvation, but to help me to preach once more. My knees had no sooner touched the floor when the witness of the Spirit was given to my soul, saying, 'It is done.' Then I saw that for eighteen hours I had been cleansed, filled, fully saved, and had not known it. My heart bounded with joy, my naturally ardent soul burst into a flame of rapture and my head became a fountain of tears. Jordan was passed. The Canaan for which I had so long 'cast my wistful eyes' was reached.

That day sinners turned to God in great numbers, and in a few weeks over 160 had been converted. From that day to this, summer nor winter, has the Lord left me without blessed and pervasive revivals of religion. That tenth day of January, 1869, introduced a new era into my spiritual life. The characteristic of my experience since then has been rest, freedom a holy warmth in my soul."

[Dr. S. A. Keen and Dr. S. A. Kean differentiated]

The separate pictures of Dr. S. A. Keen and Dr. S. A. Kean appear in Echoes of the General Holiness Assembly of 1901. Dr. S. A. Keen whose picture appears opposite page 89, died early in life. He passed away before the book was published. Dr. S. A. Kean, whose picture next to that of his wife appears opposite page 56, lived out the normal expectancy of life. S. A. Keen was the author of many holiness writings, including Faith Papers and Pentecostal Papers. The separate accounts as to how they were sanctified appear in Holiness in Doctrine and Experience, pages 66-68 and 172-173. Dr. S. A. Kean's name in Holiness in Doctrine and Experience, pp. 172-173, is spelled wrong. This book has both names spelled alike, which according to the pictures in the "Echoes" book is incorrect.

Source: "Scriptural Death-Route Holiness" by L. S. Boardman

*Item 3

The Rev. Samuel A. Keen was born in Harrison, Hamilton County, Ohio, May 12, 1842. The environments of his early child-life, as he himself gratefully records in his precious little book entitled "Praise Papers," "were a Christian home, the family altar, and godly parents."

In December, 1855, at the age of thirteen, he was born again, and united with the Church of God.

On January 10, 1869, while pastor of Main Street Church, Chillicothe, Ohio, the blessing of perfect love came into his soul, and since then, to use his own words, "The characteristics of my experience have been rest, freedom, and a holy warmth in my soul." He was licensed as an exhorter in January, 1860, and as a local preacher in May of the same year.

August 1, 1862, he entered the Union army, enlisting as private soldier in Co. D, 83d Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry; was promoted to the office of first lieutenant in April, 1864, the duties of which office he faithfully discharged till September, 1865, when he was honorably mustered out of the service by reason of the close of the war. While a soldier of the Union, he

never forgot that he was also a soldier of the Cross, and it was his delight, when opportunity was given him, to preach Jesus to his comrades. Hastening home on receiving his discharge, he entered the Ohio Wesleyan University from which he graduated June, 1868.

In October, 1868, he entered the Ohio Conference as a traveling preacher, filling with fidelity that responsible position until 1881, when he became presiding elder of Lancaster District, and for four years his work on that district was that of a mighty evangelist, under whose incessant labors of love revival fires were kindled and kept brightly burning all the time. From 1885 to 1891, he was again in the pastorate.

In 1891, feeling deeply impressed that he was called of God to devote the remainder of his life to the evangelistical, Pentecostal work, he was granted, at his own request, a supernumerary relation, and retransferred to the old Ohio Conference, in which he had begun his life's labors, and in which so many of his rich triumphs had been won.

Eminently useful and successful as Dr. Keen has been in the pastorate, he has been none the less so in that fruitful corner of the wide field of literature to which he gladly devoted his spare moments. In 1888 there came from the press the little book called "Faith Papers," 50,000 copies of which have since been sold. The lessons of that little book came from our brother's glowing heart like burning coals from off the altar, and have been wonderfully helpful to multitudes whose privilege it has been to study them. Following the "Faith Papers" came, in 1891, "Praise Papers, -- A Spiritual Autobiography," published, as the sainted author says in the brief preface, "as a souvenir in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entrance into the experience of full salvation by the baptism with the Holy Ghost." Of this, 10,000 copies have been sold. His third book, to which he gave the name of "Pentecostal Papers," came from the press July 1, 1895, and already 5,000 have been sold. "Salvation Papers," his fourth and last book, is now in the press, the Lord having graciously spared the author the time to finish it.

It may be mentioned as one of the many evidences of the genuineness and fullness of his consecration to the Master, whose he was and whom he served, that all the profits from the sale of these books have been given to benevolent causes.

But successful and singularly acceptable as he was in the pastorate, and valuable as are, and will continue to be, the precious books which he has given to the church, it was as an evangelist that he brought the greatest good, and won his greatest victories. For more than four years, and until within a few weeks of his death, he was unceasingly engaged in evangelistic work; visiting the Annual Conferences in the autumn and spring time, the camp-meetings in the summer, and the churches in the winter.

If any man since Wesley could say, "The world is my parish," Dr. Keen was that man. In the comparatively short period of four years, he traveled 80,000 miles, held Pentecostal services at 70 different Annual Conferences, and conducted no fewer than 135 revival meetings. Changing somewhat the wording of those lines of Whittier, we may say of him:

"And comet-like, adding flame to flame,
This prince of the wide evangel came."

From ocean to ocean, and from Mexico far up into Canada, he went, spreading Scriptural holiness over all the land.

On October 6, 1868, Dr. Keen was united in marriage with Miss Mary J. Palmer, daughter of Harvey and Philadelphia Palmer, by the Rev. Dr. Granville Moody, of precious memory. How Brother Keen esteemed his precious companion is best told by himself in the "Dedication" to "Praise Papers":

"To my wife, Mary Palmer Keen, whose companionship for a quarter of a century, next to that of the adorable Comforter, whose presence and grace these pages gratefully record, has been the constant inspiration of my devotion to God, and to my fidelity to the work of the ministry; and still,

" 'She blessing is; for God hath made her so;
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless.' "

Last Sunday night, after the evening services were over, Dr. Keen sent for me to come to his room, an invitation I gladly accepted; for there has always been inspiration and helpfulness for me in his presence, and more in his godly conversation. After a most affectionate greeting, conveyed by word and look, and warm grasp of the hand, he told me he was going home, and then he disclosed to me his wishes regarding his burial. When this was done, he said: "This has been a blessed day to me, my brother; I have had great joy and gladness in my work, but have never been happier than now.

'Jesus, all the day long,
Is my joy and my song.'

I claim nothing on the merit of anything I have done in the service of
my dear Lord. My hope is in Him.

'I sing the precious blood He spilt,
My ransom from the dreadful guilt
Of sin and wrath divine;
I sing His glorious righteousness
In which all perfect heavenly dress
My soul shall ever shine.' "

On the afternoon of that last and best of his Sabbaths on earth, some young people sang at his request a few of his favorite hymns. Referring to it he said: "I told them that they had made me shouting happy, only I hadn't the strength to shout."

Monday night, a few hours before his translation, he raised his head from the back of his chair on which it had been resting, and with a glorious light shining in his face and beaming from

his eyes, he sang, slowly but distinctly the second stanza of that beautiful song called "The Land of Beulah":

"I know I am nearing the holy ranks.
Of friends and kindred dear;
For I brush the dews from Jordan's banks
The crossing must be near."

Then the chorus:

"O come, angel band, come and around me stand,
O bear me away on your snowy wings,
To my immortal home."

A little later he told this story to the company gathered about him as he sat in his chair, like the happy king that he was, joyously waiting for the crown that was so soon to complete his happiness: "A good old Baptist preacher was once preaching to young men. In the course of his sermon he said to them: 'When I am dead, and you come out to see my grave, don't come in the evening when the shadows are lengthening; come in the morning when the sun is risen, and the birds are singing, and the grass and flowers glisten and sparkle under the dew-drops.' So say I to you," he added; "when you go out to yon beautiful cemetery to visit my grave, don't go in the evening, go in the morning; however," he concluded, looking up with a sweet smile on his lips, "I will not be there."

I can understand now, I think, what Dr. Keen meant when, in concluding, his "Praise Papers," he wrote these words: "The best of all this pentecostal noontide to my soul is to have no eventide. This sun is never to set; for He who has brought me to this meridian glory, has promised, 'Thy sun shall go no more down, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light.'

"My Joshua has commanded, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon.' So I shall steadily march on and fight on beneath its effulgence, until my warfare is accomplished and my last enemy is avenged.

"I recognize, should I choose, I can pluck this sun from the sky of my soul by retracting my consecration, by canceling my faith, or by committing willful and persistent sin. But so long as I, in humble abandonment to God, sustained by trust in Jesus, and loving obedience to the light, continue to walk in the Spirit, this noontide shall know no decline, and this day no night; yea, more, it shall change from glory to glory, until the resplendence blends with the light of the city that needs no light of the sun. Hallelujah!"

I can understand that now; for there was no decline to his noontide, no night to follow his glorious day. "I am going into the valley," he said. "It is not a dark valley," I replied. "O no!" he quickly answered, "it is all sunshine."

At another time, when I asked him if all was well, the one word "Glory!" came from his lips in that quick, exultant way so well remembered by all who have ever been with him in his great meetings when his heart was overflowing.

He was not only conscious that it was well with his soul, but he had that richer boon of glory in his soul. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and precious in our sight was the death of this saint. May we die such a death, and may our last end be like his!

Source: by Rev. David C. Thomas, in "Western Christian Advocate" and reprinted in "Pentecostal Messengers" by M. W. Knapp

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THE END