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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

LOUISE ROBINSON CHAPMAN
(Nazarene)

Louise Robinson Chapman was an outstanding preacher and speaker. She spent twenty years as a missionary in Africa, and later served as General President of the Woman's General Foreign Missionary Council of the Church of the Nazarene.

The community where I grew up was as primitive as the one-room log cabin in which I was born. There were no preacher, no church, and no Sunday school in the neighborhood.

When I was about to finish high school, I went one day to visit a little country church. I entered the building a proud, happy girl, well satisfied with life. I went away sad and miserable, for God had shown me that I was sinful and lost. I did not want people to know I was a sinner, and I was too proud to make restitution for my sins. Terrible conviction seized my soul until I could not eat, sleep, or study. After several weeks of fierce battling I surrendered. I found peace and rest. I knew I had passed from death unto life!

The Spirit took charge of my life. My heart was filled with unspeakable joy. I made restitution for my sins. Out in the pasture I learned to commune with God. He told me to establish a family altar and to return thanks at the family table. God stood with me and helped me win my parents, some of my brothers and sisters, and several of my unsaved friends. Those were wonderful days of praying, working, fighting, and winning victories for my new Master.

I heard about a second blessing -- the promise of the Father. Cleansing from inward pollution, power for a victorious life and service, seemed proper and good for me. I claimed the promise and tried to believe; but, since I was so happy in my new-found joy, I felt no inward need and obtained no definite experience.

After some time I began to feel a great soul hunger. I was not free. I knew I needed what Peter received at Pentecost. I longed for the fullness of the blessing. It seemed that my soul was literally starving to death.

I sought heart holiness, publicly and privately, for over two years. I prayed in the pasture by day and in my room at night. I spent hours on a near-by mountain alone with God. I asked prayers from my pastor, my teachers, and my friends. They encouraged me to claim the promise and testify to the experience. Every time the Spirit of God manifested himself in special blessing upon God's people, my heart would again cry out for its own need. I began to wonder if there really was a definite experience of heart holiness. I was most miserable.

Three things troubled me: I still wanted to follow the plans I had made for my own life; I was afraid God wanted me to preach; and I was afraid that God was going to send me to Africa as a missionary. If I had been sure God was calling me, I would have cast aside my plans. I didn't like to see or hear women preach. I thought it was dangerous enough for a man to be a holiness preacher, to say nothing of a woman. I thought it would be certain starvation. But worst of all was Africa. I had but little conception of what it meant to be a missionary. I did not know how anyone should go about it to get to the foreign field. Once, when a child, I had seen in a farm paper a picture of cannibals preparing to cook the missionary in a big black pot. I thought one would be in constant danger of becoming food for a cannibal feast. But above all this I was not sure God was calling me; so I was confused, and thought I might be deceived.

One noon hour, after weeks of wrestling with God, I decided to find out, once for all, what God wanted me to do. I went into a classroom and locked the door. I told the Lord for what I had come and that I did not intend to leave until this question was forever settled. I began with my life's plans. I promised God that I would work no more on them unless I had direct orders from the Almighty to do so. Preach? I would try. I decided that it would be no more painful to starve to death as a despised woman preacher than to perish of famine in my soul. I was so hungry after more of God that life meant little to me if I could not be satisfied.

Then Africa loomed up. It was not enough to preach in America -- I must preach in Africa. I remembered the cannibals' pot. I saw myself away out in the jungle. I was dressed in a hideous black dress that began at my ankles and reached to my fingers and ears. My hair was pulled straight back, and pinned in a little tight knob on the top of my head. All my teeth except two or three were gone. I sat on an old soapbox by the side of a grass hut while a few naked children played at my feet. I started up in fear, and then I heard myself saying, "Lord God Almighty, You have a little old woman on Your hands from this very moment, now, and throughout eternity."

I had scarcely finished the sentence when something like a great weight slipped off me, and went splashing down into space. I jumped to my feet, feeling as light as a feather. The room seemed to be on fire with the presence of God. Fear and hunger had gone, and I was free and satisfied. My heart was aflame with the love of God. I loved His will for me. I was ready to start immediately for Africa. I had not only settled my call but had been baptized with the Holy Ghost!

So wonderful was the work done in my heart that day that not once through the years has it ever been suggested that God did not really baptize me with His Spirit, and completely cleanse and sanctify my soul. Many, many times in Africa, when I looked at men sunken into the depths of sin and demon possession, I defeated discouragement and failure and encouraged myself in the Lord because I knew that God forgave my sins and sanctified me wholly; and what He had done

for me I knew He would do for them, for it is nothing with God whether men be little or great sinners. As deep as sin has gone, so deep the cleansing! Thank God for the Gift of the Holy Ghost!

Source: "Living Flames of Fire" by Bernie Smith

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THE END