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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

LUCIUS B. COMPTON

From the happy day that Jesus had so clearly reclaimed me from those dark years of backsliding I had endeavored to walk in the light the Lord had shed across my pathway. I had lived a consecrated life before God and the world. That I was a child of God I could not doubt, because the witness of God's Spirit shone clear and bright in my soul; but I found there was a principle in my life that often caused me to do the thing I did not want to do, and leave undone the thing I wanted to do.

In one of my meetings, where God came down in great power and gave a glorious revival, I preached myself under conviction. I found within me tendencies which were not Christlike; for example, impatience, fretting, pride which at times caused a desire that folks should brag on me a little, light talk, and a tendency to easily get the blues. Then, too, although God was blessing my efforts and giving me souls, I felt a great lack of the real spiritual power which I read that the disciples received at Pentecost and Peter declared was for us all.

I had been taught by my Baptist Church that the heart was made pure in regeneration, and that sin still dwelt in the flesh; but God gave me wisdom to know better. I learned that sin did not emanate from or exist in flesh and bone, and that flesh and bone could have no power to commit sin without the consent of the man himself; and I reasoned that if the man himself got rid of sin, then the flesh and bone would be holy and pure as well as the heart. Paul prayed that our "whole body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless," and again commanded us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable;" and still again, that "our bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost, which should not be defiled, but must be holy."

Then Jesus Himself clinched the argument in Mark vii, 21-23, by saying, "For from within, out of the heart of man [not out of his flesh] proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man." I was taught that the best God could or would do for His children was to give them a seventh-of-Romans experience where the "body of sin" lived, and generally had its way. I found that Paul testified in the next chapter that

"the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from this law of sin and death" that had given him so much trouble in his regenerated experience, as recorded in the seventh of Romans.

I began to see now that there was a "balm in Gilead" for all of my troubles. The Word declared that Christ's mission was to destroy the works of the devil. All sin is alone the devil's work, and so, until a person is freed from every iota of sin, Christ's uttermost salvation has not been realized in the life. I was not satisfied with a head full of theory, even though it was logical and Biblical. To know gave me a burning desire to experience.

The world is full of head religion, but real heartfelt experience is a rare jewel. Thousands of people come to my meetings, and nod their assent to my preaching, and say "Brother Compton, I agree with you," yet they go on with apparent unconcern as to seeking and experiencing what they see is their privilege. God help them to see that, after having a knowledge of the truth, the neglecting or refusing to receive it as their personal experience will make for them the greater damnation! Beloved, as you read this book, I beseech you, be not only hearers of the truth, but doers of it.

I became acquainted with Evangelist C. W. Clark, a man of power, whom God was greatly using, and we labored together for some time. Brother Clark urged all believers to seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost. While with this brother the precious little book called the "Double Cure," by M. W. Knapp, who has since been translated to glory, was placed in my hands. I read it with great interest. I had been taught that the baptism of the Holy Ghost suppressed the Old Man of inbred sin, while the "Double Cure" clearly revealed that the baptism of the Holy Ghost expressed the Old Man of sin, purifying the heart and empowering for service.

I also found that the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the experience of entire sanctification, and a life of holiness were synonymous terms in the sense that, when a person had one of them, he had all of them. The Holy Ghost comes and purifies our hearts, giving us the experience of sanctification, which causes us to live a life of holiness. This intelligence took away any prejudice I might have had against the words, so much hated, "holiness" and "sanctification." Most persons will listen to a sermon on the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," who would run from any consideration of "holiness" or "sanctification."

I became as deeply convicted for a pure heart as I had for the pardon of my sins. As I studied and contemplated the meekness, humility, and longsuffering of Christ, and read how Peter said He was our example and we should follow in His steps, and then compared my life to His, the more deeply conscious I was of the impurity and imperfection of my own heart. The reason why so many people do not see the sin-principle of their own hearts is because they never draw close enough to the Lord to let Him reveal it. When Isaiah got so close to God that he could see the seraphim, and hear them cry, "Holy, holy, holy!" then it was he saw his uncleanness, and God sent a seraph with a live coal from off the altar and purged or sanctified (each word means the same) him from his uncleanness.

In the same summer of 1899 I most providentially found myself in Cincinnati, Ohio, on the opening day of the Salvation Park Camp-meeting, which was then held at Carthage. I had no thought of being able to attend the entire meeting, because I was not financially able, but concluded

to go to the grounds and hear the first services. The camp-ground seemed to me to be a spot where all heaven had come down to spend a few days, and, as I walked about, the tears would course down my face and fall to the ground. I felt it would be an honor to hold any position, however humble, about that sacred place. I would gladly have blacked the preachers' boots for the privilege of spending a week under their preaching. Rev. Seth C. Rees preached that morning, and with wide-open mouth I sat and swallowed the old corn and grapes and honey that he was dealing out to the crowd, fresh from the rich fields of Canaan land.

As I started for home that night I began earnestly to pray God to open up the way for wife and myself to attend the entire camp-meeting. When I got home, Mrs. Compton told me the Lord had sent in four dollars, so we concluded to go out to Carthage and stay as long as our money lasted. By living on dry bread and raw canned tomatoes, we were able to stay several days. God here turned on such clear light that I saw my need of entire sanctification as a definite experience, and, deeply convicted of my need, I began earnestly to seek.

The time came when we could no longer stay at the camp, so I sent Mrs. Compton home in a private conveyance, and started to walk the eighteen miles to our home. I determined to get the experience before I got home, or know the reason why. About seven miles from home I found a spot where I could be alone with God, and there, in the silence, broken only by the chirping of insects or the rustling of the leaves overhead, I looked heavenward, and told God to show me my worst condition as He alone knew it. I pleaded in intense earnestness; I was not simply trying to see if there was anything in it after all, but I believed in it, and wanted it more than anything else on earth or in heaven.

I knew I was seeking for something without which I could never see God. I needed no altar-worker to coax me to hold up my hands and head and pray. Like a drowning man, I grasped at every suggestion that had the slightest hope in it. Without hesitancy, as God revealed to me what I might expect and much of what it meant, I would put it upon the altar. I could see myself, with my earthly possessions tied together in a red handkerchief, walking about the country, the target for sneers and reproach. I imagined I could hear the people say, "There he goes; that's the sanctified fellow."

But I kept on saying, "Yes, Lord, anything, everything; only give me this blessed experience." I somehow had the witness in myself that I was fully consecrated to God for any world or any work, to be something or be nothing. I felt that God was crowded into a corner, and could not and would not get out without verifying His promises in me. I said, "Lord, I believe Thou doest sanctify me just now! just now!! just now!!!" Then the glory of heaven flooded my soul, and it seemed that Holy Ghost fire was purging my heart from every root and stain of sin, and I was made clean and pure in heart. The Lord Himself did it all! Glory! Hallelujah to His precious name! He did exceeding abundantly above anything I could ever think or expect, and it was so little for the Lord that heaven never missed what fell into my soul.

Beloved reader, have you a little hope-so, think-so, maybe-so experience that you are somehow, in some miraculous way, thinking will just squeeze you through at the judgment? Let me recommend to you an uttermost salvation that will exterminate all sin, and make you as sure of

heaven, if you do not backslide, as though you had already been within the pearly gates and spent a week with the angels in the New Jerusalem.

Never limit the power of our omnipotent Savior; never eat, drink, or sleep until Christ has done for you what He died to do; i. e., destroyed all sin, actual and inbred, which is the work of the devil. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and lust to forgive us our sins," and not only that, which means salvation, but to come the second time and "cleanse you from all unrighteousness;" i. e., all unrighteousness is sin, and He will sanctify you from an sin, remaining in your heart subsequent to your forgiveness.

The more I praised God, the brighter He revealed Himself in me, and the remainder of those eighteen miles I had three companions, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. That was the most glorious night in all my life up to that time; but from that day the way has grown brighter and brighter, and I can say, in the language of Micah the prophet, "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Golden sunbeams round me play,
Jesus turns my night to day;
Heaven seems not far away,
Since I found my Savior."

Source: "Life of Lucius B. Compton, The Mountain Evangelist"
by Lucius B. Compton

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