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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

SARAH A. COOKE
(Instrumental in Moody's Sanctification)

In my own country I had read and been wonderfully helped by the lives of Carvosso, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, and Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, and would often wonder if there were any such Christians now on earth, thinking how I would like to meet with them. He that fulfilleth the desires of them that fear Him had led me to America; and I was invited to go a camp-meeting at St. Charles, Ill. I went, full of curiosity and expectation. On reaching the camp-ground (I shall never forget the first impressions), it seemed to me as the very vestibule of heaven. The very atmosphere seemed purer than that of earth.

As I looked over the large congregation, I wondered they were all so plainly dressed. I thought, surely they must all be very poor people to dress so, and was very much puzzled about it. At the next morning service I sat where I could see many of their faces. Such a look of heavenly purity beamed from them. As I looked and looked, I was more and more impressed that there was a connection between their simple dress and the looks of purity and peace that sat on their countenances, while the Spirit of the Lord whispered: "They have taken the world from the outside, and I have taken it from within."

Two loved sisters, now in glory, Mrs. Mary Tuck and Mrs. Phoebe Rosencrans, had welcomed me, with many others, to their tent. I can see them now, as they waited on God's children. How I would gaze on their heaven-touched faces, beaming with the glory of God, and my soul would cry out to the living God for such an experience. Then the Lord would ask me: "Are you willing to pay the price?" and would draw my eyes from their radiant faces to the plain dresses. I can see them now. What an unutterable shrinking! Common calico, a little linen collar, bonnets the plainest that could be made; no bow, no feather, no lace, no flower! Could I give up all the world and take that line?

The devil said: "You would look just like an old washer-woman;" and then the thought of husband, unsaved and very proud, would come; could I bear his displeasure and disapproval? The Spirit would talk to me. If I loved any earthly relation more than Jesus my Lord, I was not worthy

of Him; giving me the foreshadowing of the hundred-fold in this life, and also of the persecution that would follow.

One evening there stood near our tent a little company singing that old but (to me then) new song, one verse of which particularly struck me; it was this:

If Christ would live and reign in me
I must die!
Like Him I crucified must be I must die!
Lord, drive the nails, nor heed the groans;
The flesh may writhe and make its moans,
But this 's the way, and this alone --
I must die!"

If there and then I had seen the nails, and the hammer ready to drive them through my trembling flesh, I could scarcely have shrunk more; and evermore the searching Word of God would come, urging on to obedience; as "after this manner in the old times the holy women, also, who trusted in God adorned themselves;" and "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel."

Oh, how patient, how good, my Lord was with me! And then what preaching, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," and "in demonstration of the Spirit!" I could understand the power the first apostles had, as I listened to those holy men of God -- Brothers Roberts, Travis and Terrill. One sermon of Brother Travis' was glorious beyond description. His text was 2 Cor. 3:18: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image," etc. Before the sermon closed, rays of glory beamed from his face as from the face of Moses as he came down from the mount; and we gazed, adored and wondered.

The time of yielding came, when I was to be crucified to the world. It was a struggle. All had been laid on the altar -- husband, dress, reputation, all yielded; everything, with self, a living sacrifice. It seemed as though the very powers of darkness were let loose on my soul in that time of sore agony.

In the darkness of the night, it became almost insupportable, and I thought I would awaken a dear sister, and we would go out alone together, when the words were spoken to my inmost soul, "He trode His Gethsemane alone, and so must you." I held on. I had no idea of time in that fearful Gethsemane of suffering, but tired nature, after it, sank in sleep. When the morning dawned, and I awoke to consciousness, then came the blessed assurance that God had sanctified me wholly. As I looked out of the tent, the world had never looked so beautiful, and the thought came, this is the very earth Moses and Paul and all the holy ones of the past lived on, and the blessed consciousness that I was as near God as they were.

"PURIFIED, MADE WHITE AND TRIED"

The blessing of sanctification was received about June, 1871, and all was kept on the altar of sacrifice for about two weeks before our great Chicago fire. With so much power the words of

the prophet would come to me: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." I would ponder: What did it mean for I knew the Lord did not send such strong impressions for nothing.

It was Sabbath-night. Mr. Moody had preached in Farwell Hall, and the second meeting was being held. The alarm of fire had been sounded two or three times. The Spirit prompted me to speak to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. Some that were in that meeting that night perished within twenty-four hours in the flames. How often I have looked back and regretted that lost opportunity.

The meeting dispersed. The fire alarm again and again sounded. My husband said: "There must be a very large fire on the West Side," and went out to see it. It had been a day filled with work. In a little time I was aroused from a deep slumber by my husband's voice saying, "You must get up directly; the fire has crossed the river and will soon be here."

Hurriedly gathering a few things together and placing them in the entry of Farwell Hall we hastened out. None who saw that scene can ever forget the roaring of the flames, the crashing of buildings. Often these words would come to me: "We shall triumph when the world is in a blaze," while such a consciousness of the presence of God as a stronghold in the day of trouble brought the deepest peace. Standing by the side of a lady in deep mourning, I asked if her home was burned. No," she said; "is yours?" Pointing to the flames that had already caught the building, telling her there we lived, I added: "I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; no fire would ever consume that home." How the tears rolled down her cheeks. I don't know that I have seen her since that day. It seemed as though the Lord had such a perfect right to do as He would with His own. He gave, and He had taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!

Every dray, every express wagon, was engaged. Husband, with the help of a colored man, carried two trunks to the vacant lot at the foot of Madison street by Lake Michigan. The next Sabbath morning came and as I prepared for the service, the thought came for the first time in my life, "I have no home" then followed the words of Jesus: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Oh, the tender feelings! It seemed as though I was a step nearer my Savior than I had ever been before.

Reaching the church early, there came a fuller blessing; such a manifestation of God, my God! -- the gifts gone; the Giver mine--my everlasting portion. Down on the floor, between those seats, I poured out the deep thanksgiving of my soul in adoring gratitude and love. At first we did not know but what nearly all was gone -- banks, insurance, all. But in a little time the bank in which husband had most of his means deposited made all good, and the insurance company, also, paid almost all. It was just the trial of faith -- a proof of God's all-sufficiency in every time of need! Such a wonderful consciousness that amidst all that awful confusion, His eye was on every one.

A family were living in the same building -- Mr. and Mrs. Gaylord and children. Mrs. Gaylord was in quite delicate health. They all walked as far as they could, then stopped on a

door-step. feeling they could go no farther. A woman in that house, upstairs, was greatly impressed that some one at her door needed help. Going down, she took this family in, and for weeks sheltered and cared for them. O how the world's great heart was moved! What pouring in of everything to help in that time of great distress and need!

My two brothers-in-law and their families spent the next night on the open prairie. It was days before we found each other. Churches, all available places, were turned into homes and places of shelter for the 80,000 homeless ones, and not one forgotten before God.

A colored woman in my class in the Rock Island Mission, in trying to save all she could from the flames, as she turned to escape found the fire was all around her: so, to quote her own words: "I just set myself up against the building; I shut my eyes and said: 'Lord, if my time has come, take me,' and when I opened my eyes I just see one way out." Many had such narrow escapes from death.

MR. MOODY'S PENTECOST

At this time Mr. D. L. Moody was a very active worker in the Young Men's Christian Association. Living quite near the rooms, I soon became deeply interested in their work. At their Yoke-Fellows' meetings, temperance, noon and other meetings, women of God were heartily welcomed. Mr. Moody was an earnest, whole-souled worker; but ever to me there seemed such a lack in his words. It seemed more the human, the natural energy and force of character of the man, than anything spiritual. I felt he lacked what the apostles received on the day of Pentecost.

Dear Sister Hawxhurst and myself (almost always together) would after the evening meetings talk with him about it. At first he seemed surprised, then convicted; then asked us to meet with him on Friday afternoon for prayer. At every meeting he would get more in earnest, in an agony of desire for this fullness of the Spirit while the travail of the soul for him, which came on me once on the St. Charles camp-ground, I shall never forget.

He has often told, himself, as to when and how the mighty baptism fell on him in Wall street, New York, and of its blessed results. Few have watched that life with a deeper interest than I. The continual prayer of my heart has been, "Lord, keep him humble as a little child at Thy feet."

After that wonderful work in England and Scotland, on his return to Chicago, when it was announced that he would be in Farwell Hall, what a gathering to welcome him back again! Was he the same? Had all this wonderful success and popularity not puffed him up or exalted him? No, he was just the same simple-hearted man, and as intensely in earnest as ever. I thanked God and took courage.

O what are any of us but the cloud on which the Sun of Righteousness can shed some of the beams of His glory? All, all from Him; and to Him for every one of His workmen we would ascribe the praise and the glory forever.

Source: "The Handmaiden of the Lord or Wayside Sketches"
by Mrs. Sarah A. Cooke

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