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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

SUSAN N. FITKIN

I was in the midst of my first evangelistic meeting; about thirty had been definitely converted and many others were under conviction, and God was blessing and answering prayer.

A Holiness Convention was in progress a few miles away, and I planned to go to the day meetings, for although I had sought the blessing at different times, and claimed it by faith, my heart was not fully satisfied. At the very first service I attended, the message seemed meant for me. How well I remember the text, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psa. 32:1, 2). It was a real old-fashioned first and second blessing sermon. I knew I had the first, but when in a holiness meeting, there was a question in my mind about the second. As the preacher continued, I decided first that I did not have it, and second, determined to have it, and could scarcely wait for him to finish. But I was having a real battle with the enemy, who did not hesitate to remind me that I was a preacher, and that I was myself holding a revival meeting and having souls converted, and so of course I was all right. But the Holy Spirit was faithful, and I knew that I did not have all He had for me. Then the enemy told me that people would misunderstand and think I was backslidden if I went to the altar. He also reminded me that I was a Friends Minister, and that the convention was being held in a Methodist Church, which was not as spiritual as the Friends Church; that the Pastor was a worldly man and not in sympathy with holiness; that I was supposed to have it anyway, -- and what would my own church people think? But I kept saying, "I am going to the altar. I must have a real experience!" and oh, it seemed that the sermon would never end.

At last it was over, and I was one of the first to respond to the invitation to come forward and seek God for a definite second work of Grace. After pouring out my heart in definite asking, using all the Bible terms I could think of, telling God I wanted to be sanctified wholly, cleansed from inherited sin, the old man cast out, the carnal nature destroyed, and to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, I waited expectantly. Some one suggested it was time to believe, but I hesitated, for had I not sought before and taken it by faith, but had not been fully satisfied?

I was reminded that we were sanctified by faith, that there was no other route, and I remembered that I instructed seekers for pardon to believe after they had repented and confessed their sins. Yet I did want some feeling, some evidence, although God had declared that real faith is the evidence, and I well knew that God's order was, first, fact; second, faith; and then feeling would surely follow.

Deciding to go God's way at any cost, I arose and testified that I believed the blood of Jesus cleansed me just then from all sin, and that I was sanctified wholly. What a battle followed! The enemy protested, ridiculed, declared I was no different and would soon find it out as before, but I had only one reply to all his arguments, "I believe the blood cleanses me now from all sin."

When the gong sounded for supper, I begged to be excused, and left a little later to return to my own revival service, feeling so exhausted that I invited one of the evangelists attending the convention to accompany me and preach that evening. I had not anticipated the unusual service we were to have. We arrived a little late and found the chapel crowded and the people singing. All the way over I had been fighting the "good fight of faith," and just before reaching the chapel I had grown desperate, and declared in the very face of the foe, "If I never get a bit of feeling from now till I die, I shall keep believing that the Blood cleanseth me now from all sin"! After that definite decision the enemy withdrew, and I entered the chapel with a sweet peace and holy calm pervading my soul.

As the service went on, I seemed almost unconscious of my surroundings. I was so lost in wonder, love and praise. I remember the evangelist read his text from Romans, fifth chapter, the first and second verses, and that he seemed to be repeating it over and over, to get the attention of the people. Then suddenly the chapel roof seemed to be cleft asunder; the heavens were rent; and shafts of heavenly light like sunbeams shot down directly into my heart, filling and thrilling my soul. I shouted and laughed, trying to control the avalanche so as not to disconcert the Preacher, for I was conscious that he was floundering around and still repeating his text, but it was little use. I glanced about me and saw that two sanctified laymen sitting near the platform were shouting and laughing until they nearly fell off their seats, and the congregation was gazing at me in wonder and astonishment. No wonder, for had I not always prided myself on being a demure little Quaker maiden, and had I not almost lost my religion at a camp meeting when a Minister got blessed and actually laughed and shouted during an altar service? What did it all mean? Oh, I knew so well, and it was so wonderful; the Holy Spirit had come to abide! I could not but praise Him.

The Preacher finally stopped and looked around at me inquiringly and I arose and told the people how I had been seeking for entire sanctification in the afternoon over at the Holiness Convention, and had believed and believed and determined to go on believing, and now God had sent the witness. The blessed Holy Spirit had come.

Then I explained to the new converts about this wonderful second work of Grace, telling them it was for them too, and the altar was soon filled with earnest seekers, and a wonderful revival followed. Arrangements were made for me to continue in revival work over the entire district, and a very gifted young evangelist, who enjoyed the blessing of holiness and preached it very clearly and definitely, was also engaged to labor with me.

I was so thankful for this, for the blessing was all so new and wonderful to me. He lent me helpful books explaining about the experience; and these I eagerly devoured.

The dear Lord gave us many blessed revivals during the next six months and I grew in Grace and in His knowledge as never before in all my Christian life.

Source: "Grace Much More Abounding" by Susan N. Fitkin

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THE END