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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

ANNA M. HAMMER
(Episcopal)

I was born in the town of Pottsville, Pa., in the year 1840. My father was a Quaker and my mother an Episcopalian, an earnest Christian woman, and one who early taught my young lips to pray and to value the Word of God. At the age of nine years I became greatly convicted of sin. I cried in agony at the thought of death, but finally the impression wore away. I have no recollection of any other especial experience till I reached the age of fourteen, when a young man (soon to become a relative), an earnest Christian and member of the Episcopal Church, urged me to give my heart to God and join the Church. My dear mother mingled her prayers with his, and at that point I date my conversion. We removed immediately to the town of Wilkesbarre, Pa., and I there came under the pastorate of the Rev. George D. Miles, of blessed memory, rector of the Episcopal Church, and a truly evangelical man. The means of grace under which I was brought at that time did much to form my Christian character and implanted in my heart a love for the pure and true and holy, which not even the claims of a fashionable, gay life were able to entirely dissipate; for I did enter into a life of amusement, which was a great grief to my dear pastor and spiritual friend. This gay life was not one of unmixed pleasure, for I keenly felt all the way through that my spiritual life was suffering because of it. After my marriage I gave up dancing to please my husband, who strongly disapproved of that amusement. In 1864 my husband moved to Newark, N. J., and after a few years we came under the ministry of Rev. Dr. William R. Nicholson (now Bishop Nicholson), and under his earnest, spiritual teachings I found my soul greatly quickened. The entire loss of fortune and the death of my first-born son, and also of an elder brother, all within a few short years, served to draw me nearer to the Lord, and my Christian life grew sweeter and deeper.

There came a time, in 1874, when, having become a member of the Reformed Episcopal Church, I attended a female prayer-meeting held every week in the vestry-room. Upon one occasion, a very rainy day, I found but one dear woman at the meeting, and she told me how mightily the Lord had blessed her soul, so that she cried out to Him to stay His hand. I was completely captivated by this account. I never before had heard such an experience. The next day I was lying upon my bed resting and thinking over the wonderful story of the day before, when the thought came, "God is no respecter of persons; what He has done for her He can and will do for

me." I knelt and prayed, and asked for just what I wanted, and O, how God did pour His Holy Spirit into my soul and give such a love for souls and hunger for work! I have always spoken of that baptism as "my anointing for service." I then consecrated myself fully to the Lord, and especially to the temperance work. In this state I lived an, outwardly consecrated, purified life, having the grace given me to prevent the outward manifestation of anger and kindred sins, so that even some of my most intimate friends, who enjoyed the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a distinct second experience, thought I enjoyed the same blessing. I some times agreed with them, but oftener distrusted having had any such experience. Finally a great hunger of soul came upon me. I knew there were in the corners of my heart things known only to myself and God, and I realized that nothing short of the "anointing which abideth" would satisfy my soul and fit me fully as a worker for God.

In July, 1880, the first assembly of the women's Holiness Campmeeting was held at Camp Tabor New Jersey. I went there with the fixed intention to get all the Lord had in reserve for me. I was under deep conviction of soul and for three days I was in an agony of tears, as one friend said, "dying hard." I held out on points which now seem very ridiculous, but then they assumed proportions which appeared serious enough. But all this time the hunger and the aching increased till I could no longer resist the pleadings of the Spirit, and then came my second consecration. I said, "Lord, all I have or all I ever will have; all I am or all I ever may be; all I know or all I ever may know I put now upon the altar." I knew the "altar sanctified the gift," and I bound my offering to the "horns of the altar" and waited for the fire. For hours forgetting all my prejudices I was prostrate in the straw. The meeting broke up, but here I remained, a few friends around awaiting the result. I am glad no one talked to me; my soul was in quiet communion with God. Finally a dear minister of God came upon the ground, and, seeing the unusual gathering, asked what it meant. Some one replied, "An honest soul seeking the blessing," and another added, "She is an Episcopalian." With great heartiness he responded, "Well, He is the God and Father of us all." Then the Fatherhood of God peculiarly struck me, and I raised my head to confirm the thought, when with the action the anointing came. I was shaken as with a violent ague; over and over and over again the shock came, finally leaving me so prostrated that I was helped over to the cottage, where I lay on the lounge for hours bathed in glory. From that hour my Christian life has been victory. I have grown year by year in the depth of experience which becomes richer and deeper and sweeter as the years roll on. I have made mistakes, but they are under the blood; I have had temptations, but early I learned that they were not sin unless yielded to. But O, the delights of a life wholly given up to God!

I have no doubt as to my conversion, that I was "born again"; that, being "dead in trespasses and sins," I was made "alive in God." At the time of my anointing by the Holy Spirit I was living a consecrated life of faith and active service. My sanctification was a second actual experience, and from that time my life has been changed, is deeper, stronger, steadier, sweeter, richer. The life I have lived for the last seven years has been wonderfully free from condemnation. I have more than once done ignorantly that for which I sorrowed afterward, but handed it immediately over to the Lord and felt the blood applied. Praise the Lord!

ANNA M. HAMMMER, NEWARK, N.J., July 1887

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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