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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

GEORGE ASBURY MCLAUGHLIN
(Methodist, Editor of The Christian Witness 45 Years)

The term limit of pastorates was three years. My term had expired and I must leave the delightful associations of Littleton. I was sent to the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts. It was the largest membership (save one) in the conference. In it were some of the old-fashioned Methodists. The neighboring Methodist Church was about a stone's throw distant. It had swarmed from the first church. The pastor, Rev. Frank Stratton, and myself, started what we called a Union Consecration Meeting, held every fortnight. No one thought of calling it a holiness meeting, for holiness was not being preached anywhere in the conference. In this meeting holiness was not definitely mentioned.

At the annual camp meeting at Epping, New Hampshire, where we had already visited the National Holiness Meeting years before, as we have described, at the close of the four-day camp meeting an altar service was held for "consecration." As I knelt at the altar (I can see the place in my mind now), as I was kneeling it flashed into my mind, "God can save you from that disposition that is giving you so much trouble, if you trust him." As soon as I saw it, I did that very thing.

I had read the experiences of some people in that magazine The Guide to Holiness, and from those experiences I had got the impression that the experience of holiness was simply a great emotional experience. I had no idea that it meant deliverance from the carnal mind. I began to tell my brother ministers what the Lord had done for my disposition. One brother said, "I do not believe it; ask your wife." He did, and she testified for me that it had been done as I said. It led her to seek the experience.

Then I got home, I said (still in a measure in the dark), "Since the Lord has so saved me from my disposition, I believe I will seek the experience of holiness." So I prayed for an emotional experience, but did not get ahead any. Finally some one lent me the book, The Scriptural Way of Holiness, by Phoebe Palmer. In reading that book I got the idea to seek an experience of my own and not pattern after any one else. I said: "I will do it." I have no doubt but that I had the experience of holiness, but did not know it by name (like a man eating honey in the dark). But I said, "I trust the blood to cleanse me from all sin if I never get blessed." I have looked in that book since and can not find any such teaching. I believe the Lord showed me between the lines.

Thus I went for several days. One afternoon, as I was leaving the house, at the corner of Cedar and Harvard streets in the city of Haverhill, Massachusetts, the whole matter cleared up to me, as clear as the sunlight that was at that time shining through the trees on that corner. I cannot describe it any more than I could describe the light of the sun to one who is blind. But the experience of a clean heart became clear and satisfactory.

In the meantime I had been ordained and had joined the New Hampshire conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I had taken all the ordination vows required. I had answered the usual questions in the affirmative. Those questions were as follows:

"Have you saving faith in Christ?"

"Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?"

"Are you groaning after it?"

I meant all this, but did not understand what it implied or how to obtain it. But I meant to be just as good a Christian as I could be. I did not know that there was any objection by any one to having a second work of grace whereby the believer is made perfect in love. If any one had told me at that time that any one could be a Christian and not want all the Lord had for him, I would have been amazed. How can any one that has the experience of salvation object to receiving more? I can not understand it, and how any real Christian can oppose others in their attempt to get all that the Lord has for them is still a mystery to me. I look upon it this way: He who does not hunger and thirst for all God has for him is a stranger to divine grace. If what he has is good, how can he fail to want all he can get? Those people who do not want all the grace God has show that they do not like what they now have. We do not blame them for not wanting more. It shows that they do not have real salvation. I got it before I found out that many churchmen did not consider it the thing to have.

Source: "George Asbury McLaughlin Autobiography"

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THE END