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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

J. C. MCPHEETERS
(Methodist)

J. C. McPheeters served as editor of the Pentecostal Herald and was president of Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

It was at the early age of five years that my heart was strangely warmed by the regenerating grace of God. It was at the little village Methodist church of Fairdealing, Missouri, at a regular Sunday morning monthly preaching service, that my heart was touched as a small lad by the Spirit of God, and I turned my steps toward the entrance gate to the blessed way of salvation...I enjoyed a Christian experience throughout my childhood. There were variations in the degrees of my fellowship with Christ throughout this period, but there were no lapses in my faith over any considerable period of time...

After graduating from high school, I entered Marvin College, a small Methodist church college serving southeast Missouri. It was during my first year in this institution that I came in contact with a young man who had been a student at Asbury College. He had a student pastorate, and we were in a number of classes together, and he also roomed in the same home where I roomed. He bore witness to the experience of sanctification. The students generally regarded him as a bit extreme and somewhat lacking in true balance in his Christian testimony.

The fall revival for the college and the Methodist church of the town was conducted by Dr. Marvin T. Hall, pastor of the Methodist church at Jackson, Missouri. While this revival was in progress, the young man who had formerly been a student at Asbury College returned from his student pastorate one Monday afternoon with a glowing report about a very unusual woman with whom he had ridden on the train. He said she was coming down from old Centenary Methodist Church in St. Louis to conduct prayer meetings for the revival meeting then in progress in Fredericktown. He also announced to myself and my roommate that he had arranged for us to meet her that evening in the home where she was being entertained, only a short distance away.

There were three ministerial students that found their way to what proved to be an Upper Room in a lower room in that home. The name of the woman that we were to interview was Mrs.

Margaret Skinner, who was the first deaconess ever appointed by the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She served for many years at Centenary Methodist Church, St. Louis.

When we came into her presence, I realized immediately that she had something in Christian experience which I did not have. Her face was fairly aglow with spiritual radiance. Early in our interview, she asked me the question, "Do you believe in sanctification?" It was a bit puzzling at first, and my answer was, "You will have to tell me what you mean by sanctification." She set about to explain the wondrous simplicity, power, and triumph of the sanctified life through the atoning blood of Christ. Before she finished, the prejudice which had been in my heart, which had in some measure been engendered by persons who had not always been samples of this grace, was broken down. When she had finished her explanation, my reply was, "If that is sanctification, I believe in sanctification." She then replied, "Are you willing to accept Christ as your Sanctifier?" To which I replied in the affirmative. In that one swift second which I took this step of faith, my soul was flooded with glory divine. I broke into laughter; and Mrs. Skinner arose from her chair, walked across the room, and extended her hand to me, saying, "Do you believe that Jesus sanctifies?" To which I replied, "Yes, thank God, I know that He sanctifies even me."

My testimony was followed by a season of prayer in which heaven and earth truly met together in the power of the blessed Holy Spirit. At the close of the prayer, my two ministerial friends were rejoicing alike with me in the floodtide of glory that had come to our souls.

Some of my fellow ministerial students expressed their conviction to me at that time that the experience into which I had come was only a temporary emotional manifestation which would soon pass away. I rejoice that these friends were absolutely mistaken in their interpretation. The glory and the victory still abide. I rejoice in the new strength that has come with the passing of the years.

If I had a thousand lives to give, I would gladly give them all in the proclamation of the glorious truth that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It was a pivotal point of destiny for me when I came to my personal Pentecost. Whatever I have achieved in life, or whatever measure of success that may have come to me along the way, may be attributed to this "more excellent way" which I found during my first year in college, more than to all things else. To Him who shed His blood that He might sanctify the Church, and "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" be the praise and glory now and forevermore. Amen.

Source: "Living Flames of Fire" by Bernie Smith

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THE END