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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

MOLLIE ALMA WHITE

On a Sunday evening the church organist was absent and I was called upon to take her place. The pastor did not have his usual liberty, and the Spirit moved me to give an exhortation. There was an intense burning in my breast, and a pressure upon me greater than I had ever felt before. I thought of past failures and the suffering that they had brought, and believed that the Holy Spirit for the last time was trying to press me out, and felt that I must seize the opportunity or lose my salvation.

Thoughts of Naaman the Syrian, and the awful leprosy of sin of which this disease is a type, were going through my mind. There was a book lying near me with a song entitled "Naaman the Leper," and the enemy suggested that I sing this song instead of trying to speak. I knew I could readily find it, for it was the last one in the book. I had sung only part of the first verse when my eyes and voice failed me, and the result was a complete breakdown. There were two persons in the congregation who contributed largely to our support, who did not believe in women preaching. Satan reminded me of this and suggested that if I were to displease them it would probably cut off our support, and help fulfill the predictions of those who had opposed using the stand we took against church suppers and entertainments. For a moment the conflict was fearful.

Throwing the song book aside I stood trembling before the congregation; instantly my lips were touched with a live coal and a fiery stream of words went forth. All fear had entirely left me. For the first time in my life I had discovered the secret of preaching -- it is not in carefully prepared sermons, but by His Spirit. The message came straight from heaven and struck the audience with such power that they sat spellbound. A young man said afterward that he felt the bottomless pit was opening to receive him. I had a premonition that this anointing would not abide with me, and after leaving the church, my soul apparently was plunged into greater darkness than ever. Like Job, the thing that I feared came upon me. The Holy Spirit taught me one of the greatest lessons of my life by momentarily resting upon me in the enduement of power. Conditions had not been met by which the temple could be made clean, hence He could not abide. In anguish I cried:

"Return, O Holy Dove, return,

Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sin that made Thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast.

In this dreadful darkness I was left without human help or sympathy, to weep over my desolation. I asked my husband to pray with me, and after offering a few words he expressed himself as not being able to understand me, and retired, leaving me alone.

Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick" (17:9 R. V.). There was no help for me, except through the blood of Christ, which could be made effectual only through consecration and faith. Had there been some one to instruct me, I would no doubt have been saved from the two week's struggle which followed; however, the Holy Spirit enabled me to take the definite steps of consecration and all was laid upon the altar for time and eternity.

I had a great desire to have my voice cultivated, and had spent much time and money on it, but now I turned it over to the Lord, willing to have it a success or a failure as He saw best...Feeling that all was on the altar, I wondered that the fire did not fall. My husband noticed the change that had come over me and saw that I needed help in both soul and body, and immediately made preparations to take me to see a physician living in Denver who claimed to be sanctified.

On the 15th of March, nine days after I had made my consecration, he took me to see the physician. He received us very cordially, and after asking a few questions about our work, he said, "I understand you have been preaching." He saw this somewhat embarrassed me, and changed the subject, avoiding questions concerning my health. He no doubt knew that I needed help for my soul more than for the body.

He told how he fasted for many hours and waited before God for heart cleansing, and how wonderfully God came and sanctified him. The number of hours that he fasted was a longer period than I had ever abstained from food, and I wondered if I could hold out until "the blessing" came, as he had done. He said he believed that I was consecrated and asked me to take "the blessing" by faith.

While waiting on our knees in prayer I agreed to do so on the authority of God's word. Patients were waiting, and feeling it would not be right to take any more of his time, we left his office and started for home. We had not gone more than a block when the enemy accused me of being a hypocrite for claiming something I did not have. Frightened at the thought, I let go my hold on the promises, and my soul was soon in greater distress than before. After reaching home I fasted, prayed and searched the Bible more diligently than ever before.

At almost every place that I opened my eyes rested on some passage relating to holiness or the enduement of power. The following scriptures were read and re-read in my search for the pearl of great price: "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14); "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16); "Put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24); "That we should be holy before him" (Eph. 1:4); "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). There was no going back; I must go forward at any cost, for it was now holiness or hell.

On the 16th I went to my husband's study and asked him if he had any books on the subject of holiness. He pointed to a book-shelf where there were a number of books by different authors, among them, Steele's "Love Enthroned," Bishop Foster's "Christian Purity," J. A. Wood's "Perfect Love," Wesley's "Christian Perfection," and M. W. Knapp's "Out of Egypt into Canaan."

I was impressed to take the latter on account of its title. I knew what the bondage of sin was before I crossed the Red Sea of conversion, and that I had been a number of years in the wilderness experience. I read about the Canaan of rest, but to this I was a stranger, although my feet were at the Jordan's edge, where I had been waiting many days for the waters to part. For years I had eaten of the manna that had fallen from heaven, and the waters that flowed from the smitten rock often quenched my burning thirst, and now the promised land, with its luscious fruits was lying out before me. There was milk and honey, old corn and new wine, but between me and this wonderful land rolled a river overflowing its banks. God gave me a glimpse of something better than the manna of a justified experience which had sustained me through the years.

All fear of the giants of the land had left me, and the only question was how to enter in. Almost prostrated physically, I cried, "Lord, I must have help, and it must come quickly!" I knew that another moment of vital importance was at hand, and that the matter must be settled at once. I dared not sleep, and spent the night in prayer. The morning dawned and apparently no progress had been made, unless it was in an increased desire to possess the land.

In the after part of the second night I dropped off to sleep, hoping that I might wake up in Canaan. I opened my eyes just as the clock was striking seven, disappointed to find the Jordan was still between me and the promised land.

It was not God's plan to take me over in my sleep; the event was of too much importance. It was now the 18th of March (1893), fifteen years after my conversion. Two sleepless nights had been spent during this time of fasting and prayer; I had been searching books and the Scriptures on the subject of holiness, but no relief was obtained. The darkness was growing more and more intense and I seemed to be on the verge of despair.

My husband had a slight attack of asthma and had been sleeping a few nights in an adjoining room, where he could have the benefit of better ventilation, and knew nothing of the ordeal through which I was passing, until I went to his room a few minutes after seven o'clock and told him all about it. On hearing my story he was greatly surprised. I told him I could never help him again in his church work, for I had utterly failed to receive the blessing which I so much desired and for which I had been seeking for many days. I felt if deliverance did not come soon there was nothing awaiting me but death. With the help of the Spirit, he said all he could to encourage me; when at a loss for something more to say, he waited, then added, "Jesus loves you more than I do, more than any earthly friend." I felt myself sinking, when he said, "The everlasting arms are beneath you."

This seemed almost too wonderful to be true. At that moment I saw Jesus on the cross looking at me with great pity and compassion. His head was crowned with thorns and the blood was dripping from His brow. Never had I seen such a picture. Only a moment were my eyes fixed

upon Him when I was enabled to say, "His blood cleanses me from all sin, and underneath are the everlasting arms." In the twinkling of an eye my feet were placed on holy ground. There was no particular manifestation of God's power, but great soul rest. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The enemy suggested that the blessing was not great enough and that I must have something more before I could claim sanctification.

I said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; my heart is cleansed and is henceforth to be the abiding place of the Holy Spirit." There was a deep realization of purity in the depths of my soul such as I had never known before. My heart, which had been like a whitened sepulcher, was now transparent, the temple of God, and I would have been willing for the whole world to have looked through it. There were no fears of the Comforter leaving the house of which He had taken possession. I knew that He would stay in such a heart. Years have passed and there has never been a time that I have not been conscious of His abiding presence. When severely tested, I have stood by faith alone and claimed the victory through the atoning blood. I have said, "The blood cleanseth, the blood cleanseth just now." In the trying hour I have held fast the profession of my faith without wavering, and God has given me the reward of faith.

Having been robed in the garments of purity, my soul had at last awakened as if in obedience to the command of the prophet, who said, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments -- shake thyself from the dust -- loose the bands from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Isa. 52:1-2).

My bands were broken, I had arisen from the dust and was robed in white. "Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I" (Isa. 52:6). He had spoken to my soul, I had proved the truth of His word: "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). Years before, He had saved me from my actual transgressions, now He had cleansed me from inbred defilement. The Lord Jehovah made bare His holy arm and I knew His great salvation. For me the wilderness and the solitary place were made glad, and the desert (my soul) blossomed as the rose. The problem of years was solved; I had found the great salvation that is destined to fill the whole earth.

The joys of salvation are flowing
I'm living in Canaan's fair land;
I came to the great swelling Jordan,
And crossed o'er with Joshua's band;
My heart is now filled with His rapture,
My days are so happy and blest,
I'm singing and shouting His praises,
Oh, how could there be sweeter rest!

Chorus

In Canaan there's fruit in abundance,
In gardens where olive trees grow;

I drink the new wine of the kingdom,
Where rivers of life ever flow.

The shadows that once gathered round me,
No longer my pathway pursue,
I'm walking through vales of His promise,
Near hills that are sparkling with dew.
Oh, how can I tell of such rapture!
Oh, who can the myst'ry unfold!
The mountains are dripping with honey, --
The glory of God I behold.

The days of my mourning are over,
And heaven is coming in sight,
The glory of God is appearing,
O'er hills that are glowing with light;
The angelic chorus is swelling,
The saved of all age are there,
For all who have suffered with Jesus,
His riches in glory will share...

I had been a member of the Methodist church for many years and had heard pastors, presiding elders and bishops preach, but did not remember of ever having heard a definite sermon preached on the second work of grace, notwithstanding the fact that the doctrine of holiness has been called "the brightest star in the constellation of Methodism." Unsanctified preachers will not have it preached in their churches for fear of losing their carnal members. They cannot stand Bible truth. We once heard a faithful minister say, "If one wants to get along easily in the popular churches of today, he must not tinker with religion."

The cry everywhere is that holiness splits the churches, and this is true. If it were not so there would be no one who would escape the judgments of God...

A popular evangelist related an incident of a revival meeting in the South where a holiness preacher was in charge. There was a cry from some of the people that the church was in danger of being split. The preacher told them that if this were true that there was hope, for in that case a part of it would be saved, but, that he very much feared that the church was like an old gum log and could not be split...

Source: "Looking Back from Beulah" by Mollie Alma White

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