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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

CATHERINE WINDSOR (Methodist)

The subject of this memoir closed the great issues of her probationary life February 29, 1880, at the advanced age of eighty-four. A volume could scarcely recite all the living and precious memories of her unpretentious and saintly life; but the legacy of her familiar name is an oracle both to the good and to the froward. Especially in our feasts of charity and holy work it is that this cherished name is a very synonym of all goodness.

Sister Windsor was brought to Christ and his church in the early days of Methodism. Her father's house, in Fairfax County, Virginia, was a munificent, welcome home and rest for the noble men who had consecrated their lives to the one work of "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands," and that, too, while the "sum of villainy" was dictating terms of citizenship both to church and state; so that to assume all the franchises of the gospel and "put on Christ" in that day was simply to don the "crown of thorns." And despite the allure of human prudence and worldly policy, this was the deliberate choosing of our elect lady Windsor, whose subsequent life of divine charity and holy fruitage was only the sequence of the high birth and superhuman endowments of character which marked and blessed her life with the honor of "walking with God" and receiving the benedictions of the poor for over half a century.

For many years the earnest life of this servant of Christ was passed in the feebler light of justifying grace, with its fluctuations of "mountain and valley" experience, until, weary with failures and "being overcome with evil," her oscillating faith cried out in an agony of deep-felt need, "Is this all the assurance he can give? this all the strength our almighty Jesus can put into the human weakness of his best friends as he sees them grappling with numberless diabolical forces arrayed and pitted against them?"

This resume, this extremity of need, and this "save or perish" cry of agonizing faith, pierced the very heavens, poising only for a moment, when divinely-imparted strength was given her to receive Christ as her full sanctification as well as her redemption and justification; and this "all hail" of the Master in the moment of her extremity was to her subsequent life the "pillar by day" and the "fire by night," bringing that abounding grace which enabled her to act up to the convictions

her new-found treasure had inspired. Hence her testimony was always full, clear, and definite, denominating her present grace the "second blessing."

But this unsinching child of God soon found that a large majority of church-members were even more offended with her witnessing to the advanced experience of "perfect love" -- although strictly Wesleyan -- than common sinners were to her becoming a Christian at first; and as the animus of church-skepticism on the question of entire sanctification became more pronounced and intolerant, she determined to open her own house for meetings expressly for the "promotion of holiness."

Such a meeting soon became attractive, far beyond the expectation of its originators. They were always led by some clergyman of their own choosing, and strictly under Methodist teachings and formula. Nevertheless the meeting was non-sectarian, as it was composed of orthodox Christians, "having the form and seeking the power of godliness," willing to be counted singular for Christ's sake. One cogent reason for the marvelous power and efficiency of this meeting was that for some ten years it was kept free from the bane of parochial dictation, during which "Passover" the meeting at the house of "Mary and Martha" (or Windsor palace) became widely known as a grand rallying-center for "the elect of grace" from all sections of the country, and among the British Methodists, from whom letters respecting its success are still being received.

For years this weekly gathering in her own parlors of genial-sainted spirits was not only a fair exponent of Sister Windsor's true religious status and Ruth-like devotion, but equally convincing that these companionships had become almost a necessity to her growing spiritual life, to which she would frequently allude in terms of tender and touching strains, as occasions so free and trustful, and as the sunshine and dew of heaven, upon the closing hours of her earth-life.

It was only a few days prior to her demise that this beloved servant of Christ experienced a baptism of divine power which exceeded by far all previous revealments of similar grace to her. I saw her in that ecstatic joy, and heard her say, "Oh, what a delight I experienced today in forgiving (unsolicited) one who had despitefully used me." In this Christlike spirit she seemed talking to me from the beyond -- quite in the vestibule of heaven; and while her whole being was still wrapped with this holy effulgence, as if by a divine order, she was smitten with paralysis, and thus, unconscious of a single pang, fell asleep in Jesus, while the watchers could almost hear the glad acclaim echoed from the glory-land, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." --
William M. Ferguson, Washington, D. C.

What has the recoiling, the shuddering, bewildered, horror stricken atheist, to offer as a substitute for a religion so holy, which affords happiness so sublime? Infidel,

"Come to the bed of death!
Step lightly, -- check that rising sigh;
Behold the parting of the breath,
Without an agony.

Behold how softly fades
The light and glory of that eye,

As gently as the twilight shades
The azure of the sky."

Source: "Saintly Women And Death-Bed Triumphs" by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis

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THE END