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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

HARRIETT BEECHER STOWE

Perfect Rest At Last -- (Experience Of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, As Recorded By Herself)

For some three or four years past there has been in my mind a subdued undercurrent of perplexity and unhappiness in regard to myself in my religious experience. I have often thought, when sitting by myself, "Why am I thus restless? Why not at peace? I love God and Jesus Christ with a real and deep devotion; and in general I mean to conform my life to Him. I am as consistent as many Christians -- more; then why not satisfied?"

I could conceive of a style of Christian devotion as much higher than my present point as my present position is above that of the world. I often saw, as by a dart of sunlight, that an entire identity of my will with God's would remove all disquiet, and give joy even to suffering; as says Paul: "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

The more I groaned in spirit, and longed and prayed, the more inveterate and determined and unsubdued seemed every opposing desire. The sensitive fear of blame, the ever-luring self-conscious desire of proving to myself and others that I was right, I perceived to be stronger and more efficient in me than the love of Christ, the fear of His opinion, and the desire of His will.

"Am I then not a Christian?" thought I. Then why do I, why have I, loved Christ -- loved Him so deeply, as I know I have; nay, as I know I do? I cannot tell. I think I love him above all; yet certainly my will is, at best, only in a small degree subjected to His. "Well, then," I thought, "if you see that entire union and identity of your will with Christ is the thing, why do you not have it? Just submit, give up all these separate interests. Unite your soul to Him in a common interest. Why not?" Ah, why not? Words of deep meaning to every one who tries that vain experiment! Every effort breaks like a wave upon a rock.

We reason, reflect, resolve, and pray, weep, strive, love -- love to despair; and all in vain. In vain I adjured my soul. "Do you not love Christ? Why not, then, cut wholly loose from all these loves and take His will alone? Is it not reasonable, since you can be blessed in no other way? What else can you do?" Something said to me, "You are a Christian, perhaps, but not a full one." "Learn of Me," said Christ, "and ye shall find rest." I do not find rest, consequently I do not learn

of Him. I perceive that the New Testament ideal of a Christian was different from the higher than what I ever tried or purposed to be; that I was only trying at parts, and allowedly in some things living below. Nor did it comfort me at all to think that other Christians did so, and even good ones, too, for I remembered, "He that shall break one of these least commandments," etc. -- The question was distinctly proposed to me, "Will you undertake and make a solemn and earnest effort to realize the full ideal of Christ's plan, though not one other Christian should?" The obstacles were many. "It will do no good to try. With a lower standard have I striven, wept, prayed, despaired in vain; and shall I undertake this? I shall never do it." This was my discouragement. How can I see God clearer than I have seen Him? Can I ever be searched and penetrated and bowed by a deeper love than I have known, and which yet has been transient, has never wholly subdued me? Can I make deeper, sincerer resolutions? No. Can I have more vivid views? No. What then?" I thought of this passage: "I will love Him, and my Father will love Him; and we will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him." "That is it," I thought. "Christ has been with me by visits and intervals; this permanent abode is what I have not known."

Again, "Abide in Me and I in you" -- steady, ever-present Christ within, who should exert an influence steady as the pulse of my soul. This I needed. I copied that class of texts; I prayed with prayer unceasing that Christ would realize them; I despaired of bending my will; I despaired of all former and all present efforts; but at His word I resolved to begin and go for the whole. As James and John: "He said unto them, 'Launch out now and let down the net.' They said unto Him, 'Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word we will let down the net; and lo! the net break with the multitude of fishes.'"

What was the result? When self-despair was final, and I merely undertook at the word of Christ, then came long-expected and wished-for help. All changed. Whereas once my heart ran with a strong current to the world, now it runs with a current the other way. What once it cost an effort to remember, now it costs an effort to forget. The will of Christ seems to me the steady pulse of my being, and I go because I cannot help it. Skeptical doubt cannot exist. I seem to see the full blaze of the Shekinah everywhere. I am calm but full, everywhere and in all things instructed, and find I can do all things through Christ. -- H. B. S.

While she was in school, and about fourteen years of age, she read Baxter's "Saint's Rest." She was powerfully affected by it, and the impressions then made on her tender and plastic mind were never after effaced. God was preparing her for the great work that lay before her.

It was while her father was president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati that she married Calvin E. Stowe, a young widower, and one of the professors of the institute. Her husband was, at that time, as she said, "rich in Greek and Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, and alas! rich in nothing else." One of her friends said, "Life became a hard struggle with poverty and sorrow." Among her writings we find she wrote from her heart "Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline."

Her trust in God gave her patient endurance. The more the diamond is cut, the brighter it sparkles. Paul not only patiently endured the severe trials that came to him, but he tells us he "glories in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our

hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So Mrs. Stowe gained spiritual strength from these "Earthly Cares" and trials.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" -- which was translated into a score of languages, and produced such tremendous effects -- helping to break the shackles from three millions of human beings, was written in the same spirit of consecration to Christ -- perfect love to God -- and love to all humanity. One writer says, "Most prominent among its characteristics was noted its thoroughly Christian atmosphere. She retained the clear witness of sanctifying grace throughout her entire life."

In the year 1887 she wrote a letter to a friend, containing the following:

"I am coming to that stage of my pilgrimage that is within sight of the river of death, and I feel that now I must have all in readiness, day and night, for the messenger of the King. I have sometimes in my sleep strange perceptions of a vivid spiritual life near to and with Christ and the multitude of holy ones, and the joy of it is like no other joy; it cannot be told in the language of the world. What I have, then, I know with absolute certainty; yet it is so unlike and above anything we conceive of in this world that it is difficult to put it into words.

"The inconceivable loveliness of Christ! It seems that about Him there is a sphere where the enthusiasm of love is the calm habit of the soul, that without words, without the necessity of demonstrations of affection, we respond to the infinite love, and we feel His answer in us, and there is no need of words."

Source: "Consecration And Purity" by Mary Sparkes Wheeler

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THE END