



*"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16*

## CELIA BRADSHAW WINKLE

### BORN TWICE

In a small green house nestled in the hills of southeastern Ohio, nine miles from the beautiful Ohio River and Ironton, Ohio – so named because of the deposits of iron in the soil in that country a little girl arrived in April, via the grandmother, midwife, the country doctor, and, of course, the black-haired, black-eyed mother. They had wanted a boy, for this was the third girl, but they loved her as much as if she had been a boy, and called her Celia after the preacher's daughter who was also the country school "marm". I have sometimes thought that perhaps some of the iron of that country's soil got into the system of the little girl born there.

When Celia was two years old she, with all the family, had a terrible case of old-fashioned smallpox. Lee Bradshaw, her father, got so bad that the flesh fell off his bones in places, his eyes came out of their sockets, and his tongue fairly rotted in his mouth. He was unsaved. He called for Mary, his wife, to come and pray for him. She was so sick with smallpox herself that she could not stand the horrible sight of him. After she was blindfolded she went in, kneeled beside his bed, and poured out her heart to God. He had been a drunkard and had beaten her with his fists time and again. Now that he was dying he begged her to pray for him. When she had finished praying, she said, "Lee, how is it with your soul?" As near as she could make out his words, in his condition, he said, "Mary, you know how I have lived;" and he died like that.

The people were much afraid of the disease, but some who had already had it came with his coffin, set it on the floor, wrapped him in a sheet, and rolled him into the coffin. Without a song, a prayer, or a funeral of any kind, with lantern in hand, they took him up the hill before daylight and buried him. That was indeed a dark picture and a dark end. And, too, it was a dark day for his widow and three little girls left to the mercy of a cold world. Alice was six, Addie four, and Celia was now two years of age.

After the rest of the family, including an uncle, Charley, had recovered, everything was scrubbed, washed, aired, etc., and many things, including a lovely new rag carpet that had just been put down, were burned to get rid of all the germs.

With no breadwinner and no income, the wolf was soon at the door. The landlord, without mercy, came and set the family out in the road. That morning the mother, with her three little girls, walked down the big road, they knew not where. They came to a large rock beside the road. She said, "Children, we have always had a family altar; we do not have a home to kneel in, but we will kneel around this big stone and have our family prayers." They knelt and she prayed for God to lead them and make a way for them. They arose and walked on.

Soon they met a lady, whom the mother knew, who invited them to come and have dinner with her family and then insisted that they stay all night.

The very next morning a Mr. Dave Hughes came to that home and asked for Mary Bradshaw, and told her he had heard of her plight. He said, "We have a large house and no children. You and your little girls can live in our upstairs until you can do better." God bless his memory! Later he moved them into the little tenant house on his place and gave Uncle Charley, who was fourteen years old, some work at

75c per day. Thus they managed to keep starvation from them, but such meager living could not continue indefinitely.

A young widower was much attracted to this beautiful twenty-four year old widow, and soon there was a wedding day. Alice resented this intrusion very much; Addie was not thrilled with him; but Celia, only three, was much taken up with her new stepfather, as he was with her.

But Charley Cameron was not the right man for Mary Bradshaw. To her horror, she discovered, too late, that he, too, was a drunkard. He did not beat her with his fists, but she often said she would rather he would have than to treat her as he did. He was a man wholly given to appetite, liquor, tobacco, and physical indulgence. When he was courting Mary he told her he admired her because she was a good Christian girl; but after he got her he told her he did not think any more of her than he did of a harlot. "A woman is a woman to me," he would say. She would have a child about every eighteen months.

He was out of work a lot of the time and had very little to go on. Sometimes he would say he was going to hunt work and would be gone, she knew not where, for a month or more. She would not receive a penny or even a letter. When he would return, he would be penniless too.

At such times the family suffered greatly. There were times when they had to go out and pick wild greens on the hillsides and cook them before they would have anything to eat for breakfast. Two or three times, when the flour in the bin was completely used up and there was none to be had, she took cow middlings and made coarse, dark bread. It took the place of real bread when they were so hungry.

At the age of seven, because of malnutrition, Celia took typhoid fever. It was on Christmas Day that she took to her bed. She got so low the doctor gave her up and told them it would be impossible for her to get well for, said he, "the linings of all her intestines and stomach have passed out and are as raw as a piece of beefsteak." Once they thought she was dead and sent for the undertaker, but before the messengers reached him, they were brought back. The mother could not give up hope yet.

*During the time of Celia's illness, her mother had prayed and sought God in the secret closet every chance she got, and was sanctified at home. She had learned of the experience through an old man, G. C. Bevington, who went around doing personal work. Through this man, too, she learned, for the first time in her life, that God would heal the body in answer to prayer. After she got into the experience of holiness, she was so full of God and His glory, and her faith was so increased, that she began to pray for God to heal her little girl. Celia had lain for weeks, and was literally starving to death – was nothing but skin and bones, and much of the time was unconscious. The mother fasted and prayed from a Friday until the following Tuesday with not one bite of food or one drop of water, and still caring for her family, but she slipped away at every chance to pray. Finally, the same Heavenly Father who had heard her prayer alone, and had sanctified her soul, heard her petition for her child. He said, "I will spare her for my glory alone." People came by crowds to see the little girl who, for weeks, was dying with typhoid fever.*

But Celia began to get better – the mother had touched God. Consciousness came back. Celia cried for food, but she was so near starved that she could have only potato water with a little bread in it every two hours. At that early age she learned to tell time by watching the hands of the clock as they moved so slowly, getting around to the place where she could have more broth.

When Celia was sufficiently recovered, her mother told her how terribly sick she had been and of her prayers for her child's healing and that God had told her He would heal her "for my glory only." Those words were grated into the mind and heart of the little, pale, bony girl. She rolled them over and over in her mind. She decided they meant what they said – she was to live for God, and Him alone.

When she was able to go to church, they were taking in some new members and she too joined the Methodist Church. Now she thought she was a Christian. She prayed around the family altar and would

even pray in secret. She took active part in the Sunday school and church and was a member of the junior choir. One Sunday night after the choir had sung, they were having testimonies. By now Celia was about ten years old. She got up and testified. When she sat down the preacher began to brag about what a wonderful little girl she was. All at once God spoke to Celia for the first time in her life. He said, "Yes, here you are a member of the church, a member of the junior choir, and up here testifying, and professing religion, and you have never been born again; you have never been saved." He also said, "Down there in the congregation are Etta, Carl, Edith, and others; you quarrel and fight at school just like they do; but they don't profess religion and you do. You are no better than they are."

#### CELIA'S OWN STORY

My! oh, my! I knew that was God. No one needed to tell me. That was the biggest sermon, and right to me. No one else in the church knew it was going on. *But it was as a judgment day to me.* In my mind and heart I said, "God, that is the truth and I'll never testify again until I know I am saved, until I know I have been born again. But God, I will get saved the first chance I get." And God knew I meant it.

In that Methodist Church they usually had a few nights of revival once a year when they would open the altar for seekers. I thought that was the only time anyone could get saved. From that night on, I wanted God so much. I lived in agony of soul.

My mother had really gotten a genuine experience of Bible holiness. She was aflame with God all the time. She prayed and shouted, read the Bible, and kept the victory and kept sweet under severe trials, poverty, and persecutions. This sanctification and holiness was new to those Methodists in Oretton, Ohio, *and they did not care to get acquainted with it.* But Mother was so happy and so full of it, she could not keep still. The preacher got up and said, "*We want some testimonies, but we do not want any of this sanctification and isms.*" But when Mother testified she got blessed and the preacher jumped up, ran clear out on the altar, and said, "Take her out of here; take her out of here." One man had to hold onto the coat-tail of my unsaved stepfather to keep him from taking the preacher out. He finally got up and went out to try to hold his temper and keep from hurting the preacher. Some of the young men on the outside, who knew Mother and had confidence in her, tried to hire Pop Cameron to go in and take the preacher out. Even though Pop was mean and sinful, he knew Mother had the blessing and lived it.

This victorious life of my mother was having a tremendous effect on me. It made me so hungry for God, and I said, "If I ever get religion, I want the kind my mother's got."

One night I awoke with a pain in my side. I was scared, and cried. Mother came into the room and said, "Celia, what's the matter?" I said, "I'm afraid." She said, "What are you afraid of?" I said, "I have a pain in my side and I'm afraid I'm going to die, and if I die I will go to hell." She said, "Well, my dear little girl, if that is what's wrong with you, you need somebody more than Mamma to help you. That's something Mamma can't do; it takes Jesus to do that." I'm so glad she said just that instead of soothing me down like many mothers do.

For about six months from the time God gave me that awakening in church, I suffered continually with an unspeakable hunger for God. He knew I wanted Him more than anything in the world. When God sees any soul like that He will do something. He did something then, too.

One day, about this time, a tall preacher man knocked on our door. When Mother answered, he said, "Lady, I live several miles from here and, as I was praying, God laid it on my heart to come to this little mining village and see if they would let me hold a ten-day revival in their little Methodist Church. I went to see them and they said I could. Now, if I can find a home where I can stay, I will be all set, and I will hold the revival."

Mother did not know him, but as they talked she found out he was a true holiness preacher. She said, "Brother, we are so poor, I am ashamed to ask you to live in our house, and we have such poor food. I

would rather you would stay with some other family who has more. You see if you can find a better place. If you can't, we want the revival. That will be wonderful. If you can put up with what we have, you surely are welcome, but we are ashamed to offer it to you." He said. "Sister, I don't think it is any use for me to look any further. If I can stay here, I will stay." He did, and another helper with him.

My heart fairly leaped for joy for I knew now I could get saved. The first night in the church I wanted to go to that altar so bad, but something made me numb and just held me to the seat. They were about to close the altar call when the preacher, Brother George Appleman, said, "Well, if no one will come to pray to get saved, will someone at least come and bow at this altar for just a few minutes and let the Christians pray one little prayer for you before you go home?" When he said that, it seemed as if something let loose of me. I was sitting on the front seat beside Mother and was holding my baby sister Bertha. I had on an old lady's grizzly dress, out of a charity box from G. C. Bevington, which my mother had cut down for me. My elbows were out of it. My hair was so curly it was hard to comb, and my mother had braided it that morning and tied it with strings and had not had time to comb it before going to church. I also had on an old hand-me-down coat that was supposed to be red. Time, wear, and weather had made it a dirty pink. When I look back and think that the Great Sovereign God would notice me, or want me – how can I express my gratitude?

That minute the preacher looked down at my mother and said, "Take the baby." I handed the baby to Mother and before I was hardly conscious of it, I hit that altar and I didn't wait for someone else to pray with me, or for me. I fairly screamed to God and as tears rolled down my face, dropping on the floor inside the altar (for there was a puddle of them as I saw afterward), I prayed and prayed for God to have mercy on my poor soul and make me know I was born again. The preacher told me afterward he never saw anything like it. He said he happened to look at his watch, for he was going to close when I came to the altar, and that I prayed one hour and twenty minutes, as hard as I could pray, without stopping. All at once the burden was gone and God's Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was born again. I jumped to my feet and jumped into Mother's lap. She was sitting there on the altar. I threw my arms around her neck and said, "Mamma, I'm saved." Praise God, I have never once had reason to doubt that work of grace in my heart.

While I was crying and praying so hard, some in the congregation said, "If I were that child's mother, I would take her away from that altar. She never did anything wrong that she has to pray like that." But I thank God, and thank my dear mother, that she let me pray till I prayed clear through and heard from Heaven. Amen! I was born again and I was born alive, and I knew it. It caused quite a stir. The preacher told about it everywhere and wrote it up in the "Holiness Advocate."

MR. BOGGS

At the same time that I was so hungry for God, and longing for a revival, there was a man in the village by the name of Dave Boggs. He, too, was deeply convicted for his sins and his need of God. He would express it over and over and say, "If they would have a revival, I would go to the altar and get saved." God heard that. I believe, with all my heart, God sent Rev. George Appleman to the little Methodist Church in Oretton, Ohio, for the sake of my soul and the soul of Mr. Boggs. I walked in the light and settled it for time and eternity to go with God.

In the meetings, Mr. Boggs kept saying, "Not tonight." "Some other time," etc. The meeting closed and he did not get saved. He began to say, "I should have gotten saved," and such things. One night a heavy rap came at our door – it was way in the night, and Pop was gone. Mother said, "Who's there?" A man's voice said, "Mrs. Cameron, Mr. Boggs has got something wrong with him, and he wants you to come and pray for him." The night was very cold, snow was on the ground, it was two miles away, and no way to get there but to walk. But that mother of mine let nothing stop her when it came to spiritual things. She wrapped the baby real warm and she and the neighbor man carried it and trudged through

the snow up the big road, part of the way on the railroad ties, and through the big tunnel.

They came to the Boggs' home to find him begging her to pray for him. He would kneel down and then get up, load his pipe, take a puff or two, then throw the tobacco into the open fireplace, get on his knees again and cry and beg her to pray. Each time she would get down to pray he would repeat this act until she was dumbfounded with it all.

Finally, he would go to the door and pound and knock and say, "Jesus Christ is asleep. Wake Him up. Jesus is asleep. I can't wake Him. I have to have Him. He won't pay any attention to me." When a train came by it took several men to hold him, for he threw himself and fought to get on that train for, he said, "Jesus Christ is on that train and I have to get to Him."

He became more and more uncontrollable until he had to be bound and taken away to an insane asylum. There he continued his crying and searching for Jesus, never to find Him, and died in that condition. In a few days he was brought back home in a coffin and buried, but oh, his poor soul – when He could have been saved.

### MY SANCTIFICATION

The revival lasted only ten nights, but a night or two after I got saved, I heard the preacher tell that we must also get sanctified. I had already seen what it had done for my mother, so I went to the altar again to seek it. I prayed and did everything I could but, for some reason, I did not get through. But one thing I knew -- I was not going to stop seeking until I got it. I went the second night and did my best, and the third night the same, but did not get through. *The fourth night I went again and what I did any more or any different that night than I did the other three nights, I do not know. But one thing I do know, I came to a point in my seeking that I felt I would die, or would sink into everlasting despair, if He did not come. That moment the devil whispered, "You are not saved." I knew I was, and I ignored him and kept on praying for a pure heart, for God to cleanse me from all sin, to sanctify me.*

*All at once, like a flash from Heaven, the Holy Spirit came and filled me and set me on fire With holy joy and His presence flooded my whole being. I do not know when or how I got up from my knees at the altar, but I surely got up. I walked and clapped my hands. I marched about the church praising and blessing God. It spread. The saints got blessed and joined in shouting and praising God.*

Brother Appleman, the preacher, was over six feet tall. He got to jumping and shouting, too. The house was filled with the glory of the Lord. As we shouted, the old oil lamp on the pulpit desk began fluttering as if it would explode. The preacher never stopped but just caught it in his hands as he shouted back and forth on the platform. Then he gave it a pitch right out the window where it was open at the top, and went right on as though nothing had happened to it.

Thank God, the experience was real and a work was done in my soul

Source: "The Preacher Girl" by Celia Bradshaw Winkle

[from the Enter His Rest website](#)