



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

OSIE M. FITZGERALD

(Methodist)

I was born in Bernardsville, New Jersey, in 1813. When I was about six years old, thinking I would have a nice time, I took a watermelon from my uncle’s farm nearby and divided it with two cousins. My oldest brother, nearly twelve years of age, heard what I had done. In the evening, he took me aside and asked me if I knew I had been stealing. He said that, having taken it without my uncle’s consent, it was stealing. What he said made no impression upon me at the time; but the next April that dear brother died.

Some time after his death I became deeply convicted of sin. My brother had told me that no one who stole could enter heaven. So I felt that I was lost. My convictions were so keen they destroyed my appetite, and I stayed away from my dinner. My father missed me and sent a servant for me. I told her I did not want any dinner, but wanted to see my father. I was in the garden weeping bitterly. The dinner was given up by my father. I was taken into the sitting room, and he took me on his lap. Then I told him all--how I had taken the melon, and that I should be lost. He told me to stop crying and listen to him. He said Jesus had died for my sins, and if I would trust Jesus to save me He would do it. I think I believed because my father said so. As soon as I believed that Jesus pardoned my sins, in the twinkling of an eye the joy of the Lord filled my soul, so that I went skipping from sitting-room to parlor, from parlor to kitchen, like a bird of the air. My parents were delighted, for I had been under that weight of sin for weeks, till they began to fear for my health, not knowing what ailed me. At this time I was seven years old, and was thought too young to join the Church, so I was left out in the cold until I was nearly frozen to death.

Some years afterward the Lord graciously visited the Presbyterian Church (to which my parents belonged) and gave me a fresh token of my acceptance with Him. I was then taken into the Church with my older brother and sister. At that time I was fifteen years of age.

From the time I was converted my conscience was very keen, so that I would not take even a pin from the cushion of another, nor one that I found on their floor; and if I repeated anything I had heard I would repeat the exact words. I prayed daily, but my Christian life was not a joyous one. I had been taught to say, “I hope I am a Christian,” and that it was presumption to say I knew my sins were forgiven. Many times the question would arise in my mind, “Do I belong to the Lord?” As years passed on I had a great desire to be more Christlike. I began to note the Lord’s dealings with me. I kept a diary, which showed my many mistakes, failures, and broken resolutions. Though I now enjoyed religion, and had the witness of God’s Spirit that I was adopted into His family, yet when I “would do good evil was present with me.” Little things would make me angry. In the morning,, while bowed before God, I would resolve not to get angry that day. But when night came I found myself weighed down by broken resolutions. If I had company and wanted my cooking to be particularly nice, and it was burned, I was angry. If a servant went to the wrong side of a person at the table to help him, though I said not a word, I would feel angry, thinking my guest would consider me incompetent to teach my servant what was proper. My pride was wounded. Afterward I would weep before the Lord, knowing that He saw my heart though others did not.

About that time the Lord sent the Rev. James Caughey to the Central Methodist Episcopal Church for a few weeks, and he preached clearly the doctrine of entire sanctification. I had not thought that I could ever live without daily committing sin. But when he took his text, "Be ye holy for I am holy," and said we are not only invited but commanded to be holy, the words struck deep into my heart. He then quoted Paul and Fletcher, Payson, Wesley and others. I thought, it may be for them but not for me. But then the words came, "God is no respecter of persons," and with a determined will I said, "God being my helper, I shall have that blessing." We were invited forward to the altar. I went to get a clean heart; but when asked what I came for I said, "A deeper work of grace." The Lord blessed me wonderfully, and I was told that it was entire sanctification; for surely, they said if I were willing to die for Christ I must love God with all my heart. I did not believe I had it. I found then, and have found ever since, that it takes more grace to live for Christ than it does to die for Him. Then it came to me, "Will you give your children to the Lord?" It was suggested, "If you do He will take them out of the world." At last I surrendered them to God. Then came a still greater struggle. The Spirit said, "Will you give up your husband to me?" I said, "Lord, I will die willingly if Thou wilt let him live. I am not of much account, but I cannot live and let him die, for my health is so poor I will be unable to take care of my family." It was also suggested that we might lose all our property, and I would at last have to go to the alms-house. That struggle lasted for two days or more. Then it was whispered to me, "You may be the means of saving some soul in the alms-house." Then came the passage, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." I yielded all to God.

Saturday night came. I went forward for prayers. The Spirit said to me, "If I give you a clean heart, and sanctify you wholly will you speak before this people and tell them what I have done for you?" Having been brought up a Presbyterian; I was very much opposed to women speaking in the church. I thought no one but a bold Methodist woman would speak in church. Consequently I said, "No; it is not the place for a female to speak." Again the question was repeated. I then said, "I will do it if the Lord requires it, but He will not, for there are plenty of men to speak." My agony of soul increased, and as I continued to plead the question continually recurred. My agony of soul was so intense that it seemed to me it must soon be victory or death, and I cried out, "Yes, Lord, though it be before a thousand people. Then there was a great calm in my soul. And I said, "What now, Lord?" The Spirit said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24). I saw clearly I must believe before I could receive. The tempter said, "How do you believe without any evidence? I replied, "I have God's Word, and I believe the work is done if I never have any more evidence till I meet Him at His bar; for He says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." "But," said the tempter, "you may find yourself mistaken." I said, "I will take that promise with me to the bar of God, and I will tell him that I have been trusting Him (on His Word) for a clean heart, without any evidence."

Then the adversary said, "Perhaps you will find there is no God." I answered, "Then I am safe; if there is no God there is neither heaven nor hell." Some time after a good brother said to me, "You do believe that God cleanseth you now from all sin?" If I had had a thousand bodies and souls I could have thrown them all into that "Yes." The moment I confessed it the Holy Ghost with lightning speed came into my heart and cleansed it from all sin, and took up His abode in my heart and filled me with such unspeakable joy that for three days I scarcely knew whether I was in the body or out of it. Great struggle as I had to get a clean heart, it was a struggle of a week to get it cleansed, but need not have taken three minutes if I had surrendered my will to God; but it is a life battle with the world, the flesh, and Satan to keep it clean, and nothing but a continual surrender (a heart made humble and lowly) to God can do it.

God pardoned my sins in the winter of 1820-21. On the 27th of December, 1856, in the evening, in Central Methodist Episcopal Church in Newark, N.J., through the blood of Jesus Christ, God cleansed

my heart from all sin, and the Holy Ghost sanctified me wholly. I think Mr. Wesley says it is next to a miracle for any one to receive that blessing and never lose it. Then I surely am next to a miracle of grace. For I have never lost it, and I have no recollection of ever feeling the stirrings of anger, jealousy, pride, self-will, or bitterness, since the day God cleansed my heart from all sin and the Holy Ghost came in and filled me. He has been the door keeper of my heart every hour since; and from that day to this nothing has been permitted to enter that has not been submitted to the will of God. Temptations have come but have not been permitted to enter. There has not been one hour since that I have not had access to the audience chamber of the Most High. I think I once came near losing it, not knowing clearly the voice of the Spirit, in letting my husband decide for me, thinking the word of God required me to be obedient to my husband. In my early experience of full obedience to God the Spirit prompted me to pray in the meeting. Not being accustomed to try the spirits, I questioned whether the evil one was not tempting me to break through the rules of the meeting and pray when the men were asked to pray and no woman was invited. Not knowing fully that it was of God I questioned till the opportunity was past. Afterward it was said to me, "If you had been led to pray in your room alone would you not have done it?" I said, "Yes." "Then what but a man-fearing or a man-pleasing spirit prevented you?" I said, "Lord, show me clearly Thy will; please or displease man, I will do it." The adversary said, "You will do it before all those people." I said, "Lord, show me Thy will and I will do it if I die in the act." It came to me, "Now you will be tested."

The next prayer meeting I felt no leading of the Spirit till near the close of the meeting, when it came to me, "Pray!" I said "Lord, shall I pray when this man ceases?" It came to me, "No." I thought, "Perhaps the Lord is going to teach me obedience and oblige me to ask the privilege to pray after they closed the meeting." I felt I would do it, but they sang another hymn and called upon a brother to pray, who commenced and could not pray, stopped, and I prayed, or rather the Holy Ghost prayed through my lips.

After this there was a watch night service appointed for Sunday night, and the Spirit showed me I was to go. After I came from church I was taken very sick, so that I could not sit up, and as the time for service drew near I began to feel that I might be mistaken about the Lord wanting me to go; so I prayed earnestly for Him to show me if He willed me to go. I found He did. It was suggested, "You are so sick." I said, "Lord, I will go if I die on the way."

Not being able to walk straight it was with great difficulty that I got out of the house into the street; but as I was passing the second house from mine all sickness left me, and in an instant I was as well as I ever was. The Lord had been working in that church; the altar had been crowded night after night with seekers. That night the preacher could not get the people to move. I think only two went forward, and the spiritual atmosphere was heavy as lead. The preacher started down the aisle, and it was said to him, "There is your help, in that pew." Not knowing who I was, as I was kneeling and he could not see my face, he said, "My sister, I want you to go forward and talk to those seekers." It was a great cross for me to do it; but I went. He said, "We will sing one verse, then Sister Fitzgerald will talk to us." Not thinking of one word to say it was so great a cross that I know I could have died easier than to speak. But the thought came, "I must meet all these at the judgment," and though I could not think of one word to say, I said, "Here, Lord, are these lips; speak through them."

I told of an Episcopalian lady who some years before was in that church and became deeply convicted, but her husband opposed her coming again, saying she was as good as those who professed to be converted. A short time after she sickened and died. Just before she died she called for her little daughter, some two or three years old, to be placed upon the bed, her husband sitting beside her bed. She said, "You have stood between me and my soul's salvation. You said I was good enough. Now I want you to promise me that you will let my dear child go to church as God leads her, that she may be saved."

As I told this an elegantly dressed lady from the middle of the church arose and came to the altar. As she started out the people started from all parts of the church and came forward, and many were converted. Two days after, this lady came to see me; God had soundly converted her. She said, "I was deeply convicted, and wanted to go forward for prayer; but my husband was in Washington, and I thought he would be displeased when he came to find that I, an Episcopalian, had gone to a Methodist altar for prayers. But when you told that story I resolved he should not stand between me and God; that I would have my soul saved."

When I was first fully saved Christ so satisfied me that the things of this world did not trouble me. If a dinner were uncooked, or if it were burned, it did not move me; and so in regard to other things, if the family complained, though I saw they had just cause for it, yet I felt I must not complain, fearing I might get angry, or that others might think I was angry, though I was not. But the Lord showed me He had grace enough for me to be decided and firm, and have things done in a proper way, and yet not have one quiver of anger; and He has proven it to be so. The way grows continually brighter. I have sweet communion with the triune God. Some times my communion is with the Father; then with the Son; other times with the third person of the adorable Trinity. For the past few days my communion has been with the Father and the Son. He reveals Himself to me so wonderfully, and has for the past few years, that human language cannot express it. At times it seems as if my heart were liquid. For years, I can clearly say, my will has floated in the will of God as the cork floats on the water. Today Jesus saves me fully.

NEWARK, N.J., June 18, 1887.

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

[Return to the Enter His Rest website](#)