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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JOHN A. BUTLER

I remember being under conviction in the U. B. Church at the age of ten but I was so backward, timid and bashful that I put off my surrender to the Lord till I was about fourteen. In a meeting held in Friends Meeting House in Dublin, Indiana, by David Updegraff and John Henry Douglas, I went to the front seat with others as a seeker and Jesus proved Himself to be the Prince of Peace to me. For months I knew I was a child of God. Through my backwardness to move out in public, I grieved the Spirit and lost ground in Spiritual things till I became condemned and would often resolve and try to live right, doing better for a while, then sin would get me down. This up-and-down life continued till I was nearing my 36th birthday. On the night of December 7th, 1896, the Lord so led that I gave a glad surrender to Him for time and forever. That was indeed a memorable night, when I was so set free from Satan's bondage that I could go shouting down the aisle of the Church and down to my home with Peace and Joy in my un worthy soul. Hallelujah! Jesus Saves. Then prayer and testimony meetings were enjoyed, and to hear close, plain preaching was a delight to my soul.

Up to the time of my conversion, I had never had anything in my Christian experience like those days of being "yoked up with Him," and I must confess, the Justified Life, enjoying the First Rest, was a joyful experience to me. With Victory in my very soul, I made confessions and offered to make restitutions as the Lord led me.

On the 7th of December, 1895, I traveled 10 miles to my County Seat, Newcastle, Indiana, to be in session at the Prohibition Meeting, as a delegate from Dudley Township. I had promised the Lord, the night before, that the first opportunity I had I would go to an altar of prayer publicly and do the last one thing which was to make the full surrender of heart and life to Him. My righteousness had been very much like that of selfish, righteous Lot in Sodom. I was truly displeased with the unrighteous deeds of the liquor dealers but, oh, how I needed the exceeding righteousness that Jesus speaks of in Math. 5:20.

How zealous I was for reformation when really I was in great need of the New Creation. But the Lord of Life and Glory, who sent a servant from Heaven to lead Lot out of Sodom to keep

him from being destroyed with the worldly multitudes, sent His Spirit on the 7th of December, 1896, to pull me into the exceeding righteousness of Grace Divine. Blessed be His Holy Name, for He is worthy of all Praise, Honor and Glory forever and ever.

When the sun arose on the morning of December 8, 1896, it shined in on one of the Lord's newborn babes in Dudley Township, Henry County, Indiana. I knew then that, by Grace Divine, He who said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out," had accepted me into His Kingdom of Love Divine. How little we know of the Great Heavenly Father's dear will when we first break with sin and quit Satan forever. But one thing we do know and that is that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, for all that accept Him as their Savior find Joy in Him and the "Joy of the Lord is our Strength," so we have peace with God through Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Call To Preach

Farming had been my occupation all my life and fishing and hunting were my pastime sports. I was quite well acquainted with parts of Blue River, Flat Rock, Upper and Lower Simon's Creeks, the Conall, Big Pond, West River and Martindol's Creek. I knew where to find bass, suckers, catfish, sunfish, red horse and others too tedious to name, and knew where to find quail, rabbits, fox squirrels and gray squirrels in the day time and what way to go to look for coon and opossum at night. When long nights came in the Fall of the year, I could work all day and hunt for hours at night a few nights in the week. But a little later on, the Lord called me to hunt for souls and be a fisherman, for Him, who said, "I will make you fishers of men.

One evening as I went upstairs to dress to go to Prayer Meeting, kneeling to pray, the dear Lord definitely called me to preach the Gospel of His dear Son, my blessed Lord and Savior. I did not know how a thirty-six year old farmer boy, with but little schooling, (not even a common school education) could preach the Gospel but I knew that God had spoken and that He required of me faithful obedience. So saying "Yes" to His will, He opened doors and filled my soul with Glory and Delight in doing His will, as made known to me, seeing sinners truly repent with "Godly Sorrow unto Salvation, not to be repented of," and backsliders reclaimed, taking the Scriptural way of restitution and Living Faith in the All-Powerful Son of the True and Living God.

Experiences In Bible School

The great mercy of God has been multiplied and manifested to me in many ways. Oh, the Love Divine that filled my unworthy soul! I was a new creature and knew Jesus to assuredly be my personal Savior from all my sins and to keep me, even though unworthy, from sinning day by day through His Grace and Power Divine. My soul delighted in the Lord and His way of Grace Divine when He had set me free from the mere form of "the legal religion," described in the seventh of Romans, by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, making me a happy possessor of the delightful experience of Divine Grace set forth in the eighth chapter where Divinity had the supremacy. Yea, where Grace rules for the Glory of God.

In this way, I walked and grew, farming and preaching as the way opened for about four years, while many trials, tests and victories came my way. And Jesus was very precious to me in those days and years. He let me have many of the things of this life that I had planned in my mind

and desired to have such as, horses, cows, chickens and a little home that was so appreciated by my companion and myself, but our Heavenly Father always knows what is best for every one of His children.

So He led us to leave the little farm home and go to Bible School in Cincinnati, where Bros. M. W. Knapp and Seth C. Rees often preached the blessed and glorious gospel of full salvation from all sin. This was one of the great favors that the Heavenly Father showed me in leading me into the close association with His devoted servant M. W. Knapp when he was walking so close in the will of the Lord in those last years of his life on earth, in this holy warfare with Jesus, the Captain of our great salvation. And while dear Bro. M. W. Knapp suffered much false accusation, the Lord was using him to bring the True Light of the full Gospel to many souls. And my heavenly Father gave me the privilege of being one of the many that heard and heeded the call to "tarry until" the Holy Ghost came to abide in my heart on the seventh of December, 1900, just four years after the Lord had saved me from my sins and gave the experience of Justifying Grace before God, the Father. Then He, the blessed Lord of Life and Glory, baptized me with the Holy Ghost and Fire and I consider it a great mercy of God that He so led unworthy me.

Source: "Life Sketch Of John A. Butler" Edited by H. K. Underwood

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