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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

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I went to hear the opening sermon. It was on "Elijah's Altar on Carmel." The fire fell.

At the close of the sermon, when an opportunity was given for seekers for sanctification, about twenty came. We were called to prayer. I got inside the altar, and knelt.

I found myself in a strange frame of mind, which I have found impossible to describe. I believe if it had not been for my relation to the meeting I should have left. Dr. Carradine called on me to lead in prayer. It was a very unsatisfactory effort. It seemed impossible to lift the petition.

There seemed to be a question asked: "What are you praying for?" "Who are you talking to?" "Where are you anyhow?" I tried to pray for those at the altar. Then I struck a breaker, which reminded me that it was inconsistent to pray for those who were seeking the very thing I stood greatly in need of myself. At the close of the service I went home, solemn, silent, and thoughtful. I told my wife I believed there was some truth in it. The night was spent in prayer, and no sleep at all. My prayer was: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

God heard and answered that prayer. The search light was turned on. My! my! what revelations! Every room from garret to cellar was examined, and we were astonished to find things and principles that ought not to be there. How the "old man of sin" did squirm and writhe under the light and the fire!

Monday morning dawned, January 8th. I hastened to the ten o'clock meeting. Dr. Carradine opened with a testimony-meeting. I made a little speech -- reviewed my twenty-two years of ministerial labors: said I had been sufficiently pliable and sanctified to pull in any kind of harness, even if there was frost the collar; that my idea of sanctification was service. After that, I thought a person ought to have grace enough to keep still, and give others a chance to talk, which seemed hard for many whom I had seen, who professed to be wholly sanctified. I was fighting in the last

ditch. I said: "But if there is anything better, I want it." Dr. Carradine seemed to be looking through and through me, and said: "God bless your honest heart!"

In the sermon that followed, the power came upon the audience. There was conviction everywhere. I began to feel the last prop taken away. I said: "Old fellow, you are in for it! You have either got to stand in or run." I went forward with the crowd. I said: "I can't withstand God's work." I felt His presence and power, when the devil presented the probable consequences of my surrender to the doctrine.

I said: "Who am I, that I should withstand God?"

In a moment the temptation was gone.

In the evening the interest was intensified.

O, what a sermon! It seemed to me that the lightnings were flashing and spangling over the audience. It struck! I was as pliable as wax. The Holy Spirit in mighty power was upon me. I returned home, to spend another night of heart-searching and wakefulness. About one or two o'clock there was a sense of surrender -- every antagonistic element in my heart gave way; yet I did not have the evidence of sanctification.

All at once the Bible seemed to be animated; text after text began to be repeated, and impressed upon my innermost consciousness with the flash of a new illumination. One in particular was: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii, 20.)

In a moment my thoughts reverted to the dread and anxiety I had had of the Carradine meetings, when, suddenly, a vivid impression of two stanzas of the old Methodist hymn came into my soul, and I repeated them audibly:

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take:
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on our head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

I said: "Lord, they are breaking now; this may come out all right now." Then came this stanza:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain:

God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

I prayed: "Lord, make it plain! Don't let me be deceived!"

I was up early next morning at the church before the time for service. I can't describe the expectancy of my soul. God was leading in a marvelous way. I had not talked privately with anyone of my convictions. They left me with God. When the call came, after a loving, unctuous sermon from Dr. Carradine -- which proved most helpful to me in the peculiar state that I was in -- I walked forward, took a chair, passed by the altar where crowds were bowing, seeking sanctification, among whom was my wife, which enabled me to feel, "Well, thank God, I will be understood at home!" I placed the chair to itself, and as I bowed, determined to make a perfect, absolute, and eternal consecration. It was a struggle of a soul aroused, awakened, convinced, convicted of the supreme need, the one thing needful, "the more excellent way."

As I prayed, I said: "Yes, Lord, I know Dr. A. will actually laugh, ridicule, and have a grand time over my profession of sanctification. I am going to be misunderstood, crucified, discounted!" And then the reflection came that the reason I had not received the blessing before was, that I feared the preachers and members of the charges in the Conference, who had known of my attitude, and who would be greatly surprised that I had gone back on my position, and shifted quarters. Then the twenty-two years of ministerial labor would be discounted.

Finally I put all on the altar. I became oblivious to the surroundings. I forgot the people; everything seemed to fade away. "The horror of great darkness fell upon me," and in a few moments a strange awe took possession of my soul. I became motionless as a corpse. I began to get rigid. I had a sense of dying, and yet felt no fear. There came over my soul the most awful and thrilling sense of God's presence ever realized.

Then an impression of a small globe of light in the midst of the darkness was before my soul, which was perfectly steady, and in the midst of which came out in clearly-defined outlines a face of marvelous tenderness and beauty, under which my heart melted. My soul seemed to say, "Is it my Savior?"

Then came a passage of Scripture: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Then came the impression upon my soul: It all depends upon you; you can yield, let me in or resist. Close the door if you are unwilling to pay the price and make the consecration. But if you do so, then I will withdraw. Suddenly, as I trembled in the balance, I felt that the crisis had been reached, and to have resisted would have imperiled my salvation.

I pen these lines now, eight months after I had that vivid impression. I do not doubt that, had I resisted and the blessed Savior passed away, the echoes in my soul of the departing footsteps would have been the knell of eternal damnation.

At that moment this Scripture came to my mind: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

As I submitted, and my will yielded, I threw wide the door of my heart. There went through me the sweep and thrill of electric fire! I became conscious that the work was done. I cried: "The blood cleanses! the blood cleanses!" there came the most thrilling sense of a clean heart.

I knew I had a clean, pure heart. It seemed to me that a great magnolia had blossomed in my soul. I opened my eyes and said: "I am sanctified! I've got it, sure! It's true, after all!" O why did not somebody tell me twenty years ago that God had such a blessing as this for His believing children? As I arose from my knees, I spoke to Sister G., and extended my hand, saying: "I've got it sure! It's true! Glory to God!"

Then came a wave of joy and a thrill of ecstasy which swept me up the aisle with shouts of praise to God. For two more nights I did not sleep. I was filled and thrilled with an indescribable and ecstatic joy. Glory to God! I am so wonderfully kept, sustained, and blessed. Christ is all and in all to me. He has been made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and, I expect in the end, redemption. I do not understand all the wonderful phenomena of God's marvelous dealings with my poor heart; but it is true, glory to His precious name!

He tells us that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the Church (not out of the Church, am no come-outer), by Christ Jesus throughout all ages (not at Pentecost, but even in this and all ages), world without end. Amen!

Source: "The Better Way" by Beverly Carradine

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THE END