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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JAMES CAUGHEY
(*Two Accounts)

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[This account, taken from James Caughey's "Revival Miscellanies," seems to reveal that when Caughey sought for a clear assurance of salvation, some time after his actual conversion, the Lord bestowed on him, not only that assurance, but also the second-blessing of entire sanctification. Then, subsequent to that, his perception of when he was both actually saved and actually sanctified, was made clear. His experiences certainly do not seem to fit into a "standard textbook" on the two works of grace, but nonetheless they seem to have been quite real. -- DVM]

The reader may say, "God often bestows upon faith and prayer more than was requested. The cases in Scripture are not a few where faith only contemplated one blessing, and yet clusters of blessings have been granted." Very true. My own experience illustrates this. When I united with the Methodist people, I did not enjoy a satisfactory evidence that my sins were forgiven. This was my state during three or four years. During the above period, several gracious visitations of the Spirit were vouchsafed to my soul, and sometimes I felt happy; yet, in consequence of my not knowing the exact time and place of my conversion, together with a dimness of experience or perception, with regard to the witness of the Spirit, which, indeed, I did not at all understand, even doctrinally, I entertained a doubt, which was sometimes harassing, with regard to the safety of my soul. At length I determined to set out to seek a clear evidence of my adoption into the family of God. I did so; and, after a severe struggle, of more than a week's continuance, the Lord revealed himself to my soul as a pardoning God, and gave me an evidence, such as till that time I had never realized, that God, for Christ's sake, had blotted out all my transgressions. I was then enabled to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks.

The doctrine of entire sanctification I did not understand; indeed, it was seldom a pulpit topic in that part of America, -- not discussed, I am sure, with convincing clearness. With the exception of a few conflicts, from those temptations which assail the most holy believer, I was generally happy. In consequence of being deficient in spiritual discernment, which unfitted me to

distinguish between temptation and indwelling sin, I often imputed to the corruption of my nature that which arose simply from the effect of temptation upon my mind. Temptation is a subject of feeling, as well as indwelling sin. A temptation is not a temptation in reality, unless it is felt. How can we know that we are tempted, unless we feel it? How difficult is it, frequently to discriminate! I could not distinguish the difference. Like a blind man judging of colors, I could not form a proper judgment of the "hues and colorings" of my mental exercises, and so came to erroneous conclusions respecting them. Providence, however, favored me With the means of obtaining clearer light both as it regarded the doctrine itself; and my own experience. Circumstances, not necessary to mention, demanded I should reside in another part of the state. Here holiness of heart, and perfect love to God and man, were set forth with great clearness and power.

My attention was now awakened, and the doctrine became daily more and more interesting. I then began to investigate, and to obtain light from every source of information. 1st. By searching the Scriptures, which I read throughout upon my knees. 2nd. Mr. Wesley's writings. 3d. The experience of those around me who affirmed that they enjoyed purity of heart. 4th. By observing closely the exercises of my own mind. The result was, a firm determination not to rest until I felt that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed me from all sin. I sought the blessing earnestly by day and by night. I fasted, prayed, and wept, and often entered into an agony of soul for the blessing. Months passed away without any other benefit than an increased spirituality of mind, accompanied by great tenderness of conscience. Sitting one day in a private room alone, reading Mr. Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection, a heavenly calm, with a consciousness of entire purity, over-spread my heart, and a light like day-dawn beamed upon my placid soul. I exclaimed, in sweet amaze, "Why, if this be Christian perfection, which Mr. Wesley describes, -- if this be the true Scriptural view, -- then I have it; I do enjoy this very thing. The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me!" In a moment it occurred to my mind, "It is not now I have received the blessing, but at that period in my past history when I obtained the witness of the Spirit to my adoption into the family of God, -- then it was, God gave me more than I asked, -- a clean heart. This which I begin now to enjoy must be the testimony of the Spirit, relative to purity." 1 Cor. 2:12. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

I held the blessing for some weeks with a trembling hand, and confessed with a faltering tongue, in the assembly of the saints, what God had wrought in my soul. The more frequently I spoke of this great blessing, confessing it, and urging others to press after it, the clearer my evidence became, till I was

"Bold to declare my hallowing God
Hath wrought a perfect cure."

Since then I have passed through many fiery trials and sore temptations; have frequently been unfaithful; and, through want of watchfulness, have been necessitated to come again and again to the cleansing blood; yet I have never had any reason to doubt, that when the Holy Ghost came to my heart as a witnessing Spirit, he came as a purifying Spirit also.

Such was my own experience. Permit me to say, that, allowing to this experience the most extensive application of which the case will admit, it only goes to illustrate what I have elsewhere admitted, that some have obtained entire purity in the moment of regeneration.

Allow me to comment a little upon my humble narrative, as, perhaps, I am the fittest person to remark upon the dealings of God with my own soul. Previously to that memorable occasion, when I obtained a clear sense of pardon, I had enjoyed many gracious visitations from on high. A defective education in theology had materially embarrassed my decisions respecting my religious state. That I was regenerated, and enjoyed the influence of the comforting Spirit on my heart, at the period in question, cannot now reasonably doubt. But I did not understand these things. Again and again I cast away my confidence and relapsed into a state of uncertainty. At length I determined upon having a particular time and place which I could specify in connection with the era of my conversion. There had been a camp-meeting a few miles off, which I attended. Many were saved during its continuance, and the fire spread into a neighboring village, near which I resided. Numbers of my acquaintances had been awakened, and saved from guilt and sin, in a remarkable manner; they were instantaneously converted. To my amazement, they could point to the precise time and place where they were born again. This troubled me. After various reasonings and conflicts, I formed a resolution never to rest until such a distinct era of this kind was realized in my own experience, so that another revival might not again throw me into confusion. This I therefore sought, with strong cries and tears. I sought salvation as if I never had enjoyed it, casting aside the entire of past experience, as good for nothing but self-abasement and deep humiliation before God. The Lord pitied my distressed mind, and, in great mercy to me, condescended to hear my cry, and saved me to the uttermost. "Blessings came in clusters" -- more, indeed, than my ignorance or weakness of faith allowed me to ask; the witness of the Spirit, purity of heart, and perfect love, which cast out all tormenting fear. 1 John 4:18. I then obtained a clear starting point for "glory, honor, immortality, eternal life;" nor did I alter my course a single point, but steered straight onward for the port of glory. Like a sea captain, who has had his latitude and longitude confirmed by lunar observations, with the addition of a fairer and steadier breeze, and an increase of sail, and with greater certainty, consequently with a happier soul, I pursued my voyage, to the skies.

Source: "Revival Miscellanies" by James Caughey

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Caughey, Great Evangelist:-- His biographer said that he "wanted it (sanctification) so badly that day after day, saw him praying on his face in the lonely fields beyond Baltimore. It came and swept with cleansing power throughout his already regenerated soul; he leaped to his feet and now told God that he would go to England with the message of the gospel. He did, and thousands found Christ as a consequence."

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Source: "Were the Disciples Born Again Before Pentecost?" by Arthur L. Vess

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THE END