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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**ADAM CLARKE**  
**(Methodist, Author of Clarke's Commentary)**

Few men were more prominent or figured more actively in the great religious awakening of a century ago than Adam Clarke. Like most great men, he was "cradled in poverty." One of his earliest memories was the "weeping and wailing" in the household when their last acre of land was gone. His father, though poor, was a well educated school-master, and trained his children well. From eight years of age young Adam was self-supporting. But he was a dull student, until one day the phrase, "Oh! what a stupid dunce!" probably hurled at him in derision, aroused his sluggish brain, and "his long sorrow turned into instant joy;" study became a delight. In his research for knowledge, he waded through all learning, and mastered more than twenty languages. His biographer says: "With a bright half guinea which he found while digging in the school house garden at Kingswood, he bought a Hebrew grammar, in the use of which he made the beginning of his vast acquisitions and labors in Oriental learning. He rode, read and studied, mastering the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee and Syriac versions of the Scriptures, and most of the languages of western Europe. There was no branch of literature or physical science with which he did not become, in some degree, familiar. He was elected to membership in the London, Asiatic, Geological, and other learned societies. The government called him to high official position, where his scholarship could be employed for the honor of his country and the welfare of humanity."

His greatest work is his commentary on the scriptures. While there are some more practical, and while there are others more modern who have gone beyond him in some things, yet Clarke's Commentaries are still household words, and an invaluable treasury of Biblical knowledge. He was forty years in the preparation of this colossal work; and, take it all in all, it is one of the greatest commentaries published during the past 1,000 years.

Drawn by curiosity to hear John Brettel, a Methodist preacher, the sermon so impressed him that he went again, and a sermon from the text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," so convicted him that he was in an agony of conviction, which, as is usually the case, was followed by a sky-blue conversion. He joined the Methodists, and soon became an exhorter on a circuit of

his own appointment. One day Wesley met him and said, "Do you wish to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?" "Sir, I wish to be and to do whatever God pleases," replied young Clarke. "I think you had better go out into the work at large," said Wesley. Then laying his hands upon the young preacher's head, he prayed a few minutes, and having thus ordained him sent him to Bradford circuit, having twenty-three appointments. The next year he was sent to Norwich circuit, and one horse allowed for four preachers. He rode that circuit "mostly on foot, his saddle bags on his own back," preaching in eleven months 450 sermons, besides delivering many exhortations. In Cornwall, he preached in the open air amid the sleet and rain to crowds which no house could hold. Like most of the early Methodists, he emphasized the doctrine and experience of sanctification, teaching that we obtain a pure heart through faith in the all sufficient blood of Jesus. He says: "We are to come to God for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin as well as instantaneous pardon. In no part of the Scriptures are we directed to seek the remission of sins seriatim -- one now, and another then, and so on. Neither in any part are we directed to seek holiness by gradation. Neither a gradation pardon nor a gradation purification exists in the Bible."

As to how he reached this second crisis in his religious experience, he says: "I regarded nothing not even life itself, in comparison with having my heart cleansed from all sin; and began to seek it with full purpose of heart ... Soon after this, while earnestly wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and endeavoring self desperately to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul, which I have endeavored through grace to maintain amid the grievous temptations and accusations of the subtle foe."

Like all men and women who have been mighty for God, he laid great stress upon holiness of heart. O, if the leaders in the religious thought of these days "panted after God," and rested not until they were "perfected in love!" What a quickening there would be in the "valley of dry bones," and numberless deserts would be turned into gardens. Adam Clarke died of cholera August 26th, 1832, and the ripe scholar, renowned author and devout preacher was numbered among the white-robed throng above.

Source: "Chosen Vessels" by J. O. McClurkan (July, 1901)

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THE END