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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**DOUGAN CLARK**  
**(Society of Friends)**

I was born in Randolph County, North Carolina, on the 17th of 5th month (May), 1828. I was educated at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, at which institution I graduated in 1852. I took the degree of Doctor of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1861, and practiced my profession for about fifteen years. Since 1866 my residence has been at Richmond, Indiana.

My parents were both ministers in the Society of Friends. I had accordingly a birthright membership in that Church. I was carefully and tenderly brought up, and taught that I must fear the Lord and keep His commandments. The Scriptures were daily read in our family, and I soon learned to read and enjoy them for myself. The parental discipline which I received was strict, but kind and loving. I was to a great extent shielded from the temptations to gross sins to which many young people are exposed. I was from my very infancy a regular attender upon public worship, and in my earliest years I enjoyed hearing good preaching.

The chief things inculcated in the teaching and preaching of those days -- I mean half a century ago, so far as the Friend's Church was concerned -- were to mind and obey the light of God's Holy Spirit shining into the heart; to be moral and upright and honest and truthful and good; to do what duty required, and to obey God; and thus to work out salvation with fear and trembling.

It is true that Christ crucified was often spoken of as the sinner's hope of acceptance with God; but the fact that the Spirit always testifies of Christ and draws men to Him was too much lost sight of, and the necessity of an immediate and definite conversion was not clearly insisted upon.

I cannot point to the time when converting grace first reached my soul. I am quite sure that it was in very early life. I am certain that there were occasions every now and then, during my boyhood and youth and early manhood, when my soul was filled with the love of God; when I was contrite before Him; when my peace flowed as a river, and when I enjoyed what I now believe to have been the witness of the Spirit to my adoption and sonship.

A man can be alive even if he does not know when his birthday was, and so we may have the unmistakable signs of spiritual life without, in all cases, being able to point to the moment or the day when such life began. It is not so important to know the time as the fact of our conversion. But notwithstanding these things are so, yet I want to add right here that I do consider a definite, conscious conversion -- to which the individual can point in all his subsequent life as the day of his birth into God's kingdom -- to be an inestimable blessing and a glorious privilege. And where people are rightly instructed such conversions will be the rule, and any other kind the rare exception.

Until I had reached middle life my Christian experience was very unsteady and unsatisfactory. God was wonderfully good to me; but the carnal mind was very strong and ever struggling against the movings of the Spirit. So I was up and down, one day on the housetop, the next in the cellar; sinning and repenting, backsliding and returning; at times growing in grace and at times almost losing my faith and my hope. I was a Christian, but not a healthy one. Still, upon the whole, I can say, to the glory of Jesus my Savior, that during those years, by His grace, I did make considerable progress in the divine life. The old man -- the strong man -- was mostly kept in bonds. The struggle was often severe and protracted; but when I trusted in Jesus He gave me the victory.

When I was about thirty years of age my attention was first called, distinctively and intelligibly, to the subject of holiness as an actual, obtainable experience. This was from a perusal of the Interior life, by the late Professor Upham.

But it required many years for me to grasp the subject experimentally and practically. I made consecrations again and again -- written and verbal -- but somehow they did not stand the test. I struggled and prayed, and often got the victory; but I was not delivered.

When nearly forty years of age I began to speak, not infrequently, in Friends meetings as a minister. I only felt just call enough to justify me in opening my mouth; and, without deciding whether the Lord really intended to make a minister of me or not, I thought it safest to attend to present openings and opportunities to speak for Him as they occurred. It was comparatively only a short time before my monthly meeting gave its official sanction to my ministry by "recording" me as a minister of the Gospel. And still I was interested in the subject of holiness, and still I was desiring it, and still I was not enjoying it.

At length, in the 12th month (December), 1871, while attending a series of meetings at a Friends' Church in Ohio, in which Brother David B. Updegraff was taking part, and acting under his advice, I arose in a large assembly and stated my sense of my own unworthiness and weakness; but that relying wholly upon Christ I did there and then reckon myself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord.

I had now committed myself publicly. While I knew that I could not make myself dead to sin I felt as if the responsibility was now laid upon Jesus. What I reckoned in faith He could make real and true. There was no very marked feeling for several hours. I held on by faith to my confession. Then came peace -- full, quiet, calm; not rapture, nor ecstasy, but "All the silent heaven

of love"; and this continued almost without intermission during my waking hours for several weeks.

Now, what did I get? Answer:

1. A clean heart; I was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and my heart was purified by faith.
2. Perfect love.
3. The endowment of power; for whatever spiritual power I have been possessed of since, either for winning sinners to Christ or bringing believers to entire sanctification by consecration and faith in Jesus, I date it from that blessed day and hour.

How has it been with me since?

There have been failures on my part, but God has kept me wonderfully. There have been great and exceedingly subtle temptations -- angel-of-light temptations -- but Jesus has carried me through. There have been great trials and fearful sorrows, greater, I believe, than the average Christian, or even the average holiness man, is called upon to endure; but Jesus sustains and keeps and consoles. There has been a good deal of blessed service for Him, both in preaching and writing, and a good many souls testify to having been blessed and brought into the light and experience of holiness through my instrumentality -- with pen or tongue. I wish the number were manifold greater, as it might have been if I had been wholly the Lord's from my youth; but I can rejoice now when others preach and write better than I, and are the means of gathering in hundreds when I bring units.

And on this 19th of February, 1887, I do still testify that by the grace of God I am reckoning myself dead to sin; and I have a sure confidence that now the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth me from all sin, and that I have received, and now have, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Praise the Lord!

D. CLARK, RICHMOND, IND., Second Month, Nineteenth Day, 1887.

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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THE END