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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

### THOMAS COOK

[I did not discern whether or not the Thomas Cook of this account and the Thomas Cook of the preceding account are the same person. Therefore I present this account separately. -- DVM]

If by humbly declaring how great things God hath done for us we can encourage some trembling and fainting soul, and kindle desire after like precious blessing, it would be cowardice or false prudence not to do it with humility. For this reason the writer ventures once again to relate how he was led into the experience which he has, in these pages, been attempting to describe.

My conversion was so clear and satisfactory that I could never doubt its reality. Need I say it was an eventful day in my history when I first realized God's pardoning mercy, and received the assurance of His favor? The beginnings of this life of loyalty and love I shall never forget. It seems but yesterday, though many years have now passed since the love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and I was reconciled to God, who loved me, even me. It was a change as from death unto life. A new fountain of joys was at once opened in my heart, so exceedingly precious and sweet as utterly to extinguish all desire for that which I had called pleasure before. All my fears of death, judgment, and hell were fully swept away, and I could do nothing but praise God continually. My tastes, desires, and impulses were all changed; "all things became new." I was truly a new creature, and seemed to be in a new world.

With such experiences is it any wonder I imagined the work of moral renovation was perfected, that sin was not only forgiven, but fully expelled from my soul? But soon I discovered my mistake. My highly-wrought emotions subsided, and petty annoyances of life chafed, the temptations of the devil assailed; and then I found out, as pride, envy, unbelief, self-will, and other forms of heart-sin stirred within me, that much needed to be done before I could be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The "old man" was bound, but not cast out; the disease was modified, but not eradicated; sin was suspended, but not fully destroyed. True, sin was stunned and deadened, and held in check by grace; its power was broken, but its pollution continued. It did not reign, but it existed, making its presence felt in a constant "bent to sinning," and at times a painful sense of duality contrasting most strikingly with the sweet feeling of oneness with Christ I now

experience. There were foes within as well as without; some of the Canaanites remained, and were thorns in my side and pricks in my eyes; the flesh and spirit were in a state of antagonism, which I saw to be manifestly only a temporary position -- one or the other must eventually conquer; the light was mingled with darkness, and love with its opposites.

How many headaches and heartaches I had in struggling with my bosom foes, no language can describe. All the time I was enjoying sweet fellowship with Christ, was blessedly conscious of acceptance in Him, was an earnest worker in the Lord's vineyard, and would rather have died than willfully sinned against Him. But though I never was a backslider in the ordinary sense, my Christian life was unsatisfactory, at least to myself. There was much of vacillation about it, sinning and repenting, advancing and retrograding, swinging like a pendulum between God and the world. My experience was full of fits and starts, changeable and uneven. I was conscious also of a mighty want; there seemed a vacuum in my nature which grace had not filled, a strange sense of need, which I cannot describe, but which all who love the Lord Jesus with less than perfect love will understand. My religion moreover was full of action, but I saw little result from my efforts. I fear now that to furnish subject-matter for self-worship was the great end in much that I did, and not the glory of Jesus.

For three years this "half-and-half" sort of life continued, when I was so dissatisfied that I felt unless I had something better I could not go on any longer. Reading Methodist biographies about this time stirred my heart, and filled me with hope for better things. I thought what God had done for others He could do for me; and an inexpressible longing possessed me to enjoy the fullness of which they spoke. I began at once to seek it, determined to give God no rest until I was sanctified wholly. The more earnestly I sought the worse I seemed to become. What a view I had of the sinfulness of my own heart! I saw what a charnel-house it was -- a depth of depravity there which would at once have utterly paralyzed my faith, and extinguished my hope. I then apprehended the goodness of God in not revealing to me my need of cleansing when I sought forgiveness. It was enough that I should realize my guilt and exposure to the pangs of the second death when I came to God at first. Had I then seen my own heart sin as I saw it afterwards, I believe I should have despaired in view of the difficulties; so God's revelation of my need was tempered in mercy until I had strength enough to receive it. It was in my case very similar to that of Professor Upham: "the remains of every form of internal opposition to God appeared to be centered in one point-selfishness!" I had once prayed to be saved from hell, but prayer to be saved from myself now was immeasurably more fervent. How I struggled and wrestled for the victory I shall never be able to tell, but sin and self die hard.

From experiences I had read and listened to I imagined it would be all gladness entering into this rest, but I found it a different process. The way was through the garden and by the cross; I had to learn the hard lesson that every victory is gained by surrender, and that the place of life is the place of death. I saw it all clearly enough, that before there could be a full and glorious resurrection to spiritual life and blessedness, there must first be a complete death of self -- my hands must be empty if I would grasp a whole Christ. Again and again I searched my heart, and surrendered, praying all the while that any idol might be uncovered of which I was unconscious, that the Holy Spirit would make demand after demand until self were exhausted. Perhaps my reputation was the last thing laid on the altar. How concerned I used to be for the good opinion of my fellow mortals, instead of seeking the honor that comes from God only! But I see now that I

never had any reputation until I gave it to God. Blessed paradox, "He that loseth his life for My sake shall save it," and in all other matters this is equally true. Acting upon the advice of one deeply experienced in Divine things, I wrote upon paper the several items included as well as the obligations assumed in the complete consecration of myself to God. I did this to secure definiteness of surrender.

At last I felt sure, so far as I knew it (and we are not responsible for what we do not know), that upon all I had I could honestly inscribe "Sacred to Jesus." The language of my soul was "None of self, and all of Thee." But still the Lord tarried. Why did He not come and fill His Temple? I afterwards saw that it was because I did not receive Him by simple faith. In consecration we give all, by faith we take all, and the one is as essential as the other. I had received justification by faith, but was seeking sanctification by works. What strugglings and wrestlings and tears I might have been saved, had I known the simple way of faith then as I do now; but I had no one to help me.

Some months passed, during which I was at times almost in a state of despair; but my extremity was God's opportunity. At this very juncture, when I felt I must die unless I received the grace, an evangelist came to our town, and proclaimed "full salvation" to be a present duty and privilege. There was no disputing his teaching; if by faith, it must be a present experience. Faith cannot be otherwise than an instantaneous operation. It was like a revelation from heaven to me, and I rejoiced in hope, though not in actual possession of the fullness, during his visit. Some friends entered into rest before he left, but, greatly to my disappointment, I did not. Instead of receiving Christ as my Saviour, to the uttermost in the absence of all feeling, I waited for some wondrous emotion, some great exaltation of soul. In fact, I was seeking the experience of another friend, who had been prostrated under the weight of glory which fell upon him as he wrestled for the blessing. How many seekers make this same mistake! They forget that in all God's works is beautiful variety, and in the spiritual world this is as true as in the natural world. He scarcely ever deals with two persons alike. I had set the Lord a plan to work by, and was disappointed. Instead of in the earthquake, God spoke to me in the "still small voice." I saw my blunder afterwards, and was willing to be blessed in God's own way, with or without emotion. It was then -- oh, glory to His Name! -- He spoke to me the second time, "Be clean."

The circumstances were as follows:-- A few friends who had received "full salvation" during the evangelist's visit decided to meet together week by week, to encourage each other in the way, and assist those who might be seeking the experience. It was at the first meeting where the Lord met me. After listening to their experiences I could bear no longer, but asked them to begin at once to pray that I might enter in. I fell upon my knees, with the determination not to rise again until my request was granted. The passage, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," was instantly applied to my heart, and with such power as I had never felt before. What a fullness of meaning I saw in the words! Was I walking in the light? Truthfully I could answer, "Yes, Lord; so far as I know Thy will I am doing it, and will do it, by Thy grace helping me." I then saw that the passage was not so much a promise as a plain declaration. If I walked in the light, the full cleansing from sin was my heritage, and all I had to do was immediately to claim it. Without a moment's hesitation I did so, and cried out at the top of my voice, "I claim the blessing now." My friends then began to sing --

'Tis done! Thou dost this moment save,  
With full salvation bless;  
Redemption through Thy blood I have,  
And spotless love and peace.

While they sang the refining fire came down and went through my heart, searching, melting, burning, filling all its chambers with light, and hallowing my whole heart to God. Oh, the indescribable sweetness of that moment! All words fail to express the blessedness of the spiritual manifestation of Jesus as my Saviour from all sin. My heart warms as I write at the remembrance of the event which transcends all others in my religious history. It was not so much ecstatic emotion I experienced as an unspeakable peace; "God's love swallowed me up." For a few moments, "all its waves and billows rolled over me." So much afraid was I lest I should lose the delightful sense of the Saviour's presence, that I wished those with me not to speak or disturb me; I wanted to dwell in silence, as my heart was filled with love and gratitude to God.

I need not say the reception of this grace proved an era in my religious life. Many beautiful years have passed away since then. But no words can ever express the complete satisfaction I have in Christ; the sweet sense of rest in His hallowing presence from all worry and care, the ease and joy of His service; not "I must" now, but "I may"; the delight I find in prayer and praise; the increased preciousness and fullness of meaning I see in the Scriptures, and the clear and indubitable witness of cleansing through the blood of Jesus. How I wish I could tell of the sweetness, the richness, and indescribable blessedness of this life of perfect love. I cannot tell the story; but I cannot let it alone. O, for a thousand tongues to proclaim Jesus to men, the mighty Saviour, who is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him! Reader, will you join us and help us to spread the sacred flame?

Source: "New Testament Holiness" by Thomas Cook

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THE END