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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**B. F. CRARY**  
**(Methodist)**

I was born in Jennings County, Indiana, December 12, 1821, and was converted to God in January, 1839, while at school at Pleasant Hill, Ohio. The revival was under a most devoted Presbyterian minister. My conversion was clear, and my peace with God constant and wonderful for months. I was admitted to the Indiana Conference in the fall of 1845, and had been for three years before that under a strong impression that I ought to preach. I had most of the time a consciousness of pardoned sin and fellowship with God, but felt at times great depression of spirits and doubt about my duty.

I did not readily yield to my conviction that I ought to preach, but instead pursued my own chosen path and studied law, and was admitted to practice. I always felt a degree of happiness in talking to others about religious matters, and was active in Christian work. In the summer of 1845 I yielded so far to the voice of the Spirit as to submit my case to the will of the Church, intending to take the decision of the Conference as a final providential direction. I was admitted, and sent to a large circuit.

My conversion had been instantaneous, and about midnight, and the joy of it kept me up all night. So I never doubted that, but had times of dense darkness through which I fought with desperation, holding to the fact of my regeneration and to God's promise. In preaching I had times of great triumph, and then again was overwhelmed with confusion bordering on despair. It seemed as though I was left to myself, and my weakness was unaccountable and my doubts very distressing.

In 1847 I read with great care The Life of John Fletcher, and also his treatise on Christian Perfection. I read them on horseback, studying, praying and often weeping over them and over my own want of such experiences. In 1849, at a revival meeting, in the month of July, while many souls were seeking Christ and I was profoundly interested and affected in talking with them, and was very happy in my own soul, I was led into a faith and an experience I never had before.

While kneeling at the "mourner's bench" and directing a poor sinner how to trust God, a devoted sister, who knew my own convictions and experience, and who enjoyed perfect love herself, said to me very quietly, "Brother Crary, you had better try that yourself, and trust God for full salvation." I said then and there, "I will; I do; bless the Lord!"

This meeting was near Bedford, Lawrence County, Indiana. I had after that a constant experience of the Love of God in my soul, and never afterward went back so far that I fell into the doubts and depressions which before that gave me so much trouble. It was a quiet, subdued, constant peace and joy. I had afterward a time of long and fearful trials, sickness, sorrow and death in my family, stroke after stroke, until a shivering dread of disease and death came over me. I did not fear for myself, but for my remaining children and friends.

I then learned the meaning of "Thy will be done," and finally could say it and feel it. Before that I thought I could and would do any thing for Christ; now I learned to suffer and bear it patiently. That was another great victory, and I rejoiced and was glad, and sang and triumphed. My faith became fixed and I took to myself God's promises. Then I entered into another state of temptation from most unfortunate financial troubles. They were small, but no less grievous. I never lost faith in God nor gave up my trust in any way, but was helpless, not, as I believed, from my own fault, and I had to bear a most cruel weight of suspicion and sometimes harsh accusations. I paid, month by month, debts that oppressed me, and grieved in silence and alone. This I had to bear through weary years. On a small salary I contrived to save some and pay what I could. I dared not go in debt any more nor borrow any thing. During this time I could not explain, and I grew naturally cautious about saying much concerning my Christian experience; but I never denied God nor lost my faith.

Intimate friends blamed me sometimes for being so troubled over this matter. I found myself helpless and broken over this most unfortunate affair. I believe I had friends who could and would have helped me, but I did not ask them nor tell them. But now, having done what I could alone, and having left all with God, still hoping, working, and trusting, I find that my faith has grown into full assurance, and my peace flows like a river. Goodness and mercy fill up the days and nights, and my soul often cries out, "God is good!" I never mistook regeneration for Christian perfection. Both experiences were clear and definite epochs in my life. I have always preached that the Christian may, and indeed must, be sanctified wholly. At this time, March 4, 1887, I find my faith simple and my peace perfect. I put myself and my family in God's hands with such a sweet and precious trust that my burden seems all cast upon the Lord. I find myself in the most joyful fellowship with God's people. My whole soul overflows with gratitude and praise. So I have enjoyed this gift and grace, thirty-eight years, during which I have never lost this sense of rest and peace with God, though at times in the midst of manifold troubles.

I had lived, after my conversion, ten years in a state too fluctuating and uncertain, and had sought perfect love most earnestly at intervals, but did not find it until I fully believed and obtained the baptism of power through the Holy Ghost. I have never in the least degree lost faith in my brethren in the Church nor joined with those who indulged in faultfinding and denunciations, but have lived in peace, and done what I could to save souls, having the sweetest fellowship with all Christians.

B. F. CRARY SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., March 5, 1887.

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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THE END