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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

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(Episcopal)

I had a lighthearted child life, and never thought of being religious. In my eleventh year, in the Congregational Church, where my father and mother worshipped, I listened to the earnest presentation of gospel truths by Dr. E. N. Kirk. The sense of sin was awakened. One night I had gone to bed, but the weight of my sin I could not bear. I jumped up, sought my mother's bedside, and with sobs and tears besought her to pray for me. Kneeling there together the answer came. I arose "in the light." In the sweet relief of sins forgiven I quietly slept. Sad to say, those were the days when little or no help was given the child-convert. I know the matter was discussed of joining the Church, but put aside as not suitable for one so young. Thus my early ardor soon burned itself out after a few little prayer meetings which I called among my childish friends.

I soon began to see inconsistencies in those about me who called themselves Christians and were accepted by the Church. This practice increased as I soon after entered the family of a loved aunt and uncle who were childless, and held me as their own. These were the years of antislavery conflict. My relatives had been excommunicated from the orthodox Congregational Church on account of their outspoken sympathy with the slaves. So ardent was their adherence to their great champion, William Lloyd Garrison, that with him their hearts revolted from the teachings of the Church, and from the Bible that was made the bulwark of slavery. my mind worked something in this way, "How is it that I see in these who regard not the Church or the Bible, such strong and active sympathy for the suffering and oppressed, just as Jesus preached and lived while others, who are so staunch for the Church and its requirements, seem dead to these Christ-like demands?" Thus I puzzled and quietly asked myself, "What is truth?" declaring at the same time, "If ever I am a Christian I will be a real one."

Overlying these depths was a love of gay society, and dawning womanhood found me still unsettled and questioning. I must not omit here that during all these passing years I attended Sabbath-School at the Congregational Church, as it was my mother's wish. I am sure it was due to the teaching of two faithful devoted women, that the early call to Christ was not swallowed up in a maze of worldliness and unreality, from which the religion of antislavery was not powerful enough

to keep. I very briefly pass over the years that introduced me to a life of intense joy and satisfaction in all that the senses can crave, of the sudden and bitter grief that plunged me into utter darkness, and tell only of the supreme moment when God's infinite love pierced that darkness, and a heart utterly broken and helpless, alone in a foreign land, heard the long-neglected call of the patient, loving Christ, and responded without a thought of self, "Now, Lord, I will live for Thee!" Then followed a long and lonely voyage, a freed soul chained to a weary, helpless body, but "bearing all things, hoping all things," for the love of Christ.

With the return to home and friends came blessed work for Jesus, and, without knowing the gospel of healing for the body, life was a continual testimony to the "quickening of the mortal body" by the "Holy Ghost that dwelleth in you."

To read that "In the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..." became to my soul an immediate possession, my entire being responded to its power, for "out of the depths" had I cried, "My God, I will live for thee!"

"The victory that overcometh" seemed easy, it became a testimony that could not be withheld, and, woman that I was, with the Church traditions my birthright, there was a fire within that all the cold water without could not quench; and, diffident as any real woman must be, I yet sought a church where free vent could be given to the pent-up Holy Ghost, or I must cry, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned!" Little by little, God in His goodness led me to know little companies where His "Spirit had free course," and finally into that large place where my husband and I have walked these twenty years in the "work of faith," knowing God's faithfulness to answer prayer, to deliver from temptation, to keep from evil, to preserve unto His heavenly kingdom, to make His service a rest, a joy; where we are not continually digging up our hearts to see what roots are there, but sure that He who has "planted us in the likeness of his resurrection" is attending to the "growing up into Him," "unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ."

It has become the normal condition to "be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God doth keep..."

In the years before my faith became really active, in all time of need my Bible was not an unused book ; its words were food to my soul, many of which were stored in my memory, and I am positive that God was watering that which was of His own planting, so that in the harvest-time of my sorrow, like goodly fruit the promises fell from the bough of the Tree of Life at the lightest real touch of faith. There was no digging necessary then; the subsoil was laid bare, and quickly the Word became "spirit and life," the seal of the divine union. Thus is explained the easy natural reception of "The Promise of the Father."

As I afterward came to know, my union with Christ was only kept unbroken as, by a momentary faith, I reckoned myself "dead unto sin and alive unto God." Not a passive, but an active faith, that heeds the injunction, to "watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation," so abiding in Him that the life of Christ is renewed day by day. This is no life of constraint, or anxious care, but a rest in His love. The bridegroom of my soul hath brought me to His banqueting house, and His banner over me is love. My heart is His kingdom, and my eyes are unto Him.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:8,9.

LUCRETIA A. CULLIS BEACON HILL PLACE,
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Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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THE END