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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**WILLIAM DAY**  
**(Methodist)**

My seventeenth birthday was to me the period of religious resolve. The decision was full and earnest. Being previously much devoted to sinful society and worldly amusements, I now renounced them all and gave myself up to the work for Jesus, looking to the Church to direct my efforts, and resolving to be obedient to each indication of duty. I was at once employed as Tract distributor, Sunday-school teacher and exhorter, and spent much time in visiting the sick and dying. Being "slow to believe," my experience for some months was quite indistinct, but improving by gradual development, rather than marked by any sudden transition from darkness to light. Indeed, religion appeared to me as a work to be performed, rather than as an experience to be enjoyed. That beautiful promise from the Proverbs was especially impressed upon my youthful mind, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths!"

Clearly , as the results of this divine guidance, I found myself, in the year 1850, in the ministry of the M. E. Church. Between the doctrine of the Church and my own views there was entire harmony. I was especially delighted with the Wesleyan theory of Christian perfection, and in theory heartily embraced it.

In preaching on the subject, one Sabbath morning, I was met at the steps of the pulpit by a stranger, with the interrogations, "Please, sir, permit me to inquire, does your experience accord with your preaching? Do you enjoy the grace you have offered to us this morning?" It was with painful confusion I was compelled to confess a discrepancy which ought not to have existed.

Soon after this it was my great privilege to be pastor of the family of one of our beloved Bishops. The clear exemplification of holiness gave intensity to my desire for full salvation, and led me to seek it as my desire for full salvation, and led me to seek it as the great want of my soul, and the highest necessity in my ministry. In much prayer and self-denial I wanted for the Heavenly baptism. And, one day, while going from Morristown, N. J., to Bernardsville, alone, at mid-day, I felt a peculiar nearness to Jesus, and looking up into the bright heavens I said, "Blessed Saviour, I

do want to be entirely Thine; I cannot make this heart of mine any better; I now give it to Thee to be made pure, it is Thine now -- mould it according to Thine own will!"

The offering was accepted, and my soul filled in a wonderful manner with peace, light, love, and power!

The Christian life now, to my mind, assumed the high and inspiring aspect of communion, walking with God. And with new lustre did such passages as the following shine, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His son, cleanseth us from all sin." Holiness, as an attainable blessing, appeared as the grand central truth of the Bible, around which all the precepts and promises revolved in beautiful harmony.

But I had not yet learned the necessity of a distinct profession of this grace.

Occupying new positions of still greater responsibilities, having committed to my charge several hundreds of members annually, some of whom panting for the light and encouragement on this subject, it was my duty, as a Methodist pastor to give, the question, "How can I meet my obligations in this particular?" became one of profound interest. Nor was it free from embarrassments. I could not -- I dared not be silent, and yet reasons, such as occur to almost every brother in our ministry, strongly discouraged the profession of it. So I resolved to try to diffuse the spirit of holiness, in a general way -- but not to encourage the profession. To meet more fully these obligations I also had a meeting on each Saturday evening for the promotion of holiness. In these meetings I read, talked, sang, and prayed about entire sanctification as a blessing which might be obtained, and encouraged aspirations for it.

And, sometimes impelled by the holy Power which came upon me, rising superior to my prejudices against professing, I would say to those assembled, "I do feel all given up to God, and am filled with His Spirit!" etc.

These meetings were signally accompanied with the presence and blessings of Christ. Hallowed seasons! never to be forgotten!

But the reaping was accordingly to the sowing, though continued for some five or six years in the city of Newark and Jersey City, not one person that I am aware of was led into the clear light of "perfect love!"

All this time I believed I had some experience of the blessing--at least was near enough to it to feel its power, and to be attracted and inspired by its glory. And often did I wish that God would raise up more Fletchers and Bramwells who would boldly declare this great salvation, and in light of those examples might be seen the living "beauty of holiness." Being deeply sensible of my own mental and physical weakness, and not knowing but that these were still more perceptible to others, and less understood, I feared that my testimony, if given, would hinder rather than advance the great cause of holiness.

During the past year, from various causes, I had been less active in promoting this blessed experience. Doubts of the expediency of professing such a state of grace increased even to expressing opposition, in more than one instance. Severely criticising the spirit and life of some, making such profession, I feared that the sacred standard of entire sanctification was being lowered -- and decided that the best and wisest course for earnest Christians was, to make the consecration to God, be obedient to the revealings of the divine Will, and thus look for the gradual developments of sanctification in the heart and life.

But I was not at rest. These reasonings were outside of my proper sphere, and within the chilly regions of speculation.

About two months since I was profoundly convinced that if I would fulfill my Heaven-appointed mission, I must become definite in this matter -- I must become a witness for full salvation -- then the power for which I sighed should be mine. And laying aside all prejudices, ceasing all criticisms on the lives of professors (deeply regretting that they had ever been indulged in), I vowed before Christ in solemn covenant, that if He would bestow His might grace on one so unworthy, and help me to keep it, I would be a witness of it all times when His praise or the good of souls required it. Then did He uncover to me a glory I had not seen, and fill me with a peace deeper and sweeter than I had ever conceived.

I could no longer doubt the propriety, or even the necessity of giving testimony. The difficulty was to avoid making this blessing my constant theme. My poor heart seemed thrilled and melted with the hallowing flames of perfect love. Salvation in glorious floods rolled through my adoring wondering soul. I felt a tender sweetness of spirit toward every living being, and wanted to tell every friend I had ever known, "how great things in the Lord had done for me." Intensely did I desire to draw my people into the same light and liberty. Blessed be God, some of them were soon with me rejoicing in the same grace, among them my own precious wife. Glory be to the Holy Trinity!

The rapture of emotions has of necessity, in some measure, subsided, returning at intervals, (generally when testimony is given); faith, too, has had it be tried -- but it abides firm in the all-cleansing blood -- and its blessed peace and strength remain, and I trust will ever remain.

Entire sanctification now appears in my mind a distinct work of the Holy Spirit, standing out most prominently as a pillar of living light, diffusing its heavenly influences through every chamber of my soul. The witness is also as clear, and far more powerful than was the witness of pardon or regeneration. "The Spirit" is imparted that I "might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

And with it is the deep conviction, that if this blessing be retained in all its light and power, there must be distinct and unwavering testimony.

In writing these deep and most sacred exercises of my nature for publication, I almost tremble at the serious responsibilities involved, from which I would constitutionally shrink -- but if they will, in the least, minister to the praise of redeeming grace, excite the aspiration, or

strengthen the confidence of others -- the results will more than justify the responsibility assumed in the name of Jesus.

Henceforth be it my highest ambition to be a faithful, consistent witness, to full salvation through the blood of the Lamb!

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END