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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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**(Methodist)**

In the summer of 1844, a Camp Meeting was held near the village where I was pastor, in Oneida County, New York. The presiding elder was absent, and a great amount of care fell on me as the consequence.

As the meeting progressed, from day to day, some little good seemed to be achieved; but my own hands were so tied, and my attention so absorbed with the cares incident to it, that I experienced a growing depression of spirit.

The Sabbath was a day of special perplexity and mental distress. There were many rude and disorderly persons on the ground, and there seemed an utter want of spiritual power in the ministry and the church, to control the boisterous elements. A determined and almost desperate effort of the committee of order, resulted, however, in driving the evil-minded ones from the place, and restoring complete quiet.

When this was accomplished, and I found myself relieved of the anxiety and care that had weighted so heavily upon me, I began to feel great pain of heart at the reflection that, much as I had toiled to make the meeting a success, my own soul had scarce received a crumb of grace, through all its services, and this was the last night. I longed then to be alone with God, and pour out all my sorrows before Him.

In a remote part of the ground was a small tent, in which were a number of persons, engaged in prayer meeting. I stole quietly in and bowed myself down in prayer. It was my aim to be unnoticed, for I felt that no one of the company could apprehend my feelings of inward desolation, or at all appreciate my depth of self-loathing and yearning after God.

I remained kneeling, I suppose, two or three hours, and my exercises were throughout much as if there were a dialogue being held between my soul and Jesus. As I began to utter myself to God, in prayer, I found a sad delight in telling him my weakness, and failures, and sins, and in

recognizing the utterness of my native pollution, wretchedness, and helplessness. But in the process of self-loathing and contrition, I had been almost unconsciously drawing nigh to God, and I soon came to be sensible of the drawings of God's Spirit, in a marked degree.

Then began a process of distinct and heart-felt surrender, by which I gave up in detail the objects I held dear. They seemed to present themselves to me one by one, or in classes, and I saw that God required me to hand them forth to Him, and divest myself of all feelings of right or ownership in them, acknowledging, from the depth of my spirit, God sole proprietor of all. Meantime, all my habits of life, all my modes of thought, and all my motives, passed in review, under the blazing light that was in my soul; and there was felt, and in the course of the evening expressed the utmost readiness and depth of desire to shape my whole future life upon the pattern of self-denial and cross-bearing fidelity which the Holy Spirit seemed to present before me.

Thus one point after another was settled; and, at every "Yes," my soul drew consciously nearer and nearer to God; till presently, I found I had nothing more to surrender. I felt a degree of regret that I could give no more, and searched all about in quest of another offering, but in vain, and I exclaimed, with some disappointment, "Is this all?" I had seen the time when I thought I could ill afford to surrender all my great interests into the hands of God; but now that the offering had been laid on the altar, I was astonished at the smallness of the gift. "Will God regard it?" thought I, "that God before whom Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beast thereof sufficient for a burnt offering?"

But, now, what more was to be done? I was fully conscious that all my being was rendered up to God, a living sacrifice; but where were the striking emotional experiences that, in the case of so many of my elder brethren, had constituted, as I had always inferred from their manner of relating it, the one essential fact of their experience of full salvation? Nothing of all that -- absolutely nothing appeared in my own case. After a little I said "What next?" and I waited, looking steadfastly to Jesus, that I might receive divine light in the manner God should appoint.

While thus waiting, this scripture came to my thought and I repeated it: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Do I not thus present myself a sacrifice to God?" I asked, and at once replied, "I know I do." "If then," said I, further soliloquizing, "it is acceptable, will it not be accepted?" I was consciously strengthened by the word of God, thus applied, to hold on in my waiting and inquiring attitude.

Next came this, "Then shall ye seek me, and ye shall find me when ye search for me with all your heart." I asked, "Do I not search for God with all my heart?" and answered, "I know I do. No part of my heart is laggard in this search, and no truant affection wanders toward a counter object." "Ye shall find me," seemed now to bring me additional strength to trust and wait before God.

Finally came this, "Wherefore come out from among them, and ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I asked myself again the test question, "Do I thus come out from the world, and from whatever there is of the world in the Church, to stand

alone with Christ and in Christ?" "Yes, I know I do." But God says in the text, "I will receive you." "Does He receive me or does He not?" I saw I must answer in my heart one way or the other. I said, "I am, indeed, unworthy that God should do this great thing for me, but then, He cannot be inconsistent with Himself; He commanded me thus to give myself to Him; He gave me the desire to do it, the light to do it, and the power to do it. So He has wrought in me to will and to do of His own good pleasure in this whole matter. Will He then refuse to receive me? No, He cannot deny Himself."

Then I began to say very quietly and solemnly, "Thou dost receive me!" I repeated the words many times, simply to honor God's faithfulness, and not at all with the view to note what result, if any, might come to my emotional nature. As I thus continued to say, "Thou dost receive me," I became conscious of an increase of strength to assert the gracious truth; but beyond that there was no emotional change. I arose at length, and went to my rest, still repeating, "Thou dost receive me."

Just there, so far as emotion was concerned, I remained for several weeks. I had no ecstatic joy; none of the raptures of which I had heard so much. I found that I had the fact of salvation--not yet the joy. A sense of weakness, not wholly depressing, continually abode with me; but from the hour -- the moment, when I dared to say, "Thou dost receive me," I was completely saved.

After about two weeks, during which the Lord taught me many valuable lessons touching the exceeding worth of purity above joy, so that I came to prize and covet only that; then He was pleased, and has been pleased, from time to time, ever since, to bestow on His unworthy servant most blissful and enrapturing tokens of His love.

From the date of the experience here briefly told, to the present hour, my interest has been deep and constant in the spread of the doctrine and experience of holiness in the earth. The flame that was then kindled, burns now in my soul, and I know that, whatever there has been in my life or ministry of power to honor God and save souls, is to be attributed to the work wrought that night in my soul, and to the repeated baptisms of love and power with which God has been pleased to crown my life in the years that have followed.

See yon rock amidst the ocean,  
How the billows storm and rage!  
Fearless of their mad commotion,  
Firm it stands from age to age.

Tempest after tempest rages,  
All their fury is in vain:  
Still it stands -- "The Rock of Ages,"  
Rock of Ages, to remain.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END