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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)

As a minister of the M. E. Church, I intelligently and conscientiously held to its distinguishing doctrine of perfect love, or entire sanctification; and, as occasion seemed to require, discoursed on the holy theme, under the light of the Lord, the Spirit of God, and the authorities of our Church, but without the invaluable aid of a personal experience of the blessed verity.

About three years ago I went to the Camp-meeting at Sing, Sing, deeply feeling the imperative need of a far larger measure of purity, and power, and peace, than I ever enjoyed, though, beyond all doubt, I had been walking within the circle of the divine favor.

At that sacred place, among my beloved and trusted associates, and in the sweet meetings for the promotion of holiness, which I attended, I heard one and another speak, with meekness, but grateful confidence, of the present and abiding enjoyment of that great grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby they were enabled to live a life of faith "when sin had been all destroyed." I knew that my Saviour was no respecter of persons; that the riches of grace which He freely bestowed upon some of His disciples, He would as freely bestow upon others, yea, and upon all, if they were as willing and ready to receive; and, so, I asked myself: Are you willing, to forsake all for Christ's sake? to become singular, perhaps, for His sake? to follow Him whosoever He my lead? And I thought my heart answered, Yes, Lord, I am willing, as Thou wilt help. I then set myself to the work of renewed and entire consecration; to the seeking after increased moral ability, when--I felt there was weakness, and saw there were hindrances to be removed; and to the hastening, out of "that blessed hope of the glorious appearing, of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ," in the realm of my own soul, as my Saviour even to the uttermost.

It was not long, before "showers of refreshing" fell from the presence of the Lord. Refining fire, indeed, went through my heart, illuminated my soul, scattered its life through every part, and, I then fondly believed, sanctified me wholly unto God.

In some of the smaller meetings, where handful of congenial souls were gathered for prayer and narration of religious experiences, looking to deep, immediate, mutual improvement, I felt as though fervid waves of divine influence struck and passed through my entire being, leaving a delightful consciousness of moral refinement and elevation.

It became my practice, at night, after my family had retired, to throw open my study window, and kneeling down beside it, with my face lifted up towards the pure sky and the burning stars, though they were the eye-beams of God, the searcher of hearts, there to wrestle for hour, that God's Spirit would help me into conscious and entire surrender of my whole will and being, with every thing in any way attached thereto into His hand, for evermore, unto whom I intellectually acknowledged, I absolutely belonged. And blessed be His holy name forever. He did help me into this consciousness. There did come over me the feeling, that I was all the Lord's. I could see that the consecration of myself and my all to God was now complete. That as Elijah's sacrifice was all surrounded by the trench and the water, and separated from the contiguous land, so my whole spirit was now separated from every unholy attachment, and had gone clean over into the blessed presence of God. The struggle for perfect freedom, from in-lurking corruption, I felt to be over, and my soul rested sweetly, completely in Jesus.

Ever since I have been graciously enabled to keep my consecration entirely unto the Lord. Ever and anon, I look into my soul to see if all its faculties and powers consent, unhesitatingly, to God's sovereignty and ownership, and find that they do; and then I look away to Jesus, to be sure that He continues to accept and keep almightily what He has enabled me to offer, and find that He does; and so my soul is preserved in perfect peace.

Experience has taught me, that entire sanctification is not the whole of Christian perfection, but rather only the negative side of it; and many occasions are offered for maturity in Christian character and conduct. Instead of resting satisfied, for a moment, in any present attainments, I feel constantly stimulated to do "this one thing," forget the things which are behind; reach towards those which are before; and "press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling, of God in Christ Jesus." I am sure it is true, that there has been a growth of grace in me as never before. The region of religious experience and attainment opens up wondrously before me. The visions of purity and the promises of God beckon me on from grace to grace. In this land of Beulah, I find flowery spiritual valleys, with fountains of living water; hill sides, balmy with the breath of the Lord, and fragrant with His presence; mountain tops from which indeed, are caught bright glimpses of the glory dwelling in Emanuel's land; while every where, along the pilgrim's path, are met blessed companions, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are traveling to the "Holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of Heaven."

I find, resulting from this higher and holier religious enjoyment, into which it has pleased God to call me, "who am less than the least of all saints," 1. A sweeter, profounder, uninterrupted peace of soul; 2. An increasing ability to love the Lord Jesus Christ for what He is in Himself -- His spotless, moral beauty; 3. An increasing, longing for the salvation of sinners and sanctification of believers with corresponding effort; 4. An increasing readiness in preparing to lead the services of the sanctuary, with relish for the discharge of all my religious duties, and boldness and power in declaring "the counsel of God ;" 5. An increasing, delightful consciousness of inward purity. My

whole soul feels filled as with "soft, white light," which seems to bathe it, and is so pleasantly reflected on all outward objects, and I have the growing assurance that

"I shall summer high in bliss, Upon the hills of God."

No stranger am I, in these times, to the consciousness of perfect harmony with the whole unfallen, unstained, or renewed, and restored universe, whether physical or moral. I often seem to touch it, at every point; sink down into it, mingle with it, and do feel

"I cannot half express
Yet would not all conceal."

In these blissful moment I freely anticipate "what shall be" in the heirship of God, and joint-heirship with Christ, when "all things" shall be ours:-- "Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, things present, things to come," all shall be ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's! Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END