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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

A. D. MERRILL
(Methodist)

In the year 1820, I was suddenly and powerfully awakened to a sense of guilt and sin, and that day, at seven o'clock in the evening, I was as powerfully regenerated; my evidence of acceptance was without a doubt. I was careful to obey every impulse of duty, and in a few months became deeply impressed, that I must surrender the balance of my life to the work of the Gospel Ministry. These impressions ultimately ripened into a satisfactory conviction of positive duty. I went about the town of my residence visiting the sick and dying, and several sick and appointed unto death were happily converted to God, and died in great peace.

I was invited, at length, to hold a religious meeting on the Sabbath, and to take a text. I moved forward at every opening door that was presented, without my own agency, and from this beginning was constantly prompt to preach, and acquiesced in all that I could. As I looked forward to a life of toil in the great and sacred calling, I was constantly thrown upon myself to investigate the motives which impelled me to action. And the more severe the scrutiny, the more vividly were developed the remains of depravity. My pride of heart was discovered by the opposite effects resulting from a discharge of religious duties. If greatly assisted I was exalted, if otherwise I was severely mortified. This, with various other discoveries of inbred corruption produced painful and deep searching of heart.

These views, together with the sacredness of the calling before me, wrought powerfully upon my mind. I was in actual distress of spirit, and thus brought into a state of "Hungering and thirsting after Righteousness." I saw God to be holy, Heavens to be holy, angels to be holy, the spirits of just men to be holy, and that I must be so myself, or never secure a lot and part with those holy ones. And O, how much I needed this grace in order to understand myself, and to preach a holy Gospel. And especially did I need this, as I was so very deficient in all the outward and literary qualifications for the Gospel ministry.

The idea seemed preposterous for me to engaged in reforming others, without being fully reformed myself. About this time I went to Boston and spent a Sabbath in the city, heard good and excellent preaching. But, what interested me most was, to be permitted to attend a general Band meeting, at the Broomfield Street Church. I could not have been introduced into a more welcome,

though to me new scene--the influence of that meeting was greatly encouraging to my panting and longing heart. Such manifest depths of devotion, such simplicity of spirit, and strength of confidence in God, I had, up to that hour, been a stranger to.

I soon after was induced by my presiding elder to attend a Camp Meeting about to be held at Sandwich, N. H.; this was the first instance of my attendance upon such an occasion. At first the scene was novel, and I was too much under the influence of curiosity. But, after a day or two, I heard a sermon on the subject of Purity of heart, which was as balm to my longing spirit. I wept, I sighed. I panted after God, as the heart panteth after the cooling water-brook. I felt most perfectly subdued in heart, and the presence of God was so manifest, that I did not wish to move or speak, lest I should disturb that awful sense of God's renovating presence and power to save from all sin.

Under the gracious and overwhelming influence the Saviour was presented to the eye of faith, suspended upon the cross; He looked upon me and smiled, that instant I yielded my soul, body and spirit up to Him, to live, to obey, to suffer, or to reign with Him forever. Christ was my only hope, my righteousness, my all in all. With that smile I felt a renovating influence pervading soul and body, and thus felt cleansed from all unrighteousness, the assurance then given that I was wholly the Lord's surpasses all description, language is too poor to set it forth, and with the poet I could exclaim!

"The promise stands forever sure,
And we shall in Thine image shine,
Partakers of a nature pure,
Holy, angelical, divine,
In spirit join'd to Thee, the son,
As Thou art with the Father, one."

My will was lost in His when the Blood of the Lamb was applied to my heart. I could say and feel, to live, to die, to suffer, to reign, despised, poor or supplied, I could leave all to His Sovereign sway to choose and to command. I could never adopt such language before, and yet it was so reasonable, so perfectly proper to place my entire being, destiny, whatever I had or was, or ever should be, at the supreme disposal of unerring wisdom and superlative goodness. O, the union with the infinite Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- the altogether lovely -- a heaven below to go to Heaven in. I felt as docile as a lamb; my peace was steady, my hope full of immortality.

From this blessed epoch, preaching, praying, believing was easy, the burden was light. Nothing so pleasant, so desirable as to abide in Christ as the branch is in the vine. Moreover, from this period my usefulness became greatly augmented, and great was the gathering of the people unto our blessed Redeemer.

This Divine Power has been my constant attendant for forty-five years; it has given character to my whole subsequent history, and bless God it does not forsake me in old age. An incident occurred as soon as this grace was mine; I asked my blessed Saviour what He had for me to do at that Camp Meeting? I felt instantly directed to a neighboring tent, where there was something to be done. I went, and on reaching the place there were two persons there. I at first felt a check, and thought my impression was from the enemy. But I resolved to know if it was the Spirit

of the Lord, or from the evil spirit. So I asked the two (they both were young ladies) whether they enjoyed religion? I found them under awakenings, so I collected in a few Christians to join me in a prayer for their salvation. I took the case of one of them to the Lord in faith, and in less than a moment I became so convinced of her freedom from guilt, that I exclaimed at the top of my voice, the work is done! the work is done! She broke forth in shouts of praise to God for delivering grace.

Instantly, the other asked imploringly, can you beg for me in faith? Yes, I replied. We bowed, and in precisely the same manner of the first, she came out praising God. After this short but thorough work I listened with great delight to their developments of experience; they were both school teachers. I never saw them before then, nor have I ever since.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END