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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**JOSEPH GRANT MORRISON**  
**1871 -- 1939**  
**(A Nazarene General Superintendent)**

It was in the second year of my ministry. I was twenty-four years old. The call to preach came to me when I was but a lad, and was, at the time, in a backslidden state. Sitting in the old homemade pew at the little Methodist Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, I was definitely and distinctly impressed that what the preacher was doing in the pulpit, I would have to do when I grew up.

I keenly resented the call to God's service. The ministers whom I knew were not, for the most part, of the kind that would inspire a boy to imitate them. Consequently when the Spirit would impress my boyish heart that I must some day proclaim the gospel of Christ, I fiercely refused, and hardened my heart.

However, later on, when a schoolhouse revival broke out, and conviction settled darkly upon me, I sought to compromise with the Lord and to secure my salvation without entering the ministry. It seemed as if He consented to this, and after a terrible struggle with the hatred which I had nursed in my heart, I gave up and was graciously converted, with the idea of preaching entirely forgotten. Indeed, I served as a youth in the church, and went away to college and was almost through, before the conviction that I must be a preacher became peremptory. In the sickening struggle that ensued because of this, I almost gave up my hope of heaven.

At length, rather than be lost and damned, I gave a reluctant consent. Driven thus to the task, and being a stranger to the thrilling, sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, made the whole work of the ministry irksome, distasteful and extremely objectionable. There are phases of the work of a preacher of the gospel that are very trying and difficult even when one is filled and blessed with the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, but to the man or woman who is a stranger to this divine endowment, the whole work of the ministry becomes an impossible, a confusing and distracting effort. No wonder our Lord commanded His disciples to tarry for their Pentecost.

My great difficulty was a gun powdery temper. Under trying circumstances it would explode with a bang, and my eyes would blaze, cheeks burn, and tongue wag with mean, sarcastic, angry and bitter remarks. Although I had been taught that every case of this was backsliding, and although I faithfully apologized and got reclaimed, nevertheless I was subjected to this sinful, carnal habit every few months. Now it was the church board, then it was the Sunday school superintendent, again it was the good lady who led the choir, while my heart was in a chronic and almost constant rebellion over the lack of finances, the shabby clothes and the poor food which we constantly faced.

I had in the meanwhile moved to a circuit with five preaching places. To care for this a team of horses was necessary. An opportunity to secure two unbroken "broncos" for an astonishingly small price induced me to buy, and the task of breaking them to the harness and buggy was almost fatal to all the piety I had. They were wild, difficult to control, ready to kick and run at almost anything, or at any time.

One day late in October, not long before the annual conference was to sit, I started on Saturday afternoon to a distant appointment in order to preach there the next morning, and then to preach at another place some less distance away, and finally at home on Sunday night. The broncos were a bit chilly with the nipping October weather, and ready to run, plunge, kick or anything else that struck their fancy. A tumbling piece of newspaper, carried by the wind, whirled beneath them. With a great plunge they both started, wildly kicking.

I sawed on them with the reins, and we raced galloping down the road. At length my temper blew up. "If you are going to run and kick," I shouted, "I'll give you something to run and kick for." With that I held the reins in one hand, caught up the whip with the other, and standing up in the buggy seat, laid the lash to them. They leaped and raced and ran and plunged. The region was reasonably level, and I balanced myself in the swaying, rearing, cavorting buggy. We streaked along like we had been shot out of a huge cannon. At length they tired, and then I had them, for I made them run, and never stopped lashing them till we whirled around the corner of the farm home where I was to spend the night.

But I was so angry that I was completely and hopelessly backslidden. Indeed, but for decency's sake, I could have done those horses great bodily harm, even after we had come to a stop in the farmer's yard. With hatred and disgust for myself, and fury in my heart and brain, I stabled the beasts. I was so ashamed and humiliated and still so angry and furious that in sheer self-abasement, I bent my head over the feed box in the horses' stall, and wept bitter, scalding tears of hate. I then and there took a deep vow that I would never preach again. I determined that I was through. That I could not stay saved and consequently would not be a hypocrite and a menace to the holy ministry of Christ.

Full of this bitter vow, and hating myself with keen desperation, I fed the team, blanketed them, and then slowly walked toward the farmhouse. "Come in," called the pleasant voice of the farmer's wife, as I knocked on the door. As soon as I stepped within the room she took one look at me and then solicitously inquired, "What's the matter with you, pastor?" I mumbled a false statement to the effect that there was nothing the matter with me. She promptly replied, "Yes, there

is; you don't usually look like a thundercloud. Neither do you usually drive into our yard with your horses on the run, and covered with lather and foam. What is the matter?"

She was a mature woman and a ripened Christian. I was twenty-four. Her solicitous inquiry opened the flood gates of my heart and I poured out a confession of the whole wretched situation. I burst into tears. "I can't stay saved," I wailed. "About every so often I explode with this awful temper, and then for several hours I hardly know what I am about. I hate myself for it, and I am so bitterly ashamed of it that I have solemnly resolved never to disgrace the pulpit again by appearing in it, and I shall never attempt to preach any more." The good sister was mixing baking powder biscuits for supper, and had her hands in the ingredients. She calmly continued to mix the dough as I passionately wept out my shame, my confession, and my resolve never to preach any more. At length she said, "I know what you need." At this remark, I burst forth at her, "I know what I need; I need salvation; but I suppose that I can get it again. This is not the first time this has happened."

"No, no," she replied quietly. "I do not mean that what you need is just to be converted again. Not that, you need something more than that, you need to be sanctified wholly." "Sanctified wholly," I queried, in much wonderment. "What in the world is that?" "Don't you know what entire sanctification is?" she answered. "Have you never read 'Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection'?" "Yes," I answered. "That's in the Course of Study." "Didn't you know what he was talking about in that book?" she inquired. "No, I don't think I did," I made answer. "At least I feel sure that I didn't get out of it what you seem to have found there. What is this entire sanctification that you say I need?" "It's a second work of grace that one obtains after one has been converted. It's what the disciples received at Pentecost." My next question burst from my lips like the discharge of a rifle. "Will it take the temper out of a fellow?" I almost shouted.

"That's what it did for me," she replied. "You mean that you have it?" I asked in considerable wonderment. "The Lord very graciously gave me that experience," she quietly answered. "But is such an experience taught in the Bible?" I persisted. For reply she immediately ceased mixing the material for the biscuits, and rubbing the dough from her hands, reached for her Bible. She turned to Isaiah and read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

I listened in wonderment. This was my first Bible study on the blessing of holiness of heart as a second definite work of grace. As she looked at me inquiringly, after reading the marvelous statement from Isaiah, I answered rather dumbly, "I never knew that was there." She turned familiarly to the New Testament, and read again, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." She again turned an inquiring look toward me. "I've read that before," I answered, "but I didn't know what it meant."

The farmer's wife again turned the pages of her Bible and read, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And with the turn of a few more leaves, she read again, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." And again, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." She paused,

looked me over for a moment thoughtfully, and then remarked, "That doesn't sound much like the way you acted this afternoon, coming around the corner looking like a thundercloud and your team all covered with sweat." I had no answer. Again she read, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." And again, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Seated there in the kitchen of a South Dakota farm home, I saw as by the illumination of the Spirit the truth of the second work of grace. That there was a gun powdery, carnal disposition left in my heart after conversion; that it was the purpose of God to cleanse this away. As I saw the truth in the scripture quotations that this Christian woman was reading to me, I recognized immediately why my ministry had been so barren and so irksome. I needed Pentecost just as the disciples did. She read one more, "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." I fell on my knees by the kitchen chair and asked her in a humble tone to please pray for me. Then and there I was reclaimed for the last time.

Though I did not receive the blessing of a clean heart for many months after that, yet I saw a great hope ahead, and was given divine strength to fight a bit harder and to keep my heart from yielding to the assaults of carnality. I became a seeker for the second work of grace. And what a seeker I was. At the first holiness meeting that I heard of, I went to the altar three times a day for ten days. The preacher, an uncouth old chap, with a rasping voice would kneel down in front of me and pray loudly, "O Lord, what that conceited young feller needs is to be killed. Kill 'im, Lord, kill 'im!" When he had run the gamut on this, he would beckon to a booming voiced farmer and urged him to pray. With a roar, he would cry, "What we need is a first class funeral. Back up your hearse, O Lord, and load this young preacher in and haul him off and bury him." This was a regular feature of that holiness meeting three times a day for ten days.

I did not get the blessing but I did learn a lot about these matters. I read everything about this wonderful grace that I could find. We were so hard up financially that we went without meat for nearly a month in order to get money enough to buy Wood's "Perfect Love." I read it through and through. I began preaching on the need of the second work of grace. I described its characteristics, confessing frankly that I did not have it, but was hot on the trail of it. Several of my hearers were under conviction for the blessing before I had received it myself. I consecrated all. I abandoned everything to Jesus my Lord and Master. I did just what the old preacher and the old farmer prayed should happen, I slowly died.

Finally I reached the place where the great God dared to release His burning baptism upon my heart. It came one day as I sat praying in my study chair. Like a great spiritual light it slowly rose above the horizon of my soul. It shined and burned and melted away all the feverish, gun powdery, carnal, disposition that I had. It filled my heart and my life. It cleansed and sanctified my soul. The Holy Ghost had come! He transformed my life; He transformed my ministry. From that moment it was a joy to serve Him; a thrilling pleasure to preach His truth; a glad privilege to suffer for Him; and a deep satisfaction to be in His wonderful service. I shall praise Him forever for His goodness to me.

Source: "Interesting Incidents" by J. G. Morrison

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