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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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(Wesleyan Methodist)

Roy Nicholson served as an author and a minister in the Wesleyan Methodist church, editor in chief of all Sunday-school publications of his denomination, and in June of 1947 he was elected president of the General Conference.

My acquaintance with the teaching of heart holiness dates to my early childhood. One of my earliest recollections is of attending a tent meeting conducted by an itinerant evangelist whose message of full salvation stressed the twin facts that the truly converted could "know" that they were saved and that it was possible for them to live without willful sin. This positive and spiritual message created a sensation among the religious people of our small county seat town.

My parents were kindly disposed toward the message of this man, who was limited in many ways, but who fearlessly preached his convictions. At that time, my parents were members of a church in the town and were endeavoring to rear their children in a wholesome atmosphere. Grace before meals, Bible reading, and family prayer were daily practices. Attendance at Sunday school and church was compulsory, and our humble home was always open for the entertainment of gospel workers.

This latter thing greatly impressed me as a lad. I heard the preachers at the church and watched them in the home as they read their Bible and wept over the lost. Naturally, each man had his peculiar characteristics, but most of them took time to manifest an interest in the pranks and problems of an inquisitive boy. But the real crisis occurred the summer a gospel team, composed of an evangelist and a singer from a holiness school in the adjoining county, were entertained in our home while they conducted a revival.

During this meeting, Mother was reclaimed and sanctified, and Father was genuinely converted and broke with the old life. Formal religion gave way to vital godliness. God's outpoured glory rested upon our family devotions. Naturally, my parents sought fellowship in the church to which these workers belonged. As a child, I also sought the Lord. And I distinctly

remember when He pardoned my sins. Less attention was paid to nurturing and developing the young converts (especially the children) than they deserved, with the result that for several years my experience was "up and down." I was, however, unable to forget the fact that God was both able and willing to save from sin; nor did I ever forget the sweet peace that came to me with the knowledge that God had forgiven my sins.

Early in life -- even before my childhood conversion -- I manifested interest in the ministry and declared that someday I would preach. In due time, the call to preach was inescapable, but I felt an inward disposition to shrink from what the call involved. Thus I became aware of my need for God to purge from my heart the carnal tendency to pride, prejudice, fear, and anger. There never was any doubt that God had provided for the removal of carnality and that some had been cleansed from it. My problem was how to seek this second blessing intelligently.

Unfortunately, much of my instruction was from those who majored on the blessed results of the experience instead of how to seek and find a clean heart. The result was that my seeking was chronic, and my profession was dependent upon my ecstatic feeling.

Pursuant to my call to full-time Christian service, I arranged to attend a church school, and it was most natural that I should choose the school which sent out the workers under whom my parents were converted. It was at this school that I was instructed more intelligently in the matter of heart holiness. The main lesson for me was that it was received by faith -- that, when my faith responded to God's promise, He rewarded my faith with the sweet assurance that my heart was clean, purged by the Spirit who filled as He cleansed, and cleansed as He filled.

My epochal experience came during a revival at the college. After several hours of earnest seeking, about mid-afternoon on a Sunday in March, 1923, the Holy Spirit came to abide in His fullness. The twenty-five years since have brought a variety of unusual experiences. Eleven years were spent in pastoral work, and fourteen have gone into the general service of the church in several official capacities. But regardless of the demands these things have made, God's grace has been sufficient, and the Holy Spirit continues to abide and to keep the heart clean. Praise His name!

Source: "Living Flames of Fire" by Bernie Smith

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THE END