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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #006

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1. Though I have maintained since my conversion, which was about sixteen years ago, a general purpose to serve God, I have been conscious in most, if not in all cases, when I have brought myself to the test, of an unwillingness to take the will of God as my rule of life in "all things". I have known that I was not wholly consecrated to God -- that I was keeping back a part of the price. I have felt a reluctance to give up some things of which I doubted, at least, the lawfulness. Self has claimed some indulgence, and has not always been denied. In this state of mind I have not only done that for which I felt condemned after performing the act, but of which I was before admonished of conscience that it was not right. This has been chiefly in matters where self-denial was required. Over these sins I have mourned and repented, and sometimes have been almost in despair: then I have felt that I was forgiven, and have resolved that in future I would be more firm in resisting temptation. But alas, alas, how often have my vows been broken. I resolved and re-resolved, and yet remained too much the same. I was wanting in an unwavering purpose to obey God always. My will was not at all times in perfect submission to his.

2. I have also been conscious of an unsanctified state of the heart, i.e., of the propensities, appetites, &c. In this respect, however, I think I have in general been growing in grace. Those principles which were inordinate have been weakened, and most or all brought more and more under the control of reason and conscience.

3. From unbelief I have suffered much. This has not resulted from any apparent defect in the arguments in favor of the existence of a God, or the truth of Christianity. In my study of nature I have met, as appeared to me, with almost innumerable demonstrations of the existence of a great intelligent First Cause -- possessed of infinite wisdom, goodness and power. The arguments I have read, and that have been suggested to my own mind when investigating the subject, have appeared very satisfactory in favor of revealed religion. And yet my mind has not been perfectly satisfied. Doubts and fears, for the existence of which I could assign no good reason, have been floating in my mind almost continually. In this state of mind I have reasoned thus -- If Christianity is not true --

if this life constitutes the whole of man's existence -- then it matters little how I live; but if Christianity be true, then it is of incalculable importance that I live as it requires. I will therefore stake all upon its truth, and endeavor to live as if I had no doubt. This for several years I have been striving to do. Still I have felt the paralyzing effects, of this vague kind of infidelity. Among other evil effects in connection perhaps with too great a desire to please, it led, I think, to a degree of insincerity at times in my devotional exercises. I have not always been sufficiently careful to have my words precisely express the sentiments of my heart; and yet I have not intended to be a hypocrite.

4. As a general thing I have not felt a perfect victory over the fear of death, or an entire readiness to appear before God in judgment. And yet my feelings in view of death have been very different from what they were before my conversion. My fears have been comparatively slight; and often I have rejoiced in hope. But I have not always enjoyed the full assurance of hope.

5. My experience has been rather variable. At times I have been quite zealous -- have felt revived and quickened -- have had joy and peace in believing, victory in some good degree over sin, and in a few instances have felt that I was near the possession of perfect love. Once indeed for a few days I thought I enjoyed that great blessing. But at other times I have felt cold and worldly-minded. And yet I have never wavered since I professed faith in Christ, in my purpose to make the service of God the great, the leading business of life -- to live to his glory and prepare for heaven.

6. I have often felt the inconsistency of professing a belief in the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, and yet not living in its enjoyment, or seeking it with all the heart. As a minister of the gospel, I have felt the need of holiness, that the power of God might rest upon me, and that from experience I might be prepared to lead others into the heights of Christian perfection. For its attainment I have often resolved and often prayed, but for the most part with a consciousness that there was not a perfect yielding up of myself to God. I desired holiness, but was unwilling to make the required sacrifice.

7. During the past year I have often preached on the duty of entire consecration to God, and of its connection with sanctification. This I believe has been rendered a great blessing to myself. My mind has been enlightened, and my heart impressed by the truth I have preached to others. Of late I have been urging the importance of regarding the truths of the gospel as facts. This has caused me to feel their weight. They have come with an authority before unknown. I have also, for a few weeks especially, been striving to be perfectly sincere in my devotions. This has seemed to bring me near to God, and to give me renewed power with him in prayer.

8. About two weeks since, while engaged in social prayer with a small circle of friends, I experienced, in connection with others, an uncommon baptism of the Spirit. My physical strength was well nigh prostrated, while my soul was filled with peace and joy unspeakable. At this time my desires for holiness were greatly increased. I took pleasure in conversing upon the subject, and in encouraging others to seek its attainment.

9. Last Sabbath was a memorable day in my experience. I was attending a quarterly meeting at B____. Much of the presence of God was manifested in the congregations and social

circles during the day. After retiring to my room at night, while meditating upon the provisions of the gospel, and the character of God, especially as manifested in Christ, the Spirit seemed truly to help my infirmities, and to take of the things of Christ and show them unto me. I saw that the same Jesus who tabernacled in the flesh, the same compassionate Jesus who was all tenderness and love towards his disciples when on earth, was my Lord and Master, and that I was his disciple. So convincingly was this impressed upon my mind that I could not doubt. I felt, I knew it to be a fact -- a glorious reality. And O, how blessed did the relationship appear. How my delighted soul exulted in it, and in what sweet confiding faith was I enabled to commit all my interests into his hands; and how willing did he appear to bless me with all the riches of his grace!

My mind was now more especially directed to the subject of entire sanctification as a matter of present and personal experience. Never before had I seen so clearly God's ability and willingness to save from all sin. Justification and sanctification seemed so related in the plan of redemption, that the latter appeared as certainly and fully provided for as the former, and I could not doubt but that God was then willing to make an end of sin in my heart, would I but put all upon the altar of consecration, and accept salvation as a free, unmerited favor; and I think, calmly and confidingly, I did

"Give up myself through Jesus' power,
His name to glorify,
And promise in that sacred hour
For God to live and die."

I saw how reasonable it was that I should make the will of God my only rule of life, and felt a strong desire to do and suffer his will in all things. And now, without any sudden transition of feeling, I felt an assurance that God accepted the sacrifice -- that he sanctified the gift. My mind was never calmer, my judgment and reason more clear and active; and the word was my ever present guide. I felt that I ought to believe the promises -- that it was most unreasonable not to believe them; and believing them, I could believe for nothing less than full redemption.

While considering my state of mind, and inquiring whether I ought to regard myself as in possession of the great blessing of perfect love, such a sense of my unworthiness was revealed to me, as almost forced me to exclaim, can it be possible that I, so inferior in talents and so much less distinguished for self-denying efforts to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, than many others who have not attained to this state, should receive such a signal mark of divine favor. I was deeply humbled, but not cast down. I saw that it was upon the simple condition of faith that the blessing was offered, and that the unworthiest therefore were as sure of receiving it upon believing as any. It was then suggested that I had not passed through such a struggle of soul in seeking the blessing as some who profess to have obtained it. But the simple declaration, "he that believeth SHALL BE SAVED," was sufficient to silence the accuser.

Upon opening the Bible, I was surprised to find a depth and fullness of meaning in many passages which I had not before observed. Indeed there appeared a correspondence between the work and the word beyond what, till then, I had ever experienced -- "Deep answered to deep" -- God's Spirit, through the word, returned with my spirit to the work he had wrought. I felt that I loved God supremely. And O, with what sweetness and power was the word applied! Truly it was

as the honey and honey-comb to my soul. I could say with the Psalmist, "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold: I esteem all thy precepts."

It soon occurred to me that I had sometimes doubted the existence of God. Immediately I had such a realization of the awful fact, with such a view of his character, as filled me with reverential awe and adoring love, and in a moment I felt his all-pervading presence surrounding me. But how shall I express the hallowed influence of that hour! I felt of a truth that I dwelt in God and he in me. Every power of soul and body was soothed to sweetest peace, and wrapped in holiest joy. The language of the poet is hardly too strong to express what I then experienced:

"The overwhelming power of saving grace,
The sight that veils the seraph's face
The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

10. Since that time I think that my evidence of entire sanctification has been daily strengthening. I have experienced almost uninterrupted peace, and considerable joy. I feel the beginnings of a new life -- a life of faith in a higher sense than I have before known: a life of entire consecration to God -- of scriptural holiness. In comparing my past with my present experience, I appear to have formerly served God as a servant, but now to be serving him as a son. I have also experienced the truth of the declaration, that "if any man will do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

11. In the preceding statement I have endeavored to give a simple narrative of facts. I have prayed for guidance, and felt the blessing of God resting upon me while writing. It has afforded me at least one evidence of a radical change having been wrought in my heart. If not entirely mistaken, I have been enabled to write uninfluenced by selfish motives. I have written from a sense of duty and with a desire to glorify God. And now, with heart felt gratitude would I render up to him my tribute of praise for his grace vouchsafed to me... For his glory may I ever live.

"Lord, arm me with thy Spirit's might,
Since I am called by thy great name;
In thee let all my thoughts unite,
Of all my works be thou the aim;
Thy love attend me all my days,
And my sole business be thy praise."

Source: "The Blessing of Perfect Love"
by D. S. King

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THE END