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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #007

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The want of personal responsibility, attached to an expression of almost any sentiment, in verse, might be given as a reason why it should not be employed in a relation of religious experience. This objection has presented itself to my own mind, and I would therefore disclaim all wish to take an irresponsible position, in this respect, though I have chosen poetic measure as the easiest (because the most common) mode with me, yet I should not consider the following effusion entitled to a place in "THE RICHES OF GRACE," if I could not in sober and unadorned prose, subscribe to every sentiment contained therein. I know that I have given you "more truth than poetry;" and though in my former guilty aspirings after literary distinction, a conviction of this kind would have been a source of deep mortification; yet I rejoice to feel that it is no longer thus. I am content with the possession of a truth, which can never be exalted by ideal flights, -- which has never yet woven itself into the baseless fabric of a vision; a truth that stands forth in its own unborrowed light, -- a light to which fancy is but a flickering ray, and poetry an idle dream. What I have written, therefore, I am willing to acknowledge a true relation of my own experience. It appears real (to use a figure elsewhere employed) that I have long been on board the wrong ship sailing indeed under Christian colors, and supposing that my destined port was "Mount Zion, the City of the living God." Alas for me, that it was necessary to remove every earthly trust -- to turn every reed on which I leaned into a thorn, piercing me through with many sorrows -- to change every cup of earthly bliss into one of wormwood and gall, before I could resolve to leave all for Christ. But thanks be to Him, whose eye has been upon me during many long rebellious years of miserable compromise with a guilty world -- who has seen my vain, but earnest struggles to secure an inheritance in Heaven, without relinquishing one jot of my hold on earth, and who at last, with infinite kindness, sent the moth and the rust upon my earthly pleasures, the blight and the mildew upon every earthly joy, that I might turn to Him, in whose presence I have found fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

THE VOYAGE

'Twas lovely all -- this glorious earth,
With sunny garniture of bloom --
I walked in light and beauty forth,
And well nigh had forgot the tomb.

Well nigh, alas, there was a breath
Of poison on the summer air --
And life and joy, disease and death,
Seem'd often, strangely, blending there.

And whispered tones of coming ill --
Ah me -- I could not choose -- but hear
That life was but a gliding rill,
And death's dark waves were rolling near.

Which way to fly -- that murmuring stream
Was music to my spell-bound ear --
I strove, as with a magic dream --
Pleasant -- but still combined with fear.

I strove, and conquered -- broke the spell,
And ask'd again, which way to fly --
Turned from the path that leads to hell,
But saw no other pathway nigh.

Far off; upon the distant sea,
There lay a bark of wond'rous size --
With canvass spread, she seemed to be
A cloud upon the summer skies.

A waving flag, of crimson fold,
Circled the lofty topmast round --
And on its crest -- inwrought with gold --
I read the words, "For Zion bound."

For Zion bound -- that bark had borne
Its thousands to a happier shore,
And though 't was old, and sadly worn,
I knew 't would bear its thousands more.

I stretch'd my arms -- they saw me there,
Half deluged by the driving spray,
They lower'd a boat, with anxious care,
And made the shore whereon I lay.

Just then a little skipper pass'd,

With trim white sails and pennons gay --
Mount Zion, too, was on her mast,
As o'er the waves she wing'd her way.

Take me, I cried, with frantic wail,
As down upon the breeze she bore;
They turn'd her helm, and shifted sail,
And ran her close along the shore,

On board, they cried -- we run a race
For Zion's port -- and close beside,
A thousand boats are on the chase,
While we are losing wind and tide.

With eager haste I seized a hand,
That quickly drew me from the shore;
I only thought of Zion's land,
Of life -- of life forevermore.

Ah, beautiful it was to fly
So like an eagle in the air, --
To pass the shore so quickly by,
And dream that we were almost there.

To dream the passage would be short,
Alas -- it seemed not thus to me --
We touch'd along from port to port,
But seldom ventured out to sea.

We would not run a race in vain,
But snatched the good each moment brings --
And made our godliness a gain,
By bartering some for earthly things.

Our colors floated on the breeze,
With Zion's flag of crimson glow;
But colors too, diverse from these,
Were floating o'er our deck below.

We sang the songs of Zion's hill,
On holy-days, our raptures told --
But often anchor'd where the chill
And sluggish streams of Babel roll'd.

And there our earthly love prevailed,
'Till hushed at last was Zion's song,

And e'en the port for which we sail'd
No longer seemed to urge us on.

All things to us were lawful then,
All things expedient -- and divine --
To buy and sell the souls of men,
And lay them on our Moloch shrine.

To tamper thus with earthly dross,
To wear its tinsel bright and gay,
'Till ev'ry vestige of the cross
Had faded from the soul away.

One night -- alas, can I forget
The horrors of that fearful night,
When billows washed our reeling deck,
And storm-winds blew with fearful might.

Unlade the ship -- the trumpet tone
Above the bellowing tempest roar'd;
Bring forth your treasures every one,
And quickly cast them overboard.

We brought our merchandise of souls
And cast it on the foaming wave;
Back on itself the billow rolls
And opens wide a watery grave.

We brought our treasures, with a sigh,
Our earthly treasures, one by one --
They turn'd to bubbles -- floated by --
Upon the angry surges borne.

One moment more -- a moment brief --
And clinging to that sea-washed deck,
The storm-wind bore us to a reef,
Where all was cast -- a shapeless wreck.

All -- all was gone -- each beam and spar, --
'T was then we raised our failing eyes,
And saw amid the clouds afar
A ray of starlight, in the skies.

And just beneath this cheering ray,
Far down upon the troubled sea,
We saw that ship, that in the bay

So old and worn appeared to be.

On -- on her course, with sails unfurl'd,
And like a spirit seemed to glide,
While mountain waves were o'er her hurl'd,
And breakers roared on either side.

Save us, we perish -- loud the cry,
That rose above the tempest's wail --
While through the mist we strained our eye
To watch that swiftly gliding sail.

Fear not, 't is I -- the ocean spray
A moment, spread its misty pall --
The next, upon that deck we lay,
Saved -- saved at last -- but strip'd of all.

The storm is past -- and sunlight steals
Along the waters, bright and free,
And to the eye of faith reveals
The land that lies beyond the sea.

We pause no more to fling our gold
For pebbles on the nearest strand
But keep our wealth, of price untold,
And lay it up for Canaan's land.

And should the storm again o'erwhelm
Our bark upon life's changing sea,
If Jesus holds our vessel's helm,
The storm and calm alike shall be.

High on the raging billows borne,
Or sweetly wafted o'er the deep,
Alike to us, the calm or storm,
If Israel's guard our watch shall keep.

And when the ransomed of the Lord,
With singing unto Zion come --
And ev'ry harp -- from ev'ry chord,
Shall shout the pilgrim's welcome home;

When far beyond the billow's roar,
The hidden rock, the treacherous sand,
We furl our sails and hail the shore --
The verdant shore of Zion's land.

Oh then, we'll sing of dangers past --
Of toils that made our bliss complete --
That brought our crowns and palms at last,
And laid them all at Jesus' feet.

And there, in anthems loud and long,
The heart shall tune its rapturous chord --
The angel choirs shall catch the song,
And heaven shall echo -- Praise the Lord.

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

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THE END