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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #012

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[I know not why the compiler of this book included this testimony. However, it is not a clear testimony to entire sanctification. Its author, near the conclusion writes: "there is, and ever has been a little fog on my mind, in regard to calling any state entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or consecration to God..." That being the case, would it not have been better to omit this experience from the book? -- DVM]

I have often thought of recording some of the mercies of my God -- the experience of his goodness to my soul -- not for publication -- but thinking it might be a comfort to my dear children, when they could see my face no more. As you, however, and our dear friend N. have requested it, and suggested that it might do good to others, I have concluded to attempt it, and leave to those who control such things to decide whether what I write will be useful for publication. I know that could I declare the thing as it is -- could I show forth as I desire to do, the praises of Him who hath "called me out of darkness into his marvellous light," it would rejoice the hearts of the righteous, and "revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones."

"But oh, eternity's too short to utter all his praise."

The first that I recollect of the striving of the Spirit of God in my heart was when I was, I believe, about four years old. A pious lady, who lived in the house with my father, took me up on her lap and sung to me "The Hiding Place:"

"Hail, sovereign love! which first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man!
Hail! matchless, free, eternal grace!
That gave my soul a hiding place," &c.

I believe, had that dear friend, or my dear mother, known how I felt, and given me instruction, and taken the pains that many, at this day, believe in taking for the early conversion of children, I should then have given my young heart to the Savior. But I passed on, the subject of frequent awakenings; sometimes by the death of friends, and sometimes by hearing the word preached -- yet fond of the gayeties and follies of my age, till I was fifteen when it pleased the Lord to give me a loud call, by laying on a bed of death one who was very dear to me as a former teacher -- one who, though young, had taken in that place unexampled pains to impress on the hearts of his scholars lessons of piety, and to lead them to the love and service of God. He was at this time a student in college, preparing for the sacred ministry, with every prospect before him to make life desirable. He calmly resigned himself to the will of his God -- the glories of eternity beamed on his pathway to the grave -- and he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. I visited him a few days before his death, and from that moment my resolution was fixed to endeavor to live the life of the righteous, "that my last end might be like his."

In all former seasons when God called me, I was unwilling to part with the vanities of the world, or to bear the reproach of the cross. I wanted the Christian's safety, without his duties and crosses. But I now fell at the Savior's feet, and inquired, with trembling anguish, "Lord, what shall I do? I will part with everything, or do anything, for an interest in Jesus."

I do not recollect deep conviction for any particular sin, but that I had lived so long in neglect of God, not being willing to acquaint myself with Him who was the fountain of all blessedness. I did not obtain an evidence of pardon and acceptance for about three weeks, though I sought it with prayer and tears. Yet I think I see now, that God was gently leading me to a knowledge of Himself, and his way of life and salvation, and preparing me for the glorious manifestation of Jesus, my advocate and Savior. My burden had become exceeding heavy, too heavy for my strength. I laid down on my bed; but the cry was in my ears,

"The Savior's knocking at your door,
Arise without delay."

I arose and returned to my chamber, with groanings that could not be uttered, and took hold of my work, (spinning,) but soon sunk to the floor, kneeling beside my wheel, and was at once absorbed in contemplation of the glories of the heavenly world, where the inhabitants are freed from sin, and clothed in the white robes of a Savior's righteousness. This sweet hymn came into my mind:

Savior, I do feel thy merit,
Sprinkled with redeeming blood;
And my wearied, troubled spirit
Now finds rest in thee, my God.

Now our Advocate is pleading
With our Father and our God;
Now for us He's interceding,
As the purchase of his blood.

Hark! methinks I hear Him praying,
'Father, save her, I have died

The remaining part of the verse is

And the Father answers, saying,
"They are freely justified."

But these lines came to my mind in their place,

"The Father lays his thunder by,
And smiles upon the Son."

And I saw, too, as I then supposed, by an eye of faith -- I saw my pleading Savior and my smiling God, and my soul was filled with love, and joy, and peace, in believing. In an instant, darkness, sorrow, and mourning fled away; and joy, unspeakable and full of glory, took their place.

"The opening heavens around me shone,
With beams of purest bliss;
While Jesus showed his heart was mine,
And whispered I was his."

I rose to my feet to sing and rejoice, in the name of my dear Redeemer. I was from home, in a family who were not Christians, though amiable, kind friends. I said nothing to them; but have since felt condemned. They had noticed my distress, and now observed the happy change, and informed my mother. She conversed with and instructed me. At seventeen I united with the church. Among my private writings I find the transaction thus recorded:

"Jan. 13th, 1805. -- I have this day publicly devoted myself to the service of God. Have entered into a solemn covenant with the Eternal King of Heaven, to renounce the sinful pleasure of the world, with whatever is displeasing in his pure and holy eyes; to walk in his commandments and ordinances: to seek his glory and the best interest of his Church here below; and in confidence of well-doing, to look forward to a happy inheritance among the saints in light."

For a season I thought I was dead to the world, but did not persevere in that course of consecration, which alone secures unwavering hope. In those days much was said about superstition and singularity. Even ministers of the gospel, in some cases, encouraged their young people to attend balls and pleasure parties, with the gay and thoughtless. As I was the only young person in the neighborhood, who professed religion, amid a large society, naturally amiable and beloved, I had many temptations to return to folly, which I mainly resisted; but sometimes went with them, instead of endeavoring to bring them all to Christ. O, could young Christians know what I have since suffered, when the news of the death of one and another of those dear companions of my childhood and youth, who have died without hope, has reached me, they would not, for once, descend from the high and holy enjoyment of communion with God, to mingle in scenes of frivolity and mirth -- and thereby encourage others to continue to waste their time thus, to the neglect of a preparation for death and the judgment.

Here was first experienced a diminution of my happiness. I could not go from the circle of folly to my closet, and find my Savior, and hold sweet communion with Him. But, with adoring wonder, I remember, that when I repented He forgave me, when I returned to Him, "He healed my backslidings and loved me freely."

After I was married, and children were given me, I suffered six years to pass before offering my letter to another church for admission; when my husband united with me, on profession of faith. It was a great comfort, to have my companion a helper, to train up our children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Yet I had many cares, and found it necessary to work very hard, and neglected, too much, their early religious instruction. Being desirous of having them converted young, I conversed with them some, and prayed for them. As they advanced in years, the elder of them began to talk of leaving the paternal roof, to learn trades. I felt great anxiety, and could not bear the thought of their going out amid the snares of a sinful, tempting world, without religion. I asked the Lord, if it was not from my own want of faith, as well as faithfulness, that they were without it? Awful reflection! Immortal souls had been committed to my care -- and who could answer for the blood of souls? -- and that, too, of my own children!

Other circumstances, likewise, led me to reflection; health failed; I was in the decline of life; what had I done for God and the souls of my fellow-beings? "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." My prayer was -- "Lord, wake me up to zeal and activity in thy service." I found that I needed a deeper work of grace in my heart -- "that when for the time I ought to be a teacher, I had need that one teach me again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." My life was all imperfect -- "My duties black with guilt." Could it be that I had ever been made a child of God, by the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit? Would a child of God, born of the Spirit, be otherwise than holy? And if holy, how commit sin? My prayer was, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." I longed for forgiveness; but this could not satisfy. I wanted to be freed from sin, and thoroughly cleansed from all iniquity, so that I could never vex or grieve Him more. I can never express what I suffered during this season of darkness, and hiding of my Father's face, and from the buffetings and temptations of Satan; which lasted something over a year. But I continued to cry though as it were "from the belly of hell," to Him who was able to deliver; but durst not appropriate the promises of his word to myself. The threatenings were mine. I had shut myself out from the promises. Sometimes, however, I would get hold of a promise, long enough to raise my head above "the billows" for a few moments, but they returned "the more fiercely," and plunged me again in the deep. I now know that Jesus was near and sustained me in those conflicts; though I then felt, that He had left me alone, to contend with the powers of darkness.

One morning, near the termination of these conflicts, I awoke from sleep, with these words in my mind:

"Jesus, my King, proclaims the war;
Awake! the powers of hell are near!
'To arms! To arms!' -- I hear him cry
'Tis yours to conquer, or to die.'"

I was roused by the sound, and sensible of the presence of the foe -- but my helmet and my shield, how should I get them on? My armor, how? I could only use the weapon of prayer. This was almost as constant as my breath; and, blessed be his name, it was not used in vain.

Soon after this, and I tremble while I write it, while resisting with all my might the temptations to rebellion against God -- to call Him unjust -- to reproach Him for creating me, when He knew just what I would be and what I would do, &c., I thought I could hold out no longer -- would end the conflict and learn what would be the result. All was still, but God's word, proclaiming slowly and solemnly, "I am the Lord, the Lord God -- gracious and merciful." The impulse or temptation came, "Contradict Him!" I did it! But oh! the horrors of that moment! Till then I resisted every temptation, as I thought, and had resolved to resist while life lasted; but now a worm, crushed to the earth beneath the mountain weight of its sins, had dared to rise in the face of infinite wisdom and excellence, and contradict Him. This must be the sin for which there is no forgiveness! But I could weep tears of penitence -- could sink at his feet, and own it just. What less could insulted Majesty and Purity do, than crush the rebel worm? But He did not do it. Not even a frown was on his gracious brow. The promises of his blessed word passed in review before me. O, how glorious, "engraved in eternal brass," or letters of gold -- so bright -- so strong -- so full -- so sure -- enough for the present and eternal salvation of every sinner who had not, like me, contradicted Him, and thereby "made Him a liar." I could attend to nothing else but the matter between God and my soul, and gave myself to reading the Bible. I contemplated the glorious character of God, and saw, that unless I could find evidence that my sin was "against the Holy Ghost," I should only be repeating that dreadful sin while I refused to believe them intended for me when penitent.

I read Erskine on the unpardonable sin; but after continuing my search about a day and a half, and not being satisfied that this was it, I retired with my Bible -- spread it open before me -- and, kneeling, read and prayed over the chapters in Hebrews which represent the blessed Savior as our sacrifice and High Priest. At the 25th verse of the 7th chapter, I found this assurance: "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Here was something to meet my case. "To the uttermost" I had insulted Him, but "to the uttermost" He could save. I believed -- and here my soul entered into rest "Lost in wonder, love, and praise."

I embraced the promises, rich and boundless, as my own. In Christ Jesus they are all "yea and amen." I felt and said, with heaven-born confidence -- "This is firm footing, this is solid rock." My feet are placed upon it, to remove no more.

"Here at thy cross, my dying God,
I lay my soul beneath thy love,
Beneath the droppings of thy blood,
Jesus -- nor shall it e'er remove."

The view was not transporting, or rapturous, like my first conversion, (if so it may be called,) but calm, delightful, "strong consolation" -- firmer than the everlasting hills; because founded on the immutable word and oath of God in Christ. It was "hope as an anchor to the soul,

both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail." I have accounted it the "assurance of faith."

Eleven years have passed since, and my peace has been like a river. In the world, to be sure, I have had tribulation, and expect to have; for Jesus told me I should; but, blessed be his name, in him I have peace.

"In Him I hope, in Him I trust
His bleeding cross is all my boast:
Through troops of foes he'll lead me on
To victory and the victor's crown."

I rejoice to live and labor for God, in this world, and I expect to rejoice more when the summons arrives for me to cross the Jordan of Death, and be for ever with the Lord; though I have sometimes thought He did so condescend "to draw nigh to me," and so to fill my soul with his love, and sweet submission to his holy will, that I could hardly conceive how saints and angels could be more blessed or feel more happy.

I greatly desire, that all Christians should obtain "like precious faith," and believe it to be their privilege. The Church must have this faith, die to sin, and "live by faith on Jesus" -- or she never will -- aye, never can, usher in the great millennial day of purity and love.

I hailed the Oberlin Evangelist with joy, and have read it from the beginning of its publication, with satisfaction and profit; especially the articles on the Holiness of Christians. I love the subject of Christian Perfection, or Entire Sanctification in this life, and have blessed God for the paper prayed for its success, and for all who have sustained and who now sustain it. But there is, and ever has been a little fog on my mind, in regard to calling any state entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or consecration to God, in which there is a liability or possibility to sin. I know that I sometimes do wrong, and as soon as I discover it, I at once repair to the

"Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"

and feel that I am cleansed. This is all the perfection of which I have any knowledge; yet, I believe, I perfectly desire to do the will of God. May God bless the efforts of all the dear brethren, who are laboring to promote the sanctification of believers. I believe He has blessed, and will continue to bless them greatly; and I pray the Lord to sustain them under all their sore trials, and to strengthen them for all their conflicts.

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

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THE END

