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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #014

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From a child I believed the Bible to be the word of God. My parents were not professors of religion, but were favorable to Christianity. And although I was not taught either by precept or example to pray, yet I was taught to reverence and fear God. When I was but six years old, I remember a remark of my only brother to my mother, that no one could go to heaven without being converted. I was surprised at this, for I thought only the very wicked needed a change; but being assured by my mother, that the Bible taught that all must be born again, I examined the Scriptures, and prayed, and became fully convinced of it. But my believing right on this subject did not alter my course, for I became very wild, and indulged in the usual sins of youth, such as profanity, and breaking the Sabbath by making it a day of sport.

In this way I continued till the year 1839, when I was brought to see my sins. I had been laboring under deep conviction some time, when one night I went to my bed room to retire. My colleague was sleeping, as I thought, very sweetly, (he had been converted that morning.) I stood a few moments reflecting on his condition and my own. He appeared very happy. I knew I was wretched. It was at this time I formed the resolution that I would no longer continue in sin, but would now submit to the requirements of the gospel. After I had thrown myself upon the bed, it was suggested to my mind, that the Savior must do this work for me, and that He was willing to do it, but that I must ask Him before He would. I thought, why not ask Him now? I made the attempt to pray, and that moment all my anxiety was gone; I felt emotions of peace and joy; but the leading characteristic of my feelings was love. I could not believe that so simple a thing as this could make me a Christian, and refused the evidence God gave me. Although I had submitted, some unbelief still remained, and it was not till the next Thursday evening (this was Monday) that I received evidence that I was a child of God, so strong that nothing could ever make me doubt. At this time I was eighteen years old. The next Sabbath after, I united with the church. For a year I enjoyed communion with God, and was warm in my first love.

Being but a youth, and having no regular home, I met with many temptations, especially after I came to C____, which was in the latter part of 1840. Here I was obliged to be in company with those who knew not God, as I boarded with such. In many instances they proposed to take me to the theater gratis; and it will ever be a source of gratitude to God, that amidst all this I never gave up my purpose to serve Him, never omitting an opportunity to pour out my soul in prayer to God for help. Though now I regret that my course was not more consistent, for had I been more faithful and let my light shine, some of those young men might have been converted, but I sometimes felt as though I had very little light myself. As J. B. Taylor says, I had some darker scenes after my conversion than before. My heart was often cheered in prayer, for which I praise God. In this way I lived, sometimes enjoying the presence of Christ, and sometimes far, far away, till I came to the seminary. I then concluded I should be able to live a more consistent life, as I should be free from the temptations to which in the city I had been exposed, and I rejoiced in the thought of being separated from the world. But I soon found that satan was in the country as well as city, and that I had the same heart then as I had before -- that I did not change with circumstances. I saw that some there had come into a state of more permanent holiness, and I began in earnest to seek it, trying in every way to overcome my besetting sins for I thought this was the first thing to be done. But the more I tried the more I felt, and the darker my path grew.

Wesley declares three things to be indispensable to its attainment. 1. Expect it by faith. 2. Expect it just as we are. 3. Expect it now. The conversation of those who had attained the "assurance of faith," tended to the same point. Yet nothing would satisfy me but trying to overcome my besetting sins, before I attempted to believe. As to coming to Christ just as I was, I could not believe he could bless me till I made myself better. In consequence of the slowness of my heart to believe, the Lord let me try the experiment. In this way I tried and tried, mustering all my forces again and again, until I was anxious to return; but the Spirit of the Lord suggested, victory or death. When I attempted new resolutions, the tempter would say, You have tried so often and failed, there is no use in trying any more. I thought I knew what Paul meant when he said, "O, wretched man that I am," &c. Just at this time I heard a sermon on Holiness, showing that this blessing was attained by faith, in which it was stated that we should at the very outset, believe and rest upon God for the accomplishment of this great work. Here I began to take courage, and promised some of the brethren that I would never rest short of it. I took my pen and wrote down my besetting sins, promising to forsake them all and give myself entirely to the Lord. Here I made an entire consecration of myself, and went to my Savior. I now began to see I could make myself no better, that I could not even keep from running into sin without Christ's help. So I began to pray with all my might to God for the blessing; but the same darkness continued. Now Satan suggested that the Bible could not be God's word, for it said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." I knew I had asked for a long time in earnest; still I could not give it up. One brother told me I was trusting too much to feeling; but I told him I only wished to know the work was done: so what am I to do? He said believe without a sign. You must believe.

Not long after this conversation, these thoughts presented themselves to my mind. First, I know Christ is able to save me from my sins, "for his name is called Jesus, that he should save his people from their sins." Second, He has declared it to be his will, even our sanctification, and has commanded holiness. Thirdly, But is he willing now? Yes, for I have just read, "now is the accepted time," &c. But is he willing to save me? Yes, for he tasted death for every man, and has shown by his death the interest he feels in us. What, then, hinders me from being saved? Certainly

nothing but a want of compliance with his terms. But what are his terms? What does he require? "He that believes shall be saved." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Then I see faith is all that is necessary. But my heart is so cold and hard, can I believe? Yes, I will believe, let my feelings be what they may. Let the evidence come as it may, or when it may, it is my business to believe. I can, I will, I do believe. This is all I can do. It is all that Christ requires me to do. The rest I leave with him, and I believe He will do it. In this state of mind I left the throne of grace, without a single emotion. I went about my studies and work, feeling that I had done all I could, and that was nothing but to leave myself in the hands of God to let him do for me. I sometimes felt uneasy, because I did not feel more; but this I left to Christ, to give me feeling or not, as he saw fit, feeling that he would do just right. Twenty-four hours passed before I had any change in my feelings, then I begun to feel great peace. I felt relieved from my besetting sins. Christ had taken them away, and I felt a sweet resting on him. Oh, it was delightful thus to leave myself in the hands of Jesus, so full of love! It was glorious to feel such confidence in my Savior! Up to this time I can realize that by faith I am able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and come off conqueror, and more than conqueror.

"Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

Satan has often since contended sharply with me about faith, yet when I go to Christ he enables me to realize his willingness to save those who trust in him, not because I am anything, but because "He will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on him." Why? because he trusts in him." Now I can leave the future in his hands, feeling he will do just right. Now, instead of making advances one day and going back the next, I feel that my confidence is daily increasing, and that I am growing in grace. The great lesson I feel I have learned, is to live by faith. This I know is an anchor to the soul. I realize now that faith is a substance, as Paul says, Heb. xi. 1. Not a metaphysical abstraction: but a something that may be known and felt. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I need not dwell here, for you know infinitely more about this subject than I do. Christ has done all. All I did was to give myself away to him, and as soon as I did this he filled my soul with his love. Hence I feel strong confidence that he will perfect his work, for he is able to keep that which we commit into his hands. I praise God that this work is so rapidly spreading in our churches, and Christians everywhere are beginning to feel that something must be done, and that a different experience is necessary; that it will not do for them to depend on waking up in time of a revival, but they must come into a permanent state of holiness, in which it shall be their meat and drink to do God's will. I feel that the time has come for Christians to awake to this subject, for we have full evidence that God will not convert sinners while Christians are living so for this world, while the standard of piety is so low.

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

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THE END

