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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #018

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In compliance with the wishes of some dear friends, and I do not know but the requisition of Him who hath said, "Ye are my witnesses," I will endeavor, briefly, to give in my testimony.

One Monday morning, a little more than twenty-one years since, when but a feeble child, seeing a minister apparently very happy, I desired the same enjoyment; and was instantly prompted to secure it, by seeking to become a child of God. And on the Wednesday following, after an earnest struggle for pardon, I heard Jesus whisper,

"Thy sins are forgiven;
Accepted thou art!
I listened -- and heaven
Sprang up in my heart!"

My transported soul, perfectly unconscious of earthly objects, was permitted, as if disembodied, to mingle with the heavenly choir in praise and adoration. The witness imparted that moment has never since been questioned. For weeks my joys were uninterrupted -- not even a temptation was permitted to cloud my sky. About two years after, I was presented with Wesley's Views of Christian Perfection. My mind was peculiarly happy at the time, but I began to pray earnestly for all that it was my privilege to enjoy, and became very anxious. For the first time, I now heard the voice with power, -- "I am the Almighty; walk before me and be thou perfect." But O, the subtlety of my enemy! The very means used in bringing me to the door, was now made to bar it against me. I sought it for instruction, but astonished, I read, "We are not now speaking of BABES in Christ." Again and again it was resorted to, but for years the adversary would scarce permit me to pass -- "It is only of grown up Christians it can be affirmed," &c. My desires were intense -- my temptations powerful. But O how often, in flying to Jesus for refuge, have I felt all the sweetness and security of a babe in its mother's arms. I was a babe, and felt as a babe. My soul

was also frequently encouraged by the consideration -- it is the "Almighty" who commands. Then, endeavoring to take hold of Omnipotence, I would be enabled for a season to rejoice in hope.

It was not until 1824 the veil was lifted, that I might glance at the corruptions of my nature. Then I was almost overwhelmed at the sight; and while abhorring myself, was perfectly astonished that even the infinite love of Jesus could look on one so impure. My views of sin, its awful demerit, and anguish felt in consequence, was now much, much more clear and keen than before justification. It now seemed as if the enemy must be forced to surrender by continued resistance, and the conflict was sore. In the early part of 1825, I obtained *The Christian's Manual*, and through this means was led to expect deliverance through faith in the atonement. While in this state of extreme anxiety, I dreamed one night of being alone in a large, beautiful field of snow, on a lovely moon-light evening. Nature looked so pure and heavenly, that I thought surely God is here -- I will kneel and ask him to purify my heart just now. I did so, and was immediately filled with light and inexpressible glory, and exclaimed, this is not holiness but "heaven". I awoke filled with holy rapture, and said, if I had only been awake, I should have no doubt but that God had purified my heart. I immediately arose and fell on my knees to ask the blessing, but prayer was lost in praise; yet I could not confidently claim the witness of holiness. Those distressing views of depravity seemed now to be withdrawn, and the enemy often suggested that I was losing my convictions for holiness; but my soul was all athirst for the full impress; my views of faith became more clear, and I often attempted to believe now. Thus I went forward for about three months, generally rejoicing, and sometimes believing that the blood of Jesus now cleanseth. One Saturday evening I resolved not to rise from my knees the whole night, or even the next day, without the witness of holiness. I plead earnestly. Several times the promise was presented, -- "The blood of Jesus cleanseth." Tremblingly faith would take hold and say, I do believe; but impatient for further manifestations, I would again resume pleading. About one o'clock in the morning, I opened the precious Bible on "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promises. For yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." I felt the reproof, also the encouragement; and calmly said, Lord, I will believe; I am wholly thine; help me to abide in thee. I then retired, resolving to live by faith. At the dawn of day I awoke, desiring the Lord (almost as a condition of perseverance) to confirm my faith, by directing my eye to some special passage, and for that purpose reached to take a Bible. The suggestion came, "It will open on some passage you have marked." Indulging the impression, I withdrew my hand, and took another which I had not used; when the Holy Spirit, in infinite condescension, directed my eye to, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." A thrilling sensation came over me; I felt, to draw back would be death, and cried, Lord, keep me. Throughout the day, a most profound solemnity rested on my mind. Holiness seemed written on every object. On Monday the enemy said, "It is possible that you may yet be deceived; you have not received this blessing as you expected." But my heavenly Father soon assured me, if an earthly parent would not give a stone for bread, or a scorpion for fish, neither would he. My soul was now sweetly and continually sustained by the precious promises. It was only to ask and receive. On Tuesday morning, a very powerful temptation being presented, I hastened to the closet, and pleading my youth and inexperience, felt encouraged to ask another and a still more powerful assurance of purity. The answer was instantly given by a most powerful application of "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It was enough, and my enraptured soul could only adore such infinite condescension. For nearly a week, I was permitted, in a manner unknown

before, to walk and talk with God, continually receiving repeated and powerful assurances of purity.

On Friday afternoon I went to my class, almost impatient to declare the loving kindness of God, but at the commencement our leader prayed, "Lord, sanctify us wholly: let it not be a think so, a hope so, or a believe so." It was enough for my insatiable adversary; it came as an arrow to my heart! "You have only believed so; you have no evidence only as connected with believing." It was a fatal dart! My only hope seemed now, as by violence, wrested from me. Unconscious of all about me, I seemed intent on having the question decided; "Is it a reality or a believe so." When aroused by the leader's inquiry as to the state of my mind, I merely said, "I have received some very remarkable answers to prayer through the past week," and without listening to his reply, was immediately absorbed in reasoning with the enemy. The struggle was severe for about two hours, and when rising to leave the class room, the fatal decision came; I will give up this intense interest on the subject; others seem to enjoy the favor of God without the witness of holiness; I will try to do so too; and little thinking of the impossibility, I thought, I will live without sinning against God, but will never again yield to such anxiety, or say anything more respecting the witness of the Spirit. Until that moment, there seemed a plausibility in the reasoning of the arch deceiver. But now language is utterly incompetent to convey an idea of my feelings. I seemed as if instantly hurled into a bottomless abyss of blackness, darkness and despair, with nothing before me but the awful doom of the fearful and unbelieving. I did not now think I had been deceived; but, from what had I fallen? While my senses were almost astounded with, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." For weeks my sense of ingratitude was so great that I did not dare to hope for pardon, but was afterwards enabled to plead the infinite mercy and forbearance of God toward sinners. But for years the temptation prevailed, that I could never expect to live in the enjoyment of full salvation; that state I had forfeited, and so subtle was that temptation, that it was not even suspected as such, until 1833, when speaking of the impression, I was fully assured it came from the enemy. I now began to struggle for deliverance, and after a few weeks it came, almost as suddenly, and sensibly, as at my conversion. The Holy Spirit now imparted a more comfortable evidence of my acceptance, but not that joyous witness formerly possessed. During this long period of comparative desertion, I do not know that I once violated a vow made soon after my conversion, never (in consequence of feeling) to forsake the closet, or refuse to speak, or pray, when called upon by a brother or sister. Yet my spiritual energies seemed in a degree paralyzed, and failing to receive those spiritual supplies so necessary, my enjoyments became too intimately connected with the domestic interest of my friends. And now I began most painfully to feel, "The Lord your God is a jealous God." The contest was long and severe. The way was marked out in which I supposed the Lord required me to walk. But death (of the body) seemed preferable to these terms. While in this state of mind, one Sabbath evening, in August, 1834, our beloved brother (now bishop) Waugh read for his text, "I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." It was the voice of God. The crisis had come -- the moment had arrived, when life must be chosen on the terms proposed, or the negative was death! That moment divine aid was imparted, and I was enabled to say, "Lord, I will be wholly thine; only give thy smile; the scorn of worlds shall not be heeded: the faintest intimations of thy Spirit shall be obeyed." Instantly the tempest was hushed, and there was a great calm. And with what astonishment did I look back upon that heart which had dared to

question the claims of Jehovah. Since that hour his commandments have not been grievous; but with much delight I have been enabled to sing

'lo! I come, with joy to do
The Master's blessed will;
Him in outward works pursue,
And serve his pleasure still."

But it was not long before the enemy began to question my motives in almost every religious duty; but I was generally enabled to appeal to the Searcher of hearts as to their sincerity. I was now a mystery to myself, enjoying sweet communion with God, and constant victory over the world, and when pleading for holiness, would generally lose myself in praise.

In the former part of May, 1835, an impression was felt so much like unhallowed emotion, that it caused extreme pain. I then resolved if it was possible to have the positive assurance of inward purity, I would have it. I immediately went to my room, and in the most solemn manner entered into covenant with God, to withdraw my mind from every object that might divert it from this point, and to leave no means unused to which he might direct; most earnestly imploring divine guidance. I now withdrew as much as possible from society, and with much fasting and reading the Scriptures, with continual prayer, waited before the Lord. Temptations over which the Lord had enabled me to triumph for months, were now presented with renewed force: each motive, purpose and practice, was required to undergo a renewed investigation, and the result was too clear for even Satan to question. My only desire was to walk in the narrowest part of the narrow way. I now waited, expecting an immediate baptism of the Holy Ghost. I had not once thought of claiming the blessing without it; but it did not come. It seemed as if my heart would break with desire to be filled with God. One day while thus breathing out my desires, too great for utterance, it was suggested, "emptied, then filled:" this turned my attention, and instead of fill, I now cried, empty, thoroughly purify my heart. That moment, as if directed by God, I opened the life of H. A. Rogers, and read, "Reckon thyself dead unto sin, and thou art alive unto God from this hour. O begin, begin to reckon now: fear not, believe, believe, believe; and continue to believe, so shalt thou continue free." I fell on my knees and cried, Lord, I will believe, I now believe. "Help (now) my unbelief." I now believe the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Thou hast purchased pardon and holiness for me, even me. I will from this moment reckon myself "dead indeed unto sin." Perfectly composed, I looked at theme, and continued to say, "Yes, Lord, from this hour, half past two, P. M., the twenty-first of May, I dare reckon myself dead indeed unto sin." I waited speechless and motionless, expecting an instantaneous baptism, but felt no emotion except a sacred stillness. The word of life was lying before me, I cast my eye on it and read, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me ye should have known the Father also, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." A new and inexpressible consciousness of having come to the Father through the Son was now given: and I cried, O fill me with the Holy Ghost; but all was calm and stillness; I had none of the expected emotion. I arose from my knees fully determined to rest in God, when the enemy immediately suggested, "You have no more evidence now than before; you might have believed long since; who ever heard of believing and continuing to believe without evidence?" Immediately the Spirit replied, "Blessed are they that have not seen, yet believe." For nearly a week I do not think there was a joyous emotion, but an unnecessary effort to believe. Presumption, enthusiasm, antinomianism,

were the constant cry of the enemy. But the sword of the Spirit prevailed, though the contest was very, very severe. To draw back I knew was death to the soul, and I resolved to endure the conflict while mortal life should last, if no other evidence was given. Just after forming this resolution, the promise came with more power than ever, "Blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of (all) those things which were told her from the Lord." Thus nerved afresh, I was enabled to obey the oft repeated exhortation,

"Tarry till thy Lord appears,
Never, never, quit thy hold!
Murmur not at his delay,
Dare not set thy God a time:
Calmly for his coming stay;
Leave it, leave it, all to him."

The whole of that hymn was made a blessed means of sustaining my soul under this severe trial of faith. The next Wednesday afternoon, in a prayer meeting, I was sorely tried by having no liberty in prayer. This, for the enemy, was a powerful argument. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" but I could only reply,

"Be it I myself deceive,
Yet I must, I will believe."

On my return from this meeting, business required me to call on a beloved minister. Speaking of holiness, he said, "Sister, you know something of this by experience, do you not?" I was startled, and replied, "I am not prepared to answer that question:" but after a moment's hesitation said, "I have made a bold venture; I have dared (though perhaps presumptuously) to believe, and reckon myself dead indeed unto sin." Our dear father gave me much encouragement; said, "Never fear presumption in believing God: presumption lies in daring to doubt." All fears now vanished, and on leaving the door, I began to glory in being wholly the Lord's, and immediately my soul was filled

-- "unutterably full
Of glory and of God."

For a week, the mortal powers could scarcely sustain the weight of love. I had such a deep consciousness of purity as is utterly inexpressible: nor do I think there has been an hour since, but I have been enabled to rest in the atonement, and much of the time, with the most indubitable assurance that the blood of Christ now cleanseth. And O with what holy rapture, with what triumph, have I since been permitted to dwell in God:

"'Tis more than angel tongues can tell,
Or angel minds conceive."

Though, as before stated, the witness of the Spirit has not been withdrawn for an hour, yet there have been instances when sudden temptation has assumed so much the appearance of sinful emotion, as to cause severe sensations; but I have been invariably enabled almost instantly to

appropriate that blood which now cleanseth from all sin, known and unknown. These acts of faith have generally been immediately succeeded by a most joyous assurance of acceptance; and but a very short season has, at any time, intervened before the Comforter has come. There are also on record, seasons when almost positively convinced of having yielded to temptation, I could

"Weep my life away, for having grieved his love."

But O! infinite condescension! Glorious plan! My Advocate has prevailed; the fountain has been opened, and I have been permitted immediately to wash and be made clean.

My consciousness of the necessity of the momentary intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, is much more clear than ever; and never was the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses," presented with more fervor, than it has been since I have been kept from voluntary transgression. There has also been seasons when, for days in succession, the arch enemy has seemed to rally all his forces to wrest my shield: especially on one occasion recently, the powers of darkness were permitted so to prevail, that I seemed almost constrained to cry out, "Hast thou forsaken me?" But deliverance came, Omnipotence prevailed, and his feeble one was enabled to rejoice in him, "Who always causeth us to triumph."

Since I have been enabled to abide in Christ, I believe the language of my heart has been,

"No cross, no suffering I decline,
Only let my whole heart be thine."

The honor of being an agent for God, seems very, very great, and yet I fear I often lose opportunities of acting for want of wisdom. Perhaps there is no grace of which I feel so much the need. I feel that I am nothing, I have nothing, I know nothing; and am therefore constrained to cry continually, "Teach me thy way; lead me in a plain path." And O, how precious do I find the promise, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee by mine eye." The word of God is increasingly precious. It is principally through this medium I am permitted to hold converse with Deity. And while his infinite love and faithfulness are unfolded to my enraptured vision, I hear him say more, and still more, audibly, "Ye are my witnesses" of these things. And O, with what holy ambition does he often inspire this feeble one to test by actual experiment, the extent, the glory, of all those "exceeding great and precious promises" given to redeemed ones. Even to be continually "filled with all the fullness of God." 'Tis only for this I would live, to be the happy recipient, and joyful diffuser, of all my heavenly Father is willing to communicate.

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

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THE END