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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #021

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Fourteen years have nearly elapsed since I believed the Lord, for the sake of his Son, forgave my sins. At that time I had never heard the doctrine of Christian perfection preached, or advanced in any way whatever; but shortly after my conversion, I began to feel the need of a deeper work of grace in my heart. I was, at that time, an utter stranger to the doctrine of holiness; but there was a certain something which I could not define, which I was anxious to obtain. I told my feelings to an experienced friend, who put into my hand the Christian's Manual. I read it with prayerful attention, and readily received its doctrine, and fully believed it to be the duty of every Christian to seek for, and their privilege to enjoy, perfect love. I searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so, and found enough on almost every page to confirm my belief.

I therefore began with all my heart to seek for this great salvation, and prayed without ceasing. The burden of my petition was, O Lord, give me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit. My convictions continued to increase for about ten months: they were nothing like the convictions I felt before conversion; there was no guilt or deep remorse connected with it; but a deep, heart-felt sorrow, that I did not love God with all my heart. And this I felt that I could never do while sin, either inward or outward, had dominion over me, or dwelt within me. There was to be a campmeeting held in the town where I resided; and about two weeks before its commencement, my convictions became deeper, clearer, and more powerful. I looked forward to the meeting with much interest, expecting there to be blessed, not because I thought the Lord to be confined to a place, but there, I thought, I shall be excluded from the world, and its cares; there will be many praying people and much faith, and my own faith will thereby gain new strength; and there, the Lord being my helper, will I become his entirely. Thus resolved, I went to the meeting. The first and second days passed by without any particular change in my feelings. On the morning of the third day, an aged minister of the gospel preached from the words, "May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." I listened with the most profound attention; every word fell with great weight upon my heart. At the close of the sermon, a sister arose and told the way and manner in which she was convicted for and received sanctification. The agitation of my mind and body

became so great, that it was with difficulty I could remain upon my seat till she concluded. I then went into the woods and tried to pray, but could say nothing. It seemed as though the heavens were brass; gloom and darkness overspread my mind. The remainder of that day, and the former part of the next, I spent in painful suspense; hope and despair alternately took possession of my mind. At the close of the afternoon sermon, I went into the praying circle, and knelt with the mourners, but felt that to be no place for me. I then returned to the tent where I boarded, and sat me down to reflect. The sun had already begun to decline, the meeting was to close the next morning, and my soul was unblest. I was deeply impressed to go to a retired part of the grove, where, unheard by the congregation, I might pour out my whole soul to Him who had power "not only to forgive sin," but whose blood was sufficient "to cleanse from all righteousness." I did so, accompanied by two Christian friends.

When we had reached a place deemed convenient, we bowed before our God solemn prayer; and there we found him ready to verify his promise. While leading in prayer, I believe the power of the Lord fell upon me as it never had done before; but feeling at that time a disposition to love my neighbor as myself, I did not give full vent to my feelings: I knew those who came with me, as well as myself, came to seek a blessing: while they were praying, the agony of my mind nearly overpowered me. When they had prayed, I renewed my supplications. I felt the Lord to draw divinely near, and his presence inspired my soul with fresh courage -- unbelief began to yield to faith. I earnestly pleaded the merits of Christ, and claimed him as my whole Savior. I cried unto the Lord to help me exercise that faith which brings the blessing now: and ere I was aware, I exclaimed, "I will believe." In a moment, all my doubts were gone; every cloud of darkness was dispersed by the glorious rising of the Sun of righteousness. Heaven came down to earth, and my unworthy soul was unutterably full of glory and of God. Then did I find love, joy, and peace in believing. Then did I find myself truly humbled under a sense of my own unworthiness, and God's great goodness. In short, the manifestation was such that I can never doubt the nature of the blessing I then received.

It was "perfect love," for which my soul thirsted, and it was for this I sought without intermission, for the space of ten months. I can say with truth, the grand object of my search was never absent from my mind. It was for this I prayed to God in the name of Christ, for this I believed on the Lord Jesus, and I can never believe that when I asked for bread he would give me a stone, or anything else instead thereof. For some three or four years following, I believe I enjoyed the blessing in some good degree, but meeting with some opposition, I declined speaking of it openly, and therefore lost my evidence; and for the last nine years have been in an uncertain state of mind. But at a campmeeting, recently held in this town, the Lord renewed my witness, and filled my heart with peace; which continues to be as a river. I have never before had such an overwhelming sense of God's presence. O, how sweet do I find it! to give my all to him for time and eternity. But sweeter, far sweeter, to feel an evidence in my soul, that for Jesus' sake the offering is accepted, poor as it is. Yes, I feel a blessed assurance that God receives and loves me. O how delightful to feel

"That sacred awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

I have ever loved the doctrine of holiness, and striven in my feeble way to help its promotion; and this only induces me to send you this sketch of my experience. And I pray Heaven that this simple relation may be blessed as an encouragement to some humble seeker to press into the full liberty of the children of God. As for myself, I still feel to be a seeker; still my thirsty soul cries out for more. O, for an enlargement of the heart, and then to be filled to overflowing with that love which waters cannot quench.

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

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THE END