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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #025

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I was born in this place the 18th day of July, 1801, and in the year 1821 was placed in a public office, where I am to the present as a surrogate. My father, who died in December, 1803, was, I have since learned from others, deistical in his religious notions. My mother, many years before her death, embraced religion and attached herself to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and died suddenly in March, 1829, and I hope in the faith, although in the latter part of her life she was rather indifferent on the great subject of the soul's best interests. I do not recollect that my mother ever spoke to me of religion, more than she caused me to be learned and repeat, when a child, the Lord's Prayer, on retiring to bed. With a view of commencing at my earliest convictions, I remark that, in 1810, or 1811, whilst the late Bishop Emery was laboring on this circuit during a revival of religion, I was much affected, and the impressions made upon my mind at that time, strongly inclined me to be religious but I did not then yield to those impressions. From that time until the year 1823, 1824, or 1825, I had doubtless many slight convictions, but do not recollect any very serious and strong impressions until one of those years; yet I was a regular attendant on the Methodist ministry.

About this time, whilst I was sitting under the sound of the gospel, some truth reached my heart; there was then no particular religious excitement or revival here, nor any extra effort being then made for the conversion of sinners. I was induced to leave the house of prayer and retire to a place in the open lot, where it seemed to be suggested to my mind if I would go then, I would obtain religion; but after retiring to the place, and praying, I obtained no relief, but was led by suggestions made to my mind to go to another place, where I still found no relief. I then endeavored to break off from my sins, and did for some two or three months come out from the wicked, and took to reading the Scriptures, in which I had considerable delight; conversed with several Christians, on the subject of religion, and spoke of my convictions, and was much encouraged by them and advised to give the subject my special attention. During all this time I made no profession of religion, nor did I attempt to join any society of Christians. If I had done so, I have no doubt I should have saved myself some nineteen or twenty years of living in sin and

folly, and rebellion to God; for in an evil hour I gave way to a sudden temptation to anger, and lost my good impressions and strong desires. From that time to the year 1843 I gave way to a course of sin and folly, and ran into many acts of gross wickedness, which make me blush to think of. Billiards, cards, dice, and such things, I delighted in notwithstanding I had many convictions of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come.

In 1840, whilst a friend was in great distress and seeking religion, I was deeply convicted of the importance of religion, and made many excuses, and even at one time took medicine to avoid going to the house of prayer, the exercises of which I could hear from my room. In March or April of 1843, I heard a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Yardon, of the M. E. Church, from these words, "All are yours," which made considerable impression on my mind: soon after which a revival of religion commenced in the Methodist Episcopal Church of this place. The protracted services of this meeting had been begun and kept up for some eight or ten days before I ventured to the church, during which time my mind was suffering under painful excitement and anxiety. I was restless and uneasy -- the Spirit doubtless striving with me and I resisting it. I felt an intense anxiety to learn every morning if any person had been forward the previous night to the anxious or mourners' bench, to seek religion; yet I feared to ask. I learned, during the progress of the meeting, that the Rev. Mr. S ____ had said he was satisfied there would be a revival; the announcement of this seemed to unnerve me, and created in my breast singular emotions and flutterings. At length I learned some had been forward and found peace. Oh! what feelings I had on hearing this; fear, despair, conviction, seized my mind, my feelings became almost insupportable, yet notwithstanding I endeavored and succeeded measurably to conceal them under a cheerful countenance. Sometime during that week, I, and one who is dear to me, together with a young lady, (who is still in the gall of bitterness, and for whose salvation I often pray,) made an agreement to go to church and go forward to the mourners' bench to seek religion. This contract, or agreement, although made in seemingly trifling spirit with us all, was nevertheless adhered to, and we accordingly went to the church. When the invitation to seekers was given, my dear friend and Miss _____, and others went forward, which left no alternative for me. However, I tarried for a while, and asked and insisted on an acquaintance that was sitting by my side to accompany me, observing to him I believed in the truth of experimental religion, and remarking at the same time, that if others could obtain it we could, and that we were somewhat advanced in years, and were preventing, by our example, other persons from seeking religion; he replied yes, he believed in it too, but refused to go forward, saying he did not feel like it. I observed, as well as I now recollect, neither do I, but I will go, and arose from my seat and went forward and kneeled under the most painful feelings of mortification and shame. After kneeling some five or ten minutes, my convictions increased and became deep, pungent and powerful, and I cried mightily to God for mercy, but could get no comfort that night. The next night I again attended and took a seat near, or among the members of the church (which I found a great cross to do), but refused to kneel at the mourners' bench; yet I desired to be considered as a seeker. Oh, the pride of the human heart! During the meeting I continued to attend, refusing to kneel, only as the congregation kneeled. The protracted exercises of this meeting lasted some week or more after this, during the continuance of which I found no permanent peace. After these services closed, I resolved to break off from my sins by righteousness. I therefore joined the society on trial, and forsook my former companions and places of amusement, and sought the company of the religious and pious, talked about religion, inquired of such the plan of salvation and of their Christian experience, prayed much, established regular hours for private prayer, became very punctilious in the observance of all the means of

grace, especially class meetings and private prayer, (and have never to this day missed my class, unless distant or sick, except once: then it was to attend preaching.) I became very attentive in reading the good book, often taking it on my knees and asking light from Heaven. Sometimes I fancied I had religion, and again I would be thrown into doubts and fears; and would often despair of mercy, feeling my former course of life bear heavily upon me. I repeatedly read Mr. Wesley's sermon on "SERVANTS AND SONS," and was often comforted in the belief that I was a servant and should be saved. In August, 1843, a very particular friend died, whose death, together with other circumstances growing out of this Providence, gave me great affliction of mind, and added much to my previous distress: however, it drove me close to a throne of grace, for the day after his interment I took up family prayer, and notwithstanding I found it a great cross and was often tempted to drop it, yet I persevered; often almost despairing of ever obtaining a clear evidence of my acceptance with Heaven. However, it pleased God in his abundant goodness and mercy, after ten months, drinking the wormwood and gall, on the 7th of February, 1844, to set my captive soul at liberty. Whilst bowed before God in prayer (and immediately after closing the public prayer), I asked the Lord to show me what it was that prevented me from obtaining a knowledge of the forgiveness of my sins; and that portion of Scripture came to my mind wherein it is said, "And a certain ruler asked him (Christ) saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good, none is good, save one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, do not, &c. And the ruler answered and said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Jesus replied, Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." I was struck at first with the importance of a literal compliance with the Savior's instructions, and rather drew back when making an application of the language to my own case; yet upon one moment's reflection, I resolved to acquiesce, even though this should be required of me, and replied I think audibly, "Yes, Lord, I will;" then it was, this language was communicated to my senses by the Holy Spirit, clear as if written in letters of gold before me, "Your sins are pardoned, you are free," and as quick as thought I was filled with the fruits of the Spirit, peace, love, ecstatic joy in the Holy Ghost; and was enabled to rise and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, having a new song put into my mouth, even praises to our God. Then was it manifest to me that I had no genuine religion before this. Yet I still believe, had it pleased Almighty God in his wise providence to call me from earth, at any time between April, 1843, and February 1844, he would have cut short the work in righteousness, and taken my soul to rest. Glory be to God for his forbearing mercy and tender kindness.

The next morning after my justification, and regeneration, and entire forgiveness of my sins, I felt the kindlings of revenge and unkind feelings towards an individual with whom I had had some misunderstanding touching a business matter. These feelings alarmed me much and gave me much uneasiness of mind for the moment; yet I soon went to Christ, and inquired of him in my closet, how these things could be, and prayed that they might be removed; and forthwith my heart was again filled with love to God and love for this same individual, as well as all the world. I was then very happy for two weeks, with little or no intermission. The language of my heart was,

"Jesus all the day long,
Is my joy and my song."

After these feelings abated, I was again thrown into doubts and fears by discoveries of the remains of the carnal mind; a disposition to anger, malice, revenge, pride, impatience, self-will, &c., &c., in all of which the enemy of God and man took the advantage of, and would and did make to me many suggestions.

However, I now took a decided stand and prayed much, fasted, read the word of the Lord, inquired of the Lord on my knees with his word open before me, for light, and when done reading, would pray that instruction be sealed upon my heart, and that the truths might be treasured up in my memory, that thereby my understanding might be enlightened, my judgment informed, that I might have my fruit unto holiness and my end peace. I never have, since God spoke peace to my mind, neglected any one day, (unless sick in bed,) the reading of a portion of the good book. I early discovered that I was growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ. At a campmeeting, the summer after my conversion, whilst a local brother was praying in the meeting tent, I received such a blessing as almost induced me to think it was sanctification, which I knew nothing of and had heard but little about. Yet I was early convinced after this, that my heart was not cleansed, for I still found in it the remains of the carnal mind.

During the latter part of the year 1844, and the beginning of 1845, my mind was drawn to the subject of sanctification, or holiness of heart: chiefly, I think, by my own diligence in searching after truth, with the aid of the Holy Spirit enlightening my understanding. I was continually striving to know the truth of this doctrine, by doing the will of God, which I found to be the advice of Christ.

I talked with many Christians, both of the ministry and laity, but (I regret to say it,) I could find but few that understood or enjoyed this blessing. I examined Wesley, Fletcher, Peck, Carvosso, Mrs. Palmer, Clarke's Commentary, and many other writers on the subject, in which I became very much interested.

Sometime in the Spring and Summer of 1845, I visited Baltimore, and attended the Saturday evening meetings held at the chapel, by Dr. Roberts, for the benefit of those who were seeking holiness. I listened attentively to the experience of others, and to the holy advice and instruction given by that man of God, but could not exercise faith so as to make a personal application of the advice.

I have been (and I speak it without boasting and without the fear of contradiction,) attentive on all the means of grace, public and private, from the time God in his infinite goodness spoke my sins forgiven, and I have enjoyed a large portion of the divine influence, and have been made to rejoice and shout the praises of the God of my salvation. I have been often much drawn out in prayer after holiness, entire sanctification, and often, rather despairing, become indifferent.

In December, 1845, I was struck with the great victory I had obtained and was still obtaining over inbred sin, and began to believe more than ever in my privilege of obtaining the complete victory over the remaining corruptions of my nature, (if any,) for indeed I was sometimes almost constrained to say, to be sure my inward foes are all vanquished and gone. In January, 1846, our much beloved and dear Bishop Janes paid our village a pastoral visit, and preached some three or four times, once from Romans 8:18, and 12:1, Rev. 3:18, in which he beautifully

portrayed the duties and privileges of Christians; that they should by the mercies of God present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which he clearly proved to be their reasonable service, showing that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in them; he therefore counseled them to buy of Christ gold tried in the fire, that they might be rich, and white raiment, that they might be clothed, that the shame of their nakedness might not appear, and to anoint their eyes with eyesalve that they might see. These sermons, together with a conversation had with the Bishop, and his general deportment and holy living, greatly encouraged me, and I became again deeply engaged with the Savior for a clean heart. These sermons were to many as bread cast upon the waters, seen after many days, and have been, I believe, the chief instrument of building up the walls of Jerusalem here, -- (new church erected.)

Sometime in February of the present year, (just two years from the time God, for Christ's sake, forgave my sins,) I had retired to my chamber in the afternoon for prayer, and whilst kneeling and pleading with God for a clean heart, for the removal of all inbred sin, to be cleansed from all my idols, and to be sprinkled with clean water, for holiness of heart, for entire sanctification and dedication of all to God, and perfect love, I became much humbled before the Lord, with a deep sense of his presence, during which I felt much of the melting, tendering influence of his grace, with great poverty of spirit, weeping and agonizing with considerable earnestness of soul, when the Holy Spirit gently communicated to my mind, "that you ask for, you have." This was entirely different from what I had expected, as I did expect it to come as the rushing of a mighty wind. My faith laid hold and I believed, and whilst retiring from my chamber and proceeding down stairs, with my foot resting on the first step, the enemy suggested, May you not have been mistaken? -- and forthwith I began to doubt, and immediately returned to my chamber and bowed before God, and asked of him a renewal of the witnesses or a confirmation of that given, whereby all doubts might be banished and my faith increased, and again the same language was sealed upon my mind, "that you ask for, you have;" after which I heartily praised the Lord in silence; my soul seemed to exult greatly with deep humility, and great meekness and poverty of spirit.

I resolved at once I would make a profession of my faith in Christ's sufficiency to cleanse from all sin, from a knowledge of what I had thus felt and now enjoyed. I found many temptations to hold my peace; the enemy suggesting that I had not made a profession of religion sufficiently long to profess holiness, that there were so many others in society, even in the class to which I was attached, who had been ten, fifteen and twenty years in society, and had never made any such profession, and some of them were considered very pious, and that they would not believe me.

However, I resolved that others might do as they would, I should and would acknowledge, as I believed it to be my duty to do, what the Lord had done for me, and accordingly I did so the first opportunity, which was in class, probably the next evening, and I have never from that day to this ever regretted my profession, or for one moment doubted the genuineness of the work. I have felt from that time to the present, that all doubts and fears were gone, all roots of bitterness, anger, wrath, malice, impatience, self-will, are all expelled, and I have an abiding consciousness that I please God, and shall, by faith through grace, inherit eternal life. Patience now has its perfect work, and perfect love hath cast out all fear which hath torment, either of death, hell, or falling from grace, though I am conscious I yet dwell in a house of clay, and have no confidence in the flesh. I have had various temptations and in various ways, but out of them all the Lord delivered

me, and continues thus to deliver, and I am assured he ever will whilst I put my trust in him and cast my care on him. I have often been in great heaviness from these temptations, but whilst thus tempted and tried, I have felt always a calmness and peace within, whilst my soul has been sustained by the promises, "Lo, I am with you always;" "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but God is able to deliver them out of them all;" "In six troubles I will be with you," &c.; and in patience I am enabled to possess my soul. I trust it will not be considered presumption in me to assert positively that I have never for one day in the slightest manner yielded to the influence of sin; I certainly have never for one moment since felt any condemnation. I have now an implicit confidence and trust in the atonement, and perceive that I am daily strengthened in faith, and am advancing still in the knowledge and love of Christ. I now understand spiritually what is meant by Paul in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, by faith all things were done as therein enumerated. I feel that I am now crucified with Christ and made comformable to his death, "the body of sin is destroyed;" and I, (that is my corrupt nature,) live no longer, being dead to sin, but Christ liveth in me, and is as a well of water springing up unto eternal life, and as a fountain in my inmost soul, from which all tempers, words and actions flow, and the life that I now live in the flesh, even in this mortal body, I live by faith in the Son of God.

Since I have been thus established and made this profession, I have had the good pleasure of seeing the work of the Lord revive much in this part of his moral vine. yard. Some six or eight other witnesses have been raised up to testify of this great salvation, and many others are in fall stretch for the kingdom; praise be to Jesus' name, the work is reviving here; the will of the Lord be done, praise ye the Lord.

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

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THE END