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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #030

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My natural disposition was serious and thoughtful, rather inclined to melancholy than gaiety. From a child I felt deeply the necessity of a change of heart, to qualify me for the enjoyment of that world of spirits where none but the pure and holy are permitted to enter. I was timid and fearful, and the prospect of death was terrifying. I sometimes retired to secret places to ask God to have mercy on me and pardon my sins. When nearly grown, the Lord was pleased to send an affliction on me which blasted all my earthly prospects; but with the affliction these words were applied to my mind:

"Afflictions, though they seem severe,
Are oft in mercy sent."

I often thought of the words, but my heart was unbelieving, and rather inclined to murmur at the dark ways of Providence; and often did my wicked heart rise in rebellion against God, and reproach him for unkindness and injustice. My convictions continued to increase. I felt that I had a wicked heart, and that I was wretched and undone, without an interest in the merits of the Savior. I began to seek with my whole heart the pardon of my sins. I read the Scriptures and prayed frequently; and employed all my energies to subdue every evil propensity -- determined never to give up the struggle. Glory be to God, he did not suffer me to seek in vain. A ray of light penetrated my benighted soul, and I felt a peace and calm that I had never before enjoyed: and there seemed to be a "still small voice," assuring me that my sins were blotted out, and that I had acceptance with God through Jesus Christ our Savior. But I was not satisfied; the light which I had received was too dim, and my evidence was not as bright as I desired. I ventured to express to a friend the change that I had felt, but assured him that I could not take this for conversion. This confession brought with it an increase of light and faith, which grew brighter and stronger until every doubt was removed, and I was filled with peace, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Death had no longer any terrors to me. For about three months I had neither doubts nor fears. I could say continually,

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken my skies,
Nor hide for one moment the Lord from my eyes."

Had I then seen the conflicts and difficulties that awaited me, I should have shrunk from the field of battle and sunk in despair. But the Lord has led me on step by step, and I have ever found his grace sufficient for me. In my darkest and most trying hours, he has never suffered my faith to fail. I have fought a thousand battles, and he has given me as many victories. Glory be to God, I can now look back upon my past life, and with feelings of love and gratitude to God, say,

"In all my ways thy hand I own;
Thy ruling Providence I see."

How sweetly do I feel that all my trials and afflictions have been sanctified to my good. Glory be to God, for the praise is all due to him. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." About the year 1883, I was thrown among the people called Methodists; and as I became acquainted with their doctrines and customs, my heart was drawn towards them by the strongest chord of Christian affection. Surrounding circumstances made me feel it my duty, as well as privilege, to unite myself to this society of Christians. I have learned that there were yet higher attainments in religion than I had ever before thought was my privilege to enjoy. I was delighted. It was the very thing that my soul longed for. Whenever I found anything written upon the subject of "holiness" or "perfect love," I read it with eagerness and a sincere desire to be made a partaker of the blessing. I sought it in the sincerity of my heart, and sometimes felt that I was ready to lay hold on the blessing; but my faith would waver, and thus I suffered myself to be deprived of this inestimable treasure for years, -- sometimes doubting my privilege to enjoy it, and sometimes seeking it with my whole heart.

Last fall I was very much encouraged to renew my efforts, and double my diligence. Several persons of my acquaintance had professed to enjoy the blessing. I was fully convinced that it was my privilege also. And I determined, by the grace of God, never to give up the struggle, cost what it would; that I would never again rest satisfied until I felt that I had a clean heart, and enjoyed that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear." But instead of looking to Jesus immediately, as my all-sufficiency, I began to look at my own unworthiness and surrounding difficulties. Consequently my mind became overwhelmed with darkness, and difficulties seemed to multiply and rise like mountains before me; until my way seemed so hedged up that I almost despaired of victory. But I was continually encouraged by my faithful pastor, to persevere, though all things should appear to be against me. I denied myself, and took my every cross; and the language of my heart was, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee." While in this state of mind I heard a sermon in which the Savior and the promises were presented to my mind in a most striking and forcible manner. I had a severe conflict with unbelief. At length it gave way, and I felt that I had gained the victory. I felt that the Savior was mine, his peace mine, his promises were mine, and his love was mine. I was inexpressibly happy, but did not, at that time, claim the blessing of "perfect love." I felt that God had, in some degree, given me the victory. I was enabled to look to Jesus, and I saw my way clearly. I continued to seek the blessing with increased confidence and zeal. I felt that the work was going on in my heart, and firmly believed that I would obtain it; but had an impression that it would be a gradual work. I expressed myself in this way to my pastor, with

whom I was conversing upon the subject. He reminded me of the length of time that it had been gradually going on in my heart; and made it very plain to my mind that there must be a time when it would be instantaneous. The admonitions of that day sunk deep into my heart. I was edified, strengthened and encouraged. I felt deeply impressed with the awful sin of unbelief. I could not rest. I felt an aching void within which nothing but God himself could fill. I retired to my room and threw myself at the feet of mercy. I wrestled and agonized, and read the Scriptures and sung until bed-time. My heart was very tender, and tears rolled copiously down my cheeks. Being wearied and almost exhausted in body and mind, I retired to rest and fell asleep. I awoke sometime in the night, and still felt that aching void and those awful convictions of unbelief. I thought that the Holy Spirit was striving with me for the last time, unless I made a full surrender and took God at his word. I felt that it was believe -- believe now, or be lost for ever. I made a covenant with God, that if he would sanctify me and give me a bright evidence, every power and energy that I possessed, should be wholly and unreservedly devoted to him my remaining days. I commenced singing the hymn, "And can I yet delay, my little all to give?" I believe I sung it through, and every line was in accordance with my feelings and desires. I prayed in the sincerity and fervency of my heart that God would take entire possession, and make me wholly his. I ventured myself and my all upon the merits of that blood which cleanses from all sin. My faith laid hold on the promises, and I claimed the blessing. No sooner had I done this than a flood of light and love and joy poured into my soul; and I felt as conscious of the immediate presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as I did of my existence. I exclaimed in the fullness of my heart, "Now I am thine and thou art mine. I am sanctified. O! the sweet fullness of a Savior's love. Never more withdraw thyself from me, and I will be wholly thine. Glory be to God. Bless the Lord, O my soul." I felt that I was conversing with an intimate, loving friend, and that there was a sweet union between God and my soul. Words fail to express all that I felt that night, but it seemed to me that I was "filled with all the fullness of God." That aching void was completely filled, and I was satisfied. This took place on the 24th of Dec .1845, -- a day never to be forgotten. But in eternity I expect to remember it, when I join with the sanctified above, to sing the holy song -- " Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

But the tempter came and suggested to my mind that perhaps I had been deceived; that I had better not make an open confession of this blessing, lest I should not be able to live up to the profession. I listened, and reasoned, and for some time "kept back part of the price." But I found that this would not do. I lost the witness, and my mind became overwhelmed with darkness. The sorrow and disappointment which I felt on this occasion are indescribable. Temptations came like a mighty torrent; and it took all the strength I possessed, both of body and mind, to bear up against the assaults which were leveled upon me. Blessed be God, although he hid his face from me a little moment, he did not forsake me. I held on to the promises with a trembling grasp. I told my heavenly Father that I could not live without his smiles and his presence; and promised solemnly that if he would restore that sweet witness to my heart, I would confess on all suitable occasions all that he had done for me. This sweet promise was applied to my heart -- "In due time you shall reap if you faint not." I rested upon this promise, and in a short time the witness was restored. I now longed for an opportunity to make this full and open confession. At length it was presented; and I believe if I had been certain of being put to death for it as soon as I had done, it would not have deterred me one moment. And O what strength and power did I receive on that occasion! I felt that

I was wholly given up to God, and my peace flowed as a never. Since that time I have sweet access to the throne of grace, and commune with my heavenly Father in a far more endearing manner than I could with my most intimate earthly friend. I feel there is a sweet union between my soul and my Savior; and that fear is cast out by perfect love.

"Stretch my faith's capacity
Wider and yet wider still:
Then with all that is in thee
My soul for ever fill."

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

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THE END