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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #035

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"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord " -- and should we not vie with each other in testifying of the wonders of his love -- of the depth of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, as we have proved it? And should not those of his children who have spent many years little to his praise, be especially zealous to improve the time that remains in more abundant labors to spread the savor of his name, and by every possible means bring others to the knowledge of his salvation? The manner in which these inquiries have appealed to my own heart, has induced me to attempt to tell them that fear the Lord, "what he hath done for my soul."

At a very early age, he manifested himself unto me as he does not unto the world; and for a considerable time I rejoiced in his smile, having no doubts of my acceptance with him. But in the hour of temptation I east away my confidence, and for several years walked in darkness, with only occasional seasons of light and comfort. Sometimes I was near despair, but I often lived much in the spirit of the world. The fear of God kept me in the church, and a sense of propriety led me to conform to its requirements; but I used the means of grace with little faith, and prayed rather from a sense of duty than from any expectation that my prayers would be answered. Yet, such was the mercy that followed me, they were often answered in a manner that exceedingly surprised and humbled me. In the year 1820, a change of residence placed me in a society of living members, and the fires of devotion that burned brightly everywhere around me, occasionally kindled on my desponding heart; but they were as often quenched by doubting and reasoning, which had become almost as habitual to me as breathing. Thus I continued, comparing my experience with every other I heard, and telling my perplexities to almost every Christian with whom I conversed -- at one time praying for conversion, then my heart became harder than a rook; and at another, with a little more confidence praying for a deeper work of grace; till a series of temporal reverses brought me to feel deeply the need of greater spiritual strength. Without a firmer trust in the Providence of my heavenly Father, and a more perfect resignation to his will, I found that I could not be sustained. For these I besought him early and late, till he heard and answered; so that I could refer every event of every day to his care, and thank him for all things, whether painful or pleasurable. I now

lived much in prayer, and sought to follow my Savior closely; but till this date I believe I had never thought of "entire sanctification" as an attainment possible to me.

In 1828, having removed my residence to Cincinnati, I sat under the ministry of one who in almost every sermon presented this blessing as the glorious privilege of all believers; and appointed a special prayer meeting for such of his charge as would seek it. I was one of the few that attended this memorable meeting; but alas for me! while one after another of my companions stepped into the pool and were made whole, I seemed to be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." I increased in strength -- took a firmer hold on the throne of grace -- left the things that were behind, and reached after those that were before but in all this there was much of self-confidence, and of effort to work out a righteousness of my own. Years, crowded with mercies, passed away, while unbelief was still so much the habit of my soul that I feared even to offer praise, lest I should express what I did not feel. Thus time rolled on and found me unhealed.

At last, wearied with the length of the way, I began in the winter of 1842-3, to cry mightily that the Lord would cut short and finish his work in my heart. At this time I read in the Christian Advocate and Journal, the Nos. entitled, "Is there not a shorter way?" which greatly enlightened me respecting that to me perplexing subject, "the way of faith." I now felt that, like ancient Israel, I had traversed the wilderness to the borders of the promised land, but that only the God of Israel could bring me over Jordan and give me possession. Here I tarried waiting for "power from on high" till August. I then attended a campmeeting where I had few acquaintances, and little to engage my attention, or interrupt my efforts to enter this Canaan. In approaching the ground I was blessed, and felt that faith and hope were strengthened. The heavens seemed bowed almost to my reach, and every waking breath bore upward the prayer, "O Lord, give me a clean heart!" I had laid all on the altar, and so intensely was I occupied in watching the sacrifice till it should be consumed, that I dreaded even the salutations of a friend, lest my heart should be for a moment diverted from its object.

The day before the meeting was to close, found me, as I thought, in a less devotional frame than I had been for days. I had been compelled to be absent from the ground during a part of the meeting, and other circumstances had conspired to produce dissipation of mind. Perhaps I was by this means brought to a more perfect consciousness of my utter helplessness. My purpose had not changed, nor my efforts relapsed; but I could not now find, even in feeling, any ground for hope. In this state I went into the prayer meeting for mourners, on Wednesday afternoon, about five o'clock. The Lord was there to heal and to save. I found around me a few of those who were used to pray with and for me. One of them, a dear sister, began to exhort me to look up. I did look; and quick as thought, was spoken to my inmost soul, "If you ask bread, will he give you a stone?" A glimpse of the fullness of God was at the same instant presented to my now opened eye, and glory to God broke from my lips, which had so long refused to speak his praise. I wondered at myself, but had no idea that I had received the "long-sought blessing." I had expected the "kingdom of God to come with observation," and was not prepared to receive it in any other way. But I felt that a change had passed upon me, and while the breathings of my soul were still for purity, the sky was perfectly clear above me and all was peace within.

About an hour after, the congregation assembled at the stand for preaching. As I was kneeling, during the first prayer, I thought, I shall meet sister -- on the ground in the morning, and, in spite of the tempter, I will say, I am an heir of God; and at the thought my soul filled and overflowed with unutterable bliss. My heart had become like the full vessel which runs over with the slightest motion. That was indeed a new life in which hallelujahs rose spontaneously from a heart so long unused to notes of joy. Yet I did not begin to apprehend what was this new state, till the following Wednesday night, when at a society meeting I received a more powerful baptism of the Holy Spirit, and these words were applied to my heart, "He that hath the Son hath life." I then began to see the way by which the Lord had led me, and with joyful surprise to exclaim "Jesus, and all in him, is mine."

O, what a world of life and of bliss did this single lesson open in my soul! But it was months before I ventured to say I had received even the lowest degree of "perfect love" -- nor can I be sure that I ever had those powerful manifestations which enable me to say

"Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight."

On the contrary, temptations to doubt (especially the extent of the work) have been perpetual. But I have resolved that, in the strength of grace, I will believe with sufficient evidence; and not as in former years, dishonor my God by looking for signs and wonders; and hitherto he has enabled me to "hold fast the beginning of my confidence."

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

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THE END