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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #039

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The benefit I have myself received from the testimony of others, induces me, in compliance with your request, to review the leading circumstances of my own experience in relation to the subject of Christian holiness.

Long before I became personally interested in the subject of religion, I adopted the belief that it is the privilege of Christians to live without falling into sin. And though my views, both in regard to the nature of this state and the means of obtaining it, were very limited and indefinite, yet they were sufficient to bring my mind into continual condemnation after I had professed religion, because I did not more decidedly seek to know by experience, that which I had already admitted in theory.

After receiving evidence that a principle of holiness had been implanted within, I was pained to perceive that my heart was yet prone to depart from God. This discovery gave rise to repeated resolutions to seek entire conformity to the requirements of God, but these resolutions seemed to avail nothing. Finding they were not sufficient to keep me, discouragement, doubt and darkness gathered over my mind, tempting me to lay aside the subject in despair. Circumstances often occurred tending to increase my conviction. I will refer to only one.

In the spring of 1838, being in Providence, I met with a gentleman from Oberlin, who professed to believe that sin is not a necessary part of the Christian's life. I heard him converse upon the subject, and felt convinced that his views were correct. Turning to me, he said, "Do you believe it your privilege to live as we have stated?" I replied, "Yes, decidedly." "Do you live in this manner?" "No, sir," said I. Lifting his hand, he exclaimed, "What an account you sill have to render! your responsibility is a thousand times more awful than if you did not know your master's will." From that time I felt the burden of my responsibility as I had not before. My desire for holiness had been more on my own account than from a sense of duty. Now I felt more sensibly that God not only permits but requires his children to be holy. I felt more and more that sin was a

grievous burden under which I could not bear to live. Though at times I could believe my sins forgiven, I did not receive power to retain a clear conscience, since sin seemed to be mixed with all I did. Thus I lived on, sinning and repenting, till August of the same year; when, hearing that a campmeeting was to be held in Eastham, I resolved to attend. I thought, as the meeting was to be among a people who believe in the attainment of that state of perfect assurance for which I had been so long seeking, I might, perhaps, receive some benefit.

The order prevailing throughout the campground was favorable to religious improvement -- the sermons were well calculated to be profitable -- and especially, the tent meetings were such as a Christian could hardly fail to enjoy. Only one subject, however, interested me. I could not feel interested in any prayer, sermon or exhortation, that did not bear directly upon the great subject of personal holiness. If any other subject was presented in the tent to which I belonged, I sought another, where prayer was being offered for holiness of heart. In one tent, a spot to which my mind ever reverts with peculiar interest, there were several individuals in whose prayers I found the state of my own mind described. They seemed to have come to the ground with the same object in view; and while they prayed that they might there find "a grave for their sins," and return home to labor in the cause of God with consecrated hearts, I could sometimes hardly refrain from responding audibly to their petitions, so entirely they expressed my heart's desire. Many hours I lingered about that tent, listening to the burdened prayer of the disconsolate, or to the praises of those just delivered from bondage. The subject continued to present itself in a clearer light, but I gained no relief. I was surprised that those with whom I conversed dwelt so much on faith, urging me to believe, in much the same terms I should have used with an unconverted person. I thought I had faith and needed something else, I knew not what -- some almost miraculous influence to slay every inbred sin and set my spirit free. On the day previous to the close of the campmeeting, a praying circle was formed specially for those who were seeking sanctification. After some hesitation, I went forward with those who requested prayers. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," was the burden of my desire. I did not at that time receive an evidence that prayer was answered; but the result of that exercise was a calmness of mind, accompanied by a desire to praise God for his willingness to grant so great a blessing to any of his creatures. A momentary fear came over my mind lest my evidence of sanctification should be, as that of my justification had been, somewhat indistinct at first, like the earliest morning dawn; and as the fact that I could not refer to any time as the date of my conversion, had been the means of many doubts, I feared I should be continually in danger of doubting whether my heart was ever sanctified -- so little did I at that time understand the clearness of that witness which is the privilege of the consecrated believer, the strength of that living faith which rests not on past experience or future hopes.

That evening, I attended meeting in the tent in which I had passed so many hours. After several had expressed it as our desire that the work of grace might be deepened in our hearts, we joined in prayer. I say we, for I believe those who spoke audibly were not the only ones who prayed. One cloud of incense arose, burdened with one request. At an interval, a sister spoke of the extent of the atonement. It never appeared so efficacious to me before. I only wanted faith to feel that it was for me. While one was leading in prayer, a heavenly influence seemed to pervade the tent, and fill the very atmosphere. He paused, and all was silent. "Peace, peace," said he, "all is peace here." I could respond heartily to this sentiment. "happiness, happiness," said he, "happiness is here." I felt that it was so. "Glory, glory," he again exclaimed, "there is glory here." I was

conscious that this also was true. Never so forcibly did I realize how much is contained in that song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." O, how easy, then, to believe in Christ as my present Savior. My mind instantly recurred to the dear church, with which I am connected; I longed to be in their midst, and tell them what a blessing I had found, -- scarcely doubting, but that upon the presentation of a subject so glorious, and yet so simple, they would embrace it with their whole hearts.

My peace of mind continued undiminished for several days after my return home. I realized an increase of spiritual discernment, enabling me, as I thought, to distinguish between subjects tending to profit, and those wholly useless. Once, however, having engaged in a conversation which at first seemed calculated to result in good, I unguardedly related an anecdote, which, upon reflection, appeared to me foolish and worse than useless. This threw me into great distress. I was unwilling to give up my confidence, and yet feared I had no right to retain it. I called upon a clergyman and related the cause of my anxiety. He advised me to go directly to the cross of Christ, without stopping to inquire into the nature and extent of my error; first, to seek an evidence of pardon, and then, in the light of God's countenance, I should be better prepared to examine the subject. This advice I have since found of use, in instances almost innumerable. By this course, my peace of mind was restored, and became as a river. I learned to live by looking to Christ; and though the great enemy of souls has often sought to bring me again into bondage, I feel that he is a conquered foe.

I still rejoice in a full salvation, and am willing to bear this testimony, that the "blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin."

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

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THE END