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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #042

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Having read the Guide with much interest and comfort, I shall be happy if I can add anything to its pages in favor of the blessed doctrine it teaches; hoping that some desponding, doubting soul, may be encouraged to believe and fearlessly plunge the cleansing fountain.

By the grace of God, I was induced in the morning of my days, to attend to the strivings of the Spirit. I sought and soon found the pearl of great price; and, for a considerable length of time, enjoyed the light of the reconciled countenance of my heavenly Father. This peaceful frame, however, did not always last; for experience taught me that my foes were not all destroyed. Unbelief, my most powerful enemy, often brought me into captivity. Years passed and found me still wandering in the wilderness of unbelief; frequently traveling over the same ground and making but little advancement. Sometimes I caught a glimpse of the promised land, and desired greatly to partake of its precious fruit; but, like the distrustful Israelites, I feared I should never be able to possess it, because my enemies were strong and powerful. Thus I passed eight years of my religious cause; although I endeavored to live consistently with my religious profession. At this time, I was made to feel deeply,

"'Twas worse than death, my God to love,
And not my God alone."

Happy would it have been for me, had I then relied with persevering faith upon the never falling promises of God. Then might I have brought forth everything which I felt opposed to the reign of the Savior in my heart, and had it slain at the foot of the cross. But this was too much for my weak faith to expect at the time. I saw the promised land afar off; and resolved to leave no means untried which would give me the victory over my spiritual foes, and bring me nearer to the land of promise. I accordingly united in a band with a few kindred spirits, who, like myself, were seeking the full salvation of their souls; and taking Wesley's rules for our guide, we hoped by watching, fasting, denying self and bearing the cross continually, we should crucify our sins and

arrive at that state of mind where we could consistently expect God to apply the all-cleansing blood of Jesus, to wash out the stains of sin from our souls. Not that I expected anything on the ground of merit; for I was fully sensible that could I keep the whole law, I should do no more than my duty, and should then be but an unprofitable servant. My error was, that I sought by works to prepare myself to exercise faith, believing the Lord could not consistently bless me, while there was anything I was unwilling to do for his sake. I therefore went forward, neglecting nothing which I thought could be duty, whether in public or private. But instead of getting my heart into a better state, I continually saw it in a worse light. The fountain of the great deep of my depraved nature being broken up, I could only, with the publican, cry -- "God be merciful to me a sinner." I spent much time in prayer and searching the Scriptures; sometimes endeavoring to reach and take the blessing, which, I firmly believed, was not only my privilege, but duty to enjoy; but could never believe fully, because I thought I was not quite in the right place.

Thus passed many dreary months, and found me frequently endeavoring to double my diligence in getting myself prepared for the coming of the Lord. Meanwhile I was exhorted to believe; to come to God as I was, and rest upon his promises. But this appeared to me too much like presumption. To me it appeared easier to create a world, than for the Savior to take possession of such a heart! Almost a year had passed, from the time when I decided to be wholly the Lord's, when a special means of grace was appointed. To this I looked forward with much interest, hoping and praying it might be the time when I should be delivered from the body of death with which I had so long been oppressed. But, alas: the state of my mind can better be imagined than described, when, at the close of the anticipated meeting, I found myself unblessed. I was now brought to a critical point, and knew not what to do. I saw it was vain for me to hope to be blessed in the way I had sought the year past; for, notwithstanding I had endeavored to discharge my duty faithfully, yet I could see nothing but sin in all I had done; and I never had seen a moment when I appeared farther from God than at this time. I spent much time in prayer, searching the Scriptures on my knees, for some sweet promise to shield me from despair, in this time of trial. But the Bible was a scaled book, and the heavens seemed brass over my head. I feared, yea, greatly feared, that I had so grieved the Holy Spirit by my unbelief, that he had taken his departure from me. But praised be the Lord, who leadeth the blind by a way they know not. A friend called to converse with me, who, by the blessing of God, was made the means of removing the scales of unbelief from my eyes. I was made sensible of the reason why I had so long wandered in darkness. It was because the pride of my heart had hindered me from humbly submitting to the righteousness of Christ by faith, instead of endeavoring to establish my own; or, in other words, to find something good in my heart. I now saw my great sinfulness in distrusting God, and of praying in unbelief. From this moment, I raised my heart to the Savior in prayer, believing him a physician able to heal every disease of the soul. I retired to my room, threw myself on my knees, and opened my Bible at the 14th of John. I was greatly comforted, in reading the soothing address of the Savior to his disciples, and when I read the precious promise, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do;" it was effectually applied to me. It was now clear to me, that though I possessed such a depraved heart -- a heart free from any native goodness -- yet he, who is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe, now bid even me ask what I desired, and he would do it. I now felt it my privilege to believe the Savior would perform his word; and, with childlike simplicity, asked for a clean heart. The calmness of a summer evening pervaded my spirit as I walked to a place where a humble few had met for prayer. I entered, and a sense of the presence of God rested upon me. I plead the promise, and felt that now was the time when I should be made clean in the

blood of Christ. But the adversary of souls was not willing to relinquish his prey without a struggle. He caused my sins like mountains to tower around me, and suggested the temptation -- can you expect these to be removed now? I struggled a moment, and then again grasped the precious promise. Glory to my Savior, he not only comforted me with his word, but himself came to my rescue. I realized his presence, and felt that he presented me to God, the Father, clothed in his own righteousness. My sins were gone, God was reconciled, for Jesus had made a full atonement for my individual sins. Had I been the only sinner, and had I seen the Savior crucified for me, I could not have had a clearer view of the nature of sin, and the price paid for my redemption. I felt that God loved me for his Son's sake, and owned me for his child. O, amazing love! I rose and fell upon my knees, I wondered, and adored. Heaven came down to earth, and the glory of God surrounded me. I felt myself to be but a mote, as it were, wafted about on the ocean of the love of God, -- yet with confidence crying, "Abba, Father." I felt indeed that I was in Christ and Christ in God, and such was the union enjoyed with the Father and Son, that, with St. Paul, I could say -- Nothing was able to separate me from the love of God. I indeed was dead, and my life hid with Christ in God. Self was crucified. I was no more my own, but was bought with a price! I was therefore the Lord's, wholly his, soul, body and spirit. To know and do his will, was now the only desire of my heart. I feared no cross, for I was alike regardless of the frowns and smiles of the world; the sword, the faggot or the rack, could not have daunted me; for Jesus was my all, and wherever he saw fit to send me, there he also was to support me.

My simple faith laid hold on every promise. I asked and received, and felt indeed that I was in God, and his glory surrounded me. The veil was removed, and the way into the holy of holies was now made clear, by the blood of Christ. I felt that I stood upon its threshold. I drank at its pure fountain, and partook of its precious fruits. I saw before me an extended field, which was mine to explore. Very contrary to what I had anticipated, I had no ecstasy or even joy. A calm peace pervaded my whole soul, so sacred, that I feared to move or speak, lest I should disturb the sweet communion which I enjoyed with Deity. I arose, however, and sung -- "My God is reconciled," &c., and wished to speak of what the Lord had done for me; but found I was not beyond the power of temptation. I feared I should not be believed, and might convey wrong impressions, and so injure the precious cause; which, for my part, I would not have done. My peace, however, was like a river: broad, deep, and ever flowing. I returned home a new person, and almost in a new world; wondering at the unparalleled, unspeakable love of God, to so unworthy and sinful a being as I was. All was of grace, free, unmerited grace! I wondered at my unbelief in refusing, so long, to let go my hold of self, and to fall into the arms of Jesus, which had ever been extended to receive and sanctify me, as unholy as I was. I now found the words of holy writ more precious than gold, for I received them as from the mouth of Deity directly to me. All this, I saw, was only because he loved me, because I was the purchase of the precious blood of Jesus. This great salvation, I clearly saw, was not restricted to a few; but was for all; and for them now! if they would but believe and accept it.

For about six months, I went on, trusting in God at all times, and endeavoring to discharge every duty which God enjoined on me, and persuade all I could to believe and be made whole. About this time, I attended a campmeeting, where I expected to receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost. It, however, proved a time of severe trial. A cloud darkened my spiritual horizon. This led me to ask the cause. I feared I had sinned; but felt no condemnation. The direct witness of the spirit was withdrawn, and I knew not what to do. Had I then had some experienced friend to teach me

still to hold on, by faith, in this trying hour, I might still have gone on in this good way. But not having seen or conversed with a single experienced friend since I first received it, and, like many other unfortunate souls, I did not distinguish between sin and temptation. I reasoned with the adversary of souls, instead of looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith, until I was induced to believe that if I was guilty of no other sin, I at least had yielded to unbelief! Then was my shield gone; and, like Samson shorn of his locks, I had become as weak as another.

I need not speak particularly of my exercises during this time, and the time when I was again enabled to lay hold, by faith, on the hope set before me, except it be to say, that several times, for short periods, I was enabled to exercise that faith which brought me near the bleeding side of my dear Redeemer. But not receiving new light, sufficient to make so deep an impression as at first, I soon cast away my confidence. Having once tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, nothing short of this could satisfy my mind. I also knew, that I could not glorify and serve God without it; and when I exhorted others, my words returned to myself, and my inconsistencies appeared in their true light. But what could I do? Strange as it may appear, the same obstacles hindered me from coming directly to the throne, as at first. I was not penitent and humble enough. But to live without it, was but a living death. I resolved, deliberately resolved, to place myself once more on the sacred altar. I retired with a friend, and knelt before the Lord. I recalled this promise, knowing him to be immutable: "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it." I calmly and understandingly believed he would do as he promised; resolving never to remove my cause out of his hands. I asked not for happiness, but a clean heart; and this, I knew, was the will of God I should possess. And glory to his name, as unfit as I was in my own eyes, my Savior permitted me not to wait long. As soon as I had fully consecrated all to him, I was enabled to lay hold, by faith, upon my Savior, and the victory was won. Again I was brought nigh, by the blood of Jesus, to God, my reconciled Father. I now resolved, no more to distrust the willingness of God to bless, since he had so repeatedly bestowed his favor on one so unworthy. None need distrust or hesitate in the least; for he is a Savior well able to save from the power of sin, and impress his image on every heart that will submit to Him.

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

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THE END