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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

#### ACCOUNT #044

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Your request, that I would write you a more particular account of the way in which God was pleased to lead me to the discovery of the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus, has not been forgotten. My principal reason for deferring it has been, lest I should seem to arrogate something peculiar to myself. Yet I know that you will not so understand me. Indeed, if there has been anything peculiar in my case, it has been a peculiar amount of hardness of heart and unbelief, which has resisted the grace of God.

It was in the spring of 1836, that I first indulged a hope in the pardoning mercy of God. For more than a year my mind had been laboring under deep conviction, yet contending till the last moment with that gracious influence which was drawing me towards my Savior. Notwithstanding all my waywardness, the Holy Spirit had been gradually discovering to me the glory and excellency of the divine character, until God's perfect equity, his unchanging goodness, and above all, his love in Christ Jesus, presenting themselves in contrast with my vileness, had rendered my sin and guilt an insupportable burden. In vain did I look at the various ways in which my mind had been hitherto seeking help; their efficiency had all vanished. Refuge failed me. Nothing lay between me and everlasting death, save the mere mercy of God. I was distinctly conscious of casting myself on him as my only hope. I saw clearly that it would be perfectly just in him to cast me off for ever -- that I could never redeem the soul I had destroyed, nor atone for one of the least of my sins; but that, if ever I was saved, it must be by the free, sovereign grace of God. Long had I admitted this sentiment in theory, yet never till this moment had I known the meaning of GRACE. A new idea had taken possession of my soul, and I sought in vain for a new term by which to express it. But still it was grace; and, whatever epithets I might add to it, I could express no more than the gospel had always expressed, of the way of salvation through Christ.

But O, in what a glorious light did the gospel now burst upon my view; so adapted to man's necessities, -- so simple, and yet so glorious, -- so worthy of its Author. It seemed to melt my whole soul in love and gratitude and praise. My happiness did not arise from any change which I

supposed wrought in me, or in my relations to God, for it was not until some time after, that I discovered any such change to have been wrought. But it was what I saw in God, and especially in his way of salvation through Christ, which filled my heart with rapture and my lips with praise. My whole soul rejoiced that the entire universe was under the government of such a Being, and wherever I turned my eyes the whole earth seemed full of his glory. For several weeks I was conscious of no other feeling than that of love to God, and desire to spend and be spent in his service.

I knew very little, however, of the nature of true religion, or of the way by which the soul draws life and strength from Christ. The consequence was, that, struggling against temptation in my own strength, I was soon overcome, and my mind brought into darkness. For many years I lived, for the most part, in a state of bondage to sin; earnestly desiring deliverance, yet knowing not where to find it; vainly resolving, striving, and praying against it, yet continually conscious that the world divided my heart with God. True, I could go to a throne of grace, and there pour out my complaint, confess my wanderings, and renewedly throw myself on the sovereign grace of God. This was my first, and this my only hope, that salvation was of God alone. I should have given up at once, had anything depended on me; but I could not despair, while Jesus lived to dispense a salvation founded alone on free, unmerited grace. Sometimes I would for a season feed in green pastures, beside the still waters, but oftener I was constrained to inquire

"Where is the blessedness I knew,  
When first I saw the Lord?"

In the early part of 1842, I heard Elder Knapp preach several times in Boston. His discourses led me to think more than ever before of my own responsibility, and convinced me that my slow progress in the divine life had resulted wholly from want of effort on my part. I returned home, fully determined to exert my utmost powers to lead a godly life. But, alas! the more I strove the more I sinned and stumbled, and the deeper and more awful appeared the depravity of my heart. I now began seriously to question whether this was the new heart which God had promised to believers. The fountain of my hope underwent a thorough examination. I took the Bible anew, as the word which must judge in at the last day, and sought to learn of Christ and his apostles, what it was to be a Christian. The more I studied upon this point, the more thoroughly did I become convinced that it was no small thing to be a disciple of Jesus. A high standard of Christian character was before me, but how should I attain to it?

While searching to know what provision God had made to enable his people to meet his requirements, the gospel opened before me as a glorious plan of sanctification. So new and precious did its promises and provisions appear, that it almost seemed like a new gospel. I saw in it all that I had ever desired or wished for. It was truly the pearl of great price. But how should I come into possession of it? Its blessings, I saw clearly, were all promised to faith; yet for a long time I sought to attain them by works. My proud heart wanted to do something towards its restoration. Still my confidence in God was daily increasing, as I saw more and more of the wonders of his love towards us. I felt that he was worthy of our unmingled confidence, and that no sin could be equal to that of unbelief.

One day I had been reflecting on the 11th of Hebrews, and while considering the various examples of faith, as there recorded, my mind rested on that of Gideon. I thought of his fleece twice tried, and of his listening to the dream of the Midianite, till it really seemed to me that, under the same circumstances, I should have had more faith in God, -- that to me the command of God would have been enough without any such tests. What, thought I, had he to lose, supposing God had not sustained him? Could he die in a better cause than while executing the commands of Jehovah? Amid such thoughts as these, I again retired to my chamber, to wrestle with God for a heart to love him with all my soul. Of this one blessing it seemed to me I could not be denied. I saw that God was so worthy of the love and service of every rational creature, that I longed, with a desire I can never express, that in all things I might live to his glory. The passage, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," came with peculiar force to my mind. I began to plead with God for such a disposition, when it seemed forced upon me as a command, with an authority I had never before felt. Here, thought I, is a command, as obligatory, and as much directed to me, as was the command to go against the Midianites on Gideon. But this is wholly beyond my power. So was that beyond his. I have tried a thousand times to obey this, yet always failed. Then, has God commanded an impossibility? I saw that it was awful impiety to refuse to do what God had commanded, however seemingly impossible; yet I feared to undertake. At this moment my reasoning respecting Gideon came home to me with power. What had I to lose? Suppose I should not succeed, would there be any harm in making the attempt? I dared not decline; yet O, my weakness! With what feelings did I leave my chamber as I saw on the one hand the justness and excellency of the command, and felt that nothing was so desirable as to obey it -- yet, on the other hand, I had reduced myself by a course of sin into a state of guilt and impotency, which made me weaker than a bruised reed. Still my constant prayer was for grace to enable me to obey this precept. No special duty was before me, nothing but the common avocations of my family. But as I went from one thing to another, the question still was, Will this be for the glory of God? Of some things I felt constrained to say, Yes; of others, I was doubtful; while a third class I thought could not possibly glorify my heavenly Father. And would I not have done these yesterday, thought I, without any compunctions of conscience? Yes, because I thought them trifles, without any particular moral character. As to those things respecting which I was in doubt, I could but ask myself, how I could be so ignorant of the moral character of actions which I was in the daily habit of doing. This question brought with it the astounding fact, that I had never really made it my business to do all I did to God's glory. My soul sank in abasement before God at this discovery, and I longed for an opportunity to retire again to my chamber. Three distinct errands urged me to a throne of grace. First, to thank God for having enabled me thus far to keep before my mind a desire to promote his glory. Secondly, to ask for wisdom respecting those things of which I was in doubt; and, thirdly, to confess my awful guilt for never having made his glory the one object of my life.

Never shall I forget that season of prayer. My soul seemed to melt before God. I felt that I was indeed nothing; that he was all in all. Yet there was a sweet consciousness that what I wanted accomplished in my soul was the very object most dear to my heavenly Father. And though all weakness, yet I felt to lean on him to mold and fashion me into his own image; I felt to choose him as my only portion. Everything else looked like dross, as less than nothing, and vanity. I felt, too, to take him as my king, to rule in, and reign over me for ever. As I looked back, it seemed to me I had all my days been serving self; now I could say in truth, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. My whole

soul went out after God, and delighted itself in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Yet, like a little child, I could repose on his arm of infinite love with a peace which truly passed all understanding. Never before had I known such a heaven on earth.

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

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THE END