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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #047

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Since I have thought of writing, in answer to your proposal, I have labored under a sense of extreme inability, and have been almost ready to shrink from the undertaking. But at length I have broken through every objection, believing, through Christ strengthening me, I shall be able to declare what God hath done for my soul.

Five years previous to the time I was convicted for holiness, I experienced the pardoning love of God. I had not a doubt of my acceptance with him.

For nine months, I rejoiced continually, and obeyed the voice of the Spirit. I loved my Redeemer, and longed to depart and be with him, which I considered far better than life. After this I began to decline, and by degrees lost my enjoyment, and became formal and spiritless in my religious duties. Remains of sinful tempers began to trouble me, and I doubted my former experience. But though I was unhappy, and my heart unholy, yet I was enabled to live uprightly as to my outward walk. At this time, the Rev. Elijah Hedding was stationed in Boston. I was reclaimed, and brought into liberty again; after which, I retained a sense of my justification, till I resolved to seek for holiness of heart.

It is now full three years since I began to read the word of God carefully, diligently, and with prayer, to see if the doctrine of Christian perfection could be proved by it. I likewise took my pen, and marked every text in the New Testament which proved or favored that doctrine. After thus carefully examining the Scriptures, I was convinced that this was purchased by the Savior's death, and that God intended that we should be restored to his full image. I saw that he had promised it to us, and that he commanded us to be perfect. At this time my mind was greatly perplexed with doctrines. I read many books, and the different ideas and sentiments I met with greatly confused my mind. But the Lord, who delighteth not in the death of a sinner, in great mercy caused light to break in upon my mind and shine upon my path. February 18, 1818, in prayer I cried to God that he would show me my state, earnestly entreating him to let me see all that was in my heart, when he

inclined his ear and granted my request. But the sight made me tremble, and for a time most threw me into despair. I found the remains of almost every sin in my heart; and groaning in this deplorable situation, I lost sight of Christ as my mediator. I struggled, mourning, weeping, prostrate on my face; for some time being tempted to think that my damnation was sealed. I lay, as it were, crushed under the mighty hand of God; for Christ, my advocate, was hid from my eye of faith. A sense of God's penetrating eye surveying my heart, beholding all, yea, more than I saw, sunk me down, and I appeared to myself as a mote; yet my sins appeared like mountains. But after all this, I saw that there was compassion in God; and soon my Savior appeared to my view. I saw by faith that he loved me, and had given himself for me. I plainly saw that he had bought me with his own blood, and that his blood was sufficient to cleanse my polluted heart from every sinful temper -- yea, from all sin. I could now cry for mercy, peace, and a pure heart. My soul was comforted, and a gleam of hope appeared.

But it was soon suggested, "All mankind will eventually be saved -- why do you trouble yourself? You will lose your senses at this rate." This temptation brought darkness upon my mind, and I could not believe that all would be saved -- there was no rest for me here. I cried to the Lord, and light broke in upon my mind. I said, "Lord, strengthen me, and open my way before me, and I will not rest until I obtain a clean heart." I opened the Bible (which lay before me) on these words, (Rev. iii. 8,) "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." This, and what followed, to the end of the chapter, greatly strengthened my faith, and I cried, "I will, I do believe; and my way shall be open from this moment." I resolved to obtain the blessing, at the expense of everything else. From this time I began to fast and pray, and to seek sincerely and earnestly for full sanctification. I strove to keep the whole law. I sought by works to subdue my sins, and conquer myself. But, alas! I grew worse: and my heart rose against God, because I could not conquer it. I asked, and obtained not. I strove, but did not receive the blessing. At times I was apprehensive I should never obtain my end. I gave way to temptation, and involved myself in many difficulties. I saw no power to live to God a single day. I found indeed that I was weakness itself; and my sins appeared like mountains, separating between me and my God. But I had some comfortable seasons. I had now and then a taste of the little streams which flow from the great fountain of life and comfort. I had a little strength to keep my resolution, that I would have the blessing of sanctification at the expense of everything, and deliverance from my Lord's enemies in my heart.

At one time, this text was brought with power to my mind, "You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Sometimes Christ would fly over the mountains of my sins and transgressions to my soul, and for a short season would comfort me. Then again he would leave me in the dark, struggling with my temptations and troublesome forebodings of future things. I was in an agony, and knew not what to do. It appeared to me as though Satan led me captive at his will. One day, while contemplating the wretchedness of my condition, it came to my mind, as if spoken by a person standing by, "Read H[ester] A[nn] Rogers' Life." I arose from my meditations, and immediately obtained it. O! praise! praise! praise the Lord, that ever this precious book fell into my hands! I read it with prayer, and my heart opened to conviction; for I had done all that I could do, and was none the better, but rather grew worse, like the woman in the gospel, who, having spent all that she had, was at last glad to come to Christ for a cure. In like manner I came at last.

In reading Mrs. Rogers' letters, I saw that the way to obtain sanctification was by faith, and hereupon discovered my own error. I found that by works alone I could not obtain salvation from all sin. I resolved, however, not to lay works aside: but used the means, waiting at the foot of sovereign mercy, expecting to receive; for I was laid low, yea, in the dust I could lay my mouth, with my hand upon it, crying, unclean, unclean. I saw the way I was to come, with all my pollution and unworthiness, and cast my soul upon Christ; and I believed that he would accomplish the work in me, that he would slay all my foes, and by his spirit and grace make me truly alive. Here grace and nature had many a struggle; but grace always prevailed. Self now appeared out of the question -- nature and grace fought the battle; for I had given myself to God, in the name of Jesus Christ, to do with me as it pleased him.

I cried continually with many sighs and tears, "Give me thyself to know, from every sin set free -- cleanse my heart, sanctify my nature!" I could take no denial. I said, Give me this, or I die. Take everything I possess, but give me an indwelling Savior. I must have this. Nothing short of this can satisfy my immortal mind. Lord, give me thy nature, thy perfect image.

"I cannot rest till pure within,
Till I am wholly saved from sin."

I had many temptations to think this was not the time; but in such a place, or in such a meeting; at home, in the closet, I might obtain. Notwithstanding the power of Satan to tempt, I was enabled to look to God by faith, and wait patiently till the work was accomplished.

Whether at home or abroad, my language was still the same. One night in class, I felt my heart exceedingly hard; but it was soon melted before the Lord. After I arrived at home, these words were applied to my heart:

"Dear Savior, steep this rock of mine
In thine own crimson sea;
None but a bath of blood divine
Can wash my sins away."

After this I resolved to open my mind to our minister, who had not preached the doctrine of holiness so explicitly and fully as he afterwards did. I went to his house, trembling, weighed down, fearing I should not be able to stand against the opposition I should meet with; for few fully believed the doctrine of heart holiness, even among the Methodists. I endeavored to tell him the exercises of my mind, and he explained some things, and prayed for me. While in prayer I shook exceedingly; and when we arose from our knees I found I had lost my burden, I felt neither sorrow nor joy. I went home much relieved. I had no sense of anything, only my soul was delivered.

A day or two after this, I began to think I had lost my convictions; and it appeared to me that I had lost my earnestness for the blessing. I was somewhat alarmed, and feared I should not obtain what I so much desired. I retired, with a view to pray for conviction; and, to my great surprise, when I came before the Lord, I could not feel distress: but the following words were set home upon my heart: "Abide in me, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." At this moment I was in Christ; my every passion

was at once laid even; and a sweet stillness, a peace like a river, or, like the waves of the sea, wave after wave, thrilled through my soul, as no tongue can tell, or pen describe. I arose from my knees to see what it was, or from whence it came. I looked abroad upon the trees, and every leaf appeared awed into profound silence before the Lord: and all that I saw brought joy into my soul. The weight of love I realized was great indeed.

From this moment I had the witness that the work was done, and that God had full possession of, and dwelt in my heart. "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?" But again I erred; for I resolved to be cautious about telling of it. I thought I would see the fruits it produced, before I professed it. And although it is proper to be careful, yet it is the duty of sanctified souls, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to make known what God has done for them. I brought a dark cloud upon my mind by not professing it at a certain time, when it appeared my duty. But as soon as I began to declare what God had done for me, light shone upon my mind; and from that time to the present, I have had the abiding witness of the same, except once for a few days, when under great weakness of body and severe trials of mind. I professed this blessing with great weakness, feeling my entire helplessness; but in every instance, when I have been called to profess or defend this glorious salvation, God has stood by me, and I believe he ever will. Though earth and hell should be engaged against me, they shall not prevail, while Christ is my strength and my shield.

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

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THE END