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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

### ACCOUNT #053

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I have perused a few numbers of the Guide, by which I have been both edified and blessed. I saw a number some time since, and read upon the cover, "We are in special want of matter for the Guide." I felt impressed to contribute for the promotion of holiness, my own experience. A suggestion arose, It would do no good in such a glorious cause; consequently I concluded to be silent. But after more mature deliberation and prayer, I felt conscious God had done much for me, and if it were possible, I ought to promote his cause by confessing "the blood of Christ had cleansed me from all sin." I turned to my diary, from which I make the following extracts: January, 1836. -- During this revival, quite a large number were converted. My own soul was often like "a well watered garden." I longed to be spent in the vineyard of the Lord. But O, the longings of soul I felt for perfect purity. Sometimes, when praying for mourners at the altar of prayer, my heart would be drawn away from their condition to pray for holiness for myself in such a manner, that it seemed I could pray for nothing else; and though often blessed, it did not satisfy me. I saw such a fullness in Christ, such a beauty in the holiness and purity of God, that I could not be satisfied unless filled with all his fullness. I had been convinced, by reading the Bible and pious memoirs, that it was my privilege to enjoy it. The unsatisfied desires of my soul urged me to seek it. O, what hungering and thirsting I felt for the living God. I panted after him as the hart panteth for the cooling water brooks. And often did the inquiry arise in my mind, "After thy lovely likeness, Lord, ah! when shall I wake up?" The least trifling word afflicted my conscience, which was as tender as the apple of an eye. Vain and idle thoughts were unwelcome guests. An unholy dream gave me pain. I wanted my whole life conformed to the holy example of my Savior. I wanted "to walk even as he walked." I was grieved to see professing Christians jesting or trifling. I could not bear a fretful, peevish spirit; and the words

"What, never speak one evil word,  
Or rash, or idle, or unkind?  
O how shall I, most gracious Lord,  
This mark of true perfection find?"

were often applied to my mind. I wanted to hear and talk of nothing but holiness. It even mingled with my sleeping hours, during the silent watches of the night. I prayed hours for it. I read everything I found on the subject; and the sermon that did not directly or indirectly touch upon it, appeared to me like a skeleton. But when I heard it preached upon, my soul was all desire. A pious friend gave me the following rules of holy living:

1. Let your words be few and serious.
2. Let your temper be mild, and all your actions kind.
3. Let your deportment exhibit cheerfulness, modesty, and devotion.
4. Begin every day with prayer; spend it watchfully and dutifully, and end it with praise to God.

I endeavored to regulate my life by these, and to keep God's glory constantly in view; and in all I did, to have in reference the day of final judgment. Devoted souls were my delight. How irksome was the society of any but those, who either enjoyed or were pressing after entire purity of heart. I even dreaded a visit from a near friend, as it diverted my mind from communion with God and the pursuit of his renewing grace. I prayed without ceasing for days together; whether eating, drinking, walking or conversing, my heart was engaged in mental prayer for entire sanctification. This was last in my mind at lying down at night, and first in rising up in the morning. I often fasted for it, and in this I found sensible benefit. I watched over my words and my thoughts; believing, with the psalmist, if I "ordered my conversation aright, I should see the salvation of God." Sometimes, in a retired apartment, I walked the room, lifting up my heart in silent prayer to the Lord for his cleansing grace. This would sharpen my devotions and increase my desires, and give a more wakeful appetite to prayer. I longed to have pride and unbelief rooted out of my heart. I wanted that faith which credits all the word of God. I desired to have a freer access to a throne of heavenly grace at all times. In my approaches to God, I felt at times a spirit of fretfulness and impatience; and often did I cry,

"Lay the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And open in my heart a little heaven."

The conviction for this blessing far exceeded that for justification, though I felt no guilt or condemnation. My sympathetic powers were acute; a tender spirit of weeping often melted my soul in prayer. I profited much by reading the Lives of Bramwell and Benjamin Abbot. Merritt's Address, in pamphlet form, on Christian Perfection, was made a great blessing to me, especially that part treating upon the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The Acts of the Apostles I often read over and over again. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, so often spoken of therein, I ardently desired to feel. I thirsted for it as one famishing by thirst in a desert land. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full," more than a hundred times were a plied to my mind, often drawing tears from my eyes. I sometimes felt so much in family prayer, that I trembled like a leaf in the wind. I retired one evening for secret prayer. I felt the Spirit's influence in such a degree as to produce a weakness throughout my frame. I had hardly opened my mouth in prayer,

when it seemed as if the heavens were coming down to earth. An awful sense of the presence of God rested upon me. It appeared as though the powers of darkness surrounded me to prevent my obtaining the blessing. I drew back with fear. The temptation, "put it off until family prayers," was suggested to my mind. I listened to it for a moment, but the presence of God as then manifested, was withdrawn. I almost despaired of obtaining, as the nearer I approached the blessing, the more powerful and cruel were my temptations from Satan. I thought as I preached, how could I teach others what I did not know myself. I could be of little use in the world, or church, without this blessing, and the thought of being but a weak, dwarfish Christian all my days, and thereby depriving my soul of what had been so dearly bought by my Savior's precious blood, and probably miss of heaven at last, only prevented my giving up the struggle. Again did I resolve to go up and possess the Canaan of perfect love. I waged an irreconcilable war once more with my internal foes. And although I have been defeated, I resolved once more to approach, in the name of Christ, the citadel of my enemies within. One morning, in company with a circuit preacher at Bro. B\_\_\_\_'s, during a season of social prayer, I felt again an unusual struggle for the blessing. The power of God rested on all present. It threw my soul into an agony, and even "my flesh cried out for the living God." I fell to the floor in deep distress. The blessing approached almost within reach, and as I looked to Christ by faith, it seemed to approach still nearer. Temptations, like chilling water, were poured upon my spirits, to dampen my ardor, and divert my mind. My soul appeared all desire, and the language thereof,

"My heart-strings groan with deep complaint;  
My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee;  
And every limb, and every joint,  
Stretches for perfect purity."

But Satan tried to keep me from it; his temptations were as cruel almost as death itself. I groaned and cried to the Lord for victory. O, how I felt the need of some one to pray for me, far more than when seeking pardon. The circuit preacher had fallen under the Spirit's power, and lay motionless on the floor, and some had risen from their knees. I was tempted to think that they thought I had been a hypocrite, and had never been converted, and was then crying for mercy under conviction for my actual sins. I yielded to the temptation for a moment; my ardent desires left me; the presence of God was again withdrawn. I arose disheartened and unhappy; I felt as one who had been fighting for a prize and had lost the conquest. Next day being Sabbath, I attended meeting. And whilst leading the class, the sacred purifying fire went through my soul, burning up my pride and unbelief. I ventured all on Christ. Glory to his eternal name; I was filled with unspeakable joy. O, what faith and confidence I felt in God. Salvation in heavenly floods was poured upon my soul. It appeared to be a fire of burning love throughout my whole soul. After this, when I went to my private devotions, ere I had opened my mouth in prayer, the Lord poured his blessings upon my soul. And often was I so sweetly and fully blessed, that I desired to break away from the clay tenement, that I might inhale the pure air of heaven, and gaze upon my adored Redeemer and see him face to face without an intervening veil, and be lost and swallowed up in the ocean of love divine. I now felt that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost resided within my unworthy heart; and at times it has seemed that I had distinct communion with all three. The Father has appeared to me to be like an unbounded ocean of purity and majesty, which always filled me with solemn awe and veneration. And sometimes I have viewed the Son by faith, in person, so near me, and so much like a reality, it seemed I could clasp him in my arms, and pray to him, as I would converse with a

friend, face to face. O, how have his sufferings and wounds endeared him to me! And in my approaches to the Father for his blessings, the name of Jesus only repeated, was the most successful petition I could use. And Jesus has always appeared to me the most precious appellation by which he is called.

At other times, I felt no particular communion with either the Father or Son, but with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I have felt the outpourings of the Spirit almost as sensibly as I could water. At other times, it appears more like a pure flame, burning on my heart; but generally, like the gentle fountain springing up into everlasting life; and so exquisite has been my enjoyment at times, that I felt I was a wonder to myself. O, to hold communion with the triune God, who upholds universal nature, has appeared to exhibit such condescension on his part, as would sink me in adoring silence at his feet, and involuntarily I would utter from my lips:

"O! for this love, let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break  
And all harmonious human tongues,  
The Savior's praises speak."

I could not now be silent in the company of the unconverted without warning them of their danger, and pointing them to Christ. O! how plain was my duty. The Spirit would roll upon me a burden for undying souls in the way to ruin, so that, at times, I could not converse with them without weeping; and if I neglected to speak to them, I grieved the Spirit, and lost my light and enjoyment."

But to proceed. I lost the witness of the blessing, by giving way to the idea that if I had not those raptures constantly, I had not perfect love. If I was tempted or weighed down, I concluded a sanctified person did not feel as I felt, and consequently dared not profess the blessing; but, after struggling and praying for it, again it would be given me. And then, O! how happy! The very spirit which glowed within my heart would seem almost audibly to say, "surely, this is perfect love." And thus, for some time, I kept gaining and losing the blessing, until I have become less ignorant of Satan's devices. And now, let my frames of mind or feelings be what they may, I live by faith, and often are my severest trials and temptations precursors to greater blessings. I now, in all suitable places, confess what God has done for me, through the merits of his Son.

I preach holiness; and I have seen, when preaching on this subject, men fall under the power of God like men slain in battle; and in praying with those who were seeking purity of heart, I have seen them sink down in a motionless, deathlike state, being

"Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,  
And lost in His immensity."

Nothing so enraptures my soul as preaching, praying and talking about holiness. O, blessed subject! It is the marrow of the Bible -- the essence of the gospel -- the bone and sinew of Christ's church! I almost envy the Editor his task and usefulness. O, may he spread sheets innumerable, until the world becomes Emanuel's land, and a mountain of holiness to the Lord.

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

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THE END