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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #055

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On the 14th day of February, 1842, the writer, after a severe and protracted struggle in prayer, found peace in believing on God.

Amid alternate hopes and fears, he struggled on until the 9th of September, 1843, when his mind became deeply exercised on the subject of holiness of heart. An extra meeting was at that time in progress in Sag Harbor, and Bro. R____, a faithful and holy man, was present to aid our stationed preacher in his arduous labors. The first sermon Bro. R____ preached was a very close and practical one on the subject of holiness, explaining how it might be obtained by consecration and prayer, and that it was our privilege to so overcome every besetting sin as to love God with all our hearts. He then invited all who would seek for the blessing of holiness or perfect love, to come forward and kneel for prayers. Being myself within the altar, I did not arise to pledge myself to seek the blessing with those who came forward. I thought it was useless for me to seek for holiness, believing that while engaged, from day to day, in my store, I could not live in the enjoyment of the blessing, even if I should obtain it. But, when they knelt for prayers, I knelt with them. I then, led by the Spirit; began to think how I could overcome my evil propensities and live a holy life. The first besetting sin presented to, my mind, as an obstacle, was anger, or a spirit of fretfulness. In the strength of the Lord I put this upon the cross, and made up my mind, that, by the grace of God assisting me, I would, by watchfulness and prayer, overcome it, remembering, at the same time, that precious promise, "My grace shall be sufficient for you." As soon as I had decided to overcome this sin, another and another came up before my mind, until all the temptations to which my disposition and associations peculiarly expose me, were presented before me, and as I grappled with them as they came along, with a full determination to overcome them, I was overwhelmed with deep sorrow and penitence. Tears bedewed my cheeks, and prayers and cries went up to God for help. After the praying was over, whilst still on our knees, Bro. R____, with a heart filled with the Holy Spirit, and with a sweet, clear, shrill voice, commenced singing those beautiful lines, "Lord, sanctify me, just now, just now."

And while listening to that heavenly music, my heart melted as wax before the fire. Tears gushed from my eyes anew. I was completely overcome and sank upon the floor writhing in the greatest agony of soul, while the beloved Brother H. fervently invoked heaven's blessing upon me. At the close of the meeting I felt some relief, but went home rather cast down. The next morning, when I awoke, it seemed as if the room was filled with the full rays of gospel glory, and I then loved God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind. It appeared that heaven was about as high as the steeple of the church, and that if I prayed aloud, angels could hear me in heaven. All that day and the next day my heart was filled with this same heavenly love. In the evening I again went to church, and Brother R_____ explained the witness of this great blessing, whereby I knew that I had obtained it, and felt it my duty publicly to confess it, which I did. While going home from the meeting I was greatly tempted. I thought that I now had confessed to the world that I had obtained the blessing of perfect love, and that if I did not retain it, I should bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. The next day my faith began to grow weak. I thought I should lose the blessing; that my faith was too feeble to hold it; and while meditating about losing it, I began to be a little worried about some temporal business, and there seemed at once to be two spirits contending in my heart -- the spirit of the world and the spirit of God. Then I thought, surely I shall lose it, and according to my faith, so it was unto me. That afternoon it flickered away like an expiring candle, and went out and left me entirely in the dark. I felt so bad that I would not go into the altar or take a part in the public exercises, as I had been accustomed to, but sat back in the church and waited until Brother R_____ came out. I told him I had lost the blessing, and asked him what I should do. He said, you received it by faith, did you not? Yes, sir. Do you keep consecrated? Yes, sir. Well, said he, hold only faith, and you will get it again. He then left us, and was gone about a week. When he returned, the subject of holiness was again preached, but still I was in the dark. I thought, however, of this rich promise, "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." This promise I turned over in my mind from day to day, and prayed over it; finally, I believed that this promise was true. That if I kept the commandments, I should abide in the love. I thought I would bring it to the test, and that I would adopt a system, such as I would in any other important business. On Sunday evening I prayed until I was blessed; I then knew that I was in the love, and keeping the promise in view. I was determined the next day to watch myself closely and see what it was that stole my peace away. I found that the same old besetting sins which I once had overcome, again sprung up and robbed me of my love. The next evening, I laid these besetments before the Lord, with a full determination to overcome them. And in answer to prayer, I was blessed, and was again in the love of God. The next day I watched myself again, and found that I had so overcome the first besetments, that they did not trouble me. But other temptations again stole my peace away. The next evening I laid them all on the altar, and, in answer to prayer, had my soul blessed, and was again in the love of God, and so continued to consecrate for several days. About the fourth day, I went into my closet, and began to look around for some besetting sin to nail to the cross, and finding none, I felt that they were all overcome; and, of a truth, I said that I loved God with all my heart. There was a perfect calm. Not a murmuring thought in my mind. The communication between my soul and God seemed to be direct. As far as the eye of faith could reach, there seemed to be one broad ocean of love, without bottom or shore. Then I praised God with all my heart. Then I basked in the full sunshine of gospel glory. Since then, when I keep the commandments, I live in love: if I willfully break or neglect them, I lose it; and then, by using the same means, I obtain the same end. My joys often ebb and flow, but generally my peace is like a river. How sweet it is to live near the bleeding side of our blessed Redeemer. This love casts out all fear, except the fear of breaking the commandments, grieving the

Holy Spirit and losing my love. When my affections are on anything more than God, then that love plumes its wings and takes its flight. I can live and enjoy it in the same way a man can keep perfectly clean. If he washes himself clean and puts on clean clothes, he can keep himself pure only by washing and changing his clothes from day to day; so the Christian, in answer to prayer from day to day, must have his heart washed in the atoning blood of Christ, be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and be clothed with the garment salvation.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW LIFE

"Ah, how long shall I delight
In the memory of that day,"
When the shades of mental night
Sudden passed away!

Long around my darkened view
Had those lingering shadows twined,
Till the Gospel, breaking through,
Chased them from my mind.

There was light in everything,
Everything was bathed in bliss;
Trees did wave, and birds did sing,
Full of happiness.

Beauty in the woods shone forth,
Beauty did the flowers display;
And my glorious Maker's worth
Beamed with matchless ray.

"Ah, how long shall I delight
In the memory of that day,"
When the shades of mental night
Sudden passed away.

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

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THE END