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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

### ACCOUNT #063

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It was in the early part of June, 1861, that I was led by the Holy Spirit to give my heart to God, and become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. From my earliest childhood I had been surrounded by Christian influences, but being naturally of a gay and lively disposition, passionately fond of worldly amusements, I broke away from all Christian and home influence, in order to gratify my natural tastes, and, until I was twenty years of age, was one of Satan's most devoted followers.

My dear mother's prayers followed me, however, during all this time, for ever and anon I would hear the voice of the gentle Spirit urging me to give my heart to God. I would answer: "Yes, but not now -- not now; at some future time, when I get older, and have become satiated with the pleasures of the world." Ah, how unsatisfying they were, even then. How often, when whirling in the giddy dance, memories of my childhood's home and of my mother's grief -- did she know how I was engaged -- would sadden my heart, and in a moment destroy all my anticipated pleasure! In the midst of scenes of earthly enjoyment my soul was ever yearning after purer and more lasting joys, and as year after year rolled on I became more and more dissatisfied with the transient pleasures of the world, but knew not how to better my condition. I used to think: "Oh, how I wish I was a true Christian;" but always felt deeply sensible of my own inability to become one.

Dark days came, however -- oh, such days, and weeks, and months, and even years, of sadness and gloom; every cup of earthly happiness was embittered, and I was utterly wretched. I knew not what to do, nor where to look for help. I had grieved away the Holy Spirit time and again; I had poured contempt upon God's love, and would not have him to reign over me; and now, when dark days had come and all earthly sources of joy had failed, he had forsaken me. For two long years I sought the Saviour sorrowing. My sins, oh, how they haunted me day and night! I hardly dared close my eyes in sleep, for fear I should wake in hell. My friends wondered at the change in my appearance, but attributed it to physical debility. They recommended a physician. I

took his prescriptions, but they did me no good; none but the great Physician of sin-sick souls could cure my malady; and he did -- blessed, ever blessed be his name.

I cannot tell when I first exercised faith in Christ. I remember one Sabbath afternoon taking my Testament, and as I read page after page of the sacred word, oh, what sweetness there seemed in it, what food for my hungry soul! What a different book it was! I wondered it had never seemed so interesting before. I felt like a person who had suddenly found some great treasure, and I thought I should never grow weary of reading. How I longed to tell some one what I had found; but I did not and for two or three weeks I kept my new-found joy locked up in my own breast, until, one Saturday evening, I was invited to attend the young ladies' prayer-meeting connected with the church of which I am now a member.

At the close of the meeting, the pastor asked me if I was a professor of religion. I replied, "No." He then asked me if I had ever met with a change of heart. I immediately replied: "I believe I have during the past few weeks." And oh! I shall never forget what a flood of light and joy rushed into my soul and through my whole being as I thus gave expression to my faith in Christ. From that night I had no doubt as to the genuineness of my conversion. The Spirit himself bore witness with my spirit, that I was born of God; and shortly after I related my experience and united with the church of my choice, not without meeting with opposition, however, from those whom I loved very dearly, on account of my particular views in regard to baptism. But God gave me grace to walk in the path of duty, with his word alone for my guide, and the language of my heart constantly was: "You may have the world, only give me Jesus." On the third Sunday in July, 1861, I was buried with Christ in baptism, and raised to walk in a new life indeed; a life of peace and joy, such as the world cannot give nor take away. Oh I how I exult in the thought, that we can be placed in no position in life where we may not rejoice in the Lord.

About two months after my conversion, my thoughts were very specially directed to the subject of sanctification, by attending a grove meeting held purposely for the benefit of those who were seeking that experience. I did not go as a seeker of sanctification particularly; but, when the invitation was given for those who desired an experience of that kind to manifest it by rising, I at once arose. I knew there could be no blessing in the Christian life above my aspirations. I always used to think, when an unconverted sinner, "If ever I become a Christian I will be a whole-hearted one." I did not stop to consider whether I was worthy of enjoying the experience of sanctification. I only knew that the word of God demanded, in view of the sufferings and death of Christ on the cross for me, that I should present my body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which was but my reasonable service; and while I thus met his requirements, Christ was made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I at once made an entire consecration of myself to God then and there; and without any effort on my part, just simply believed that Jesus was all to me that he had promised to be.

I did not have an opportunity of bearing my testimony that day, but a few days afterward I did, in a meeting in the city; and oh, how God blessed me! My soul was filled with joy unutterable in thus honoring Christ by simply believing the truth of his word. From that time I breathed as it were the very atmosphere of heaven.

"Jesus, all the day long,

Was my joy and my song."

Trials the most bitter and severe had no power to destroy my happiness. My mind was constantly stayed on God, and he kept me in perfect peace according to his promise; and if ever I have lived devoid of that peace during the intervening time, it has been on account of my lack of faith in Jesus. He is unchangeable, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Blessed, ever blessed be the name of Jesus, it is my privilege to abide in him as the branch abideth in the vine, and constantly to bring forth fruit to the honor and glory of his name, who hath called me from darkness into his marvelous light, and from the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Source: "Experiences of the Higher Christian Life in the Baptist Denomination" by John Q. Adams, New York: Sheldon & Company, 500 Broadway. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co. 1870

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