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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

### ACCOUNT #078

A. R.

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### EXPERIENCE

Dear Brother King:-- For some time I have had it in contemplation to write my experience of entire sanctification for the pages of your excellent Guide. But feeling myself among the least of God's saints, and seeing the Guide so well filled from month to month with such rich experiences of gospel holiness and other important contributions to the same point, I have deferred it to the present time. And now, nothing but a strong desire to aid the holy cause, and a sense of duty to do all the good in my power to God's dear heritage, could induce me in any wise to trouble you or your dear readers with this imperfect sketch.

I dearly love the cause of holiness, the word itself is a perfect charm, but nothing compared with the sweet name of "Jesus." The Guide has been a great blessing to me. And the first thing I look for in it is the experiences of God's dear children.

Before I was born, my mother was a praying woman. I received from her a decidedly religious education. Among my earliest recollections are her prayers and tears for her children and unconverted husband. But for me, in particular, she was much drawn out in prayer.

In the early part of my sixteenth year, at a camp-meeting, I was convicted of my sinful state, sought and found redemption in the blood of Jesus. Glory be to God. About one week after, I believe, God cleansed my heart from all sin by an act of simple faith, though at the time I did not apprehend fully what it was. I was dead to sin, and loved God with all my heart. My life was hid with Christ in God. O the sweetness of redeeming grace and dying love. Could inanimate objects speak, there would be very many witnesses to the thrilling scenes my soul experienced while in the bower of prayer, holding sweet communion with my dear Savior.

O blessed be God. How glad I am that I had a praying mother. How many times did I think, when a boy, while under the restraining hold of my pious parent, that when I became a man I would have my own way. But, thank God, ere that time arrived, my soul was happily converted. Now there was one whom I greatly feared, even God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

I lived for many months in this happy state of loving God with all my heart, and doing all my duties. But by reasoning with the devil, I lost my witness, and got into the dark; neglected one duty after another, until I lost all the life and power of religion, and got into a mere form. Still I remained a member of the church. I frequently attended the class and prayer meetings, and could tell of my good desires and determinations as well as thousands can, who are backslidden in heart from God, and remain members of the church.

Several years passed away, and I was still a backslider. The spirit of God called, but I refused. My conscience upbraided me. At times I was deeply sensible of my deplorable condition. I formed many resolutions to do better, but broke them all, lost all confidence in myself, and a kind of fate seemed to settle down upon me.

During this time I attended school at the academy in Cazenovia, and passed through a powerful revival in the church and among the students, comparatively unmoved. My habit of unbelief was confirmed. I was held perfectly spellbound in its iron chains. O how thankful I am that the good Spirit did not cease his strivings and leave me in my unbelief .

At length, while teaching school in the town of Bethlehem, Albany County, a book fell into my hands, called "The Pilgrim's Progress." I read it with very deep interest. It was new to me. The spirit returned with power, and the nail was driven in a sure place. When I came, to accompany the "Christian" through the "Ruin of death," I was much affected. But when Bunyan attempts to describe a "glimpse of glory" he had when the "everlasting gates" of the "New Jerusalem" were opened to admit the sainted "Christian," my soul melted within me.

Ah! thought I, shall I ever enter that happy place? No, was the response, unless you become a holy man. I wept. But to resolve seemed perfectly futile. I was at a stand. The destiny of my soul was to be decided by the course I should then take. It seemed to be my last call. All was darkness. Unbelief held me in chains; but my duty was plain. I must "repent and do the first works." But how and where to begin, was a difficulty. A protracted meeting was about to begin in the place.

I finally concluded to make one more resolve, clasping my blessed Bible, and pressing it to my bosom, I knelt before God, and solemnly vowed upon its authority, to do the whole will of God. I felt that this was the most solemn vow I ever made. I arose, went to my boarding place, and then to meeting. Here my first public duty was presented to me. I must go forward to the altar and pray vocally. (And here I would remark that the first step of my backsliding from God, was a neglect to pray publicly in our prayer meetings.) It seemed almost an impossibility. But my vow -- I could not break it.

The prayer meeting progressed, and I kept away from the altar. The devil said, you cannot pray, you have not prayed for so long, you will only expose your ignorance, keep away from the

altar. O what a cross! Truly I found it as a good sister once said, "It was so high I could not get over it, so low I could not get under it, and so broad I could not get around it." I must take it up. But here are many of the patrons of your school. What will they say?

Just at this point, brother S., our minister, called me by name, to come to the altar and pray. Awful moment, upon which hung my eternal interests. I thought, decided, and went. And, glory be to God, I was blessed in the deed.

After prayer was over, I arose and confessed my sins and received much strength. Felt a small degree of peace restored. From that time I went forward, endeavoring to do all my duties, grew in grace, and again saw the need of entire holiness of heart, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Soon after this, God called me to preach. This was a great trial to me; but after a few months' struggle I got the victory over the tempter and received license to preach. Seven years ago next July, I was received on trial in the Black River Conference, having traveled one year previously, under the Presiding Elder.

O how many times the good Spirit has visited me since I began to preach, with the most cutting convictions of the want of entire holiness, and for the many defects of my ministerial life. I have ever viewed entire conformity to the will of God the most essential qualification of the gospel minister. Of what avail is it for the professed ambassador of Christ to urge entire holiness of heart and life upon his flock, when he, the shepherd, is destitute of the holy prize himself? Will not his flock, his conscience, and his Bible say, "Physician, heal thyself?" Will not the more intelligent part of his congregation most easily discover the defect, and say within themselves, sir, we would see Jesus, give us the practical part.

It would be too tedious to relate in detail. I can give but a sketch of my experience of perfect love. O praise thy God, my happy soul, for his marvelous condescension, his amazing love to thee. O how good is the Lord, and how gracious is our God.

At a camp-meeting upwards of three years ago, in the Herkimer district, through the labors of one of God's dear ministers, I was powerfully convicted for this blessing. And while listening to a discourse, coming from an overflowing heart, my feelings quite overcame me. I fled from the stand, and sought a retired place to weep. Here I sobbed, vowed, and promised the Lord that I would make a full surrender of my little all to him. Perfect purity of heart, inward holiness, was the thing I mourned for.

For several months I preached the doctrine, and tried to seek the blessing. But by being removed to another circuit, where religion was at a low ebb, and having a colleague who did not profess the blessing, I soon gave up seeking it with the necessary zeal, as a specific blessing, and fell into the popular error of seeking it as a gradual work only. Time passed on, and I attended another camp-meeting.

Here the blessed Spirit met me again. But I refused, and He soon ceased His powerful work of conviction. After I had moved and settled on my next charge, I was most powerfully

aroused to the subject again, by reading the life of William Bramwell. So pungent were my convictions for the blessing of full salvation, that I actually laid the book aside, for fear I should not be able to preach on the Sabbath, this being on Saturday.

O what a perfect unwillingness there was in me to surrender myself up to this work. I saw that if I obtained this blessing I should have to profess it before the world. And O, the cross! The enemy often suggested, also, if I got it I could not retain it. O, I did not then consider, as I do now, that I needed it to keep me. But glory be to God, the day of perfect love was beginning to dawn on my spiritual horizon.

Not long after this I attended another camp-meeting, near the village of R. C. The meeting progressed very well. But there was nothing peculiar in my case, till near its close. And my greatest fear was that the meeting would break up and leave me without the blessing. But my Savior had appointed otherwise. One of God's flaming ministers was sent upon the ground to herald to us the joyful news of a perfect redemption in Christ.

This was just the thing. The word from him came home to my heart in peals of thunder. I withered and melted under the devouring blaze of God's pure unadulterated truth. My heart was thoroughly broken up. I cried, "I yield, I yield." I can hold out no more.

"I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own thee conqueror."

We went from the droppings of the sanctuary all in tears, to the tent for a prayer meeting, and a powerful time it was.

"God came down our souls to greet,  
And glory crowned the mercy seat."

Some fell in the midst of shouts of praise, while others were crying for mercy. I was made better, but yet I was not what I wanted to be. On Friday evening, the last great day of the feast, Jesus appeared. And though we did not go up into the mountain, yet we prayed all night in our tent.

That night I was enabled to place all upon God's altar; and after a sore struggle, I was emptied of all sin. But through unbelief I was not filled with the fullness of God. From that time, a marked change was discoverable in my whole manner of life -- particularly in my preaching. God led me directly from my old systematic course into a strain of preaching of an almost entirely practical nature. For two or three months after this I was not perfectly established, purely for the want of correct views of simple faith. Now I had the evidence clear, then by doubting I would lose it again. And then I would weep and pray till I obtained it.

At last, glory to God, after being able to reckon myself dead to sin through the day, in the evening, while reading the hymn, page 302, before preaching, faith comprehended a perfect Savior. O the heaven of love my soul then entered. Not ecstatic joy, but a silent heaven of love. I had had the same witness before in kind, but never so full, clear, and powerful.

I exclaimed, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." After Bro. S. A. concluded his sermon, I arose on the Rock, a witness of perfect love. O how glad and thankful was I, that my poor soul was now in the clear element for which it had been panting so long. Glory to God in the highest. O how truly can I say my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed. But O what have I enjoyed since! Streams of purest salvation. My happy soul has settled into the perfect assurance of faith. My peace, for a long time, has been like a river.

This moment I have the clear evidence. All is glory and peace. Heaven is mine, Jesus is mine. All things are mine. O how I love to preach it, and pray it, and live it. How clear the way of simple faith. All is by faith. I have had many trials since that blessed hour. But not one too many. All have worked for my good. How sweet the Bible -- its promises are sweeter than the honey in the honey comb. "It has God for its author -- salvation for its end -- and truth without any mixture of error for its matter!" Glory be to God, we shall soon be with Jesus.

These last remarks are the result of two years' sweet experience in the highway of holiness. Amen.

Yours in the bonds of a perfect gospel,  
Oct. 12, 1847  
A. R.

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