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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #079

J. A. H.

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Bro. King: The following communication I have solicited for publication in the Guide; the authoress, Mrs. J. A. H____, is a sister of unusual talent, and of great energy of character. Here is only an account of her first exercises and experience on the subject of holiness. Since then, the providence of God has led her through trials greater than fall to the lot of ordinary Christians; yet the grace of sanctification has triumphed amidst them all, and still shines with increasing luster. You may hereafter expect to hear of her subsequent trials and triumphs. -- A. O. Seward, January, 1848

Dear Bro. ____: But to your request. When I first read it, my heart shrank from the task; not that I did not love the blessing of holiness, but the greatest hindrance seemed to be, at the time when I experienced this blessing I did not write my exercises and enjoyments -- my thoughts and meditations. This was deferred till a number of years after, when I believe yourself suggested the thought that I had better write down my experience. I did so. What I brought together from memory was hastily sketched, at a time when I only wrote for my own comfort, not expecting any of it would be brought before the public.

My first exercises and experience in this blessing began not many months after I found the pardoning love of God. I then felt the roots of bitterness springing up in my heart. I was alarmed, fearing I had done something wrong; but, upon examining my heart, I felt a consciousness that my sins were all pardoned. I prayed much read my Bible, and found it was the will of God, even my sanctification. But how to obtain it I knew not.

I soon obtained Wesley on Christian Perfection; this gave me some light. I also read every work I could find on holiness, but none gave me so much encouragement as Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism. Here I saw more clearly how to come by faith and believe on Jesus. Continuing to pray for light and direction, I had new discoveries of the willingness of Christ to cleanse me from all sin, till my faith was fixed on this point: Jesus is able, is willing, is ready, to save me to the uttermost, and to save me now.

This part, of being saved now, seemed to be the hardest of all. Sometimes my faith would nearly grasp the blessing, when unbelief would gain the ascendancy, suggesting that I must first wait a number of years; but again faith triumphed, and my soul was exceedingly happy in the prospect of the perfect love of God; and my conscience grew more tender.

I aimed to shun every appearance of evil; and every blessing I received, seemed to bring me nearer the great blessing of holiness. Every time I approached the throne of grace, it appeared as if all sin in my heart would expire; for I was looking for a period when instantaneously I should feel the cleansing blood applied to wash and make me wholly clean. Blessed be the name of the Lord, that time did arrive.

On the 7th of Dec. 1832, a number of us met together for a social visit -- a season of prayer was proposed -- during the fore part of which, while one after another was praying, my soul was in an awful struggle to be blessed. I cared not how, nor in what way, if I might but feel the power of God as I never had felt it before. I did not seem to fix my faith on the blessing of holiness; my only cry was, Lord bless me, even me. I opened my mouth in prayer, and in an instant I felt the power of God running through soul and body. I lay speechless at his feet, not having power to move a finger; but I could hear them sing, and heard one say, She is cold -- her pulse has stopped. But this had no effect on my mind; my soul was full of glory; it appeared that it was all glory; at every breath I wanted to say, glory. O, such a heavenly calm -- such a sweet sense of the divine presence. O, who can express it? I never could find language to bring it into words. None but those who feel it know its sacred joys, and they cannot express it.

I had been blessed times without number, but this exceeded all. After an hour or more, I recovered my strength, so as to sit up; but my soul was full of glory. I began to inquire, Is this holiness? I was very fearful of deceiving myself, for I had set the mark of Christian perfection very high.

Up to this time, I believe I had never heard a sermon on this subject, though I was at church nearly every Sabbath. Another difficulty stood in my way: not one of the class professed to enjoy the blessing, and my class-leader himself, did not fully believe the doctrine. I had conversed with him on the subject; and, though he was a man of thirty years' experience, and one in whom I placed the utmost confidence, yet he had early formed unfavorable opinions of this blessing, by seeing a member who professed to enjoy it, afterwards make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. He thought this was all a mistake. If we lived up to the grace given, and continued faithful to death, we should receive a crown of glory. This last objection often staggered me, for I knew if I came out and professed the blessing, I should be watched continually by the church. This led me to cry to God earnestly, that I might not be deceived.

I think I had the blessing fixed as near angelic perfection as I could, and one reason for my ignorance was, I had never seen but one of my acquaintances in the church who had professed to enjoy it. Even on this extensive circuit, I do not remember of ever hearing but one preacher talk of personal holiness, and he was a young man seeking for it.

O, what a dark time this was! Thank God, the light has since shone! But to my subject. That evening I returned, and stayed at Bro. N. E_____'s. It appeared to me I had not received the blessing I desired, but only a foretaste -- as though the Lord was about to take up his abode in my heart. Still I was happy in God all the time. The next day, being rainy, I was prevented returning home. So I continued to wait for all the desire of my heart. In the evening we thought it best to have a season of prayer, hoping to experience the blessing for which we sought. It seemed easy to be blessed; it was only ask and receive. In an instant it appeared that all sin was destroyed -- the overwhelming presence of God came upon my soul and body. I thought I could look into my heart and see it all clean; all light and purity seemed to be stamped there.

O, such a view as I had of the purity and holiness of the Divine Being, of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, taking their abode in my heart, and of Jesus, looking and loving; his image there can never be destroyed. I felt a consciousness of the cleansing blood of Christ applied to my heart. Nought but love dwelt there. I was entirely lost to everything of earth, as much as if I had been in heaven. It appeared to me that I was with the heavenly host, and heard them sing praises to God; but my soul gazed with greater delight on my bleeding Savior, who suffered to save me from all sin. O, what a company of holy beings seemed surrounding me. During all this time I had no thought that I was an inhabitant of earth, my whole soul being enraptured with glory.

We knelt down about eight o'clock in the evening, and when I opened my eyes to look around me again on earth, it was two o'clock in the morning. O, what glory shone about the room. No pen can describe, no tongue can tell, the unutterable glory that filled my soul. It appeared like a new world; and as soon as my eyes were shut, it seemed that angels were all about me, praising God for what he had done for my soul. I retired to rest, but O, what a holy converse I had with my Savior. It was like conversing with a friend face to face. I fell into a drowse, but I was still with the Lord.

When I arose in the morning, now, thought I, is this holiness? I can not doubt it -- I never will doubt it. I knelt down and asked the Lord, if my soul was entirely cleansed from all sin, that I might have the witness in such a way as I never could doubt it. Instantly I felt the witness as clear as I ever saw the sun shine. I exclaimed, "I am thine, I am thine forever." I took up the Bible, and desired the Lord to direct me to some passage that would apply to my case. I opened upon the fifteenth of John, third verse: "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you," &c., and read on to the tenth verse. This was applied as powerfully to my heart, as though I had heard it from heaven. A wonderful change was effected -- it really seemed a new creation had taken place in and all around me.

We started for the house of prayer -- it being Sabbath morning. It was impressed on my mind that I must tell what the Lord had done for my soul. But Satan suggested: "Wait till you live it awhile -- prove it by its fruits -- for if you should not live it, you will bring disgrace on the cause." But I cried, "Lord, continue the witness of thy Spirit, and I will do what thou requirest." I bore

testimony in a plain and simple manner to what grace had done, and in a moment an overwhelming sense of the divine presence so rested upon me, that I was again lost in wonder, love, and praise. It was not a great ecstasy, but a sinking into God -- "that sacred awe that dares not move, and all that silent heaven of love." I rejoiced evermore -- prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks.

I returned home lost in prayer and praise. I neither wanted to eat, drink, or sleep. God's will was mine, and I delighted to be with him in secret, continually. I lived by the moment, and felt that every moment I had the merits of Christ's death. The Bible seemed entirely a new book; its every promise I could claim as my own. My memory, which before was quite imperfect, was now so strengthened that I could remember whole chapters, after reading them once. I also could clearly distinguish between the emotions of the Spirit and the devices of Satan. It seemed that I advanced in the way to heaven more in one day than I had done in months before. I felt that to live was Christ, and to die would be gain. In this state of feeling I went on from conquering unto conquest, praising God with my whole heart.

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Edited by Dexter S. King

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