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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #082

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

To The Editor of the Guide:-- Educated in Methodism, I had the advantage of early religious instruction. The first page of memory is impressed with reminiscences of the Sabbath school, the classroom, and the worship of God's house. While yet an infant in years, I had serious thoughts of religion, and a love for the Bible. I cannot date the period when I first heard of Jesus, the friend of sinners; but I can remember, while but a small child, that I read the sacred volume with much interest and pleasure.

I have often thought that if care had been taken to give habits of devotion with the knowledge I was receiving, I might have become a Christian, almost, or quite, as soon as I became accountable; but, alas, the enemy of my soul sowed tares among the wheat, by means of my love of books, and in tender youth, my mind received the poisonous suggestions of unbelief. Light works, likewise, became a snare to my soul, and I learned many things, which I would gladly have unlearned in after life.

In my fourteenth year, I was more deeply impressed than ever before, and soon after the close of my fifteenth, during a protracted meeting, at which time there was a glorious revival of religion in my native place, I was most happily converted to God. it was after a protracted struggle, and many conflicts with unbelief, that I found mercy; but my joy was more than in proportion to the sorrows of repentance. It was "unspeakable and full of glory." I was taught to bear the cross, that, in order to grow in grace, I must live a life of obedience to the teachings of the word, and Spirit. Oh! the tender care, that was bestowed upon me, by the nursing fathers and mothers of the Church.

I soon found a warfare -- I was prepared to expect it. I had learned that the pardon of sin, and the adoption into the family of God, was only the first step, or the first attainment in a life of

holiness, and that onward must be my motto through life. Yet I believed there was such a state as the entire sanctification of soul and body, and that it formed a gloriously prominent point, in the experience of the children of God. Of the nature and condition of the state, I knew but little. I had witnessed a bright exemplification of its power in one whom I had known in early life, the remembrance of whose happy life, and triumphant death, has ever been a star of example to me.

But of the principles, or experience, the power by which there was such an exhibition of lovely fruit, I knew not. To a want of light on the nature of sanctification, I, in a measure, attribute the delay, which attended my advancement; but there was yet another cause of delay. When seeking, I often found my faith strengthened, and when in view of the bright manifestations of love, which I received from time to time, I was almost ready to claim that which I sought. I was met with the question, Are you willing to become so remarkable as this profession will make you? No, answered my rebellious heart, I can never bear the persecution which those suffer who make this peculiar profession; but, whispered the Spirit, nothing but this will save you; you have an enemy within that may betray you. True, responded my desponding heart, "Lord give me the blessing, but not now," was the inward feeling. Oh! the mercy of God!

Thus in view of my privileges, I for a period of several years refused to claim them. I often wonder that I was blessed at all, yet such was the condescension of my loving Saviour, that when ever I came pleading for a present blessing, I always received it. I sometimes lived for months in a state of enjoyment of that which, it seemed to me, could be but little less than "The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." My prayer was always, Oh, for a clean heart! Oh, for the power of holiness! Yet, when the frail body would almost faint under the power of the presence of God, and friends would ask, "Are not your prayers answered?" I replied "No, wait until I know that sin is all subdued, and pride destroyed."

I did not comprehend clearly, that faith is the condition upon which the blessing of holiness is gained, and retained. I cherished a determination to risk nothing by confession, until I was perfectly assured; and I thought I could not feel assured, until I had been tried, and in this trial I had taught myself to believe there would be an absence of temptation. I had made up my mind, that so long as I had unholy thoughts, I could not believe myself to have attained.

In the midst of blessings, I had my secret backslidings, and in the hour of temptation, I often yielded to my besetments, with a weakness that distressed me exceedingly.

The summer of 1845, I must have exhibited strange inconsistency. I was tempted, and gave myself up to vanity, and miscellaneous reading, and, of course, lost all enjoyment in religion; but my vows were upon me, and I dared not leave the means of grace. And when in the classroom, my confessions were full and honest. At this time the Church in L____ was in a cold state, and there seemed to be none to help me. But glory be to God, his spirit was faithful, and I became alarmed at my state. I threw aside romances, once and for ever, and resolved to read religious works alone, or at least that which was sufficiently solid to benefit me; and now I turned to my Bible, and the Guide to Holiness, which I had read occasionally, some two or three years. Thank God, its rich pages poured a stream of light on a subject now very dear to me; for in the sanctification of my nature, I hoped for deliverance from sin, which had become so wearisome, that I felt as if I could not endure its presence. I knew that my Bible taught me the blessing in precept, in doctrine, and in

promise. Yet the Guide brought all to bear, in my view, on the lives of individuals, and the promises were fulfilled to them, and the precepts obeyed by them.

Oh! how I panted for holiness! My will bowed, and my heart breathed a continual prayer for purity.

In September, of this year, I was privileged to attend a Camp Meeting. I spent one night on the ground, and then and there, I made an unreserved surrender and a consecration of all to God; and there I began to wait for Christ, my sanctification. All that I had, and was, passed in review, and became a free gift to God. When my mind rested upon my good name, which had ever been so dear to me, my heart inquired, how shall I glorify God without this? but the next thought was, what is that to thee? leave it there upon the altar. By grace, I was enabled so to do, and now nothing remained. My contemplations became calm, sweet, and awful. I thought a clean heart would be new indeed; how should I feel. Just then a manifestation was made to my view, of a human heart, darkened and stained by sin; and in a moment more, the blood of cleansing was applied, and all became as the mingling of the purest white and flame. Yet, I rejoiced not, only in hope of the witness of the Spirit yet to be given, and thus I continued in constant expectancy for some two weeks, feeling all the while, that time and distance shortened between my heart, and assurance, until the 22d of September, 1845, while my husband and myself joined in prayer at the family altar. My heart was strongly drawn from prayer to praise, and a glorious liberty dawned upon my mind. I felt to bathe in an ocean of love. I said, oh! what is this? this is like perfect love. This is perfect love. Fear was gone -- bondage was gone -- and light, liberty and love only remained.

And when I told it, it was with simplicity, freedom, and power. I did not inquire, will they receive it! Ah! no, I said it is thy truth. The next morning being Wednesday, I went to see a friend, and the following Wednesday found her rejoicing in an experimental knowledge of the same truth. I conversed with a young Minister of the Gospel, on Friday, and on Monday he realized the same glorious power.

During that year, one, and another, and another, received the same blessing. At the close of that Conference year, my husband, at the same Camp ground where I lost all in Christ, found full assurance of faith. From the most of those named above, you have heard. But at a distance from those loved ones, I have found others who are partakers of a like precious faith, and I have witnessed displays of the power of Christ to save to the uttermost, on behalf of others. For me it is happiness to cry, "behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." -- L., Nashville, Sept., 1849

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Edited by Dexter S. King

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THE END

