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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

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**(Methodist)**

I was born April 23, 1806, and born again June 21, 1819. Being taught by Christian parents that Jesus loved children, and often feeling a conscious love to Jesus, I seemed to take it for granted that I was a child of God. But in my twelfth year I began to question my adoption. Just after I had passed my thirteenth birthday, on my way to a campmeeting I began to ask the Lord to make me His child and let me know it. Then came the first keen conviction. I was a condemned sinner; I was frightened, and wept aloud. But soon the joy unspeakable was mine. The glory was too great for the feeble frame. Totally unconscious of earthly surrounding I joined the angelic choir in adoring Him who so loved us.

Months passed joyfully, when I was deeply impressed while reading Gen. 17:1. It seemed to be a command, and yet an impossibility. Soon, however, the light came. The Lord had prefaced the command by saying, "I am the Almighty" He had also said, "I will put my Spirit within you and will cause you to keep my statutes and do them."

Temptations were many, and my views were not clear, but I felt that I must have a clean heart. We were going to a camp-meeting. I thought, "Surely I will get the blessing there."

On the first day of the meeting I went forward as a seeker of sanctification, and continued to do so through the whole week. Jacob-like, the whole of the last night I wrestled. Dear ones said again and again, "Believe, believe, the blood cleanseth." My reply was, "I do believe, but I want to feel." The day dawned; my dear mother said, "Daughter, you must leave this place," as she raised me from my knees.

Finding I could struggle no longer I said, "I will believe." At that moment, as I opened my eyes and caught the first crimson ray of the rising sun, filled with rapture, I exclaimed, "The Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in his wings."

For months my comfort and confidence continued. Temptations came. My numerous young associates could not understand me. They said I was "supercilious" or "sanctimonious." I did not then, nor do I now, in my eighty-second year, think I made the way too narrow.

The tempter, no doubt, took advantage of me, and often brought me under painful fear lest I had grieved the good Spirit. Sometimes I prayed my heavenly Father to take me from this world of temptations. I even told the Lord I could see no reason why I could not go and live where there was no danger of falling.

But the crisis came. The family had returned from a funeral. As I entered the hall-door, and placed my hand on the rail of the steps, I breathed a sigh and said, "O, if they had only laid me away instead of that one!" Instantly it seemed as if a heavy hand was laid upon my shoulder accompanied by a severe reproof. The voice said, "How ungrateful! God has put you here for a purpose, and you are struggling to get away." Never did I so cower under an earthly parent's reproof. It was God my Father, and I had offended Him by my impatience. Bursting into tears I cried, "Lord, forgive me, and I will never ask this again."

Another temptation was a fear that I might live to be old and useless. An ardently-loved relative seemed to be set aside as old and useless. Passing her house, on the opposite side of the street, one day, I looked up to her window to catch the affectionate recognition. But the loved one did not appear. I drew a sigh, and was on the point of saying, "Please, dear Lord, don't let me live to be old and useless." Then the thought came, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age." Rejoicingly I said, "That is written in the Bible, and if I live to be sixty years old I will claim that promise." I was near fifteen when this precious promise was given, and I have held it fast, calling it mine, ever since.

Tests came. The yielding of my will became painful that my consecration was questioned, perplexity followed, and the consciousness of purity was dimmed, then lost. Not until 1823 was the veil lifted.

One evening I resolved not to rise from my knees without the clear witness of holiness. Several times the promise was presented, "The blood cleanseth." Trembling, I would say, "I do believe," but, impatient for further manifestations, would again resume pleading. About one o'clock in the morning I opened the precious Bible on "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." I felt the reproof and also the encouragement, and calmly said, "Lord, I will believe; I am wholly Thine; help me to abide in Thee." I then retired, resolving the Lord to confirm my faith by directing my eye to some special passage in the Bible. I opened to "Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

I was thrilled. I felt to "draw back" would be death, and cried, "Lord, keep me!" Throughout the day a most profound solemnity rested on my mind. Holiness seemed written on every object. On Monday the enemy said, "It is possible you may yet be deceived; you have not received this blessing as you expected." But my soul sweetly rested in the precious promise. On Tuesday morning a very powerful temptation was presented. I hastened to the closet, and, pleading

my youth and inexperience, felt encouraged to ask another and a still more powerful assurance of purity. The answer was instantly given by a most powerful application of "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

It was enough. I was now permitted, in a manner unknown before, to walk and talk with God.

I went to my class almost impatient to declare the loving-kindness of God. At the commencement our leader prayed, "Lord, sanctify us wholly; let it not be a think so, a hope so, or a BELIEVE so." It went as an arrow to my heart. "You have evidence only as connected with believing." It was a fatal dart from the adversary. My only hope seemed wrested from me. Unconscious of all about me I seemed intent on having the question decided, "Is it a reality or not?" When rising to leave the classroom the decision came to give up my intense interest on the subject of holiness. Others seemed to enjoy the factor of God without the witness, and I thought I would try to do so too. I little thought of its impossibility. I was instantly hurled into darkness and despair, with nothing before me but the awful doom of the fearful and unbelieving.

My senses were almost astounded with, "If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." For two weeks my sense of ingratitude was so great that I did not dare to hope for pardon. Then a sweet voice whispered, "This man receiveth sinners." I came as a sinner and was again accepted. But an impression that I had forfeited the close fellowship of former days caused deep humiliation. It seemed just that I should not be trusted. I had "drawn back," and as a naughty child I must be kept at a little distance for a time, but not disinherited. So subtle was this temptation that for months it was not suspected as Satanic. As soon as I detected its true character I got the victory. With new light came new responsibilities. The first duty against which my will rebelled was leading a religious meeting, and, next, more faithfulness in personal warnings. The way in which I supposed the Lord required me to walk I could not expect the dearest loved one to understand. Alone with God this matter must be settled. Death seemed preferable to the divine tenets. But at last I settled it, and I triumphed.

Early in May, 1835, an impression was felt so much like unhallowed emotion that it caused extreme pain. I then resolved to have a more positive assurance of inward purity. I immediately entered into covenant with God to withdraw my mind from every object that might divert me from this point, and to leave no means unused which He might appoint. Every motive, purpose and practice was required to undergo a renewed investigation. I cried, "O fill me with the Holy Ghost!" All was calm. I had none of the expected emotions. I arose from my knees fully determined to reckon myself dead to sin if I had not a joyous emotion in forty years, when the enemy immediately suggested, "You have no more evidence now than before; you might have believed long since; who ever heard of believing and continuing to believe without evidence?" Immediately the Spirit replied, "Blessed are they that have not seen yet believe." "Presumption" was the constant cry of the enemy. But the "sword of the Spirit" prevailed, though the contest was very severe. To "draw back" I knew was death, and I resolved to endure the conflict while mortal life should last, even if no other evidence was given. Just after forming this resolution the promise came with more power than ever, "blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." For seven days Satan tauntingly suggested, "You believe because you will believe."

Just at that time I met Rev. Timothy Merritt, who said, "Sister, you know something of holiness by experience; do you not?" I was startled, and about to reply, "I am hardly prepared to answer that question," but after a moment's hesitation said, "I have dared to reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, but it is constantly suggested that it may be presumption, with so little evidence." Said Brother Merritt, "Never fear presumption in believing God; presumption lies in daring to doubt." All fear now vanished. The baptism of the Holy Ghost came in its glorious fullness; it seemed as a baptism of love almost to the overwhelming of the physical frame, accompanied with an inexpressible consciousness of purity, a consciousness only understood by those who have received it.

Since that blessed day, May 21, 1835, I think there has not been one hour in which my soul has not been sweetly resting in the precious atonement. Though the witness of the Spirit has not been withdrawn for an hour, yet there have been instances when sudden temptation has assumed so much the appearance of sinful emotion as to cause keen pain; but I have been invariably enabled almost instantly to appropriate that blood which cleanseth from all sin. These acts of faith have generally been immediately succeeded by a most joyous assurance. Since I have been enabled to abide in Christ I believe the language of my heart has been:

"No cross, no suffering, I decline, Only let my whole heart be Thine."

The responsibility of being a steward--an agent for God--seems very great. I fear I often love opportunities of acting for want of wisdom. I am, therefore, constrained to cry continually, "Teach me thy way; lead me in a plain path." How precious do I find the promise, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee by mine eye." The word of God is increasingly precious. It is principally through this medium I am permitted to hold converse with Deity. And while His infinite love and faithfulness are unfolded to my enraptured vision I hear Him say, more and still more audibly, "Ye are my witnesses of these things."

After more than seventy-six years of conscious adoption, and fifty-two of dwelling in the peaceful land of perfect love, my heart is singing, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised; there hath not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised."--1 Kings 8 :56.

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Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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