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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

B. K. PIERCE
(Methodist)

I was born February 3, 1819, in Royalton, Windsor County, Vermont. I was, I think, soundly converted on the Island of Nantucket, when a boy of about twelve years of age. But, not joining the Church, I lost my spiritual life and fell away from the Savior, although I did not give up prayer. I was renewed in Lynn, Mass., in a revival in my father's church when about seventeen, in 1836. My evidence of the new birth came very gradually, but very clearly, while I was attempting to point the way to a seeking friend.

Soon after this I went to Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn. My collegiate course was a severe trial to my faith, but in the last year at college (1841) I began to preach, joining the New England Conference in 1842, and was blessed with seasons of revival. But, although I had no doubt of my previous sonship in the family of God, my experience did not take on a clear, positive, well-rounded form until after that MEMORABLE NIGHT of prayer in the second year of my ministry, 1843, at Newburyport, Mass. The social meetings in my church were interesting; the congregations increased. But there began to be felt a need of a deep religious interest, and the expediency of calling in an evangelist was discussed.

On this Sunday evening after service I returned to my study. I was alone. The family was absent. I had become greatly depressed at not seeing the spiritual outcome to my labors which I desired. I said, "Why need the church send for another minister? Is the missing link in myself?" These questions brought me to my knees. I saw my spiritual life to be defective. I had not a sufficiently clear personal apprehension of the whole plan of salvation to preach effectually to others. Inward anxiety became positive distress. Some more definite and pronounced era of the divine life must be reached.

Prayer was blind at first, and I was in great trouble. I was shut in on all sides and helpless. I prayed for deliverance even if it cost my life, but the prison walls only drew closer and more fearfully around me. In the midst of this turbulence of emotion and purposeless prayer, it occurred

to me, that, like the Jews, I was seeking a sign, something miraculous when God had made a distinct promise.

These words then came to me: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Here was the promise of a divine guide. Still upon my knees, in this light I wrote out an entire surrender of myself, body, soul and substance, and all pertaining to me, and sought to weigh every word before I solemnly signed my name to it. Now I said: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I grasped the simple, all-embracing truth as never before. In tearful trust I cried, "Lord, I am lost, but Jesus died."

Unconscious of the passage of time, and still on my knees, in sweet and blissful iteration I said over and over again: "He forgives; He cleanses from all unrighteousness!" I hardly knew when I left the kneeling posture, but I found myself walking the room in the early morning hours, saying, "He cleanses from all unrighteousness!" while an indescribable calmness and peace pervaded my whole being.

This baptism of the Spirit was a great inspiration in my pulpit and pastoral work. It illuminated the Holy Scriptures and enriched the daily life. It made the whole plan of salvation very clear and positive. I walked in the light and comfort of this great blessing for a long period, and have never lost a vivid conception of the process by which it was secured.

While chaplain in the House of Refuge, Randall's Island, N. Y., somewhere about the year 1868, I came again to a remarkable hungering and thirsting for the cleansing of my soul and its full occupation by the Holy Spirit. To this end I devoted a night of prayer and came again into great peace and an absorption of divine things. I could not read anything but the Bible and devout books, and literally I continued in prayer without ceasing. In this state I walked for many months. Its fervor wore off somewhat, the absolute absorption in spiritual things abated, and I again took a general interest in affairs. My reading became more miscellaneous. I did not keep up that incessant communion and loving fellowship with the Savior, but I did not lose the hold I had gained upon the double office of Christ as pardoning sin and the cleansing from all unrighteousness. I was almost unfitted for every thing besides at first, but it was a blessed and a heavenly state. I try now to live in the sight of it. Nothing is so sweet or dear to me as the contemplation of my Savior in His person and offices, and I long for nothing more than to be like Him in spirit and life.

B. K. PIERCE. BOSTON, MASS., MARCH 3, 1887

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by Rev. S. Olin Garrison

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THE END