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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)**

At the age of eighteen, in my native village, in Central New York, I gave myself to the Saviour. At once, my attention was called, by my class-leader, to the work of entire sanctification. Just then arose an unhappy controversy concerning, this doctrine. This controversy created in me a disrelish for the entire subject. I practically resolved to think no more about it; at least, until the "doctors could agree."

While pursuing the studies of my college course, I had concluded to embrace the law, as my profession for life. Hence, on graduating, I soon entered on the study of law, which I pursued until I secured my certificate of admission to the bar. God, however, overruled my plans; and in obedience to His will, at the age of twenty-one, I entered on the regular work of Methodist itinerant.

For five years, I gave myself, as far as I knew, unreservedly to the work of God. I ever found acceptance with the people. In fact success appeared to be sent of God in all departments of ministerial labor, save in one; viz., the salvation of souls. In this I had but limited success I often lamented my lack of "revival power." At time I became quite discouraged in view of my limited success in this work.

At the end of five years of labor in the regular work, I was led (as I firmly believe), in the providence of God, to enter on the work of a teacher in one of the academies within the bounds of our conference. my great motive was, increased qualification to be secured thus, for subsequent ministerial efficiency. I have sometimes thought that my comparatively limited success in the work of saving souls may have had some influence in the matter. I remained teaching four years. During this time, I preached frequently; and was instrumental, under God, in the salvation of a number of souls. The Lord gave me success in teaching.

After four years of experience as an instructor, in answer to what I believed was a call of God, I re-engaged in my former work. During, the first four months of my labors on my charge, my

experience, personal and ministerial, as not unlike that of former years. We had a church enterprise which engaged our attention, and which God conducted to a successful issue.

From the commencement of my ministerial experience, through a period of nine and a half years, faint glimmerings of something better, and deeper, and sweeter, and more complete in Christian experience than I was possessed of, would occasionally appear; but they were only transient, because unwelcome and unheeded, from my prejudice against the whole subject of so-called "heart-purity."

In the fall succeeding the time just referred to, I attended the Camp-meeting of our district. My charge had no tent. I was led, in the providence of God, to make my home, during, most of the meeting, at a tent where personal holiness was the great theme. It was urged upon me by friends: I acquiesced in their views, but did not fully give myself up to the work. I returned from the meeting, thinking more and more favorably on the subject than ever before.

On my return, I felt resolved to go to work for the salvation of souls in right good earnest. I worked hard, but yet with only limited success. There was evidently weakness somewhere. I felt all along, during the remainder of the conference year, that I ought to be able to "reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" yet my mind was befogged. I had conviction; resolved again and again to be altogether the Lord's; I prayed often, "Lord, sanctify me, soul and body;" yet no light. I promised, when God would give the needed light, I would walk in it.

I had felt, at the close of the conference year, that, in view of my limited success in "winning, souls," it would be better for the charge to have a man of more "revival power" sent there the next year. Still, it appearing, to be the general wish of the charge, no change was made. During the summer, my convictions for a deeper work of grace in my heart were increased. I felt that a revival was needed, and resolved that I would not be in the way, and told the Lord I was willing to be anything, or do anything for the furtherance of this object. How often I wished I could "drop in," even but for a few moments, at "23 St. Mark's Place," for advice and counsel concerning, "the higher life!" I still covenanted with God, that when He sent the light, that I might see my way clear, I would walk in the light. I was sincere in this declaration; yet it may be that the covenant, or contract, as the more readily made, that thus I might, for the time being, satisfy my conscience for neglect of doing the work then, and still retain my justification.

This year I resolved that we, as a people, should be well represented at the Camp-meeting. We had a goodly number present at the whole meeting. I there learned to account for my convictions on the subject of entire sanctification, since we last met on the camp-ground. Friend had been wrestling with God during the entire year, that fullness of liberty might be mine. Holiness was the great theme at the Camp-meeting. It was preached from the stand, and was the constant subject of conversation among the more devout. My own convictions on the subject were very strong: still I procrastinated. I purchased the work on "Perfect Love," by Rev. J. A. Wood. I commenced its perusal, and endeavored to satisfy my mind for delay with the thought, "After I read the book, and see my way clearly, I will act." I still renewed my covenant solemnly with God, that, when the light came, I would walk in it.

On Friday morning Rev. Henry Belden, of Brooklyn, preached. His theme was holiness. Its presentation was clear and happy. Darkness and fog were dispelled, in a great measure, from my mind. This sermon was followed by one from Rev. J. A. Wood, on the same subject. Before he had concluded, the last vestige of darkness was gone, and I had no longer even the flimsiest pretext for further delay. Those two sermons were of remarkable clearness and power. Hundreds, to their dying day, will thank God for them.

I now had received what I had long sought and on which I had based my promise to God, that, when I should receive such as this, I would yield. But, strange to say, I still refused to act. I then had reason to believe that I had all along made the promise, conditioned thus, too much as a soother of my conscience for delay. At the close of the prayer meeting, after the preaching before mentioned, all, preachers and people, who were willing, to covenant at that time to wrestle with God to secure full salvation before the Camp-meeting broke up, were invited to manifest it by the uplifted hand. I was unwilling to make the covenant then. I was also unwilling to let the people, especially those of my charge, know that I would not make the consecration. I dared not assume such a responsibility. I therefore sat down behind the seekers on the stand, and, at the close of the meeting, retired to my tent, restless and unhappy, and conscious that I had violated my pledge to God.

At once a prayer meeting was called for in our tent. About the middle of the meeting I could no longer pray or speak, but, under the convicting, and melting power of God, could only sob like a child. My pride was mortified, myself humbled, to be thus exercised in the presence of my people. After this trial in the crucible for more than an hour, with my pride humbled, myself extremely broken down I could only say, "Lord, only this; and what is thy will?" It seemed at once as if God, by His Spirit's impress, thus addressed me: "My will is your entire sanctification. You promised me, that when the light came, you would walk in it. The light had been afforded; and yet you are ungratefully and criminally allowing your pride of heart, your prejudice and imperfect professors of heart purity, and your fear, lest, if the fullness of the Spirit should be poured upon you, you should be obliged to be exercised in some way that would not be acceptable to the carnal mind, and you should not be popular, -- you are allowing, all this to make you a perjurer in my sight; for you are thus, in the isolation of your solemn pledge. lying not unto man, but unto God."

Oh, what a view God then gave me of my folly gratitude, and sinfulness, in thus treating my Saviour, when desirous of bestowing a most blessed boon upon me! I was enabled to yield, after quickly and yet thoroughly weighing the matter. I freely gave up all, -- pride, prejudice, regard for man's applause or worldly popularity as a preacher, -- and simply by faith in His word, took Jesus as my Saviour from all sin. At once was presented to me, as a cross that must be borne, "You must go out to the prayer-meeting before the stand, and make your confession and consecration known to preachers and people, without a moment's hesitation." I responded, "Christ helping me, I will." This was one of the most trying requirements of my ministerial life. The cross was heavy, and burden was removed from my heart; and, during the rest of the meeting, I felt like a prisoner to liberty. How many times since have I blessed God that he held me to the work at that time!

I had no evidence direct from the Spirit, while on the camp-ground, that God had saved me wholly, nor did I have for several days afterward; though the consecration was full, and the faith unwavering. Still the people of my charge remarked that there was evidently a great change in the

spirit of my preaching, on the Sabbath after my return. The direct Spirit evidence soon fully came; though I cannot say at what particular moment, or in what special mode, except that it seemed to come, like the morning light, gradually. The words which would best express my feelings when deliverance fully came, and which are the best index to my constant Christian standing, since that full deliverance, are ABIDING IN CHRIST.

I now, as my life, realize an unrestricted intimacy with the Saviour, a consciousness that whatever is not to the glory of God is distasteful to my heart, the worth of the soul, and the sanctification of the gospel. The privilege of the true believer is a life of faith, limited only by the word of God; which life is one of constant reliance on God, and expectation of fruit from Him. This has been my experience in preaching, in the various means of social grace and in my visiting from house to house; while in the constant panting within for all the fullness of God, and in the unceasing burning of soul for the salvation of others, to which the Lord is abundantly responding, I realize that the spirit of Christ is fully mine.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless His holy name."

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END