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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

W. H. POOLE
(Methodist)

To record the goodness of God in leading me into the enjoyment of a full salvation, I must first narrate the manner in which, by the Divine hand, I was led out of the Egypt of sin and unbelief, from the galling service of a slavish fear; then how by the same hand, I was led into that state beautifully symbolized by the land "flowing with milk and honey," into the Canaan of "perfect love." Being the son, the grandson, and the great-grandson of a Methodist, I enjoyed all the advantages of early religious instruction--of pious example--of good books combined with the most powerful influence of religious association. And in youth,

Was Changed

When as lad, in a crowded parlor at my grandfather's in Ireland, the Rev. Mr. Olive stood behind a chair and preached Jesus. I sat on that chair during the sermon, and felt that my heart was then made new. For months my heart was full of peace and joy, and love, and praise. I loved prayer and praise more than my play, or my dinner, but I did not fully understand it, I made no profession of it, and after a time, a change of country, companionship and circumstances, drew me away from the spiritual to the secular.

Was Dumb

For nine or ten years I met regularly in classmeeting and love-feast, and I used to enjoy it. It was a pleasure and a profit to me; but all that time I never witnessed for Christ. "With my mouth " I did not make confession, as was my duty. I tried to overcome my timidity but could not. I suffered much from my backwardness in the duty; my silence caused me sad loss. I had many a long and terrible struggle, and I suffered many a crushing defeat, until at length I gave up the conflict, gave place to the enemy, quenched the Spirit, and sat in silence and in tears. The Rev. Wm. Willoughby once in class-meeting lifted me on my feet, as if in love, he would compel me to victory, but my lips were sealed. If I could have done as Moses, Miriam & Co. did, when the Lord opened up a pathway for them through the sea, and they sang their experience, I would have "triumphed

gloriously" but I could not hold up the banner for Jesus, every attempt only proved my inability, and failing, I became discouraged, and lost my confidence.

Zin, or Coldness

Gales of heavenly love brought new life and power to our church and congregation, and scores of my acquaintances gave evidence of a change of heart. Members of our family, too, were made to rejoice in God their Saviour, and witnessed a good confession, but during that season of refreshing, I lost my tenderness of heart, my comfort in the ordinances, my communion with God -- my delight in His Word -- my love for religious conversation -- my taste for good books -- my anxiety to please God at all times. Indeed I lost all but the form of religion; I became a wonder to many, and to myself also. I wandered in thought and feeling. I attended the means, and tried to trust in the midst of overwhelming doubt. I was in the wilderness of Zin, i.e. coldness, that district lies between Egypt and Canaan. There are many existing (it is not living) in that region; many die there of whom it might be said they died of coldness of heart.

Sons of Anak

I might have gone up at once and possessed the goodly land; but I was too timid, too faint-hearted, those Anakims, the word means men of long necks, how they discouraged Israel. Here those sons of Anak types of those persons, a large class or tribe in some communities, who claim the right of stretching their necks to watch for the errors and failings of young converts. The fear of man proved a great snare to me. Such persons greatly hinder and retard the pilgrim on his way to Eshcol and Zion.

My parents, friends and pastors were not forgetful of me, they followed me in their sympathies and prayers back to Pi-hahiroth, the spring of liberty, or the mouth of deliverance, and farther, even into bondage, and in answer to prayer, God saw fit to speak to me more directly, more personally, and more powerfully than before. He did this in a DREAM.

Dreams, no doubt, are often produced by physical causes, and are, in general, not worth a place in the memory where they have failed to make an impression. Yet God does, sometimes, as in the days of old, speak in dreams. It is unpopular now to speak of impressions received through this channel. I know it, dear reader, but the popular rule is not always the way of duty, thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that I am not now afraid of the sons of Anak, and for the honor of God I can say, "this shall be written for generations to come."

MY DREAM

I saw that life and time were past -- the judgment day at hand -- I heard the trump of God -- I saw the response of earth as the dust stirred and heaved with life as the trumpet-sound pierced the dull, cold ear of nature, and echoed through all the cemeteries, vaults, catacomb and caverns of mountain and of deep. The angels removed the mountains and the water-courses, and prepared room for the human race. Each person seemed alone, though in the mighty throng. Each individualized, each conscious of his state. I saw the great white throne coming down in mid-heaven, and resting as it were on a bow or arch that spanned the horizon. That arch seemed to

be formed of clouds that became more dense and dark as they receded from the grand stairway of light that connected earth and sky. I saw the Saviour, Jesus, as judge, seated on the throne, and before him on the right were books of immense proportions, in which appeared names and deeds.

Open to every eye was a hall, or gallery of judgment, through which every one must pass on his way to his reward. On the right, and above, this hall or gallery was connected with the celestial home or heavenly country, while on the left and beneath it was connected with darkness and woe. On the right and above were angels of light to welcome the good and the pure to their home on high. The floor of this hall seemed to be constructed of bars and lines and spaces, as the scale in music, those of pure motive and holy life went over those spaces with a buoyant step and a bounding heart, as if gravitation had lost its power over them; while the disobedient and unholy disappeared quickly in the darkness below. Sin seemed to be the great force that drew them downward, the more sin the sooner they disappeared, and with greater velocity. As on the other hand, the more holiness, the more immediate and the more rapid their flight upward. The white robed ones were all singing, and as the redeemed ones joined them they too commenced to sing.

A I stood petrified by fear, I saw many whom I had known in life, who, when measured by human standards, were pronounced wanting, to whom the Judge gave a look of approbation that filled them with light and glory, and made them, almost transparent, so that heaven and earth witnessed their joy. I saw members of the church, and church officers, and ministers of the gospel, whom human standards would pronounce all right, but who in the hour of judgment stood condemned and disappeared in darkness, some were out of sight at once, and others passed on and were almost over and disappeared in a moment. Oh, the anguish of mind -- the bitter regret for broken vows and neglected duties, such views of God's love and goodness, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, such longing for holiness.

When my name was called by an angel that seemed to have charge of the record of eternity, obedience was not voluntary, as in life. My will seemed to have no part in influencing my action, my going seemed not to be of myself, an unseen power controlled all, and compelled compliance. In the presence of the throne and of the Judge, the most timid would not be afraid of the whole human family. It is utterly impossible to describe my feelings as I ascended the stairs of light, and oh how strange that I should be the only one who dared to speak to the Judge, or utter a word, but I did speak. His look of love prompted me to speak, and inspired me with confidence. He seemed to say, speak on, and I exclaimed, "O, dear Saviour, don't send me over, I am not prepared." And O, boundless love, infinite, immeasurable love. He permitted me to return and prepare, and go and persuade other to prepare for judgment. I awoke, but I have not forgotten my dream. My appeal was spoken in accents so loud as to disturb my parents who came to my room. For days and nights my sleep departed from me, and when anxiety and grief had wearied my body and mind, and I slept again, my dream came back upon my spirit with all the definiteness and distinctness of reality. There was a grandeur and a majesty about every point in it, that I can never describe. For some weeks I could think of nothing else; my strength failed; "I was, sick; certain days." My cup was filled with the "waters of Marah," they were indeed very bitter. When wearied walking my room, I often wet "my pillow with my tears."

For three months I sought the Lord constantly. I think I understand the meaning of the "unleavened bread and the bitter herbs." I gave up business and devoted my time exclusively to

reading and prayer, hoping, that God would come to my rescue. Thank God, he did come, but first he came to me in dream.

My Second Dream

I saw myself in a vast desert, without a drop of water, or compass or guide, parched with scorching winds and burning sands, my only companion was despair. Unable to stand from weakness and fatigue, I sat down, feeling that death itself would be welcome. At then I looked up, and saw, far, far away, where sand and sky seemed to meet, a beautiful mansion, or city of mansions. In the sky above were the words: "Room for all," and "Jesus bids you come." I felt my heart grow lighter, and my limbs grew stronger, and I made my way to it. There was only one entrance; between the outer gate and that entrance there were fountains of water, and fruits, and flowers, in all forms of loveliness; but to my astonishment, as I approached the gateway (for there was no gate, it was open night and day), I saw thousands of hideous serpents, with eyes of fire, and teeth and tongue of poison. I paused a moment, and looking in, I saw Jesus standing at the door with hands outstretched, and that same look of love and compassion I saw before, when he sat on the throne, and he repeated Matt. xi 28 and 29, "Come unto me all ye that labor;" and I walked on and over the serpents unhurt, and threw myself at His feet, full of peace and joy. I awoke and was much cheered, and slept and dreamed the same again, I arose a long while before day, and spent the day alone with God, in meditation and prayer, and twenty-two hours after my dream, or at 2 o'clock A. M., in my father's stable, after spending the night in prayer, I saw a star which led me in thought to the star of Bethlehem. I knelt once more in prayer and said, "Father, bless me for JESUS' sake," and in a moment my long dark night was turned into more than noon-day brightness. "My chains fell off; my heart was free," all doubt was gone, and I made the air ring with hallelujahs to Jesus. I had good reason for praising God, and I did praise him. I awoke my dear father and mother, and they too praised God in my behalf. I, who had trusted so much to my own righteousness, now trusted solely in the righteousness of Christ. I, who had been silent in class for nearly ten years, now found a tongue. I, who was so timid that I could not speak one word for Jesus, now began to tell to thousands what the Lord had done for me. O, if once I drank the bitter waters of Marah, I now drank from the smitten rock on the highlands of Rephidim. If I once was afraid of the long-necked Anakim, I now went right up into their camp, shouting victory through the blood of the Lamb. If I once sat me down on arid sand to die of thirst, I now enjoyed the famous twelve wells of water and the seventy palm trees cooling shade. If once I had to eat bitter herbs, believe me, my dear reader, I have been feasting on the real manna since the morning of July the 8th, 1838.

GOING FORWARD

Whatever I pass through, I can never doubt my experience of the grace of God, that happy, happy hour. But leaving Egypt is not entering into Canaan -- feasting on manna and drinking from the new made fountain is very pleasant, but it is not crossing over Jordan, and storming Jericho. Enjoying the cooling shade of the palm is not conquering the land and exterminating the enemies of God and the country. "Up, sanctify yourselves." A great many left Egypt that never entered Canaan. The first step from Egypt is one towards Canaan, and every succeeding step, forward, is so much gained. So the work of holiness commences, when the first ray of light moves you to repentance, and every successive ray of light that leads you on to justification, adoption, and regeneration, is

so much more gained in the work of holiness, and is preparatory to it. But there will come a time in your experience, if you go forward, when you will as clearly and finally know that you have entered Canaan, as that you have left Egypt; or, to be more definite, the evidence of our sanctification may be as clear and as convincing as the evidence of our justification. If God wants an abiding testimony when he changes our relationship and removes the guilt of sin, giving us pardon, will he not, through the same spirit, give us a satisfactory and an abiding assurance when he changes our nature, and imparts the divine nature, cleansing us from the pollutions of sin, and renewing us after the image of God.

I had a clear and satisfactory evidence of my forgiveness, and could say and feel, that "Being justified by faith I had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." A peace that passeth all understanding. At the same time, I felt conviction of the necessity of more complete consecration to God; that in order to my own holiness and usefulness, I must have the victory over Self, the World, and Satan; that I must have my nature purified; that having the righteousness of Christ imputed to me, it must also be imparted to me, and be implanted in me.

In order to obtain that holiness I now longed for, it seemed to me that the first step for me was to be fully convinced, beyond a doubt, that upon the Divine testimony such a blessing was attainable. I read Fletcher and Wesley and others on the subject but first I must satisfy myself of "the law and the testimony" on the subject. I collected and arranged all the passages in the Old and New Testaments. I did this with great care, examining every term used, and each passage separately; my notes taken at the time are now before me. A brief reference to them may help some inquiring one: 1. Scripture commands, "Be perfect," "Thou shalt love." 2. Promises, "I will sprinkle clean water," "I will cleanse," "Blessed are the pure." 3. Prophecies, "and an highway," "There shall be upon the bells of the horses," "Holiness to the Lord," i.e., "the commerce, the recreations, and the pleasurable of life shall all be holy" and "every pot in Jerusalem and Judah," "All the eating, and drinking, shall be done to His honor and glory." 4. Precedents, "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect," "Herein is our love." 5. Scripture invitations, "Come now and let us reason," "Sins scarlet." 6. Exhortations, "Wash you, make you clean," "Let patience have her perfect," "That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives." 7. Prayers, "Create in me a clean," "Sanctify them through thy truth," "May the very God of peace sanctify you," "Preserved blameless". 8. Declarations of enforcing the doctrine--"If I wash thee not," "Without holiness no man shall see thee," "If we confess our sins," "There is no fear in love, but perfect love," "May be filled with all the fullness of God," "To him that loved us, and washed us."

There are scores of such passages spoken by God to me, to thee, dear reader. They show what He requires of us and these requirements harmonized with the teachings of the Holy Spirit to my mind and heart, and with the felt want of my nature, these truths provided so fully, and offered so freely, that, for which my new relationship leads me so eagerly to pant, that I felt my longing soul to be all on fire, to be dissolved in love.

The Trinity Working In Me

God, through Jesus Christ, had done a great work for me. I now felt that the work of sanctification was a work in which the whole Trinity were engaged. The Father, through the Son,

by the Holy Spirit, "working in me to will and to do of his good pleasure." The following passages were applied to my mind with great power:

1. It is the work of the Father, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will."

2. It is the work of the Son, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people." "He loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

3. It is the work of the Holy Ghost, "through sanctification of the Spirit by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The conviction that it was my privilege to be sanctified body, soul, and spirit, came in like a flood of light upon my soul; a knowledge that it was the will of God, even my sanctification, left me under such a weight of responsibility, that I saw as never before, that my privilege was the measure of my responsibility. He had given me light, or knowledge of my sinfulness, that light produced conviction, and contrition, and repentance, and turning to him with my whole heart, trustingly, I was accepted through Christ. He took me into His family, and now He was willing to make me holy; to cleanse me from all sin, to impart His own nature; to stamp upon my being His own moral image; to give me spiritual conformity to His image and likeness; to clothe me with courtly apparel, with the costume of saints; to bestow upon me royal immunities and privileges; to admit me to the royal banqueting house, to the family table; to give me a meetness and a title to the royal presence; to secure me constant access there; to afford me parental instruction in the school-room of Christ; to make me wise unto salvation, and honor me with the most illustrious titles, a "son," "heir," "joint-heir," etc.; to secure me a royal guard for my protection, and a throne, and a crown, and a kingdom where there are pleasures for evermore. Was I willing? Not only willing, but intensely desirous to be thus transformed by the renewing of my mind. My whole nature drawn out, and up, and on to Him. It was not the anxiety I had when I sought for pardon, there was not here any sense or feeling of condemnation. By no means. I had great peace, and I praised God night and day. Then, I moved with fear, now my promptings were love; then, I had sense of displeasure, now, the smile of approval; then, I came tremblingly, a stranger, now, with confidence as a child; I was then afraid He would employ me, now, I was glad to think he would give me something to do, and I promised that I would do all that He commanded me, trusting, Him for strength.

My Work

In this state of mind, earnestly looking for the work of holiness to be wrought in me, "my heart and my flesh crying out for the living God," the Spirit of the Lord impressed my mind with the thought, that sanctification was not only the work of God in man, but that it was man's work too. And now for days, all those texts pointing out our duty in this work, came to my mind. Holiness is a duty assigned as well as a privilege afforded, "Be ye holy," is a command, "Be thou perfect;"

there is a person addressed there, and a duty assigned to that person. "Make yourselves a new heart," and a "new spirit." We are called to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." "Wash you, make you clean." "That ye put off the old man, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "Sanctify yourselves." "Work out your own salvation." "Give all diligence." I saw from these and other passages of the Word, that the whole responsibility came back on me again. Have I done my part? Have I complied with His conditions? Have I given myself fully to Him? The work of sacrifice, of self-denial, of complete surrender, of entire consecration, of yielding up all confidence in working, was fully before my mind. Aaron and his sons were sanctified when they were "set apart," devoted, or consecrated to the priesthood. The Sabbath day was sanctified when it was set apart for God. The furniture of the tabernacle was made holy, or sanctified, when separated to holy purposes or surrendered to God's service. The vessels of the temple became holy, were made such, when set part to temple service. The lamb became the Lord's, in the sense of a sacrifice, not when it was caught, or confined in a place of safety, but when it was bound to the altar of God; then and not till then did it become holy.

I could not believe that I was accepted of Him, while I was in doubt as to the completeness and sincerity of my act of consecration. I must first make the surrender on my part, and bind myself in solemn covenant to Him, before I could trust Him for acceptance, and for the bestowment of that blessing I desired. The self-examinations, heart-searchings, and reasonings of my mind just here, lasted for some time. I saw that to pray sincerely and in faith, that God would cleanse and renew, I must be conscious that the vessel I wanted him to purify and fill was not to be used in the secular and the worldly. It must be dedicated to His honor and His glory. This question spread out before me in all its proportions, as a life question, as connected, indeed, with eternal life. A complete, entire, unreserved, unconditional devotement of self to God is necessary before the exercise of that faith that purifies. The "old man" must be crucified, nailed upon the cross, and put to death, before the "new man" will come in, and wash, and cleanse, and refit, and refurnish, and ornament the temple of the heart with all the lovely virtues and graces of the Holy Spirit. It is painful to fasten the old nature on the rugged wood. It requires very firm resolution. Human nature cries out for sympathy, and sometimes resolution fails, and the work of nailing him up is not half done. Often we take him down and administer cordials and revive his dying energies, and Satan and the carnal heart triumphs, then we gather up our resolution, and muster courage for another conflict, and succeed with the "old man" as before. There must be an unwavering determination to please God, such an invincible purpose as will lead us to nail the old man the cross, and go and nail him more firmly if need be. The question often came to my mind, can I crucify self and all that pertains to the carnal mind? Can I bear the reproach, for it is sure to come, that such a sacrifice will bring upon me? Can I witness for Christ and his power to save from all sin? I am sorry to say that at first my courage failed me, and I shrank from the duty, but the Lord helped me, and I came from the closet saying, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." I had there on my knees counted the cost. I reviewed the whole question in all its forms, with all its conditions and consequences, and I said, "O, God, my heart is filled, I am thine." With some emotion and trembling of heart, I took my pen and wrote,

" 'Lord, in the strength of grace, with a glad heart and free, Myself, my residue of days, I consecrate to thee.'

I am thine, thine for ever, fully, freely, for ever thine, through Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen." While recording the words of this covenant or consecration, my head and mind acted out its full import. I gave myself, I trusted, and I shouted his praise from a full and a pure heart. The double cure was effected, the water and the blood applied, and I, even I, was made whole. I have no language to express my feelings of gratitude. I think I had an experience of what Bunyan meant by the Slough of Despond. I know I was wounded by the bowmen of the enemy, and often discouraged by the lions in the way; but now, I triumphed so in Beulah, my sun went not down, the songs of Zion ever cheered me, the perfume from the Eden delighted my spiritual senses, "it was heaven below." I had one up into Canaan, and my inheritance was the valley of Sharon, and the mountains of Carmel and Tabor. I then began to grow in grace, to understand in some humble way the glorious privilege of living by faith upon the promise of God. There is a luxury divine in trusting Jesus. Oh, what a melting of heart -- what a subduing of the will -- what an emptying of self, and what a communication of the divine fullness. It was love filling and flooding my whole heart, refining my nature, and giving me complete victory over self, sin and Satan, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" Edited by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END