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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JOHN SCARLET
(Methodist)

On the evening, of the 8th of January, 1833, I was powerfully convicted of sin, at hearing, a sermon by the late Rev. Doctor Pitman. I continued in a wretched state of mind for about six months. My mental sufferings were intense, as I seemed to oscillate between hope and despair, in bitter anguish. The false supports afforded by Deism gave away, yet I feared I was reprobate, predestined to destruction. In the following month of June, I attended a Camp Meeting held near the city of Newark, N. J. Near the close of it. I was happily converted to God. I had a clear witness of justification by faith by sins were all forgiven -- the scarlet and double-dyed sins of infidelity.

The forgiveness of sins through faith in the love of Jesus mapped the first form of Christian religion on my heart. Forgiving mercy gave delightful impressions, while I shouted, "Glory to God," with joy unspeakable. Yet the forgiveness of sins shaped, stamped and bounded my creed! I am thankful I prized it so highly. I love the doctrine yet. It is a precious truth, we cannot live without. But three months had not elapsed before I felt the need of something more than pardon. Remains of the carnal mind were disclosed, that forgiveness could not reach. My needs, and gospel provisions for them were viewed from a new stand-point. Self-examinations, with faith in prayer added to scriptural searching, gave a view of more ground to be possessed and cultivated.

Of my conversion I never had a doubt, because I would not backslide. I passed through severe temptations and trials. I conversed freely on the subject of Christian experience with the people of God. I was of child-like simplicity, and wished to hold no secret views or reserved opinions. I loved Methodist preacher, and asked them many questions. I found, on comparing notes on religion experience, that I lacked what some of them possessed, -- abiding faith, with perfect love! I felt the conscious need of a blessing, not included in my past experience. I had no theory of what I needed and desired. I felt no guilt from transgression. My want, with my faults and infirmities did not make me guilty. Somehow, my nature was not yet all subdued by grace. There seemed to be something remaining, within that I could not trust--a vacancy not filled! I was thankful that God would shew me my lack! I prayed that He would make known to me all my faults.

I loved the institutions and rules of the Church, and attended to all my duties as a member. I began the duty of fasting one day in the week that I might reach the fullness of my privileges in Christ. I wanted to be useful and in a safe state. I was happy, but that was not enough to fully satisfy the desire the Spirit created in me. I thirsted and hungered that I might be filled. Justification could not increase, and there was no progress in regeneration. I wanted a form of grace that I could grow in. Cleansing power and love, with knowledge of God in Christ, I sought.

One quiet day in autumn, about three months after my conversion, late in the afternoon, I wandered away alone in deep meditation, until I reached the suburbs of the city. It was my fast-day, and as the shades of evening were deepening around me, in a lonely spot I knelt down, with a solemn vow upon my heart of consecrating, my entire being to God, for time and eternity. I resolved to continue seeking until an answer would be received.

With concentrated powers and intense desire, unaccompanied with bodily exercise, I prayed for about thirty minute, when the answer came with the witness of the Holy Ghost, and I was free and filled. God's presence was with me and in me in an awful stillness. I heard nothing nor saw anything; but I felt the heart-pervading presence of Divine love. Its purifying power killed all pride and lust and envy. I arose and walked home as though I moved on wings, Oh, what a precious state of mind! never to be blotted from the tablet of immortal memory! It cast out all tormenting fear. It was a distinct and peculiar blessing fitting exactly my need in heart and mind, and soul. It had simple and abiding faith constantly working! Is was what God in substance had for me when He gave me the longing for it, under it shadow. It started my thinking anew, giving shapings to my views on the phase, and grade experienced, of religious truth. I borrowed and read works on the subject, by Wesley and Fletcher. My light was increased.

I am old -- have been preaching the Gospel for more than thirty years -- but I have never doubted of my receiving sanctifying grace, or perfect love, as I he stated. The lamented Cookman and Rev. E. S. Janes (now Bishop) helped me much in my early experience. Since then I have passed through trial, temptations, and afflictions. All my children, six in number, are gone to Heaven! -- but Christ, in his sanctifying power and presence has been my support. I love every part of pure religion, but this is central to all. I can not help loving holiness, and I must confess that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin. Fault and infirmities are the inheritance of my probationary life, yet, his words abide in me, and I abide in the Vine. I know that I am but a weak creature of the dust, but the Holy Spirit is refining my nature, and qualifying more and more for the society of saints and angels. I love the society of the holy here, and I believe all the Bible promises to do for them. This blessed theme has helped me much in my preaching, and I have rejoiced in seeing some precious fruit. While my life lingers along this vale of tears I pray it may be my heart's joyful support, and after I go hence to be here no more, to have a lot forever among the sanctified.

"My consecrated soul would stay,
On Jesus' bosom night and day,
And drink compassion in;
Would live a life of faith in Thee,
And keep the law of liberty,
Of liberty from sin.

Love's pleasing toil shall then be rest,
Sustained by Thee and in Thee blest --
Shall all be wrought in God;
My purpose ever pure and true,
In all I speak, or think, or do,
Kept pure in Jesus' blood.

With white-robed hosts I'll dwell on high,
And lofty seraphim outvie,
In praises to the Lamb,
The harp I'll take of singing lays,
Reciting odes of endless praise,
To my Redeemer's name."

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" Edited by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END