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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)

Being convinced that my experience is a part of that all consecrated to God, I now submit it. I was converted in 1850; entered the ministry in 1857; early made myself acquainted with the doctrines of the M. E. Church; read most of our authors on "Christian Purity;" believed in sanctification as distinct from regeneration, to be obtained by faith, and enjoyed in this life, and at times earnestly sought it. It was frequently subject of pulpit effort, and I generally had liberty in trying to preach it. A measure of sadness, sometimes of condemnation, has attended my ministry, in that I did not know the power of that grace which I thus, in all conscience, presented to the people. If it be asked why I preached this doctrine, seeing I did not enjoy it my answer is this: "I did not dare to make the measure of my experience the measure of that Gospel which I brought my people. I could not do other than preach the whole counsel of God."

Thus I continued until coming to my present charge. Here, without verbal profession, some of my people believed that I enjoyed Sanctification. When I found such to be the case, I did not undeceive them, and for two reason: I thought I could do them more good by allowing them to think thus; and, secondly, to preach holiness, and not enjoy and live it, seemed to me so utterly inconsistent, that I had not moral courage to confess the whole truth. The time of the Penns-Grove Camp drew near. I debated for a time the propriety of attending the meeting. Should I go to the camp? and could I pass the ordeal? I desired, and yet feared to go. I would avail myself of the religious privilege; but then, would I not by some means be compelled to confess my spiritual condition, and thus stand exposed as a deceiver? for I could not resist the impression that I was acting a great lie. I had hoped to come into the experience of sanctification in a private manner, and would then profess it; while the previous struggles, time of its reception, etc, would be unknown.

All effort to obtain rest of soul in this manner were fruitless. My heart became strangely hardened. Thus was I up to and during nearly all the camp-week. I went to the meeting in some sense as the lamb to slaughter. Some unseen power seemed to lead me on, and yet I dreaded to go. At the camp I avoided, as much as possible, close personal conversations, yet kept myself open to

convections ["Convections" might here be used in the sense of "circulations," a possible meaning of the word. Perhaps the writer is speaking of a willingness to keep in the "circulations," "social swirl," or "activities" of the camp-meeting -- DVM].

As the meeting progressed, my wretched increased. So far from finding rest, my soul was tempest-tossed, until I knew not what to do. Was tempted to do a thousand things but the right! More than once I believed I ought to humble myself in the presence of my people, and publicly consecrate myself to God. This, for a time, I strongly resisted. It seemed to me less dreadful to leave the ministry, church, and state. I would fly from my conflicts and ministerial responsibilities. Two, if no other, reflection prevented this decision. One, the woes of Heaven would pursue me; the other, I could not escape from myself. The meeting was drawing to a close. Friday night had come. My agony increased. I was arrested with the conviction that my eternal well-being was now pending; the great controversy between self and God must be ended; that henceforth I must be wholly the Lord's, or I would be wholly God's enemy.

I had attended a covenant meeting just before evening preaching, and from this solemn circle went to the stand to hear the evening sermon. Busied with my own wretched heart, I heard but little, knew but little, besides my own sad reflection. This much, however, God assisted me to do, -- to resolve to do His will when clearly revealed, and at whatever cost. The sermon ended, I was put to the test. Again I was impressed with the duty of public confession and consecration, and again doubted the propriety of such a course, seeing I already was understood to enjoy that blessing. But now, willing to walk fully with God, and being distrustful of self, I sought the counsel of one whose intelligence and fervent piety I could not doubt. The memory of that brother, hour, decision, and victory, is more precious than words can express. From a private tent, and persona1 conference, I went into the circle; and in the presence of God and of angels, of my brethren and others, I publicly humbled myself. Confessing all, surrendering all for time and eternity, I knelt in prayer. The struggle was not long, but severe. The searching One saw me humbled, surrendered, consecrated, trustful. The promises were applied to my mind with unwonted sweetness. I saw myself that nothing that I am, and God the All in all. Oh, what views of God! -- of His presence power, holiness, mercy, love! He loved me, even me; and so assured was I of that love, it would have been sweet to have died then and there. Oh, blessed rest of faith! My "soul dwelt at ease." Having Christ, I had all; and my full heart said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!"

I have been somewhat definite; yet the half who can tell? I have been trying to lift up and keep up a standard; and God even the Lord God, is my God and Father.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END