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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

GEORGE SHARPE
1865 -- 1948
(Founder of British Isles Nazarene Churches, 1915)

In the year 1898 I was sent by the Bishop to be pastor of the Church in Chateaugay, New York State. It was a fine structure with a pipe organ, the seats were circular and roomy, the windows were small and filled with coloured glass, and a beautiful toned bell called the people to worship ... It was the second year of my ministry when the Board and the Church had planned special services. These were to be conducted by L. Milton Williams who was then a major in the Salvation Army. He was a mighty man of God. He drove the people to their knees and also to their Bibles. In a short ministry of less than two weeks the country for twenty miles around was under deep conviction. In every afternoon meeting the subject was holiness. Every evening there was more on the same subject. The hymns, the prayers, the sermons, all breathed and pulsated with this glorious truth. There were officials seeking the blessing. There were preachers seeking the experience.

My own loved wife prostrated herself before God until she rejoiced in the fulness of the blessing. But what of the preacher himself? From the commencement of my ministry there was a goodly company who rejoiced in the experience of holiness. They were the finest group of saints I had ever known. Their chief business since I became their pastor was to pray for me that I might enter into Canaan. How they loved me and how they supported my ministry was unique and wonderfully revealed the grace of holiness. The pressure of truth and the Holy Ghost were upon me. The price I had to pay was the loss of popularity amongst my brethren, the District Superintendents and the Bishops, for many of them soft pedalled holiness and also were against fanatical preachers of holiness. It might mean a ministry in little mean Churches in the woods.

An afternoon service was finished and I was left alone. I had to face the call of God to holiness now. Dare I reject this glorious experience? Dare I say no to the entreaties of the Holy Ghost? Dare I disappoint my blessed Saviour and my heavenly Father? My heart said "No" and I dropped on my knees at the organ bench. There I prayed and made my consecration. I can now repeat the formula of that afternoon, "O Lord, I give Thee all. My spirit, soul and body, my time,

my talents, my friends, all I have and all I ever will have, all I know and all I ever will know, to be anything and to go anywhere for Thee. Amen."

There was no reservation and as a result the prayer of faith followed and God sanctified me then. There was no ecstatic joy, no shout of victory, but I believed the work was done. The night meeting came on. The Church was full. Chairs had to be placed in the aisles. The preacher preached with great unction and power. He came to the altar call and for the first time there was no response on the part of seekers. There seemed to be a hardness in the service.

I arose and said to Bro. Williams, "Let me speak now." He answered, "Go ahead, Bro. Sharpe." In the space of a few minutes I rehearsed to them certain things relating to my pastorate in their midst. A past revival, their help in the ministry and work of the Church and most of all their prayers on my behalf. I knew that many of them had prayed that the Lord might sanctify me wholly and then I said, "All this leads me to tell you that this afternoon in the prayer room yonder I met God while I knelt at the organ stool. God answered my prayer and here I testify that He sanctifies me now."

Then suddenly the Holy Ghost came and filled the cleansed temple. Praise God. He witnessed that the work was done. Just as suddenly the glory of the Lord came upon the people. Seekers flocked to the altar. The triumph of the Holy Ghost was complete. The preacher of the occasion is in heaven. The writer is still here, but we shall meet again in the glory land.

Source: "This Is My Story" by George Sharpe

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THE END