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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

AMANDA SMITH

I always got up as early on Sunday mornings as on other mornings. I got my breakfast and cleaned up my house, and at nine o'clock my little Mazie went to Sunday School. While she was gone I would cook all my dinner and get everything ready. I did not have time to cook much through the week, as I had often to dry my clothes in the house and I could not have the smell of cooking, so Sunday was the only day I would have a real good dinner, but I never stayed home from church to cook -- so I gave my baby his bath and laid him in his cradle, then I got down on my knees and prayed the Lord to keep Will asleep till I went to Green Street Church, and to keep James in a good humor so he would not scold me, for I hated to be scolded, in the worst way. James was peculiar. If he came and I happened to be out, even though I went to carry clothes, he would be vexed. So after Mazie came I said, "Now you read your library book and be a good girl, I am going to Green Street Church this morning; it lets out before our church does, so I will be home in time. You can tell your pa, if he comes before I get back. If Will cries, don't take him up; just rock him."

She was a good strong girl, thirteen years old, quite able to take care of him and could manage him quite as well as I could, so I went and left them. On my way to Green street, it seemed the Devil overtook me. Just as I turned in Carmine street, I felt a Satanic influence walking by my side and whispering, "Now, you know, if James comes home and finds you are out, you know what you will catch; you had better go to Bedford Street and hear John Cookman."

"Well, I will."

So when I got to the corner and was just going to turn down Bleecker street, a voice said, "No, go on." I went on. After I had gone about half a block Satan whispered again, " You are seeking sanctification?"

"Yes."

"Well, if James comes home and you are out, he will be very angry, and that will be a sin and you should not make anybody sin."

No," I said, "I will not do it."

Then Satan said, "You had better go and hear that Presbyterian minister on the corner of Houston and Prince streets." I had heard how kind they were to colored people and I had promised several times I would go and hear this minister; the Devil had found that out some way; I can't tell how he knew it, but he did." You had better go and hear him; then, it is nearer home, three blocks nearer, and you can get home quick."

"Yes," I said, "that is so."

When I got to the corner, as I was about to turn down, with a gentle pull a sweet voice whispered, "No, no, go on."

"Lord, help me!"

Oh, how will I ever praise God enough for His tender love and faithfulness to me in that awful hour. He gave power to my fainting spirit, and when I had no might, He increased strength. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

I went on a little further and by and by the enemy seemed to approach me again fiercely. He said, "Now, you are the biggest fool that ever was. You think you are going to hear John Inskip; he is not there, he is at the Five Points."

"O, if I thought Brother Inskip was not there, I would not go. I would go back."

I went on. When I reached the steps I shall never forget the thrill of joy that ran through my heart when I heard Brother Inskip pray. With what strength I had left I said, "Thank God, he is here and not at the Five Points." I seemed to feel the Satanic presence sweep by me and say, "O, she has found it out." Old Satan knew I had caught him in one of his biggest lies. I went into the church and sat down about three seats from the door. I had been to that church but once before and that was Brother Inskip's first Sunday while I lived in York street I was very sick and could not walk away up to Sullivan Street Bethel Church where I belonged, so I went in there that Sunday.

I sat in the gallery. The people were so kind; one brother handed me a book and asked me to come again. I thank God for that spirit that was in Green street those days, even to colored people. The Sunday I got the blessing I did not sit upstairs, but O, how tired I was when I got into the church. I leaned my head forward and prayed God to give me strength. When Brother Inskip had finished his prayer he rose and made his announcements; the last hymn was sung, then came the text:-- Ephesians, 4th Chapter 24th Verse,--" And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." He said, "In preaching from this text this morning the brethren will observe I shall have to make some reference to a sermon that I preached a few Sabbaths ago on sanctification."

I was struck, for I had never heard a minister say that word in commencing his sermon before, and I said, "O, I have missed my chance; two Sabbaths ago I had such a drawing to come here -- and I did not do it; O, Lord, I have disobeyed that spirit and I am so sorry; do forgive me and help me, I pray Thee."

O, how I wept, for I had lost my chance and I am so hungry for the blessing, but, "Lord forgive me and help me to listen now."

I raised my head and fixed my eyes and thoughts on the speaker and got so interested it seemed he was preaching right to me, and I took every word. By and by I heard my baby scream out,--I heard him scream as distinctly as ever I heard a child scream. "You told Mazie not to take that child up, but she has done it and let him fall," Satan suggested.

For a moment the actual thing did occur, and it was before my eyes. My heart stood still and a voice said, "Trust the Lord."

"I will," I said, and fixed my mind again and listened, and as dear Brother Inskip warmed up and I was feasting, my baby screamed out again. I jumped, and it seemed that all the people in the church heard; it was so plain.

"There," the Devil says, "James has come home and Mazie has not done as you told her, and you will catch it when you get home."

O, I felt if I had wing I would fly. I wanted to scream out. A sweet voice said, "You said you would trust the Lord."

"So I did," I said, so I sat back and was listening and drinking in and thought all was well now. Again I heard my baby scream.

"There," said the Devil, "Mazie has let him fall and broken his back," and I got up and walked to the end of the pew.

"It is no use," I said, "I shall be tormented here: I will go home." And it was as though a person stood before me and said, "Didn't you say that you would trust the Lord with that child?"

"Yes," I said, "and I will trust the Lord, even if he is dead;" and I sat down. Just as I sat down Brother Inskip said: "There are a great many persons who are troubled about the blessing of sanctification; how they can keep it if they get it."

"Oh!" I said, "he means me, for that is just what I have said. With my trials and peculiar temperament and all that I have to contend with, if I could get the blessing how could I keep it? Now, some one has told him, for he is looking right at me and I know he means me." And I tried to hide behind the post, and he seemed to look around there. Then I said, "Well, he means me, and I will just take what he says." He used this illustration: "When you work hard all day and are very tired, -- "Yes," I said, and in a moment my mind went through my washing and ironing all night, -- "When you go to bed at night you don't fix any way for yourself to breathe," -- "No," I said, "I

never think about it," -- "You go to bed, you breathe all night, you have nothing to do with your breathing, you awake in the morning, you had nothing to do with it."

"Yes, yes, I see it."

He continued: "You don't need to fix any way for God to live in you; get God in you in all His fullness and He will live Himself.

"Oh!" I said, "I see it." And somehow I seemed to sink down out of sight of myself, and then rise; it was all in a moment. I seemed to go two ways at once, down and up. Just then such a wave came over me, and such a welling up in my heart, and these words rang through me like a bell: "God in you, God in you," and I thought doing what? Ruling every ambition and desire, and bringing every thought unto captivity and obedience to His will. How I have lived through it I cannot tell, but the blessedness of the love and the peace and power I can never describe. O, what glory filled my soul! The great vacuum in my soul began to fill up; it was like a pleasant draught of cool water and I felt it. I wanted to shout Glory to Jesus! but Satan said, "Now, if you make a noise they will put you out."

I was the only colored person there and I had a very keen sense of propriety; I had been taught so, and Satan knew it. I wonder how he ever did know all these little points in me, but in spite of all my Jesus came out best. As we colored folks used to sing in the gone-by years:

"Jesus is a mighty captain,
Jesus is a mighty captain,
Jesus is a mighty captain,
Soldier of the cross."

"Jesus never lost a battle,
Jesus never lost a battle,
Jesus never lost a battle,
Soldier of the cross."

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

I did not shout, and by-and-by Brother Inskip came to another illustration. He said, speaking on faith: "Now, this blessing of purity like pardon is received by faith, and if by faith why not now?"

"Yes," I said.

"It is instantaneous," he continued. "To illustrate, how long is a dark room dark when you take a lighted lamp into it?"

"O," I said "I see it!" And again a great wave of glory swept over my soul -- another cooling draught of water -- I seemed to swallow it, and then the welling up at my heart seemed to come still a little fuller. Praise the Lord forever, for that day!

Speaking of God's power, he went on still with another illustration. He said: "If God in the twinkling of an eye can change these vile bodies of ours and make them look like his own most glorious body, how long will it take God to sanctify a soul?"

"God can do it," I said, "in the twinkling of an eye," and as quick as the spark from smitten steel I felt the touch of God from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and the welling up came, and I felt I must shout: but Satan still resisted me like he did Joshua. But the Captain of the Lord's host stood close by and said, "Take off the filthy garments from him," and Satan was mad.

Again I yielded to the tempter and did not shout. Then I felt the Spirit leave me. I knew He had gone, and I said: "O, Holy Ghost, if Thou wilt only return I will confess Thee. -- "I am so glad God put the word confession in my mouth. I thought I would get ready, so when the Spirit came again I would shout; but before I knew it just as though someone threw a basin of water in my face, a great wave came and just as I went to say, "Glory to Jesus!" the Devil said, "Look, look at the white people, mind, they will put you out," and I put my hands up to my mouth and held still, and again I felt the Spirit leave me and pass away.

Then Satan said: "Now, you have lied to the Holy Ghost, for you said if the Holy Ghost returned you would confess Him, and He did return and you didn't confess, and you have lied to the Holy Ghost."

O, shall I ever forget the horror of that hour. I thought I had committed an unpardonable sin, so was doomed forever. All hope was gone, and a horror of darkness swept upon my spirit. For about five minutes it seemed to me I was in hell, but somehow, I don't know how, I said, "Well, I know the Lord has sanctified my soul" -- I felt so sure of it -- "and I will go home to my church and give the witness."

Just then Satan says: "They will not believe you because you did not get the blessing there."

Then I knew there was a little jealousy and prejudice among some, so I said: "Well, no matter, I know the Lord has sanctified my soul, anyhow." And I went to get up to go out, but could not stand on my feet. O, I was so weak. My head seemed a river of waters and my eyes a fountain of tears. I put my hand in my pocket to get my handkerchief, but I could not get it out. Just then they arose to sing the closing hymn, that blessed hymn, "My latest sun is sinking fast." I tried to get up, but could not; then the Devil says, "No one knows you here, and they will think you are drunk."

"Lord, what shall I do," and a voice seemed to whisper in my left ear, for Satan stood at my right, and would whisper his suggestions: "Pray for strength to stand up." I took hold of the pew in front of me and trembling from head to foot I stood up, but held on to the pew. Just as I got fairly on my feet they struck the last verse of the hymn,

"Oh, bear my longing heart to Him,
Who bled and died for me.
Whose blood now cleanseth from all in,
And give me victory."

And when they sang these words, "Whose blood now cleanseth," O what a wave of glory swept over my soul! I shouted glory to Jesus. Brother Inskip answered, "Amen, Glory to God." O, what a triumph for our King Emmanuel. I don't know just how I looked, but I felt so wonderfully strange. yet I felt glorious. One of the good official brethren at the door said, as I was passing out, "Well, auntie, how did you like that sermon?" but I could not speak; if I had, I should have shouted, but I simply nodded my head. Just as I put my foot on the top step I seemed to feel a hand, the touch of which I cannot describe. It seemed to press me gently on the top of my head, and I felt something part and roll down and cover me like a great cloak! I felt it distinctly; it was done 'in a moment, and O what a mighty peace and power took possession of me!

I started up Green street. The streets were full of people coming from the different churches in all directions. Just ahead of me were three of the leading sisters in our church. I would sooner have met anybody else than them. I was afraid of them. Well, I don't know why, but they were rather the ones who made you feel that wisdom dwelt with them. They were old leading sisters, and I have found that the colored churches were not the only ones that have these leading consequential sisters in them. Well, as I drew near, I saw them say something to each other, and they looked very dignified. Now, the Devil was not so close to me as before he seemed to be quite behind me, but he shouted after me, "You will not tell them you are sanctified."

"No," I said, "I will say nothing to them," but when I got up to them I seemed to have special power in my right arm and I was swinging it around, like the boys do sometimes! I don't know why, but O I felt mighty, as I came near those sisters. They said, "Well, Smith, where have you been this morning?"

"The Lord," I said, "has sanctified my soul." And they were speechless! I said no more, but passed on, swinging my arm! I suppose the people thought I was wild, and I was, for God had set me on fire! "O," I thought, "if there was a platform around the world I would be willing to get on it and walk and tell everybody of this sanctifying power of God!"

"Of victory now o'er Satan's power,
Let all the ransomed sing,
And triumph in the dying hour
Through Christ the Lord our King."

"Oh! it was love,
'Twas wondrous love,
The love of God to me,
That brought my Saviour from above,
To die on Calvary."

Somehow I always had a fear of white people -- that is, I was not afraid of them in the sense of doing me harm, or anything of that kind -- but a kind of fear because they were white, and were there, and I was black and was here! But that morning on Green street, as I stood on my feet trembling, I heard these words distinctly. They seemed to come from the northeast corner of the church, slowly, but clearly: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is

neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.) I never understood that text before. But now the Holy Ghost had made it clear to me. And as I looked at white people that I had always seemed to be afraid of, now they looked so small. The great mountain had become a molehill. "Wherefore, if the Son shall make you free, then are you free, indeed." All praise to my victorious Christ!

"He delivered me when bound,
And when wounded, healed my wound.
Sought me wandering, set me right,
Turned my darkness into light."

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

When I got home I opened the door; the baby was still asleep. I said: "Mazie, has Mr. Smith come?"

"No."

"Has Will slept all right?"

"Yes, he has not wakened up at all."

"Well, the Lord has sanctified my soul this morning," and she said, "Has He? mother?"

"Yes," I said, "and I want to go around and tell Auntie Scott." She was my good band sister. She lived in Clinton court, off Eighth street. When I got to the door, I knocked and opened at the same time. Brother Scott was lying on the sofa; he was assistant class leader to Brother Henry De Schield's, who was my leader. He believed in the doctrine of holiness, but had not the experience at that time, but, thank God, he believed in it and said nothing against it, so that was in my favor. Brother Scott was "on the fence," sometimes he would seem to believe in it and talk as though he had it, at another time he would oppose it bitterly, so you never knew just when he would turn on you. When I went in that morning, I said: "Pop Scott, the Lord has sanctified my soul this morning."

He raised himself up, and said: "Did -- did He?" (He stammered a little.) I did not wait for any more, I began to sing an old hymn that I had often heard sung in our love feasts and class meetings in the gone-by days, which seemed to be the real song of my soul. I had never felt such soul union with Jesus before in my life; so I sang:

"I am married to Jesus
For more than one year,
I am married to Jesus
For during the war."

The old man looked at me and smiled and got ready for an argument. The children all looked astonished. Sister Scott had not come in from church. When I had finished the verse, I said,

"Good morning," and as I opened the door to go out, Sister Scott was just coming in. I said; "Oh, Scott! the Lord has sanctified my soul this morning."

I thought she would be so glad for she told me that years before in Canada, she had got the blessing through Mrs. Dr. Palmer. She never spoke of it definitely and clearly, so I never understood anything about it, but to my great surprise she very coolly said, "Well I hope you will keep it," and passed right in by me, and said not another word. I went out. Oh, what a shock!

"There," the Devil says, "She don't believe you have got the blessing."

"O Lord," I said, "Can it be that I am mistaken and will I have to, go back and go all over the ground. I would rather die right here in my tracks."

As I was turning out of Eighth street in Sixth avenue, I cried out, "O Lord, help me, and if this blessing is not sanctification, then what is it?" And the Lord did help me. Quick these words came with power to my heart: "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." "Believeth," seemed to be so powerfully emphasized, and I said, "Lord, I do believe that Thou hast sanctified my soul," and the power of God came upon me so that my knees gave way under me and I dropped as though I were shot, right on Sixth avenue. The people were passing and looked at me and said nothing. I suppose they thought I was a little gone in the head, but God had turned my captivity and my mouth was filled with laughter. I scrambled up as best I could, for I did not fall prostrate, my knees gave way and I dropped on my hands, and every time I said the word which the Lord put in my mouth: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," another wave of power came upon me. Down I went again, and so three times, before I got home, I fell under the mighty power of God. Hallelujah! It is today the same, The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and I do believe God, and He has kept me saved magnificently. Hallelujah! There is a big triumph in my soul. I don't know where the Devil went, but I heard no more of him for a week, then he called on me and said, "When people get sanctified, everything gets better around them."

"Yes," said I.

"Well, you see James is not any better, if anything he is worse."

That was true, if possible, and I said I did think so too, and didn't understand it, for I thought he would be glad to know that I had got more religion.

"Then," said he, "You have no witness that you are sanctified."

"Well," I said, "I will have it, God helping me, right now."

It was Friday. I was ironing; I set down my iron and went and told Jesus. I said; "Lord, I believe Thou hast sanctified my soul, but Satan says I have no witness. Now, Lord. I don't know what to ask as a direct witness to this blessing, but give me something that shall be so clear and distinct that the Devil will never attack me again on that point while I live."

After a short prayer I waited a moment in silence, and said, "Now, Lord, I wait till Thou shalt speak to me Thyself," and a moment passed and these words came: "Ask for the conversion of Miss Chapel."

I said, "Lord, for a real evidence that Thou hast sanctified my soul, I ask that Thou will convert Miss Chapel between now and Sunday morning."

In a moment these words were flashed through my soul: "If thou canst believe all things that are possible to him that believeth." And I said, "Lord, I believe Thou will do it," and a flood of light and joy filled me. Oh, I praise the Lord. I arose from my knees praising God. I went to ironing; after a little while, Satan came again.

"You ought to go and see if the woman is converted before you are so sure."

"Well, yes, I would like to go, but then it is two miles away, and I am afraid Will might wake up and cry."

But the enemy urged me, "You had better not be too sure, you ought to go and see," and I was sorely tempted. I lifted my heart to God in prayer and said, "Lord help me, I believe that Thou wilt do it, and I will trust Thee." Then there came a still hush and quiet all over me and I went on ironing and singing. Praise the Lord!

Miss Chapel, referred to, was a very nice young woman, though not a Christian. She was a very upright, moral person. She was taken ill, and her sister, a very earnest Christian, was very anxious about her state, and asked me and others to come and pray with her. One day I went, and met Mother Jones and several others. We sang and prayed with her and left her. And now a week had passed and I had not heard from her, and I had thought that was why the enemy attacked me so fiercely on Friday. Sunday morning came and I had persisted in believing and praising God, according to His word: "If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth." I went to church, and as I sat in my pew after the sermon was over, and the collection was being taken up, Sister Jones, who sat in the opposite pew, got up and came over to me, and said "Smith, Chapel has got the blessing." I said, "Praise the Lord, when did she get it?" She said, "Yesterday afternoon." Then these words were spoken to my heart in power: "Now that is your evidence," and I said, "O Lord, I do thank Thee, Thou hast answered my prayer and given me this distinct witness that Thou hast sanctified my soul."

Many times since then my faith has been tried sorely, and I have had much to contend with, and the fiery darts of Satan at times have been sore, but he has never, from that day, had the impudence to tell me that God had not done this blessed work. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Everybody does not have direct witness to their sanctification nor to their justification in that way, but it is their privilege to have the clear, distinct witness of the Spirit to both justification and sanctification, and, as a rule, persons who do not get this distinct witness are unsettled in their Christian life, often waver and falter, and are more easily turned aside to new isms and doctrines but, thank God, He has kept me in perfect peace while my mind has been stayed on Him and I have trusted in Him. Praise His name forever!

Source: Amanda Smith's Autobiography

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THE END