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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)**

I was blessed with Christian parents and the advantages of religious training. At the age of thirteen, during a revival in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Binghamton, N. Y., under the pastorate of Rev. A. P. Mead, I became deeply convicted of sin and sought the Lord earnestly and sincerely. I had an erroneous idea of the witness of the Spirit, and was expecting some wonderful change to be instantaneously wrought in my heart. The sense of condemnation gradually gave place to peace and sometimes joy; yet I could not say I had the witness of the Spirit to my conversion.

On the advice of my parents and pastor, though with many misgivings, I then united with the church. During ten years that followed I was counted a consistent member, and was active in church and Sunday school work. I loved God's written Word, loved secret prayer, and occasionally had remarkable answers to prayer. Much of the time, I know now, I enjoyed communion with God; yet I was constantly anxious, and troubled with doubts of my acceptance, because I could not tell the exact time of my conversion.

In August, 1869, after a severe struggle, I resolved to seek no longer for the witness of the Spirit, but to trust Jesus as my Saviour through life, without light or joy, should He so will it, and appear before Him, at the last, pleading only His word of promise.

I was led to see that I had made a mistake in looking for great blessings instead of thankfully accepting and acknowledging those given. A few days later "he that believeth hath the witness in himself" came home to me with great power, and from that time I have never doubted my acceptance of the Father, through His Son, nor had a single misgiving in regard to the witness of the Spirit. The struggle of years was ended; I rested joyfully in Christ and was loyally obedient to Him.

I had often earnestly desired the blessing of perfect love and had sought it for a time, but relinquished the search through fear that I was not yet regenerated. Some of my friends thought I

had now received this blessing, but the Spirit witnessed clearly to my heart that this was the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" in the "Spirit of adoption."

The following spring I was called by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of our Church to the work of a missionary in India, and God, by His Spirit, so wrought in my heart that I knew with all the certainty I then knew I was His child that it was His call, and I dared not refuse to follow. I sailed for India September 22, 1870.

New experiences, new duties, and peculiar trials brought a new sense of need, and 1871 and 1872 were years of constant reaching out after God. It was my privilege to be associated in 1872 with Rev. and Mrs. C. W. Judd, who encouraged me to seek for perfect love, and greatly helped me in it. As new light was given I saw that my will was not, as I had supposed it to be, in perfect harmony with God's will. I resolved that my consecration should be complete, cost what it might. The Holy Spirit wonderfully helped me in heart searchings as I prayed for light, until everything was, I knew, laid upon the altar, and I could say, "I am prostrate in the dust; I with Christ am crucified." At last, after weary months of seeking, and feeling that I could not take by faith so great a blessing, I knelt by my bedside one evening in December, with the determination not to leave the room until victory should be mine. While pleading the Spirit whispered, "You have given yourself with all your soul and body's powers unreservedly to God. Why not trust Him now to keep that you have committed unto Him?" I laid hold of the word, "He is able to keep," etc.. I said, "I do trust myself into Thy keeping, and will, by an act of faith, hold myself steadily there until Thou shalt set the Spirit's seal."

Morning was about dawning. Throughout that day, while engaged in its duties, I kept claiming and realizing from moment to moment perfect keeping power. At our consecration meeting that evening, led by Dr. Scott, although I greatly shrank from so doing, I felt that I must honor God with my testimony. I stated as nearly as possible just my position, and as I ceased speaking my heart was filled with a sense of God's wonderful love and power, and with the assurance that He saved me to the uttermost. During the days that followed I seemed to be living in an atmosphere of heaven. I was lifted out of and above myself and surroundings, and realized that I was wholly saved and sweetly kept, enfolded in the everlasting arms. The desire for the salvation of souls was all-absorbing, so that, impelled by a power within, and yet not of me, I labored incessantly allowing myself hardly time to eat or sleep, but, O, what joy I experienced in labor, what help and what blessing!

After about three weeks of this unvarying experience, I awoke one morning with the consciousness that the Spirit's help was withdrawn. I was as one who had been standing on the top of a high mount, reaching unto Heaven, drinking in fresh beauty and glory at every breath, suddenly let down into a low, shut-in valley, without any knowledge of how, when, or why he came there. I knew the witness of the Spirit to full salvation had been clear when I closed my eyes in sleep. I knew I had not grieved the Spirit. The suggestion came, "You testified too soon and never received the blessing you sought." I refuted the suggestion as best I could, but began the day's duties with a heavy heart. I was examining classes in the orphanage, and from six to ten found it very wearying.

Soon after I involuntarily spoke impatiently to a girl who was very trying. It was so slight as to be scarcely noticed by the class, but in a moment I was so overwhelmed with a sense of

humiliation and sorrow that I felt obliged to retire to my room, where I humbled myself before the Lord and claimed forgiveness for the sin. I had read a statement said to have been taken from John Wesley's journal, that, notwithstanding his very arduous labors, he never knew what it was to feel in the least wearied, and thought this the privilege of all Christians fully saved. I thought, if this be true, there is so much needing to be done in India I need never feel weary while toiling here. My friends had told me I was going beyond my strength; but I thought not. Now I realized that in addition to the Spirit's withdrawal I was physically prostrated. Satan whispered, "You see you were mistaken in regard to that; the whole thing has been a mistake." Afterward though not then, I saw that God permitted this experience not only to teach me to live by faith, but also that I was always apt to forget, that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." While I did not then really let go my hold on God I was bewildered and staggered, and, in a measure, shorn of my strength.

I think I enjoyed the blessing for two years or more after this, but did not walk in the clear light as I might have done had I not, through fear, become cautious about confessing Christ as my Saviour to the uttermost. Here was my fatal mistake, and I am not surprised that my light became dim until it gradually died out. As soon as I realized that the Comforter was gone I began again seeking His presence, but found it much harder to regain a lost experience than to attain to it at first. For one year and a half following I realized much of the time great help and comfort in the work, and was used in the salvation of souls; but I longed for full salvation and for greater power in the work. I was so bowed down with a realization of my own need, my lack of power, and the responsibility of the souls intrusted to my care, that I often spent nearly the whole night praying for their salvation, and, literally bowing my face to the ground, would exclaim, as did Moses, "Lord, I cannot bear this people alone, because they are too much for me."

In September, 1876, I was holding daily meetings in the girls' orphanage, of which I had charge, and for two weeks no one started to seek the Lord. I closed the meetings and went to Luckow to a Campmeeting then in progress.

At one of the afternoon meetings, where many were seeking entire consecration, I stated my earnest desire for a baptism of power, and asked if it might be definitely sought and found. Brother Dennis Osborn, who was leading the meeting, encouraged me to seek it expectantly now. I reconsecrated myself to God, reckoned myself wholly His, and waited for the baptism.

The next morning, while reading Isa. 32, new light shone upon the Word from the 15th to the 20th verses, and especially upon the 17th: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

I knew the work of grace wrought in my heart through taking Christ as my righteousness had brought peace, and the effect of the finished work, the abiding Christ, was, I saw, the quietness of resting down low at the feet of Jesus, listening, ready to obey His voice and the assurance that He would Himself do the work, only through me. The words given me to speak should be His words, with His power accompanying them. In an instant, I know not how, my soul anchored to the words and the baptism came -- the assurance that Christ, in me and through me, was to be to me a power not before known. I was to go forth strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

I returned to my work in Bareilly, again commenced meetings in the orphanage, and in two weeks' time more than fifty of our dear girls were clearly converted.

Two months later I was obliged to return to America on sick leave, but I had never before seen such results in the work as during these two months. Instead of so much struggling and doing I could almost "stand still and see the salvation of God." The full assurance of faith was mine. My words, though fewer, more simple and more direct, were, I knew, God-given and could not be fruitless. I had learned, at least in a measure, what oneness with Christ meant, and realized such nearness to Him that when I knelt in secret prayer I was in the conscious immediate presence of Christ, and knew my prayer was answered almost before I could call.

The most of the time since then the witness of perfect love has been clear. My experiences have been varied and new tests have been frequently given. The full assurance of faith and the fullness of the Spirit have not always been mine, but I have realized access to God by faith and power in working for Christ, which could not have been mine without this rest of faith.

F. J. SPARKES, BINGHAMTON, N.Y., March 6, 1888

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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THE END