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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)

To the praise of Jesus I will give a short testimony of the manner in which I received "the gift of power by faith." I believe I have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. A brief survey of God's dealings with me from the first, may be necessary to a full view of the manner in which I have been led into this inestimable blessing. Dedicated prayerfully to God, and to the work of the ministry in infancy, by a devoted Christian mother, who fled away, in great triumph, to her home above, on a Sabbath morning, before I was three years old, I was left to grow up almost wholly without religious training. I was powerfully awakened at the age of eighteen, while attending a series of evening meetings, held by the various evangelical denominations in a country school-house. Repeatedly I went to the altar with many tears and cries for salvation, but never felt the deep turpitude of my sins till I had prayed many times in secret; then, while laboring in a field alone, God met me, and gave me such horrible views of my sins, that I was seized with the most wretched despair. While crying on my knees for mercy, in that lonely field, and feeling, that God could not forgive so great a sinner, I thought of Jesus Christ a Saviour, and suddenly my great burden of soul was gone and I arose and rejoiced greatly in God. The whole world seemed full of His glory, especially the sun, shining in meridian splendor, seemed an image of my God. In looking back on my terrible agonies and anguish, I have often felt I had a foretaste of the cup of the damned. I prayed for powerful convictions of sin, and God sent an overwhelming flood upon me. I would all could see sin as I saw it. God forgave me, but I have never been able to forgive myself. The remembrance of my sins are still most grievous unto me. For two years I doubted my conversion, on account of my former great wickedness. With much prayer these doubts were made to disappear, while I was a student in the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary.

A few years afterwards I was led, to believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification, while listening to a local preacher. I then sought most earnestly and successfully for this work in my heart, as a qualification for usefulness and heaven. I was a licentiate in the Baptist Church, and supplying, two small churches at this time, when God sanctified my soul. The word seemed clear in its fruits, the change as great, or greater than at conversion, though I was a living Christian before. I felt I had a new Bible, new power in preaching--and I must have a home with the

heavenly believers of this doctrine. My Baptist brethren opposed my preaching, the doctrine, regarding me as fanatical. I joined the M. E. Church, and for nearly two years enjoyed this higher life. A deliberately written form of entire consecration, often used, was of great assistance in my efforts to reckon myself all the Lord's. I afterwards spent a part of two years at Union College, and nearly three in Union Theological Seminary, New York. Relying in a good degree for my support on my own exertions, I was always hurried, and often neglected the thorough care of my soul, while strenuously seeking, to store my mind with knowledge. The last year's course in college, and the first in the seminar, were crowded into one year. While in the seminary I was enabled to regain the lost witness of my entire acceptance, through the precious personal influence of Dr. and Mrs. Palmer. I felt then willing to do any work God had for me, even the hardest, and offered myself to our Mission Board for the foreign field. Was accepted for China, but was providentially hindered from entering on a work my heart was much set upon. For some years subsequently I enjoyed only a part of the time this fullness. The greatest hindrance and cause of doubt, as a reluctance to its profession. While at Lowville, my last charge, a weekly meeting, at the parsonage, for the promotion of entire holiness, greatly strengthened me.

At the Rodman Camp-meeting, in August 1866, the witness of entire holiness was very clearly renewed to me, and great liberty in preaching it afterwards. Still I shrank from a full confession in public. A little band of lovers of entire holiness, on the adjacent Martinsburgh charge, were a great blessing to me, and I hope I was also a blessing to them. A few on my own charge seemed in love with this blessed doctrine. I came to Wolcott, my present charge, longing to be wholly lost in the will of God. I was greatly troubled in view of my lack of that baptism of power which I knew the Holy Spirit alone could confer. I had for a few months attentively read Wesley's sermons for my own spiritual good. My soul grew desperate; I felt I could hardly live longer without a great baptism of fire and power.

On the 25th of August, having started for the Hannibal Camp-Meeting, I was prostrated with erysipelas, in a malignant form, but my soul still agonized for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On the morning of the 31st of August, while many others, and the people at the Hannibal Camp-Meeting, also, were engaged in special prayer for me, the long desired baptism of the Spirit came sensibly upon me, in such an overwhelming, manner that it seem I never can doubt again. My wife, engaged at work in another room, felt the same influence at the time. This was especially a baptism of love. My fears were gone, my soul exulted in perfect triumph. My physical sufferings increased, life was despaired of, will was made, presents given, and my funeral and burial arrangements were completed. For days reason fled from its throne -- but not my confidence in the Saviour. When reason came again and health revived, my recovery seemed to me and to others to be miraculous. I thought my tribulation and loss of flesh were that God might give me all things new. The promises of the Gospel now fed and feasted me. Our hymns, especially the 538th and 498th, were all the time wafting my soul heavenward. I felt conscious of being sealed by the Holy Ghost, and of possessing an earnest of my heavenly inheritance. I loved all God people with indescribable delight. I felt all ambition -- but to be useful -- was gone. My spirit of hurrying, too, was gone. I now ceased that self-tormenting scrutiny into motives, that looking back on the imperfections of my labors, had been such a snare to me; all anxiety about the future, all -- over anxiety about even the cause of God, and felt that I continually gave all, and received all. My peace became as a river, and so it continued. After having suffered a while, God has wonderfully established, strengthened, and settled me. I no longer hoped I was wholly sanctified, I knew it; I

know it still. Bless the Lord! The blood of Jesus, that cleanseth perfectly; the baptism of the Spirit, that confers power over all evil, and causeth us to glory in tribulation, I know has come upon me, and I still boldly declare it. I have lost too much to keep silence longer. The whole work of Christ, all the offices of the Spirit, yea the whole realm of truth has a new and ineffable charm to me. I now see Pentecost to be God's pattern of blessing. I felt and believed God was no respecter of persons, the power that came on Benjamin Abbott, William Tennant, Mrs. President Edwards, and so many of our fathers of Methodism, as for me, and now I know this in my own heart, to the everlasting praise of a most gracious God. Now I feel all contentment, all peace, all love, all humility. Am ready to do anything, be anything, live long or for a few days, labor anywhere, and bear all manner of reproach, if only I may remain a habitation of God through the Spirit.

I suffered during my illness, what seemed many death, but I can never be grateful enough for all this, as it cast me entirely on God. I yearned much for others to feel the same baptism, and it seemed to me that many ministers, especially, were coming into this full liberty of the Gospel. The effect of this baptism on my soul I can never fully describe. Bunyan's Beulah was now mine. The sunlight seemed like molten gold, every flower and leaf, and song of birds yea, all objects around me, were full of the glory of God. Payson's river of pleasure, on which his despairing spirit seemed to float, was mine -- that river of peace I still enjoy. My doubts and fears have fled away. Difficult spiritual problems are now solved. A glorious revolution has been wrought in my feeling in regard to life's great aims. I must no live only to declare Christ's power to save, to save now and save to the uttermost All the Christian graces have been anew tested in a fiery manner; still I have the victory. I am all the Lords, and only desire to be more and more filled with all the fullness of God. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." May this power, love and soundness, speedily be obtained by our whole Zion, a fit qualification for her world-wide mission in this gainsaying, skeptical age.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END