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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**SOCRATES TOWNSEND**  
(Methodist)

I first tasted that the Lord is gracious at a Camp-meeting, in my native county, Cape May, New Jersey, in 1834, being then in my nineteenth year. It was a most gracious change. I had indeed passed from death unto life. I cheerfully bore my cross, and desired to know all the will of God.

There was but little teaching at that time in regard to holiness, as a distinct work of grace. Yet, after the first seasons of joy had passed away, on comparing my attainments with the word of God, of which I had become a careful reader, I saw there was much land yet to be possessed. My experience was too fluctuating, and strong desires for worldly gain, and worldly pleasures, would arise. I was also much troubled with impatience, and tendency to sinful anger, to pride, and unholy ambition. About this time I read Mr. Wesley's sermons, which were made a great blessing to me. His sermons on "Sin in Believers," on "Perfection," and the "Scripture way of Salvation," were peculiarly suited to my case. I also read the memoirs of Bramwell, Carvosso, Storer, Smith, and Hester Ann Rogers.

I now saw clearly what I needed. My inmost soul cried out for purity; for perfect love, and I determined to seek it with all my heart. That was about two years after my conversion. Having, raised this standard, I grew rapidly in grace. I was indeed "going on to perfection," and had I enjoyed more outward helps, should soon have entered the Canaan of perfect love. But of all my Christian friends only to instructed me particularly in regard to this higher life. Still I pressed on. At one time it was suggested "if you obtain this blessing, it will be your duty to confess it, and there is not one in all the church where you worship, that professes it, and you will be considered forward, and besides you may lose it, and bring disgrace on the cause." But I resisted this by saying, "I will try to please God and leave the event with Him."

After a time I was enabled to believe, I shall obtain it, -- then, I shall obtain it soon. One evening, in secret prayer, I was pressing earnestly for God to cleanse me now. The Spirit said, "You are struggling all this time as if to persuade God to be willing -- He is willing now, and has been all the while. Are you ready to receive it, and to glorify God with it?" I said, "Yea, Lord, I

am ready -- ready now." Then something whispered, "You are ready, and God is ready; what hinders?" I said, nothing hinder, I have the things I ask for; God does this moment save, with full salvation bless." In that moment my heart was filled with love -- an indescribable comfort came into my soul, and an entire sinking into the will of God, with a clear assurance, "This is perfect love, this is purity of heart." Then I could say for the first time in my life, now I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I was soon after licensed to exhort, and in the Spring, of 1839, was called out by the Presiding Elder to preach the glorious gospel. I was admitted to the New Jersey Conference in 1840. As I entered the ministry, I was fully satisfied of three important points. 1st. That I was converted to God. 2nd. That my heart was purified by grace; and 3rd. That I was called to this great work. But I soon found that unexpected trials waited me. I had promised God on my knees not to hide the light which He had kindled in my soul, but to preach a free, full, and present salvation from all sin.

Some received this as glad tidings of great joy, but others doubted, and some really opposed the work. My brethren in the ministry, too, embarrassed me in many cases. True, some encouraged me, and all treated me kindly, yet many much older than myself doubted the propriety of making this theme so prominent, and thought it a great pity that I had espoused it so fully. I defended it as best I could from Scripture, from Mr. Wesley's works, and the Methodist writers generally, showing that it was the peculiar calling of the Methodists to spread scriptural holiness over these lands.

But, though greatly blessed in preaching, and witnessing frequent and powerful revivals of religion, yet in these first years, I was painfully beset by the great adversary. He did not fail to accuse me of presumption in holding up so high a standard, higher than any one could live up to, -- that I was grieving my older brethren, that it would be a hindrance to me in the Conference all my days, and that I never should hold out in this way. I arose often long before day to wrestle with God for strength to overcome the temptations, and in some instances, so severe were the temptations, that I arose at midnight, to pray for victory over the dark hosts of hell.

During the second year of my ministry, after being, beset for several days with these temptations, I retired far into the grove and poured out my soul before God. After about an hour's struggle, I obtained complete victory -- every cloud was withdrawn. I saw clearly that it was my duty to go on as at the beginning, and that God would with me, and give me great success. I arose, walked to and fro, and praised the Lord. Then, remembering that Satan would most likely return again, I determined to get up a mark as a witness against him. I took my knife and made a broad mark in the side of a small tree! From that time to the present, I have not been so beset with these peculiar temptations. Whenever they are presented, I refer the adversary to the mark on the tree, and he shrinks back.

Becoming established in this race, I went on happily in my work, witnessing at times great outpourings of the Spirit, and seeing considerable numbers enter into this blessed experience; at other times too much affected by the discouragements in the way. But for the last few years, I have been wonderfully encouraged in the cause. Quite a large number of my brethren in the ministry have entered into this rest, and nearly all encourage it. Some of them go through the churches like

flaming heralds and at the Camp-meetings they push the battle to the gates. Hundreds, and even thousands, he proved that Jesus saves to the uttermost. Indeed, the flame seem to be spreading everywhere. Though laid aside for a season from the active work, yet I rejoice that I have lived to see these days. My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour. Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men.

"Jesus! I love Thy charming name,  
'Tis music in my ear,  
Fain would I sound it out so loud,  
That Heaven and earth might hear.

I'd carve my passion on the bark,  
And every fruitful tree  
Should drop and bear some mystic mark,  
That Jesus bled for me."

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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THE END