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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JOHN VALTON
1740 -- 1???
(Methodist)

...I was born in the year 1740. My parents were natives of Franche Comte, near
Switzerland, and members of the Church of Rome. They came to England a year or two before I
was born...

[Concerning his spiritual needs, Valton, as yet not born again, wrote to Wesley
anonymously. Wesley responded on January 31, 1764]

Dear Brother, -- It is certainly right, with all possible care, to abstain from the outward
occasions of evil: but this profits only a little: the inward change is the one thing needful for you.
You must be born again, or you will never gain a uniform and lasting liberty. Your whole soul is
diseased, or rather dead, dead to God, dead in sin. Awake then and arise from the dead; and Christ
shall give thee light. To seek for a particular deliverance from one sin only, is mere lost labour. If
it could be attained it would be little worth; for another would arise in its place: but indeed it
cannot before there is a general deliverance from the guilt and power of all sin. This is the thing
which you want, and which you should be continually seeking for. You want to be justified freely
from all things, through the redemption which is in Jesus. It might be of use if you were to read
over the first volume of Sermons, seriously and with prayer. Indeed nothing will avail without
prayer. Pray, whether you can or not; when you are cheerful, when you are heavy, pray: with many
or few words, or none at all; you will surely find an answer of peace. And why not now? I am,
&c., J. W.

This letter proved a blessing unto me indeed. I now gave myself to God, and resolved to
seek the general deliverance that I wanted...

On the third of May [apparently 1764] ... I continued all the night, groaning to be delivered
... In the morning ... I got upon my knees again, and began crying to God for mercy. I had such a
sense of the wrath of God due to my sins, that I expected the pit to open its mouth and swallow me

up quick. -- While I was praying, suddenly I was wrapped up in the visions of the Almighty. I saw the holy God with vengeance in his countenance, and thunder in his hand ... At the same time I saw the great Priest of God standing in his seamless garment, interceding for me. For some time the Almighty seemed inexorable. At last he looked with a placid smile upon his Son, and then upon the malefactor, and it seemed as though he had said, --

My Son is in my servant's prayer,
And Jesus forces me to spare.

My burden was gone, and my soul became calm and serene, and I had laid me down in peace and took my rest...In March [1765] I received the abiding witness of the Spirit, [to his salvation] and was truly happy. In a deluge of delight I gratefully acknowledged the goodness of my God. But this only prepared me for deeper discoveries of my evil nature, and sore conflicts...

Jan. 1, 1766. This day I wrote down my state as follows:-- "I find an abiding sense of God's love to me for Christ's sake, and believe every moment that all my sins are blotted out. I still feel pride, a desire of creature love and esteem, and much wandering of heart: all which I earnestly desire to be saved from. My constant prayer and earnest expectation is to be perfected in love. I believe that the Lord will make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. I believe that I shall soon love the Lord with all my soul. I expect the blessing every time I bow my knee to God...O God, do thou cleanse me from all my idols. Let there be no strange God in me. Save me from pride and a filthy, unbelieving heart...

About this time I fell into the hands of those croakers who say, "Believe God has done it, and it is done." My poor distempered soul drank in this poison, and directly, when I went upon my knees I told God I believed he had done the work, and thanked him for it. But soon after, finding it otherwise...Providence threw my respected friend, Mr. Robert Windsor, into my way, who, by the grace of God, delivered me from this snare of the fowler...

[August 29, 1766] Glory be to God my Saviour, in whom I now truly believe and rejoice. This being my intercession day, at twelve o'clock I kneeled down before the Lord. No sooner was I upon my knees than I felt a strange alteration take place in my heart, as in a moment, and after a blissful pause, I cried out, for near five minutes, "Glory be to God! glory be to God!"

Then I said, Lord thou has delivered me from all sin: thou hast not failed of all that thou hast promised. Glory be to thee, thou hast given me my desire over my enemies. I am sure thou hast destroyed sin; I am sure thou hast!

After praising my God, for some time, I requested a text of Scripture by way of confirmation. I opened the Bible, and fixed my finger upon these words: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v, 21...I then began to bless God for Mr. Wesley, who preached to us the whole gospel...

[It would appear from his subsequent testimony that while John Valton had little use for those who emphasized faith as a means of obtaining the second blessing, he may have failed to

recognize that faith is of the utmost importance, not only in obtaining a pure heart, but also in retaining Christ's sanctifying grace. Note the following testimony, which begins shortly after his entire sanctification on about September 3, 1766.]

...But directly after I was attacked again, and God then directed me to these words, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established," Isa. vii, 29. I stood reprov'd, and was enabled to hold fast my faith, in spite of many temptations...

January 1, 1767, I wrote as follows. I have no doubt but that the Lord did deliver me from all sin, but whether it is so now I cannot tell...

On the 1st of Jan., 1773, I wrote as follows:-- "As to my soul, I now enjoy a measure of the fruits of the Spirit. I love the Lord my God above all things here below; but still I have reason to complain as I do not now enjoy that love that casteth out fear...I remember some time ago, through very perplexing trials and temptations, I was led publicly to declare that I had lost the pure love of God. Scarcely had I yielded to this, but I became too late sensible that my unbelief, at this juncture, had effected what I before only supposed had been done. The Lord has chastened my yielding to unbelief: for I have never since had a clear testimony that I was saved from sin. However, I have enjoyed almost a continual calm, and daily feel a longing for home...

Jesus is my daily theme: my all in all for ever and ever! With pleasure and confidence I still declare to all the world, --

Ye all may know that God is true,
Ye all may feel that God is love.

In this spirit I hope to remain till the mercy of God and the sole merits of my adorable Redeemer, shall introduce my blushing spirit into the society of angels and saints, to swell the sound of Jesus' fame, and praise my god for ever and ever. I am, Rev. sir, your most affectionate son in the Gospel.

J. V.

Source: "The EXPERIENCE of several eminent Methodist Preachers with an account of their Call to and Success in the Ministry in a series of letters written by themselves to the Rev. John Wesley" J. Collard, Printer, New York 1837

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THE END