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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

O. DEAN WATSON
(Wesleyan)

[At the time this testimony was written, O. Dean Watson was superintendent of the Dakota District of The Wesleyan Church.]

What a thrill to be born again! My many sins at last forgiven and taken away! The sense of Jesus really being my Saviour filled me with delight. I was called to the ministry by the light of God in my basement room, with the words of Scripture "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," written everywhere on every wall. My submissive heart was rewarded with strength to follow that call.

The days of college and Bible school were days of struggle -- personal struggle. I would consecrate myself to God, but pride and self and human goals seemed nearly always to win and my spirit was left torn and bleeding. On two occasions at least, I testified to being entirely sanctified; but alas, doubt ruled before the witness came. I knew without a doubt when I was born again and I thought surely I would also know when the work of entire sanctification was completed.

I graduated and took my first appointment -- to pioneer a church. What a challenge! I worked night and day, supporting my family and building up the congregation of people. I wanted to make good, I wanted to succeed, I wanted to build a big congregation, I wanted to be widely known and travel.

My self-life was driving me on but my soul was crying out, thirsting for peace, relief, reality, to be cleansed, to be really sanctified. I searched the Scriptures with an aching heart and a baffled mind. I read every book I could get my hands on pertaining to sanctification, perfect love, being filled with the Spirit, holiness, etc.

We were in special meetings at the church. I stayed in my study late one night. I had to settle it one way or another. I couldn't go on as I was. I was alone with my God. I lay on the floor and wept. I told Him how proud I was, how selfish, how headstrong, that I was a poor father and

husband, that I was a failure as a pastor, full of self-esteem. How I needed to have relief from my self-life.

This and much more I poured out to Him. As I concluded this time of exposing my innermost being, I felt an emptiness, a vacuum inside. It was as though I was completely empty. I said, "Lord, I have done all I know to do; I am completely Yours, I'm on Your hands--an empty vessel!"

I went home and went to bed and slept like a baby.

The next night at the special services at the church the evangelist spoke, gave an invitation, and several responded. I went up to pray with the seekers. I knelt on the platform in front of the seekers and had just begun to pray when all of a sudden, like a bolt of lightning, the glory and fire from heaven filled my soul. The empty vessel had been filled. I wept, I leaped, I shouted, I walked, I laughed, I praised God for two and one-half hours, with people all over the church being saved, sanctified, and blessed.

My wife said I was a new person to live with. She could hardly believe the change. There was power and unction to preach and testify. People began to seek God. Several were led into the experience of entire sanctification. The church began to grow spiritually and numerically.

Doors opened to hold services in other churches in the conference, with emphasis on youth since I was conference youth president. Many were saved and sanctified. My whole life was changed. I had a great appetite for the Word of God. I loved to get alone and pray and to pray with other people as well. There was a love for God's people and for the sinner that I had never known before. I could really see heaven and hell for the first time.

From that day to this I have never lost that "presence" (Holy Spirit) from my "emptied heart." I have had many refreshings from the presence of the Lord in my soul. The problems and burdens of pastoral labors, evangelistic meetings with nights of prayer and the laying down of the life in soul travail, the work as district superintendent with the care of all the churches has not diminished the fire that came to burn away all of the dross. The face of Jesus is clearer, the assurance of victory to the end of life is brighter, heaven looms up as a shaft of gold, and the teeming throngs of people are seen as sheaves to gather and lay at the Master's feet.

If this is entire sanctification, and I believe it is, then let it be heard. Let it walk the streets with the common man. Let it go into the shops and stores. Let it journey to houses of government. Let it walk behind doors of iron and brass. Let it leap into cathedrals and thatch-roofed, mud churches. Let it take the feet and lips of youth for swiftness. Let it take the scars and the wisdom of the snowy, white heads and blend into a voice united with youth and strong as a bugle. Let's sound out the words that shall one day be upon the horses' bridles, "Holiness unto the Lord; Holiness in our hearts now and forever." Let it be so, O Lord!

Source: "And They Shall Prophesy"
Compiled by George E. Failing

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THE END