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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**RICHARD WHATCOAT \*2 Items**  
**1736 -- 1806**  
**(A Methodist Bishop in America)**

\*Item 1

I was born in the year 1736, in the parish of Quinton, in the county of Gloucester. My father dying while I was young left a widow and five children. At thirteen years old I was bound apprentice and served for eight years. I was never heard, during this time, to swear a vain oath, nor was ever given to lying, gaming, drunkenness, or any other presumptuous sin, but was commended for my honesty and sobriety. And from my childhood I had, at times, serious thoughts on death and eternity.

I served the greatest part of my apprenticeship at Darlaston, in Staffordshire; but at the age of twenty-one I removed from thence to Wednesbury. Here I found myself in continual danger of losing the little religion I had, as the family in which I lived had no religion at all. Therefore I took the first opportunity that offered of removing to another place, and a kind Providence directed me to a family that feared God and wrought righteousness.

I soon went with them to hear the Methodists, which I did with deep attention; and when the preacher was describing the fall of man I thought he spoke to me in particular, and spoke as if he had known everything that ever was in my heart. When he described the nature and fruit of faith I was conscious I had it not; and though I believed all the Scripture to be of God, yet I had not the marks of a Christian believer. And I was convinced that if I died in the state wherein I was I should be miserable for ever. Yet I could not conceive how I that had lived so sober a life could be the chief of sinners. But this was not long; for I no sooner discovered the spirituality of the law, and the enmity that was in my heart against God, than I could heartily agree to it.

The thoughts of death and judgment now struck me with terrible fear. I had a keen apprehension of the wrath of God, and of the fiery indignation due to sinners; so that I could have wished myself to be annihilated, or to be the vilest creature, if I could but escape judgment. In this

state I was when one told me, 'I know God for Christ's sake has forgiven all my sins, and His Spirit witnesseth with my spirit that I am a child of God.' This gave me a good deal of encouragement. And I determined never to rest until I had a testimony in myself, that my sins also were forgiven. But in the meantime, such was the darkness I was in, such my consciousness of guilt, and the just displeasure of Almighty God, that I could find no rest day or night, either for soul or body. So that life was a burden, and I became regardless of all things under the sun. Now all my virtues, which I had some reliance on once, appeared as filthy rags, and many discouraging thoughts were put into my mind; as, 'Many are called, but few chosen'; 'Hath not the potter power over his own clay, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?' From which it was suggested to me that I was made to dishonour, and so must inevitably perish.

On September 3, 1758, being overwhelmed with guilt and fear, as I was reading it was as if one whispered to me, "Thou hadst better read no more; for the more thou readest, the more thou wilt know. "And he that knoweth his Lord's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." I paused a little, and then resolved, "Let the consequence be what it may, I will proceed." When I came to those words, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," as I fixed my eyes upon them, in a moment my darkness was removed, and the Spirit did bear witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. In the same instant I was filled with unspeakable peace and joy in believing, and all fear of death, judgment, and hell suddenly vanished away. Before this, I was kept awake by anguish and fear, so that I could not get an hour's sound sleep in a night. Now I wanted not sleep, being abundantly refreshed by contemplating the rich display of God's mercy in adopting so unworthy a creature as I was to be an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

This joy and peace continued about three weeks; after which it was suggested to me, "Hast not thou deceived thyself? Is it not presumption to think thou art a child of God? But if thou art, thou wilt soon fall away; thou wilt not endure to the end." This threw me into great heaviness, but it did not continue long. For as I gave myself unto prayer, and to reading and hearing the Word of God at all opportunities, my evidence became clearer and clearer, my faith and love stronger and stronger. And I found the accomplishment of that promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

Yet I soon found that though I was justified freely, yet I was not wholly sanctified. This brought me into a deep concern, and confirmed my resolution to admit of no peace, no, nor truce, with the evil which I still found in my heart. I was sensible both that they hindered me at present in all my holy exercises, and that I could not enter into the joy of my Lord unless they were all rooted out. These considerations led me to consider more attentively the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we may escape all the corruption that is in the world, and be made partakers of the divine nature. I was much confirmed in my hope of their accomplishment by frequently hearing Mr. Mather speak upon the subject. I saw it was the mere gift of God, and, consequently, to be received by faith. And after many sharp and painful conflicts and many gracious visitations, on March 28, 1761, my spirit was drawn out and engaged in wrestling with God for about two hours in a manner I never did before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love. I was all love, and prayer, and praise...

[Farther account of Mr. Whatcoat, taken from the minutes of the Methodist Conference, held in the United States of America, in the year 1807.]

In the year 1784, Mr. Whatcoat came to the United States of America, and served the Methodist connection in various important stations, in cities, towns, circuits, and districts, with the pious fidelity of an apostolic man of God. Upward of Six years in the latter part of his life he served in the superintendency [as Bishop] of the Church, till past the 70th year of his age. We will not use many words to describe this almost inimitable man; so deeply serious: who ever saw him trifling or light? who ever heard him speak evil of any person? nay, who ever heard him speak an idle word? dead to envy, pride, and praise.

Sober without sadness; cheerful without levity; careful without covetousness, and decent without pride. He died not possessed of property sufficient to have paid the expenses of his sickness and funeral, if a charge had been made: so dead was he to the world! Although he was not a man of deep erudition, yet probably he had as much learning as some of the apostles and primitive bishops, and doubtless sufficient for the word of the ministry. He was deeply read in the work of God: his knowledge in the Scriptures was so great, that one of his friends used to call him his concordance. He gave himself greatly to reading. Notwithstanding he was called to the office of an overseer at an advanced period of life, he magnified his office by travelling annually three or four thousand miles through all the United States.

A complication of painful and irresistible diseases, produced and aggravated by excessive travelling, closed the scene. He was a prodigy of pain and patience for thirteen weeks. He departed this life in the full assurance of faith, July 5, 1806, in the house of Richard Bassett, Esq., in Dover, Delaware...

He professed the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, and all that knew him well might say, if a man upon earth possessed these blessings, surely it was Richard Whatcoat.

March 30, 1807, at the place of his tomb, (Wesley chapel, in Dover,) Bishop Asbury made some funeral observations upon the death of Richard Whatcoat, his faithful colleague, from 2 Tim. iii, 10: "But thou has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long suffering, charity, patience." "That he had known Richard Whatcoat from his own age of fourteen to sixty two years, most intimately, and had tried him most accurately, in the soundness of his faith, in the doctrine of universal depravity, and the complete and general atonement. The insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ. The doctrine of regeneration and sanctification; his holy manner of life, in duty, at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian and as a minister; his long suffering,--a man of great affliction of body and mind; having been exercised with severe diseases and great labours. But this did not abate his charity, his love of God and man in all its effects, tempers, words, and actions; bearing with resignation and patience great temptations, bodily labour and inexpressible pain. In life and death, placid and calm. As he lived so he died."

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

\*Item 2

Bishop Whatcoat, in describing his experience long after his regeneration, says:-- "My soul was drawn out and engaged in a manner it never was before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love." What is this but a profession of perfect love?

Source: Maturity and Purity by J. A. Wood

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THE END