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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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(Presbyterian)

I am constrained by the love of Christ and for the commendation of his rich grace, to give my humble testimony to the wondrous power and fullness of his free salvation.

Baptized and educated in the Associate Reformed Church, I was early and diligently instructed not only in the words, but also in the great truths of the Shorter Catechism. By my faithful pastor, and especially by my most affectionate godly mother, and a Christian father, I was often led in private, as well as in the family, to the throne of grace, and as most earnestly and tenderly reminded that the vows of God were upon me -- that I could not, must not cast them off.

When about thirteen years of age I accepted with awe and trembling the sacred TOKEN which was to admit me to a seat at the table of the Lord. Since that solemn, never-to-be-forgotten hour amid multiplied and grievous backslidings and repentings, I have been seeing and often struggling, honestly, I trust, but most unsuccessfully, after a higher, better life. The record of these experience, though sometimes joyful, I have occasionally reviewed with such pungent grief and shame, that I have been tempted to destroy at once a history of my inward life, so full of misery and guilt, of recollection the most strong and earnest, made only to be violated or forgotten. While I cannot forget these painful wanderings and inconsistencies, I delight rather to make mention of the loving-kindness of a covenant God, which has followed me during all the vicissitudes of the past, and brought me into my present blessed experience of liberty and peace.

When a youth of but fifteen, I was providentially led, and generously received into the family of that godly man, the late Divie Bethune. By his heavenly conversation and fervent prayers, and the judicious counsels of his excellent wife, my languid soul was often quickened, and by the blessing of God upon these and other pious influence, my feet effectually preserved from falling into the follies and vices so prevalent around me. In that truly Christian family as not unfrequently favored with the society of eminent, intelligent Christians, invited to share its hospitalities. Among these I shall never forget the Rev. Dr. Ward, that devoted missionary to India, whose earnest prayers and spiritual converse greatly aroused and profited me; nor the resistless power of a

timely and gentle rebuke from the lips of that faithful man, afterward the Rev. Dr. Cutler, of Brooklyn, who, on one occasion, solemnly and tenderly addressed me in these words: "William! I fear your heart has become TOO COLD." I went to my room in anguish of mind, entreating pardon and grace from God, and forgiveness from my friend and room-mate, because in the too eager pursuit of mere human learning, and of college honors, I had so failed to commend to his heart and conscience the power and truth of the precious Gospel.

While a member of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, I often urged and attracted by the thrilling appeal of that earnest and Holy man, Dr. Archibald Alexander, and by the conversation and prayers of James Brainerd Taylor, whose every countenance seemed to shine by reason of the joy and fervor of his soul. Since then, I have been privileged to mingle in precious converse and sympathy with many whom I have loved and honored, and almost envied, as consistent witnesses of the doctrine of a full, and present salvation. My heart has often been greatly rejoiced and strengthened by the perusal of various admirable books and publications on the same subject, and by labors in revivals of religion, with which God has occasion-all blessed the churches under my care.

Last spring, my attention was directed to a most convincing article in the April number of your magazine the reply of a minister to his Presbytery--urging so powerfully, and with so much of Scriptural argument, the present privilege and duty of entire sanctification, that I was left utterly without excuse. In accordance with an earnest and long-cherished desire, I was permitted in May last to attend, with a beloved son, who was in a similar state of mind, one of your blessed Tuesday afternoon meetings. Of the fervent prayers, the experience and exhortations to which I there listened, and of the earnest spiritual suggestions and counsels afterward received from Mrs. Lanford, I shall ever cherish a most lively and grateful remembrance. I seemed to be brought to the very gate of the heavenly kingdom. But, alas! perhaps from fear of reproach, or from want of entire consecration to my blessed Master, I did not enter.

On my return to my Western home, I enjoyed the privilege of spending a Sabbath at Oberlin, and of listening to the preaching of one who accomplished and endured so much as a witness and expounder of the precious Scripture doctrine of entire sanctification. Unexpectedly invited and urged to be a guest in the happy family of President Finney, I was blessed even beyond my largest expectations, in the very free spiritual intercourse enjoyed with himself and his gifted and godly wife, now rejoicing in the presence of that Redeemer whom she so eminently led and served. When I left that mansion of peace and love, I thought my mind and my heart were fixed on God wholly and forever; but I did not trust fully and solely in the promised present power and grace of Jesus Christ. I dared not profess that the full salvation which I had so long believed and so earnestly desired was truly mine.

Early in September last, I went with my wife, who had fully sympathized with me in aspirations and efforts for entire sanctification, to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, to avail ourselves of the counsel and aid of brethren, who both enjoyed and professed this great blessing. Spending a Sabbath there, I heard a precious discourse in the morning from a Baptist Brother, on the words, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light;" clearly illustrating and strongly urging, the unreserved abandonment of self, the world and sin, and entire consecration and obedience to God. The afternoon we spent most delightfully and profitably in conference and

prayer with Bishop Hamline and lady, and other Christian friends, and enjoyed the blessedness of commemorating with them the dying love of our common Lord. My desires and purposes in reference to the experience of entire holiness were greatly strengthened. But I seemed still to hear and to utter the cry, "Lo! here is Christ or lo! there," or to say anxiously, yet excusingly, who shall ascend up to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep?" etc. I did not attend to that blessed Voice which saith: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." If thou shalt CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I was doubtless still inclined to go "about to establish my own righteousness," and therefore did "not submit myself to the righteousness of God" -- to God's simple and effectual method of sanctification, as truly as of justification, only by faith in Jesus.

Two weeks since, I was suddenly assaulted by the temptations of Satan in a very unusual manner. For days I was fearfully tormented with evil thought and imagination, which seemed to be cast like fiery darts into the very depths of my soul. I read the blessed Book of God, I prayed and agonized; but to little purpose. Early one morning, in my daily reading of the New Testament, my eye and my heart were happily fastened upon the simple story of the leper, vile and unclean, who came and worshipped Christ, saying: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Matt viii.: 2, 3. These words seemed to be at once revealed and applied by the blessed Spirit as the full and fervent utterance of my whole soul. Then I read the wondrous manifestation of the grace and power of Christ, "And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be thou clean,'" my heart was touched as by that hand of power and love. Filled with gushing, overwhelming tenderness and gratitude, I rejoiced in the blessed assurance that the experience of the poor polluted leper was mine: "And IMMEDIATELY his leprosy was cleansed."

On the last Sabbath -- our day of communion -- I was constrained, in an exhortation to my people at the close of the services, to refer, though with some, I fear, too much hesitation, to my own experience of the rich grace and power of Jesus. I could not refuse to testify to them that I beheld and recognized the mighty arm of my Redeemer extended to me from heaven; I heard His voice of love saying "I will help thee, yea, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee, by the right hand of my righteousness." I have, since then, joyfully embraced proper occasions to confess to my brethren in the ministry, and other, the full power and grace of Jesus Christ to redeem from all iniquity -- to deliver and keep me from this present evil world. With a humble thankful heart, I acknowledge that Christ is made of God unto me, in my own daily cheerful experience, "sanctification and redemption," truly as he is my wisdom and righteousness." I well know that, like Peter, I may often, and, perhaps suddenly, be surrounded with boisterous winds and dark waters; but, I believe, that He who so kindly and so promptly stretched forth His hand, and caught His fearful disciple, is ever able and willing to hold me up, to keep me from falling, and to present me, weak and guilty as I am, faultless before His throne.

In my boyhood I took the Lord Jesus Christ to be my Prophet to instruct me, and my Priest to make atonement for my sins; but in the blessed hour of my late deliverance, I joyfully accepted Him as my King, to execute in me this blessed voice, "in subduing me to Himself, in ruling and defending me, and in restraining, and conquering all His and my enemies."

Many years since I prepared a sermon on those precious, yet solemn words, Gal. ii. 20, "I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live," etc. But the discourse so utterly rebuked and condemned me, presenting, an experience so far in advance of my own, that I laid it aside. I dared not preach it. With a humble, watchful, thankful heart, I propose, by the grace of God, to preach this as my next discourse to my people, and to strive by the aid of the blessed Spirit to quicken and elevate them to the attainment of this, the appropriate experience of all who are fully Christ's.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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