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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**JERRY MILES HUMPHREY (Free Methodist)**

A Fragment Of Experience

In eighteen hundred seventy-two,  
In June, when all the buds were new;  
When shrubs and trees were draped in green  
And tinted with a golden sheen;  
When fields were filled with nectar sweet;  
When bees did rove in bliss complete,  
And Zephyr's viewless, fragrant hand  
Brought many a sweet from sea and land;  
One Sabbath morning, just at dawn,  
Ere all the gloom of night had gone,  
From cabin-hut with rooms but two,  
Beneath a willow wet with dew,  
Came words of gladness on the air  
From earnest hearts assembled there.  
A new man-child in time had 'woke!  
Such rapture all the silence broke!  
They gathered 'round the red-clay hearth  
To greet the babe of lowly birth:  
The sun arose with glory bright  
And looked that way with great delight;  
The morning larks sang in the tree,  
While all the neighbors came to see.

It is somewhat contrary to the custom of the writer to say anything of himself; however, at this time, I feel impressed by the Spirit to give the reader a fragment of my experience, with the sincere hope that God may in some way make it a blessing.

I will begin by saying, as far as memory serves me, I was under conviction every moment of my life since I was seven years of age. It is true, I was a very wicked lad up until the time of my conversion; notwithstanding that fact, I was under conviction all the time and everywhere I went. Frequently, while in the ballrooms and gambling-dens, the spirit of prayer would come upon me and I could not take part in what was going on, but cried to God in secret to forgive my sins. Everything in nature seemed daily to remind me of God, eternity, heaven and hell. The golden sun, the silver moon and all the twinkling stars seemed to have a resistless message for me; also the musing winds, the murmuring streams, the singing birds, the evergreen trees and the solitary graveyards.

Often when I wanted to do some mischievous act, I had to perform it quickly in order to get ahead of the monitor within. Strange as it may appear, I prayed nearly all the time, and the thought of God and eternity stood before me night and day. I attended almost every revival that was within my reach and frequently went to the altar as a seeker, but failed to get through for the following reasons: First. I did not utterly renounce sin and the world. Second. The altar workers did not know how to instruct a seeking soul. Almost as soon as I reached the altar, they began telling me first one thing and then another. One said, "Give up," but did not tell me what to give up. Another said, "Believe," but did not tell me how or what to believe. Finally, one night in a popular church in the city of Chicago, after going to the altar for a whole week, I was persuaded by a company of superficial professors of religion to believe I was saved, without ever feeling the burden of sin roll away, without realizing any change of heart or obtaining any witness whatever. They clapped their hands and sang such songs as, "I can, and I will, and I do believe," "He takes me as I am," and "Jesus paid it all," but no fire fell.

My heart was as dark and cold as it was before I ever prayed a single prayer. However, I accepted this for religion and tried to make my heart believe it was; but in spite of all my plausible arguments, my heart looked up into my face and said, "This is not the old-time, heartfelt religion that your father enjoyed and told about." Regardless of its strong protest, I joined the church, was baptized and became a zealous church worker. I attended all of the services, paid my dues, prayed, testified, visited the sick, gave to the poor and was also an assistant classleader, but my soul (from a spiritual standpoint) was dead as a stone. When I saw the older Christians shouting, weeping and praising God, my heart would again say to me, "I told you that you did not have the old-time religion that makes soul and body happy." And so it was, for, notwithstanding the other people's shouting and rejoicing, I did not feel any more of what they felt and enjoyed than a man who had died a hundred years before.

However, by and by, I was fully convinced of the fact that I was not saved, but was simply an empty, dry professor of religion. This caused me to earnestly seek the Lord, day and night. One evening, while in a mission, lifting my voice to God in earnest prayer, the windows of heaven flew open and a landslide of glory dropped into my soul. I was so filled and so thrilled with glory that as I went home I seemed to walk six feet above the ground. A few days later I received such an overwhelming blessing that the room seemed to be on fire. Then the superficial, religious teachers told me that the blessing which I had received was sanctification, so they persuaded me to attend a shallow holiness meeting where I claimed and testified to holiness. Thus I became one of their prominent workers.

About this time it pleased God to put into my hands a copy of "Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection," and also some other books that treated on genuine spiritual holiness. I was also invited by a friend to a little meeting where the people had the genuine article, and while attending this meeting, the light shone upon my heart why I needed holiness. If the people had told me that I needed holiness to make me happy and give me joy, I would have told them that I already had it, for I had all the joy I could handle and was as happy as a man could be and yet live. I got blessed in every kind of meeting I attended, even in official meetings. But I noticed when these people testified they spoke of how God had taken the uprisings of anger, jealousy, impatience, prejudice, pride, etc., out of their hearts, and no matter how things went or how their wills were crossed, they never felt the least stir.

I had joy but I could not say that, for quite frequently, when spoken to sharply by my employer, I would feel something kink up in my soul that made me feel like talking back; also when some brother would be too sociable with wife, there was something in my soul that did not feel normal but felt tremendously strange. And, whenever I gave a good testimony, prayed a good prayer or gave a good exhortation, I felt something in me that wanted to ask some one if I did well or how it sounded. I was quite anxious to have some one speak about it.

These traits and many others convinced me of the fact that I still had in me the "old man" and was not sanctified; so I began seeking, by earnest prayer, fasting, self-abnegation and faith, for about ten days, when suddenly, one beautiful April day (just seven months from the day of my conversion), a mighty power came upon me from heaven and swept the "old man," root and branch, out of my soul and filled me with the Holy Ghost.

From that time I resolved, by the grace of God, to be wholly devoted to Him, soul, body and spirit, and walk in the clearest light.

This experience of being cleansed and filled with divine light and glory revealed to me my own nothingness and shallowness, until finally a mighty spirit of prayer came upon me in which I prayed for six months, "Take me down deeper that I may magnify thy grace." During this time I ate nothing except bread and water, and lay prostrate before God in prayer for three months, without going to bed a single time. The blessed Spirit seemed to hold me under such strict discipline and gave me such union with heaven that I found it difficult to live in the world.

It is true, I have made many a blunder and grievous mistake, for all of which I humbly ask the human family to forgive me, but at all times my intentions and purposes were to please God in the highest sense and walk in the narrowest of the narrow way that leads to the gates of pearl.

Source: "Fragments From The King's Table" by Jerry Miles Humphrey

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THE END