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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

EMMA DURHAM GODBEY
Wife of W. B. Godbey

Eight years after we entered into wedlock the Lord gloriously baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire; burning up the Free Mason, the Odd Fellow, the College President, the Southern Methodist preacher, the candidate for the episcopacy, making me a cyclone of fire, so I had a sweeping, knockdown revival everywhere I went; thus giving me the experience fifteen years before the Holiness Movement reached Dixie Land, the people with remarkable unanimity pronouncing me crazy; so forty-four years ago they actually gave me a free ride from Florence to Covington, Ky., turning me over to the presiding elder as a crazy man, absolutely unmanageable and incorrigible. Meanwhile the brethren of my Conference, with flowing tears were confessing my insanity, at the same time observing, "He is innocent as an angel and will not do you any harm; whereas if you want a glorious revival, here is your best chance." Consequently I had more calls than I knew what to do with and they have continued to the present day; so now at the age of eighty-two after preaching for sixty-two years I have calls enough for many men, God having laid all the Holiness people on my heart, and Bishop McTyeire, in 1884, while presiding over my Conference, having given me the entire Southern Methodist connection for my field of labor, and appointed me for life; giving me a letter of introduction to all the bishops and presiding elders recommending me to the evangelistic work as we at that time had no such an appointment in our curriculum, North, South, East, or West; thus, per se making me an evangelist for life and giving me the world for my field of labor.

When I received the experience I thought I could surely lead my dear wife out of the wilderness into Canaan, without hesitation. But I found her Anglican heredity, stirring up John Bull. Consequently I simply had to wait on the Lord till His good time would bring her over the swelling flood.

Even in her justified state, the Lord astonished us all by using her faith and instrumentality in my physical healing. On my own circuit, while pushing a revival in a brush-arbor, as they had not learned to use the canvas tents at the time, heavy rains falling, I contracted a cold and got sick

so I actually fell while preaching and was carried away by the terrified people who thought I was dying;

Then returning home ten miles on account of my illness, my wife, upon my arrival was so alarmed, she sent for her physician: who likewise became so alarmed on examining me that he sent for an older physician than himself, the two assisted by my members, all of whom, as fast as they heard it, poured in to see me. They all labored for six hours with all their might, in their efforts to break the congestion by interial stimulants and external frictions; when our family physician came to me and said, "I feel it my duty to tell you you are liable to die any moment and cannot live more than two hours. Your ailment is congestion of the lungs, all the blood in your system having flooded there so you are only breathing in your bronchial and larger air tubes, for your lungs are congested and collapsed, and as it has been on you six hours and medical history gives no account of a survival beyond the eighth hour; therefore while you are liable to go at any moment, you are certain to die in two hours."

Consequently they desisted from all treatment. and I trow would have gone away had it not been for the surprise run on them by my wife who at once succeeded them, taking command of the situation, observing, "Brothers and sisters, these doctors have given up my husband to die, but I am not ready for him to go as I need him and I do not believe the Lord is ready as I feel assured that He needs him and is abundantly able to heal him of this formidable congestion of the lungs which has proved incorrigible by the doctors. Therefore all gather around his bed and join in prayer with me to God that He may touch his body and raise him up to preach the Gospel as in bygone days." As there was no light on Divine healing at that time, I myself having received but a glimmer when the Lord sanctified me and I was alone in the experience. Such was the curiosity superinduced in the doctors by the unheard of procedure of my wife, that they both stayed to see the end, i. e., till the flight of the two hours, when they said, "There will be a corpse."

Meanwhile I was so happy, actually enjoying a vision of Heaven, shining in panorama before me; though still in the body to which I was attached by the thread of life which appeared to me like a string, holding me to the body while I was high up in the lofty firmament looking into Heaven and expecting every moment to sweep in.

The clock on the mantel tolled the two hours. They fled so quickly that it seemed to me no more than ten minutes when the healing came suddenly. The congestion breaking, my lungs were relieved, the circulation was restored, pulsation returned after an absence of eight hours; the blood flowing in through the arteries and back through my veins, as impressively as if water had been poured on the exterior of my body.

Then I said to our family physician, "Doctor, I am healed." All this time he had been standing looking on me intently, awaiting the fulfilment of his prediction that I would die in two hours if not sooner. He reached me in a single leap, apparently like a squirrel: snatching up my body, examining my pulse and responding, "That is so, that is so, the congestion is broken, pulsation restored, regular and healthy, and you are a well man." He then fell prostrate on the floor and cried aloud, "Do not get off your knees, as you have prayed the Great Physician down from Heaven who has healed my patient after I gave him up to die! Therefore hold Him back till He saves my soul!" (He was a church member but if ever saved had let it slip.) Therefore the saints

had as great a time praying the Doctor through as had already transpired in the miraculous healing of the preacher.

So I was utterly unable to lead my Better Half into Beulah Land antecedently to the ingress of the Holiness Movement; meanwhile she would constantly say to me, "Mr. Godbey, you are a preacher and I cannot be your equal in religious experiences," thinking that sanctification was only for a saint in an age, and consequently all efforts on her part to seek it proved futile.

Having stood alone in Dixie Land, fifteen years, preaching entire sanctification, currently cognomened, "Crazy Godbey," thirty-two years ago I heard that there were some sanctified people in Cincinnati. Crossing the Ohio River, I hunted them up, taking them by the collar and constraining them to come over into Macedonia and help us. Thus we started the work in Kentucky; I, myself, preaching two months constantly in the Methodist churches of Cincinnati, south of the river, witnessing four hundred conversions and sanctifications. The movement having thus crossed over into Dixie Land; our noble sanctified Bishop, McTyeire of South Carolina, at that time presiding over our Conference, bade it welcome all the way to the ocean, possessing all the land from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico.

Therefore we proceeded at once to hold the first holiness campmeeting in dear old Kentucky at Maple Grove under the shadow of Cincinnati. I prevailed on my dear wife to attend the meeting. After the saints had prayed down from Heaven copious showers of celestial fire and the tide was running high, my Better Half arrived on the ground. When she saw the altar crowded with the old, young, great and small, heavenly inundations sweeping down in great landslides from the Glory World, meanwhile many were tiding over, she rushed to the altar, observing that she had been mistaken in her conclusion that it was only for preachers, as she saw the laity crowd the altars, pray through, rise with radiant faces and tell the thrilling story of full salvation.

We were all surprised with the expedition which crowned her humble efforts to get the Pearl of great Price; when to our astonishment she leaped to her feet with shouts of victory, adding her testimony to ours confirmatory to this great salvation.

I was much gratified during our long walk together, to see the victory ostensibly abide, without those fluctuations so incident to the rank and file cognomened "Holiness people." She never flickered in her testimony but was always ready to witness clearly to the experience.

When I asked for her, her father observed, "Brother Godbey you are the kind of man I want all my daughters to marry." While her mother widely differed from him, telling me that we were making a mistake in our projected marriage, as she was sickly and always had been and we had better reconsider the matter and cancel the engagement.

You know young lovers are blind to admonishings conflicting with their sanguine aspirations to enjoy the bliss anticipated by celibates. Therefore we heeded not the kind admonishings of a good mother who never did give her consent; but pursuant to that of her father we proceeded to verify our engagement. In our union of those fifty-five and a half years she had very little sickness, being always on foot and with indefatigable industry doing her domestic work. However her constitution proved utterly insufficient to travel with me which she attempted a

number of times when she had to go home. Therefore long ago she gave up itineracy altogether as her physical condition seemed unequal to it and actually demanded the environments of domestic life. If she had traveled with me she would have been dead long ago.

Antecedently to 1884 though constantly on the battlefield I was in a general sense at home; but when the Bishop put me in the evangelistic work and gave me the whole Methodist connection for my field of labor that meant good-bye to home folks. Consequently, thinking she would be happier among her old acquaintances, I went to her native land and settled her for life, so we never moved any more. I am happy to say, that she never murmured a word but joyfully acquiesced in her lot to serve the Lord in the home while I peregrinated the world.

She often said to me that she would be so glad if she could do something decisive for the Lord like her husband and I comforted her with the law of Moses which we read in the Bible, giving those who "stayed with the stuff" as large a share of spoils taken in the war as those who went into the battlefield. She took great comfort from it.

Source: "My Better Half," Chapter 2, by William Baxter Godbey

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THE END