

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1994 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

WILLIAM BAXTER GODBEY (*2 Items)
(Methodist)

*Item 1

I was born in 1833. My father, an old-style Methodist preacher, full of the old-time power, preached hell and damnation with such an awful force that he got the hell-scare on me in my infancy, amply fortifying me against all the allurements of those follies and vices so fatal to childhood and youth. Consequently the terrible Sinai gospel, preached by my father and his contemporaries, proved the vehicle of my successful transportation through the precarious period of minority uncontaminated by those seductive vices and follies which, as a rule, utterly capture and debauch the rising generation. Having become a good reader at the early age of six years, I would work hard all day and read till midnight. Having an exceedingly retentive memory, I would make up big speeches out of what I had read, and deliver them on Saturday night in the weekly meeting of a rural polemical club of which I became a member when a stripling weighing about sixty pounds. I started to school at the age of five and graduated at Georgetown College, Ky., when at twenty-six. My father, being unable to educate me beyond the common schools, my collegiate course cost me one thousand dollars, which the Lord by His wonderful Providence enabled me to pay by my own earnings aside from my current living. Though convicted and a chronic penitent from the cradle, I never reached a clear conversion till at the age of sixteen while attending a glorious Baptist revival, and receiving a thunderbolt conviction, which knocked me down, disqualifying me to eat or sleep, till eighteen hours of unutterable agony, accompanied by awful visions of hell and damnation, the devil standing by me, my preaching father and shouting mother and the good church members, retreating away and leaving me for the devil and hell; I saw for the first time the utter futility of my irreproachable moral character, church membership, godly home, and all other human agencies to deliver me from the awful vengeance of the violated law, meanwhile all my good works on which I had been banking turned to a huge pile of old filthy rags, smoking with hell-fire, demons adding the brimstone and flame to wrap me in the unquenchable conflagration of the bottomless pit. In my irretrievable dilemma, I unequivocally and eternally confessed judgment against myself, confessing the unimpeachable justice of my damnation, conceding the incontrovertible fact that with all my moral goodness, water baptism, church

membership, and irreproachable character, I was literally chuck full of sin, hypocrisy and meanness, and never had deserved anything but a place in hell. The grand salient point with me now supervened, when the light broke in, revealing the sinner's Friend and the sinner's Saviour, the light of His presence and the splendor of His glory filling and flooding my soul with raptures unutterable, the mountain of guilt having rolled away, the buoyancy of my spirit leaping and shouting for joy. This occurred forty-nine years ago. [in 1849] Its memory this day (November 23, 1898, as here in New York City, I dictate these pages) is brighter far than the events of yesterday.

"O hallowed spot, O sacred hour,
When love divine first found me!
Wherever falls my distant lot,
My soul shall linger round thee.

"And when I rise from this vile world,
Up to my home in heaven;
Down will I cast my eyes once more,
When I was first forgiven."

MY SANCTIFICATION

Like Saul of Tarsus, who, when powerfully converted at Damascus, went to preaching with great enthusiasm, till God convicted him so powerfully for a second work of grace, culminating in the revelation of His Son in him, that he fled away into Arabia, apparently giving up preaching for the time being, spending three years in fasting and prayer amid the wild beasts and savages of the howling wilderness, till God wonderfully sanctified him, revealing Jesus sitting on the throne of his heart; I immediately after my conversion became a very bright and efficient Christian worker, becoming a preacher in four years. Meanwhile my outward life being irreproachable, I realized a terrible inward conflict, not the predilections for the vulgar vices, of which I had never been a participant, but my inordinate ambition, vanity, pride and covetousness kept up an indomitable civil war in my heart, to me most real and the source of a thousand soul agonies and sad defeats in spiritual conflict, but to my brethren who fanned the carnal flame by their eulogies and encouragements evidently unseen.

Nineteen years had rolled away, when in addition to my ministerial work, I was promoted to the Presidency of the largest Methodist College in the State. I was a prominent Free Mason and Odd Fellow, blindly thinking that these worldly aggrandizements were auxiliaries to my usefulness. During those times the pulpit was silent on the great doctrine of entire sanctification by a second and distinct work of grace. However, guided by the Holy Scriptures and the Methodistic fathers, I was all these years an humble and earnest seeker after full redemption. Of course a single holiness camp meeting would have swept me into Beulah Land; but unfortunately it was not my privilege to enjoy any such facilities. Finally, during December, 1868, while conducting a glorious revival in which God was signally blessing my labors in the conversion of sinners, I apparently inadvertently, while in my blind way really seeking with all the power of soul, mind and body, with no living human help, blundered into the experience, receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, coming on me like a Niagara from the Heavenly ocean, and sweeping through me like a

fiery cyclone, in sin-consuming flames, burning up all the debris of the carnal mind, and abiding with me, turning the collegiate President into a flaming holiness evangelist, though I had never seen one nor heard a sermon on entire sanctification till I heard myself preach it after receiving the experience. This experience, which to me was not only an unutterable astonishment, but an inexplicable paradox, radically revolutionized my ministerial and Christian character, transforming me from the cultured preacher and collegiate president into a red-hot revivalist. I have a considerable graveyard in the Land of Moab. There I buried the collegiate president, the candidate for the episcopacy, the Free Mason, and the Odd Fellow. I was so expeditious about that time that I tarried not to rear a stone, carve a line, nor plant a tree to mark the final resting-place of my carnal brotherhood. Leaving them alone in their glory, I sped for the Jordan ford with race-horse velocity, crossed over, shouted down the walls of Jericho, defeated the giant killers on thirty-one battle fields, my Joshua ever and anon halting the sun in his course that I might consummate the victory. For some time I have been in the mining business, finding inexhaustible supplies of gold, silver, and diamonds in the great Palestinian ranges, running from Dan to Beersheba. From the hour when I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, wherever I preached, the Spirit fell on the people. I have frequently preached six times a day. As I am now somewhat in life's evening, the Lord is using me mainly as a teacher, writing the Gospel in the morning, reading from the inspired original and expounding in the afternoon, and preaching at night.

When I entered the experience in 1868, long before the holiness movement had reached Kentucky, I was currently believed to be crazy as all truly sanctified people at that day, when the experience was so little known. In 1871 I was actually hauled away by my church officers and delivered to my presiding elder as a "crazy man whom they could not manage." The reports of my craziness, oddities and eccentricities brought thousands of curiosity seekers to my meetings, crowding and packing every house and filling the premises. I made it a rule by the help of God to effect the coupling of curiosity and conviction, so that hundreds who came to mock stayed to pray.

During the period of my vigorous manhood, I witnessed much of the old-style, knock-down power, my revivals soon running into an unadjournable meeting, at the conclusion of every service so many people being prostrate and unable to stand on their feet or walk away, that the meeting was necessarily prolonged to the next hour, thus running night and day without adjournment. At the first session of my Conference after my sanctification, pursuant to the custom of the times I retired from the room on the calling of my name by the bishop, while my presiding elder gave a report of my work during the year; meanwhile from the lobby I heard him certify to the Conference that "a great and unaccountable change had come over Brother Godbey during the year, radically revolutionizing his entire ministerial character, even changing the intonation of his voice, his gesticulation, entire deportment and the character of his preaching, so that he would not be identified with his former self."

Source: "Pentecostal Messengers" by M. W. Knapp

*Item 2

Meanwhile the Lord turned on us a glorious revival, characterized by deep conviction and powerful conversions. However, there was nothing said about sanctification, as no one in

attendance (in 1868) had the experience or knew anything about it. We had some splendid local preachers, who were thought to be literally full of religion and overflowing, and it is certain that God signally blessed their labors, but they were utterly ignorant of sanctification. I had read about it in John Wesley's catechism when a little boy, and later in his other books, as, you know every young Methodist preacher is obliged to read them. I had found them full of Christian perfection, but being utterly ignorant of the matter experimentally, I contented myself with my own intellectual exegesis, arriving at the conclusion that uncle John's head was muddled on regeneration and sanctification, and that he actually mixed them up, using them interchangeably. However, I had been convicted for it all the nineteen years which had elapsed since my conversion, and incessantly seeking it in my blind way, like everybody else, I suppose, by works, thinking I would grow into it in due time.

At one of my churches I had met an old woman, utterly illiterate, who claimed the experience, and I believe had it. As she was incompetent to read the Bible, of course she could not expound it scripturally; yet the testimony of old Sister Baxter, whose house was the preacher's home when on duty in that neighborhood was so clear and her testimony so positive, corroborated by an unearthly radiance lingering in her face and flashing from her eyes, that it had an effect to convict me. Yet I soliloquized, "Here am I, a collegiate graduate, having read the Bible from my childhood, surely I ought to know more about it than this old sister who does not know her alphabet."

During the preceding collegiate vacation, I was travelling in the Louisville Conference and fell into a protracted meeting at Pleasant Run. There I found a glorious revival sweeping along; audience fine, altar well filled, and the meeting running all day, with basket dinner on the ground after the old style. The pastor put me up to preach. In those days I studied hard and made sermons, as I thought, adapted to all occasions. Therefore I selected a revival sermon, as I considered it, and delivered it to the best of my ability, feeling that I was really meeting all demands. I concluded with the usual invitation. The mourners were so convicted that they came as a matter of course till they got satisfied.

While the altar service was in progress and the saints were praying for the mourners and exhorting them, a very old woman, a mother in Israel, looking for the fiery chariot, got hold of the pastor's arm, pulled up and, as she was partially deaf, doubtless spoke louder than she thought, for I distinctly heard her sobbing utterances: "Oh, Brother Donaldson, please do not put up that little fop any more, lest you ruin our revival." It was to me a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky. I went away and fell on the ground and wept bitterly, meanwhile soliloquizing:

"O Lord, is it possible, after preaching fifteen years and toiling through college, that after all I am nothing but a 'little fop'! O Lord, for Jesus sake, have mercy on me and give me the needed light and help me to walk in the same." Though nothing was said in that meeting about sanctification, the verdict of the dear mother in Israel, who called me a "little fop," broke my heart and I never survived it. She was like the mother in Israel who threw the stone on the head of Abimelech, when besieging the city with his army, and slew that great military chieftain.

The Holy Spirit used those two mothers in Israel to culminate the conviction which had been lingering in my heart for nineteen years, while I had resorted not only to immersion, but to a

thousand other good works, only to be disappointed in my fond aspirations to satisfy my longing soul. Jesus was standing by me all the time offering me the panacea for all my woes, the elixir for all my griefs, His own precious blood shed on Calvary; but I thought I had to do something and did not realize that HE had done it all, and left me nothing to do but believe, shout and obey.

My revival was sweeping on; my local preachers, licensed exhorters, and bright members working heroically, none of them claiming anything but the regenerated experience and doubtless the most of them believing that is all. I preached on the rich man and Lazarus to a packed audience, with many who could not get into the house. When I opened the altar, it was crowded with seekers for conversion, as I invited no others, having never heard of sanctification, and never did till it reached myself.

After receiving the experience, the Lord wonderfully poured out His Spirit. I had spent hours that afternoon out in the woods crying to God to satisfy my longing soul and give me the full, glorious liberty for which I had been sighing those nineteen years, preaching fifteen of them, little dreaming that there was victory ahead, which would make preaching and everything else a delight instead of a duty. Strong was the cry of my heart for the great desideratum, which had been like the ignis fatuus flitting before my mental vision all those many years; but like the school boy who ran himself out of breath to find the pot of gold at the rainbow's end, I learned by sad experience the essential difference between pursuit and possession. Such was the longing of my soul as to almost render me oblivious to the dozens and scores who had crowded the altar responsive to my invitation. That was a night I never can forget. God, in His mercy, sent us a landslide from the upper world; a Mississippi River inundated us all, which rapidly broadened into a mighty sea and disembogued into an ocean without bank or bottom. I have been basking in that ocean ever since. Oh, the incommunicable sweetness of perfect love!

"Oh, for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
Their Saviour's praises speak."

"Angels, assist our might joys,
Strike all your harps of gold,
But when you reach your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told."

I cannot tell too much about the events of that memorable night. Quite a number of those who came to the altar shouted the victory. About eleven o'clock, I found my own soul flooded and filled beyond all anticipation. My good people, though exceedingly happy in their regenerated experience and heroically pressing the battle for God and souls, as they knew nothing about a higher experience, called everything conversion. Therefore they told me I had gotten conversion. I joyfully accepted the situation, and went on telling everybody I met that God had filled and flooded my soul, beyond all expectation, and I supposed that I had never before been converted all right, and now, in His condescending mercy, He had finished my conversion.

Falling in with a very able Methodist theologian, I told him about my wonderful experience, saying that I supposed it was just a completion of my conversion, which hitherto had only been in a progressive attitude. Then he freely took it on himself to correct me, saying: "Godbey, if you had not been converted, none of us have. So do not tell that any more. It is that old Methodist experience of sanctification! or Christian perfection, which, by the grace of God, you have entered." Though he believed in it as taught in our books, he did not enjoy the experience, yet the blessed Holy Spirit made him a great blessing to me in the way of Biblical exegesis, from an experimental standpoint. I also met another very old Methodist preacher, who assured me it was the great second work of grace, called Christian perfection or sanctification, which the Methodists sought and possessed when he was a boy.

Then I proceeded to read the books of Wesley and Fletcher on Christian perfection, as well as my Bible, with new light in a glorious sunburst bespangling the inspired pages. Whereas I had concluded that Wesley was muddled, actually mixing up the two works of grace and referring to them interchangeably, ever after the light fell on me on that memorable occasion, while reading the works of the Methodist fathers, I have seen regeneration and sanctification standing out as conspicuously distinct as the Alleghenies and the Rockies, with the great Mississippi valley rolling between.

Sanctification is a most notable epoch in my experience, marking a radical revolution in my life, and soon taking me out of the school where I had taught eighteen years, and where I thought I was for life. So did my friends, as the signal blessing of God was resting upon my labors and they felt they could not excuse me from the educational work. A notable phenomenon at once supervened in my ministry, and it was thus everywhere I preached; the Holy Ghost fell on the people and a revival broke out in my school. He fell on the students and just about all of them yielded and got converted. When I went to Conference and my name was called and, pursuant to the rules, I left the house, while my character underwent examination, from the lobby I heard the clear, strong voice of my presiding elder, as he told the Conference that a great change had come over me during the year and four hundred people had been converted under my ministry. That was strikingly phenomenal in that Conference, which Campbellism had flooded with an Arctic river for a whole generation and about frozen out all of the old Methodist fire that used to make sinners cry and Christians shout. They had so long preached against Holy Ghost religion ridiculing it unmercifully, denouncing and abusing the mourner's bench, that the Methodist preachers, rank and file, had given up the altar and contented themselves to take in members as seekers of salvation, baptizing them and, after the abolishment of a Probation in the Southern Methodist Church, which took place about that time, admitting them to bona fide membership, though unsaved, and even promoting them to offices. The result was that the Methodist Church was in an exceedingly low condition; clear and bright conversions, attested by the Holy Spirit and witnessed to in the love feasts, having almost evanesced and become simply a matter of bygone history.

As above specified, sanctification radically revolutionized my whole subsequent life. I had grand air-castles, building big boarding houses and contemplating more. When the fires of the Holy Ghost fell on me in sanctification they burned up all my air-castles, and I have never seen them since they went down into ashes.

I became a Free Mason at the age of twenty one. I would have joined sooner, but all have to reach majority before they will admit them into that order. I thought it was all right, because the prominent Methodist preachers, as well as those of other churches, were all in it. They had honored me with the chaplaincy, and I was a regular attendant of the lodge. I had also for similar reasons joined the Odd Fellows and was serving them in the chaplaincy. I also had my life insured, feeling no conscientious scruples about these things. Therefore, when the fires of the Holy Ghost fell on me, filling and flooding my soul and transforming me into a cyclone, those hallowed flames burned up the Free Mason, the Odd Fellow, the collegiate president, the big preacher, and life insurance; thus leaving me quite an ash-pile in that howling wilderness where I had roamed nineteen years, fifteen of which I was preaching the gospel.

When people have their friends and relatives cremated, they generally carefully urn the ashes and keep them. I was just in too big a hurry to cross the Jordan to urn the ashes of my old friends. Therefore, leaving them in the wilderness, I dashed away at race-horse speed, walked between the clefted waves of Jordan's swelling tide, and soon marched around the walls of Jericho and shouted till they fell. Then, responsive to the bugle call, I marched with Joshua's army into the great interior, stood on the battlefield of Bethhoron, where, responsive to the mandate of Joshua, the sun stood still over Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Aijalon, prolonging the day till he could end his battle in the signal defeat of all the southern armies and the decapitation of thirty-one kings. Then I followed him into the great north, with incessant battles and constant victories, till we confronted the combined power of the northern armies under command of the king of Hazor, on the battlefield of Merom. There they all went down in blood, giving Joshua the land, which he divided among the tribes assembled at Shiloh.

While Moses represented the law, and had to die in the wilderness, lest somebody conclude that sanctification is by good works, i. e. keeping the law, Aaron the high priest, had also to die in the wilderness, lest people should believe that they could be sanctified by baptism, sacrament and church rites. Miriam, the fire-baptized evangelist, must die in the wilderness, too, lest people should look to the sanctified preachers for the blessing. But Joshua is a Hebrew word which means Jesus, whom he gloriously symbolized. Therefore he alone could lead through the Jordan into the land flowing with milk and honey and abounding in corn and wine. N. B. All I have here imputed to Joshua simply means that Jesus does it.

Sanctification, by the grace of God, is infinitely more to me than I can possibly tell you. When I received the Holy Ghost, He gave me His wonderful freedom. 2 Cor. 5:17, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Sanctified people enjoy the very freedom of God Himself, who is free to do everything good and nothing bad. The sweetness and blessedness of this freedom is heaven on earth. Well do we sing, "Prisons would palaces prove, if Jesus would dwell with me there." I can neither by speech nor pen approximate the absolute, ineffable felicity of this freedom. It puts all transitory things into final and total eclipse.

Before I got sanctified I carried, oh, so many crushing burdens. Since that notable hour, I have been light as a bird of Paradise, not encumbered with a solitary burden. Not that I have none, for I have a lost world on my heart, with all the grand and absorbing interest of God's kingdom, but Jesus carries all of my burdens and me, too. He gives me sweet blessedness and perfect rest in His arms, and a glorious balloon ride, soaring above every cloud, through the bright impereon where is

the Sun of righteousness, who knows no eclipse; where no storm clouds ever rise to hide my Savior from my eyes.

I am so sorry for my dear brethren in the ministry, crushed with burdens and worn with toils till they are prematurely gray and go into superannuation at the very time they ought to be doing the best preaching of their lives. I just know not what to do for them. If they had any idea what Jesus has for them, they would cut off their right hands and pluck out right eyes, gladly and unhesitatingly, to get it.

The Lord, in His great mercy, gave me this experience in 1868, fifteen years before the Holiness Movement crossed the Ohio River. During that time I had a very little sympathy appertaining to the experience in my own Conference. The preachers much appreciated the revivals which everywhere attended my ministry, but many of them pronounced me crazy on sanctification.

Sanctification takes old Adam out of you and leaves Jesus without a rival in the heart and life. In that case we do as He would do under similar circumstances. I do not insinuate in this that it frees us from the liability of mistakes, because the mind is not made perfect until this mortal puts on immortality. Therefore intellect, memory and judgment will make mistakes. This perfection is simply that of the heart, which in the superabounding grace of Christ and through the efficacy of His precious blood, is made perfect while the mind and body are still encumbered with infirmities, which are only eliminated by the great work of the Holy Ghost in glorification, when this mortal puts on immortality.

When I met Brother Donaldson, the pastor of the meeting where the mother in Israel begged him not to let that "little fop" preach any more, lest he ruin the revival, in the Conference, he came to me and threw his arms around me and said, "Are you not W. B. Godbey?" (there are many Godbeys preaching). I responded in the affirmative. Then he said, "I have been reading your revival reports all the year with unutterable astonishment, to see that four hundred people have been converted under your preaching. I got bewildered as I thought the signature was that of the another who preached for me at Pleasant Run, and how such preaching ever converted so many people I could not understand." Says I, "Brother, the man you heard at Pleasant Run is dead and gone. He lives no more. You now meet a new preacher, who retains the old name, W. B. Godbey." This illustrates the radical revolution which sanctification develops.

Source: Autobiography of Rev. W. B. Godbey

* * * * *

THE END