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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

IRENE HANLEY
(Converted, Sanctified Jewess)

Lovingly do I dedicate this testimony of God's sanctifying grace to Brother and Sister H. Robb French, at whose camp meeting in Florida I came into this precious truth; and to Brother and Sister G. I. Norman through whose invitation and prayers I went to that camp meeting, and through whose instruction, intercession, and persistence at the altar I came into a real "death-route" experience of heart holiness.

Over 20 years ago, Feb. 12, 1954, while doing field work for a Jewish Mission Board, I was invited to a camp meeting in Florida. To my horror and disgust, I found it to be a holiness camp meeting, not "tongues" but a camp full of old-fashioned Wesleyan Methodists. I was ready to leave within one hour after my arrival, but somehow the simplicity and love of those people impressed me.

I was also deeply (and shamefully) impressed with their severe plainness in dress and their honesty with themselves concerning the carnality of the human heart. My first reaction was one of repulsion towards those poor, "deluded" souls who, I thought, were in such bondage and error of doctrine (Arminianism). Staunch Calvinist that I was, I had always felt I was holding a good standard of separated living, and for at least fifteen years I had contended for the truth that God could keep us living above the practice of sin if we were wholly yielded to Him. What I never could have previously accepted was that God could give us an experience whereby we could be free from the presence of sin in the human heart.

The blessed Holy Spirit, knowing my hungry heart and the deep-seated longing for inward purity, did not allow me to leave that camp meeting. I listened to the deep preaching of the Word. I observed the shouts of joy and the outward demonstration. In my heart I was critical although I had heard the shout of new-born souls in my own denomination (Baptist). I saw their great apparent liberty and freedom in the Spirit, but I said to myself, "cheap exhibitionism -- that's all."

The more I listened to the exposition of God's Word, the more it penetrated my heart and created a fierce hunger and longing that I had never before known. My distress became greater as God began to show me the old carnal traits in my heart. He showed me that the "old man of sin" was at constant warfare with the "new man" which I had become in regeneration. I saw the black depths of my unsanctified, uncircumcised heart. I saw my pride! Maybe others did not think I was proud, and neither did I, for I called it something else. Yet only God knew how proud I was.

God showed me my lack of perfect love toward Himself, toward my brethren, and toward sinners. He showed me my haughtiness and my impatience which brought hasty words and quick spurts of temper. He revealed ungodly ambitions, envy, and jealousy. I was getting to the place where I was more anxious to prove that I was a good Baptist than a child of God.

I knew that if I did not walk in this new light from God's revealed Word, and allow the Holy Ghost to thoroughly cleanse and deliver me from this carnal heart, I would never be a soul-winner again. I knew my missionary days were over, and that continued refusal would bring eternal damnation to my soul.

After five days of struggling, this child of God literally ran to an old-fashioned mourners' bench. I was almost there when I tripped and fell, and I crawled the rest of the few feet to the altar. "Except a corn of wheat fall" -- but that was not all -- Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). This is not speaking of regeneration, for in regeneration we are given new birth. This is speaking of another experience to follow, that is, death to the old self-life. Thus in actual experience, not only in position, do we become identified with Him in crucifixion. After I said Yes to the Lord concerning every avenue of my life, and surrendered my whole heart, body, and soul, He sent a mighty cleansing, purging, baptizing fire through my being that completely altered my life and future. For over three hours I lay prostrate before the Lord, unconscious of all human surroundings.

Fanaticism? Ah, nay, for was this not the experience of Moses, David, Isaiah, the disciples, the apostles, and Paul? No, this is as far from fanaticism as Calvinism is from Arminianism. I do not believe that "tongues" is the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Nor do I believe in sinless perfection, angelic, or absolute perfection, as holiness people are accused of believing, but I do believe in sanctification -- He sanctified me wholly.

I used to think holiness people were proud Pharisees, a people who were always patting themselves on the back and in essence saying, "Look how good I am; look how holy I am; by my own spiritual achievements and attainments God is obligated to take me to Heaven." But I found that the reverse is true. This experience of entire sanctification has brought me to the depths of my utter nothingness. God shows me that only by my constant decreasing can He become preeminent in my life. More and more do I realize the preciousness of His shed blood, realize that apart from His mercy, His grace, His atoning, sanctifying blood, I cannot stand for one moment. He has multiplied my fruitfulness, stabilized my joy, and completed my victory. He has brought me into an experience that I had always been taught could not be mine until I died. Well, it's true -- it could not have been mine until I "died" -- but when I did die two years ago I entered into the experience of Hebrews 4:9, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Oh, the preciousness of this! Canaan rest! Oh, the sweetness of ceasing from inward strife and struggling! Oh, the satisfaction of being

inwardly clean and free! The past 20 years have been the most abundant and rich in all the 41 years I have known the Lord.

I praise Him for leading me into this "old-fashioned" way. The modern, glamorous, Hollywood type of popular holiness would never have appealed to me. God had given me convictions when He saved me that helped me then to live higher than the majority of professing holiness people do today. I thank Him for the precious saints like the Frenches, the Normans, the Allegheny Conference saints, and many others, who have held to the "old paths." Without their examples, we younger ones in the movement could never have known what the "old-fashioned" way was like.

Remember me in prayer as I witness, first, to my own -- the Jewish fold -- and then to the Gentiles.

Source: "How a Jewess was Called Unto Holiness"
by Mrs. Irene Hanley

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THE END