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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

W. G. HESLOP

W. G. Heslop is an outstanding evangelist, pastor, and author. His books have been read and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people. Dr. Heslop is serving at the present time as editor of the Higley Sunday School Commentary.

This conversion of sinners is brought about (1) by the word of the Lord -- "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7); (2) by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, and (3) through the preaching of the gospel. This conversion, or change of heart, is one of the most important things which can take place in the life of a sinner.

I was converted to Christ when I was a boy of only eight and one-half years. I never remember a day in my life that I did not love God, Christ, and the Holy Bible. I never remember a time in my life when I did not read the Sacred Scriptures, attend church, and want to have fellowship with Christian people. I have always loved God, loved the Bible, and loved godly people. Between the ages of eight and nine, I attended a Methodist revival in my home town. A woman evangelist, belonging to the Pentecostal League of Prayer in England, brought the message of the hour. My young heart was touched. When the altar call was given, I wended my lonesome way forward for prayer. Kneeling almost in the middle of the mourners' bench, I cried to God for the forgiveness of my sins, and to be filled with the Spirit. No one but the evangelist paid any attention to me. She placed her hands on my head and breathed a prayer for me. That night the burden of my sins rolled away. I could truthfully sing,

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I went home that night with a light heart, a quiet conscience, and a desire and determination to be true to God. I told my parents the step which I had taken, and was disappointed that they did not yield to Christ immediately. While not outwardly wicked as the world regards wickedness, my

parents nevertheless were not Christians and very rarely attended church. I was sure that it was because they did not know about the Lord and was quite sure that they would want him when I told them how I felt about it. Their coldness and indifference was quite a surprise to me.

The Methodists, at that time, conducted regular street meetings each week. I attended the street meetings and regularly testified to the saving presence and power of Christ. I was about nine years old when I prepared my first sermon for the open-air service. An elderly Methodist local preacher, named William Cutbertson, placed his hand upon my head and said, "God bless the little preacher." From that time to the present, I have never ceased to preach the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, however, having no encouragement at home, my feet would slip and stray; I would do things, say things, and go to places that I knew were not pleasing to God, and which, therefore, caused me to feel quite uncomfortable. Every revival or protracted meeting in the church would usually find me with my hand raised for prayer, or kneeling at the mourners bench. It became such a common thing that one day, when I was about twelve years old, and was proceeding down the aisle to the mourners' bench, I heard a very good man whisper to another, "Oh, it's just Willie Heslop." Such a remark, of course, hurt my young heart. Instead of following me down and kneeling beside me and praying for me, he almost blocked my way to God. My young heart was tender; had I made a remark like that about another person going forward for prayer, at the next revival meeting I would have been down at the altar asking forgiveness for it. Some people, however, seem to be able to say anything and do anything and get away without either confessing it or seeking forgiveness for it.

From the time of my conversion to Christ I have desired the very best that God has for me, both for time and for eternity. I never retired a single night without praying, "O God, fill me with the Holy Ghost." The passion of my heart and the cry of my soul was for a clean heart, a pure life, and to follow the Lord fully. Night after night I would go to sleep singing the words:

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the mem'ry find,
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind.

O hope of every contrite heart!
O joy of all the meek!
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

And those who find thee, find a bliss
Nor tongue nor pen can show:

The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.

Never for one moment since my conversion have I enjoyed anything that the world has had to offer or give.

At the age of nineteen I left home and went to the big city. I became quite active in Sunday school, in the young people's society, and in the church. Finally, the church asked me to study for the ministry. While studying for the ministry, a book entitled Gregory's Theology was placed in my hand. This theology was one of the texts in the course of study of the Methodist church at that time. Both in my heart and life and ministry I had felt a lack, a need, a need of cleansing and purity in my own heart, a lack of power and unction in my own life and ministry. I had prayed for years for a clean heart and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. While reading this text in the course of study, I came to the chapter on "Sanctification." This was exactly what I needed. I began seeking in great earnest. Night and day, day and night, would find me praying for the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. But how to enter in I knew not. Two of the men who were the greatest blessing in my life during my boyhood days were John Stoves and T. L. Scott. John Stoves was a postmaster, and T. L. Scott was a chemist and druggist. They were both sanctified men, and they lived the life. One day Mr. Scott ventured to speak to me about being filled with the Spirit. This was exactly what I wanted, although I did not tell him so. He urged me to send for a book entitled Holiness and Power, by Dr. A. M. Hills. This I finally did, and it was while reading Dr. Hills's book that I learned how to enter into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

After six months of sincere consecration and absolute dedication, on Tuesday morning, August 31, at about twenty minutes past nine in the morning, I took a sheet of paper and wrote out my consecration. I had no sooner signed my name to the consecration than my hand of faith reached up and grasped God's hand of power, then something like the feeling of purging fire flowed through my entire being, and I knew that God had sanctified my soul.

I have been tempted, tested, and tried, but never once have I doubted the fact that on that Tuesday morning, August 31, about twenty minutes past nine, God cleansed my heart from sin and filled me with his Spirit. I have made many mistakes for which I have been very sorry; I still have many faults and failings about which I mourn and which I seek to mend; but never once since that glorious morning have I doubted the fact that God sanctified my heart. I have need of the continued presence of Christ and the cleansing blood of Christ, but never once since that day have I doubted the fact that in my heart love was made perfect.

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels Thy blood,
So freely shed for me.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine,
Holy, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.

With other believers I pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." With others I realize my need of the constant intercession of Christ above, as well as the intercession of the Holy Spirit within. With others I feel the need daily of the atoning blood of Christ, but I also know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses my heart from sin. The Comforter abides, and the great desire of my heart now is that all men, everywhere, might know Him whom to know is life eternal.

Source: "Contemporary Conversions" by Bernie Smith

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THE END