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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

GEORGE HUGHES
(Methodist)

In the order of a wise providence I was greatly favored in having Christian parents. They were members of the Wesleyan Society in Manchester, England. My precious mother was one of the holiest of women. The sweet savor of Christian holiness pervaded my early home. In the midst of many domestic cares and severe trials my mother exemplified daily the spirit and power of Christian perfection, and it was her aim especially to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She would often take them to her room and, "with strong cries and tears," commend them to her Heavenly Father's watch-care. The remembrance of those hours of devotion is to me "as ointment poured forth." I am inclined to that in early childhood I was made a subject of God's renewing grace, but, like too many of tender years, it was not distinctly retained.

In the year 1838, when I was fifteen years of age, I came to this country. My new home was in Philadelphia. The separation from my friends and native land was very painful.

It was not long, however, ere the prayers of my pious mother were answered. In the following year after my arrival in the United States, in February, 1839, under the ministry of Rev. Charles Pitman, in the Eighth Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, I was happily converted. For a time I went on my way rejoicing, but, through the influence of improper associates and the discouragements of my business position, I was turned aside from the right path. Through the mercy of God, I was arrested, and restored to my forfeited peace.

Subsequently, I removed to the city of New York and became connected with the Allen Street Church. There I became acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, and a lifelong friendship was formed. They manifested a loving interest in the stranger-boy, and sought to lead me into the higher walks of the Christian life. They conducted a meeting in the church on Saturday evening for the promotion of holiness. I attended that meeting and felt its potential influence in fact, I believe at that time I had some experience of sanctifying grace; but the evidence was not very clear, and I did not hold to the line. Rev. John Poisal was pastor of the church, and manifested a

lively interest in my welfare. He gave me license to exhort, and I became connected with the Local Preachers' Association of New York.

In 1843 I was called to enter the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Rev. John S. Porter, presiding elder of the Newark District in the New Jersey Conference. I was sent to the Madison charge as junior preacher. I entered upon this responsible work with much trembling, but under the solemn conviction that I was called of God, and that this must be my life-work. In 1844 I was admitted on trial in the Conference and continued to prosecute my holy calling, God being pleased to give me seals to my ministry. Unfortunately for me, in the early years of my itinerant life, my environments were such that a foolish prejudice against special meetings for the promotion of holiness was engendered in my heart. This was a snare to me, and a great hindrance to my Christian progress and usefulness as a minister. My friends, Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, like guardian angels, were ever upon my track, and, had I yielded to their loving ministries, would have led me into the "Land of Beulah."

In one of my charges the new sainted and beloved Mrs. Mary D. James was one of my flock. But I was particularly averse to being led by "holy women" in this matter. I thought I understood the doctrine of Methodism, having studied our standard writers in my Conference course, and when I was ready to seek the experience I would do so without the persuasions of others. The remembrance of those years of unreasonable opposition is now very painful, and I would fain obliterate the record. But, alas! it is ineffaceable. I held to the doctrine of entire sanctification tenaciously, and preached it to my people, thinking it my duty to do so as expressive of my loyalty as a Methodist preacher. Often while thus discoursing to the congregation the Spirit would speak to me powerfully, saying, "Why don't you do this yourself?" But I pleaded for a postponement.

At length, after about twenty years of this battling with conviction, God, in the order of His providence, brought matters to an issue by permitting me to go into the furnace of affliction. While presiding elder of the Burlington District, N.J., I became nervously prostrated and was obligated to resign my charge. By the advice of physicians I returned to my native land to enjoy a year of entire quiet. I was thus furnished with an opportunity to review my past life.

In taking this retrospect I became painfully conscious of my defects, and especially did my mistakes concerning the subject of Christian holiness loom up before me. At this juncture Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, who were engaged in evangelistic services in my native city, Manchester, called to see me one day at my father's house. I was not at home, but when informed that they had called my heart was deeply affected. It brought up memories of the past very vividly. I attended the services and the Holy Spirit, through their instrumentality, wrought deep conviction in my mind. At the close of these services they went to Nottingham. I said to my companion, "It seems as if Satan gained advantages over me for twenty years touching personal holiness; let us pack our trunk and go to Nottingham and see what the Lord will do for us there." Accordingly we went, and obtained quarters in the home of a Wesleyan local preacher who was enjoying entire sanctification.

On Sabbath morning, May 31, 1863 (ever memorable day) we attended service in the Wesleyan chapel, and the junior preacher, Rev. Henschell, preached a sermon on the text, "We know that all things work together for good to them that, love God." This sermon was made a great

blessing to my soul. While listening thereto there come to me a voice from heaven, saying, "If the Lord shall fully baptize you with the Holy Ghost will you witness to the people of Nottingham of the great salvation?" To this my heart made affirmative response. A flood of joy came in upon me instantly, and I returned from the house of God to my lodgings, praising the Lord along the street.

In the afternoon we went to the opening service of Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, in the Shakespeare Street United Free Methodist Chapel. During that hour I was led to make my entire consecration very definite, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to inward purity, through the application of the all-cleansing blood of Jesus, was very clear and joyous. In making my entire consecration it was laid upon me that on my return to the United States I should witness of this grace--a vow which I sacredly performed. In the evening of that day I was led to give public testimony to probably fifteen hundred people of my folly in so long resisting my convictions on this subject, and of the gladness of my heart in the reception of this great blessing. I continued to enjoy the services there, and had great peace, and although not able to participate very actively therein.

We returned to the United States on the same steamer with our friends, Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, and had sweet fellowship by the way. The voyage was a stormy, and at times the ship was in great peril but my mind was undisturbed. While the ship was rolling in the mighty waves, as I lay in my berth, I was ready to sing:

"This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love;
He will send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

If spared to see next May a quarter of a century of experience on this line of light and love, will have elapsed. Blessed years they have been! I cannot say, however, that throughout that entire period I have retained a clear witness of entire sanctification. The evidence has been obscured at times, but I have never been able to rest without it.

The years which have elapsed have been my growth period. My feet have been more and more established in paths of righteousness. The last two years have been exceedingly precious, full of power and joy in the Holy Ghost. I never preached with such freedom as I do at the present time. I am often filled with rapture in proclaiming a full and free salvation.

The Bible is indeed a luminous book. Its hallowed pages, to my view, glow with supernatural light. I have great delight in prayer closet, family, and public prayer. I find my heart going out with glad response to pointed scriptural teachings, particularly, "Love thinketh no evil," "In honor preferring one another," "Esteeming others better than yourselves," "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." In a word, love has the mastery, the antagonisms being destroyed, and my feet rest firmly in the Rock of Ages. I am proving, as never before, that salvation is a Divine personality -- more, far more than a blessing. It is the internal revelation of THE BLESSER in the infinitude of His attributes, constituting within my soul a never-failing and ever-springing well "springing up unto everlasting life." To God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be everlasting praise!

REV. GEORGE HUGHES NEW YORK, March 12, 1888.

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

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