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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JASPER ROBINSON
1727 -- 1797
(Methodist)

In the summer of that year I heard Mr. Wesley preach, under one of whose sermons I was enabled to believe that my sins were forgiven. In the year 1763 I received a large effusion of the Holy Spirit, and seemed changed throughout the whole man. I then joined the select band, enjoyed much peace, and walked agreeable to the gospel. In 1776, after conversing with a friend, I again felt a blessed change in my heart; but, through unbelief, soon let go my hold. Some time after, at a morning preaching, it appeared as if every evil was taken out of my heart; but I soon gave way to unbelief, and became as I was before. In the year 1770 it pleased God to bless several persons at Leeds, and I received a sweet, mild, and childlike spirit; but after a while, through unbelief, my corrupt nature prevailed again.

In 1776 I set out as a travelling preacher, and was appointed for Manchester, where I preached in great weakness and fear. However, I was encouraged much from the Lord, and from many of the poorer people; but some of the rich showed great indifferency toward me. I believe I was of some use there, and in general that year was in pursuit of holiness; but though I received many marks of it, I put it off, and did not believe. In 1777 I went to Epworth Circuit. Here also holiness and usefulness were my chief aim. I received many tokens for good in my own heart, and trust I was somewhat profitable to the people. In 1778 I went to Lynn; and in 1779 to Aberdeen and Inverness. Here I was supported with an uncommon degree of cheerfulness, and found Scotland a happy place for me, notwithstanding some inconveniences. In the latter end of the year, at Aberdeen, I was much tried, and much supported. In 1780 I came to Dundee, where I had a peaceful year, and was all for holiness. Yet I was tempted in an extraordinary manner, especially at Arbroath. I fasted and prayed night and day, but could get no rest. One day upon a mount, where I ran up to pray, a tremor seized me, and I thought the devil would become visible; but on a sudden I was sensible that Jesus was my Advocate, the Holy Spirit my Comforter, and God the Father my reconciled God. Now again I received such comfort in my mind, that nothing was wanting but faith to make me a partaker of full sanctification.

In 1781 I was appointed for Barnard Castle; and in 1782 was sent to the Isle of Man, where I minuted down, at times, the occurrences of the day, an extract from which here follows:

April 9, 1783. -- I have been kept without sin in my heart this day. I grow more and more confident that God has cleansed my heart from all unrighteousness. As I was riding yesterday, a thought passed through my mind, why I was not sanctified before. And it appeared it was because I would not believe; and if I would not, then it is plain I might if I would. Is not this the case with many ? Instead of simply believing, they are looking out for some extraordinary thing formed in their own imagination. This, I believe, has been the case with me for twenty years past. Many times in the course of these years, God gave me reason to believe it: but instead of believing He had done it, I thought now I was in such a way that I could not well miss it; and, Naaman-like, I expected God would lay His hand very powerfully upon me, and manifest Himself in such an extraordinary manner, that my soul would be immediately swallowed up in a holy flame of love. But finding not what I expected, I soon flagged in my pursuit, and my vile corruption returned again to my heart. And though in general I had power over all sin, inward and outward, and peace with God, and still sought after a clean heart; yet I often thought that, according to His word, He was willing to give it to others, but had some particular exceptions against me.

I thought I strove more for it in every good word and work than many others that received it; and yet the more I strove, the harder it seemed to be attained; yea, I frequently thought the more I sought God the more He withdrew from me. Upon which, I used to fall into such weakness of mind, that I could scarce conceive anything at all of God, or of Christ. At other times, when I was earnest for purity, there would appear such a huge bar, or such a huge something, that it was impossible for me to get any farther. Then I thought I might be contented with what I had got; and, resting here, I used to enjoy a tolerable degree of peace; though envy, lust, and barrenness frequently harassed me within. But oh, how contrary to my expectation hath God dealt with me!

Two days before I received it, I was telling a brother I could not see that I had grown in grace for twenty years past; because, when I would sail forward in the divine life, there rose up always, such a sand-bank, that my poor vessel could not make any way. But as I was reading the fore-mentioned passage, ' All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive'; I thought I would once more pray for sanctification, because it is God's will, according to His word: and I thought I would depend upon Him, as I would upon the faithfulness of a friend; and should be as much disappointed in my expectation if He were not as good as His word, as if I were deceived by a man. I soon found my soul sink down into a kind of nothingness before God, and presently was persuaded that no sin remained in my heart, and that through believing I might ever keep it out. I thought, if this is the way to be sanctified, any one that has grace may believe to be sanctified, if he will; for none can be more weak in faith than myself, and yet I have no doubt but my heart is purified...

[The account of Jasper Robinson closes with the following comments:]

...I have heard him with much satisfaction publish the glad tidings of salvation, with such an holy fervour of soul, mixed with zeal life, and power, as I always wish those to feel who speak in the name of the Lord. His whole heart was in the work; and he was in very deed a man of one business. And at all times he discovered himself to be a faithful advocate for a present, free, and

full salvation. He followed after till he attained this glorious liberty; and lived and died in the enjoyment of it.

His obituary is in the Minutes for 1798:

Jasper Robinson, ' an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.' He was a travelling preacher three-and-twenty years, during which his unaffected simplicity of manners, his steady and upright conduct, his mild and gentle spirit, never failed to gain him the affectionate regard of all the pious people who knew him. His whole heart was in the work of God, and many will praise the Lord for his labours. He was remarkably patient in suffering, and entirely resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. His memory will long be precious to the people among whom he laboured. He lived and died a happy witness of the full salvation of God. He fell asleep in Jesus, December 6, 1797, aged seventy-three years.

Source: Originally from "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers" by Thomas Jackson

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THE END