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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

HESTER ANN ROGERS *2 Items
(Methodist)

*Item 1

She was a bright and shining light. The annals of the church contain but few whose lives glow with such seraphic ardor and holy love. "In depths of penitence, strength of faith, ardor of hope, fervor of love, intimate communion with God, constancy of joy and peace and zealous devotion to the cause of Christ, Hester Ann Rogers had but few equals."

She was born in Macclesfield, England, Jan. 31, 1756, and was from early childhood peculiarly susceptible to divine influence and when in trouble of any kind betook herself to prayer. She says: "I was early drawn out to secret prayer. I believe God is the author of all good, of all happiness; and sin the cause of all misery and pain. If therefore I wished for anything I had not, I asked God in secret to grant it to me. And in any pain of body, or in any of my childish grief, I fled to Him for ease and comfort; and it would be incredible to some, how often I have received manifest answers to prayer, when not more than four years old; and how my tender mind has been comforted. I never remember having gone to bed without having said my prayers except once; I was then diverted by a girl who told me many childish stories and so took up my attention that I forgot to pray until I was in bed, and then being alone I recollected what I had done and conscience greatly accused me so that I begun to tremble, lest Satan should be permitted of God to take me away body and soul which I deserved."

When she was nine years of age her father died. Shortly before his death he called her to his bedside, and laying his hand upon her head and lifting his eyes to heaven with great solemnity said: "Unto God's gracious mercy and protection I commit thee; the Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee and give thee peace, and make thee His child and faithful servant to thy life's end." Her subsequent life proved this prayer was literally answered.

She gradually drifted out into a sea of worldliness, such as extravagant dress, dancing, novel reading, etc., and in this state she continued for several years. Her conscience in the meanwhile lashed her sorely at times, and her heart cried out for something better. At about eighteen years of age God's Spirit took a deep hold upon her heart. After some time spent in various efforts to become a Christian, she was induced to attend service at a Methodist chapel and there learned the way of life. After wrestling for some time with unbelief, the Spirit whispered, "only believe." She replied, "Lord Jesus, I will, I do believe; I now venture my whole salvation on thee as God! I put my guilty soul into thy hands, Thy blood is sufficient! I cast my soul upon thee for time and eternity. Then did He appear unto my salvation. In that moment my fetters were broken, my bands were loosed and my soul set at liberty. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart; and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable. Now, if I had possessed 10,000 souls I could have ventured them all with my Jesus."

"All they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" was as true in her case as it is in the case of every one else who lives godly. The Methodists at the time of her conversion, were like the holiness people of today, misunderstood, maligned and often hated, and on account of her adherence to them, she was sorely persecuted in her own home. Being at one time confined as a prisoner in the house for eight weeks and then for eight months; doing the work of a servant where hitherto she had been exempt from all the hardships and drudgery of such a life. These rigorous labors were too much for her constitution and it was years before she rallied therefrom.

Not long after her conversion she was taught, as all primitive Methodists, the way into the holiest. The following extracts from her journal will show how her heart panted after this grace. "I have been greatly tried inwardly and outwardly though I have had some refreshing visits of love; but I feel very many evil tempers and much self-will that would not be contradicted. Pride and unbelief greatly distressed me, my cry was this evening, 'Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a right spirit within me.' "

Again she says: "The Lord shows me more than ever that I must be made holy before death, and this day I can say, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so thirsteth my soul for the perfect love of God.' Oh, may I never rest until I have received this blessing. Lord, I have in this respect trifled; I have been too easy, too lukewarm, while thy enemies had a lurking place in my heart. Oh, forgive me, and help me to be more in earnest."

Still seeking Perfect Love, she writes: "I find while pressing after entire purity my communion with God increases and I have more power to do His will."

The cry for holiness became so intense, she says: "I awoke several times in the night praying for sanctification. Oh, the depths of unbelief and of pride and these seem only the roots of many other evil branches. Oh my God, I feel my heart as a den of thieves. I loathe myself, but Oh I fall a leper at thy feet. I believe the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, but when I would come to the fountain I seem all ignorant and helpless. But Lord teach me and strengthen me for thy mercies' sake."

After such crying as recorded above, she came to the memorable 22nd day of February, and her soul was drawn out in a mighty plea for full salvation. And she exclaimed, "Lord, thou art

faithful, and this is thy word, I cast my whole soul upon thy promise; make known thy faithfulness by performing it on my heart ... fill it with thy pure love; Sanctify every faculty of my soul; I offer all to thee; I give thee all my powers; I take thee, Almighty Jesus, for my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification. Now, cleanse me from all my filthiness and from all my idols and take away the heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh; I come empty to be filled; deny me not. It would be for thy glory to save me now for how much better I could serve thee. It is true, I have no plea but thy mercy, the blood of Jesus, thy promise, and my own great need. Oh, save me fully, by an act of free grace. Thou hast said, He that believeth shall be saved. I now take thee at thy word. I do by faith cast myself on thy promise. I venture my soul on thy veracity. THOU CANST NOT DENY.

Being purchased by thy blood, thy justice is engaged; being promised without money and without price truth is bound; thus every attribute of my God secures it to me. Why did I ever doubt His willingness, when He gave Jesus; gave Him to destroy the works of the devil -- to make an end of sin. The hindrance lay in me, not Him. He desires to make me holy, but unbelief hid it from my eyes -- accursed sin! but, now, Lord, I do believe this moment Thou dost save me. Yea, my soul is delivered of her burden. I am emptied of all; I am at Thy feet, a helpless, worthless worm; but I take hold of Thee as my fullness. Everything that I want Thou art. Thou art wisdom, strength, love, holiness; yes, and Thou art mine! I am conquered and subdued by love. Thy love sinks me into nothing; and overflows my soul. I am now one with God ... Inbred sin no longer hinders the close communion, and God is all my own! I now walked in the unclouded light of his countenance, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing and in everything giving thanks."

Whether at the bedside of the dying, many of whom she led to Christ, or in ministering to the sorrowing, or as class-leader, she was mightily used of God. It is said that her husband, on entering into a circuit, would only give a few to her, desiring her to complete the class out of the world; and soon by her conversation and prayers and attention to every soul within her reach, would the number spring up to thirty or forty and then the believers in her class would be transplanted to other classes and she would recruit from the world again. After a life ablaze with holy fire, she died in great triumph in the 39th year of her pilgrimage. The memory of her holy life still lingers like heavenly aroma in the churches, and the results of her godly deeds are as imperishable as eternity.

Source: "Chosen Vessels" by J. O. McClurkan

#Item 2

We select from the Autobiography of Hester Ann Rogers the following: In describing her struggle after the blessing, she records this prayer: "Lord, cried I, make this the moment of my full salvation. Baptize me now with the Holy Ghost and fire of pure love. Now make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Now enter the temple, and cast out sin forever. Now cleanse the thoughts, desires, and propensities of my heart, and let me love Thee perfectly."

After receiving the blessing, she describes her experience with these words: "I now walk in the unclouded light of His countenance; 'rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks.' I resolved, however, at first, I would not openly declare what the Lord

had wrought; but it was seen in my countenance, and when asked respecting it, I durst not deny the wonders of His love. I soon found that this repeating of His good confirmed my own faith more and more. And so did the Lord bless me in declaring it; yea, and blessed others also, that I was constrained to witness to all who feared Him:

'His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed or me.

I dared not to live above a moment at a time, and that moment by faith in the Son of God. I never felt till now the full meaning of those words, 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being.' And again: 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and be their God; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.' Glory be to my God, I felt it written, 'It was no longer I that lived, but Christ that lived in me!'

'Yes Christ was all in all to me,
And all my heart was love.' "

Source: "The Better Way" by Beverly Carradine

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THE END