

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1994 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JENNIE F. WILLING
(Methodist)

In a prayerless home, my first remembered religious impressions were received when my sister, fourteen years older than I, came home from a revival meeting and told me that she had given her heart to the Saviour. She prayed with me, and I now think I was converted then, though only five years old. She lived till I was eight, a beautiful, consistent, Christian life. When she died my grief was as deep as a child may know. But the saddest thought of all was that now I would have no one to help me be good.

I kept up my praying secretly, and I was often greatly moved when I went to church, though the influences about me were far from helpful to Christian living. When I was eleven I joined the church.

To all others it could have been of small consequence that a little child should publicly profess faith in Christ; but to me the step was of the utmost importance, for I gave up my dancing, card-playing, and, four years later, my novel-reading, because I believed they would hinder my efforts to serve the Lord.

When I was nineteen all my family were brought to Christ during a revival in the Congregational Church of which I was a member. During the meetings I worked incessantly, and with great joy in the Saviour. Yet all the time I was certain there were tendencies within that would draw me back to my worldliness when the revival pressure was removed.

As soon as my brothers were converted I began to feel an intense desire for strength that I might take care of them when their times of temptation should come. I fasted and prayed, asking in all agony of earnestness, "Is there no way to be established so that one will be as religious all the year round as she is during the revival?" I talked with my pastor and the best of the church members, but they said, in substance, "Don't worry; you're doing very well. Be sure and read your Bible and pray a good deal, and you'll get on as well as the rest." "But will we all grow cold when the meetings are over?" "Why, yes, of course. That's about the way it has to go." "Then my brothers

will backslide," I said, almost in despair. "They've been very wicked, and, unless I keep near the Saviour I know I can't help them as they need, and they'll not live through the summer."

Here was a paradox. Never happier in Christ, and yet never in greater unrest of soul. The nearer Jesus, the keener the heart-hunger. At last, worn out with strugglings, after having tried every other aid, I got down as a little helpless, tired child, and said, "Dear Saviour, if thou ever didst such a thing as to establish one in thy grace, so that she could be as religious in summer as in winter, I beg of thee to so establish me!" And He did the next moment.

Though I was surely His child before, a change passed upon me as decided as going at once from densest midnight to broadest noon. When I rose from my knees I said to a friend, "I sha'n't backslide this summer."

"Why not? How do you know?"

"Because Christ has established me. I haven't the shadow of a fear now." "I wish He would establish me." "He will if you'll give Him all your heart and trust Him fully. His perfect love casts out all fear."

Though quite horrified when a friend, to whom I related this experience a few months later, suggested the possibility of its being sanctification, used in my public and private testimonies the same language that those do who profess that grace.

After becoming the wife of a Methodist minister I learned to use the Wesleyan phraseology. Within a year after my marriage, however, I was thrown in contact with a set of people who professed perfection in the strongest terms, and yet who were chiefly characterized by their censoriousness. Resenting their strictures, I grieved the Holy Spirit and lost the grace that had given me profound rest under most trying circumstances.

The next ten years were spent in an almost incessant struggle to regain the forfeited treasure. A Christian, zealous and constant, yet never fully at rest. Again, the nearer Jesus, the more heavily the burden of innate sinfulness pressed my heart. Days were spent in fasting, nights in prayer, and tears were shed till my physical strength seemed quite exhausted -- all to no purpose. The main trouble was, as I came afterward to see, I was determined to have the same set of emotions that I had in my early experience before I would believe my prayer answered and the grace restored. The divine rule, "By grace ye are saved through faith," could not be abrogated for me, and so my cries and prayers were of little use.

At last I began to use common sense with my earnestness. I went through the problem of my experience as slowly, difficultly and coolly as though it were a mathematical or logical question.

The first point settled, never to be reconsidered, was the relation of the emotions to the actual religious state. Usually unreliable, they must be ruled out of the court as unfit to testify. The next step was to find the limits of the consecration required. God has no right to hinge our salvation upon our doing what we do not know how to do; it is impossible for us to give Him what we do not know about. He loves us too well to require the impossible; so the limit of our

knowledge must be the limit of responsibility in consecration. "O Lord, I give thee all I know to give, just as well as I know how. When I come to know and have more I will give more. There, that consecration must be as complete as I can now make it."

Satan had driven me so many times from that point in the ten, long, wilderness years, he did his best to drive me now from this position. I held my position. "I am honest. I purpose to be wholly the Lord's at any cost. If I do not give all it is because I do not know how; and Christ cannot hold me responsible for what I do not know." I settled it that only two points were to be made: complete consecration and complete trust. "I have been all these years trying to believe; now I will give up trying. I will simply say, I do give all to Jesus as well as I can. He asked for me, so, of course, He takes me. If He really wants to save me -- and it is wicked to think any thing else -- He has the chance, for I have given myself wholly Him. Does He now save me? I don't feel it. Feeling is not to be considered. It is the fact I want. Am I now cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ? He has me in His hands, and He so hates sin He will not let me stay unclean when He has the chance to cleanse me. Yes, I believe He now saves me fully, and I am willing to risk the assertion to my husband, to the Church, and to the world."

It took nearly two weeks of slow, close thinking and prayer, for me to crowd myself, inch by inch, through this process. The promise used of the Holy Spirit to strengthen my almost paralyzed believing power was that word in John, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us, and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

Only two conditions are given here -- that what we ask is "according to his will," and that "he heareth us." "It is according to His will that I be cleansed. The opposite of this proposition is not thinkable. He heareth me. If He is with me alway, as He promised, He cannot help hearing me. Then I know that I have the petition, even the cleansing of my heart."

Since then, though often stumbling and always full of infirmities, I have been enabled by divine grace to walk in the light. Whenever a doubt has risen, or I have fallen into sin, I have gone at once through the "process" of consecration and trust, believing that, as certainly as two and two make four, this, honestly done, results in the cleansing from all sin.

JENNIE F. WILLING, LAKE BLUFF, ILL., July 2, 1887.

Source: "Forty Witnesses" by S. Olin Garrison

* * * * *

THE END