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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

HENRY WILSON
(Episcopal)

[The following thrilling testimony of our dear brother, Henry Wilson, an Episcopalian minister, of New York, was written at our request, for publication in ZION'S OUTLOOK. -- Ed.]

To help some other life, and to show what God can do for a soul and in a soul willing to be made willing and obedient to His highest will, is the purpose of this brief testimony of spiritual experience:

In my case God's order was -- First, the soul. I was saved in a very unexpected but most real way through the Salvation Army, after seventeen years of a ministry called by some successful, and certainly in some degree blessed. I found myself one night kneeling at the penitent form of the army, pleading for pardon and peace, and needing both as much as the drunkard on one side of me and the lost woman on the other. I saw myself as never before, a poor, lost soul, just as much as they, so far as the need of a new heart and a right spirit was concerned. Then and there I found what I was seeking. Shortly afterwards in a night of prayer, never to be forgotten, in the army barracks, I saw the vision of God, and heard the voice of my Savior as clearly and surely as Paul did on the Damascus road.

In a new and real way beyond any telling in words, I entered into the kingdom of God -- old things passed away and all things became new.

Long-cherished theological views, vanished in the light of His face who is the Truth itself, Moses and Elias, and all they had meant to me, were swallowed up in the effulgence of Jesus, with whom they had been talking, and to whom they had all their lives witnessed. Hosea's suggestive words became my personal experience. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? [and I surely had some, theological, and other.] I have heard and observed Him [Jesus]. I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found." Hosea 14:8 .

The sweet old chorus became the Song of my heart and lips:

"He's the Lily of the Valley,
The Bright and Morning Star.
He's fairest of ten thousand to my soul."

This the Holy Spirit, through the blessed Salvation Army, did for me in the year 1883, and made Jesus to me

A living, bright reality,
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

Second, the Spirit. Then in due time and in God's own way came the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the realizing not only of Jesus as my present and personal Savior, but of the filling of my spirit with the very Spirit of God, and the fulness of Jesus, not for salvation merely, but for all that follows and flows from it in Himself.

The name matters so little, when the reality is there -- whether it was the "second blessing," or "the experience of sanctification," or whether it was an act done by the Holy Ghost upon my saved and cleansed heart, or a state produced by that act, I have never cared much to enquire. I know that Jesus gave me the Holy Spirit to be my present, and eternal Sanctifier, and the Holy Ghost made Jesus my sanctification, and made His name and nature so rich and full in its meaning and power, that from that hour to this the "fulness of Jesus" and "filled with the Holy Ghost" have meant to me what the filling and overflowing of pure water does to the empty vessel, or a river of wholesome water does to a dry and barren land.

What these two tremendous facts, the salvation of my soul and the sanctification of my spirit, did for me in the way of service, I can only hint at here.

Soul and spirit on fire with love to God and a lost world, the Word of God illumined by His Holy Spirit, became a new and living Book to me; believing now that "it means just what it says, and says just what it means," and that it is the Word of God from cover to cover, I have had no time for higher or lower criticism of it, but have more than I can do to make it "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

New power, new pleasure, in simply preaching the Word -- 1. Himself, who is the Divine Incarnate Word; 2. His words, which He Himself says (John 6) "are spirit and life."

Souls saved through and through, fed, and sanctified after salvation, and then set and sent forth to win and bless other souls. These are some of the "exceeding great and precious" fruits that have come to and through my redeemed and Spirit-filled lips. To God be the glory for all.

Third, the body. Last in order, and as the climax of all, came the healing and quickening of my mortal body (Rom. 8:11), by the same Spirit.

After seventeen years of severe invalidism--a victim of chronic dyspepsia, catarrhal and throat troubles, nervous depression, resulting partly from severe physical injuries and partly from great sorrows and trials early in life and long continued -- I found, under the teaching of my beloved brother, Rev. A. B Simpson, of New York, that Jesus is indeed "the Savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23) in a way I had never dreamed of. By the Holy Spirit, through his teaching and life, I learned the blessed secret of the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus for my body here and now, and not merely when I should rise from the dead and meet him in the air.

I found that Ephesians 5:30 could be true of a man in this mortal life, here in the body, surrounded by the ordinary temptations and pressed by the ordinary burdens of life; that I could be in very truth a member of His body, risen and ascended and seated at the right hand of God, and of His flesh and of His bones; that I in Him and He in me meant this, and nothing less; and that in the power of this indwelling, vivifying Jesus Christ in my body, my flesh and my bones, I could be rid of all my chronic troubles and go and have continual victory over pain and every power of the enemy.

No words can ever express the joy that filled my being when this precious truth dawned upon me, and better still when it became a present and permanent reality to me.

For nearly seventeen years it has been not only a living reality to me, but a reality growing deeper and richer, until now at the age of nearly seventy years, I am in every sense a younger, fresher man than I was at thirty.

At this present time I am, in the strength of God, doing full twice as much work, mental and physical, as I have ever done in the best days of the past, and this observe with less than half the effort then necessary. It is a joy to work now. My life, physical, mental and spiritual, is like an artesian well -- always full and overflowing. To speak, teach, travel by night and by day, in all weather, and through all the sudden and violent changes of our variable climate, is no more effort for me than it is for the mill wheel to turn when the stream is full, or for the pipe to let the water run through it.

My body, soul and spirit, thus redeemed, sanctified and healed, I give, O Lord, to thee; a consecrated offering, thine evermore to be. That all my powers with all their might, In thy sole glory May dwell. Hallelujah! Amen.

He that hath spoken to thy soul
Hath many things to say;
He that hath made thee whole
Will keep thee day by day.

Source: "Chosen Vessels" by J. O. McClurkan (July, 1901)

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THE END

