

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

W. C. WILSON
(Gen. Supt. Church of the Nazarene)

William Columbus Wilson was born in Hopkins County, Kentucky, December 22, 1866. His father, J. C. Wilson, was a captain in the Union army during the Civil War. After its close he settled on a farm in Hopkins County, but one year after his son, Columbus, was born he sold and moved ten miles north to an unimproved farm. Here the young boy, Lummie, or "Lum," as his associates called him, was reared to manhood. This community had poor school advantages, one term not lasting more than five months, so "Lum" attended school very little; in fact, his father needed him most of the time on the farm, as it had to be improved and paid for; thus most of his boyhood days were spent in the woods, clearing, chasing rabbits and getting acquainted with nature. He liked this quiet country life, and spent a great deal of his time alone. Although very contemplative, at school he was a leader among his associates, and was often called to settle disputes or to act as a judge in the trouble.

In some notes he had written on his young manhood he says: "From my early childhood I was very much impressed religiously, and was often under conviction. If anyone spoke about the judgment, or if there was a death in the community, or even public worship and religious songs, I was much affected." He further states: "I attended the summer meetings and wished to be saved, but as no one would speak to me about my soul I was not converted. I wanted to be good, I prayed a great deal, and tried to be good, but came short of doing so." At the age of sixteen he attended a meeting at the Providence Church, near Hanson, Kentucky. The pastor, John King, spoke with him personally and said he was praying for him. This seemed to be the necessary encouragement, for soon the boy was at the altar, and after two days of earnest seeking he was converted. He says in his notes: "I received such peace into my heart, I thought I never would have any more trouble." He started out well by taking an active part in public services, but soon became discouraged on finding that there was still carnality in his heart, and before long he backslid; but at the end of the first year he was reclaimed and remained a true Christian the remainder of his life.

On October 30, 1886, he was married to Eliza Jones, a very devoted Christian and loyal companion. As she was a Baptist, he joined the same church to be with her. Around their family

altar were reared four children, three girls and one boy, who by their beautiful Christian experiences showed and are showing the effects of their parents' careful and prayerful home training. Their father was not satisfied that his children should have mental culture alone, but wished also that they should have the best of spiritual training. Before his death Brother Wilson saw the desire of his heart fulfilled in his children. The two eldest, Guy and Bertha, are now engaged in evangelistic work, and one, Hallie, was waiting in Heaven to welcome her father home.

Early in his married life he was led to have public worship in his home on Sunday morning. From this he received an impression that some day he might have to preach. In the spring of 1888 a Holiness evangelist came to his community to hold a meeting. He was opposed by Brother Wilson's pastor, but kept sweet, shouted the victory, and continued to preach sanctification as a second definite work of grace, in spite of all opposition. This brought the people under conviction. One night Mrs. Wilson came home in trouble and asked her husband to pray for her. He says, "I wanted to pray more for myself." That night his wife was sanctified. This brought such conviction on him that in a few days he was seeking the blessing. On May 14, 1888, he was sanctified, and from this time his impression to preach was greater. It seemed to be the only way to tell the people about this wonderful blessing, but his opposition was great. He was not educated, so the devil told him that he could not preach, and it looked that way; yet he could get no relief from this impression. Accordingly, one day he announced to the people of the Methodist Church that he would preach there the next Sunday. So, in the Methodist Church in his home vicinity he preached his first sermon, from I Thess. 5:23. The Lord wonderfully helped him and blessed his soul to overflowing, and from that Sunday he never doubted his call to the ministry.

At the age of twenty-four the way opened for him to attend school. He spent part of a year at Bremen, Kentucky, when some trouble in the school broke it up, and he entered the pastoral work in the Methodist Church. His first charge was the Greenville circuit. He had three churches and organized the fourth. The first year he received \$180, had many souls converted, and added to the church; two boys of this number were called to preach. The next year he took the Vinegrove circuit, with eight churches, which were scattered over a large territory. Here he had to walk a great deal; this, with other exposures, greatly impaired his health, yet he had great success and the churches prospered under his ministry; for Brother Wilson was a minister of full salvation and never compromised, although he had much opposition. His preaching was not confined to churches, but he preached in homes, courthouses, tents, and wherever he had an opportunity. He was a man of sincere trustfulness, open-hearted and candid, with convictions and courage to stand by them. He was a holy man, a man of prayer, and a successful fisher of men. He preached with plainness and unction. He was a fearless presenter of the truth, and did not shun to declare both regeneration and entire sanctification.

On September 11, 1893, his wife died, and at the end of the conference year he entered the evangelistic work, preaching mostly in cities and small towns. Sometimes a church would oppose him; if so he would secure a tent or engage the courthouse, for the people were anxious to hear this gospel wherever he went, and many souls were led to Jesus as he continued to present this full salvation. This traveling and change of conditions kept him in very poor health, consequently after about three years of evangelistic work he again entered the pastoral work.

On June 17, 1896, he was married to Miss Sarah Ragsdale, of Paducah, Kentucky. To this union five children were born, four of whom are still living. One little girl has gone to be with Jesus. In 1903 Brother Wilson joined the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, where he labored until his death. In April, 1905, he came to California. He had no place to preach when he arrived, but as he was a man who did things, he went to Long Beach, held a six weeks' revival, organized a church there and became the pastor. After the assembly he took the church in Upland, California, where he spent three very successful years as pastor. In 1911 he resigned his church at Pasadena, California, to enter the evangelistic work, when he was elected to the superintendency of the Southern California District, where he served with great efficiency for four years. In the meantime Brother Wilson was connected with our University as a member of the Board of Trustees, and showed much interest in the upbuilding of the institution. He seemed to have an insight into the need of education, and we often heard him encouraging the preacher boys to make a thorough preparation and then stand true to their calling, whatever it cost. In the last General Assembly, which met in Kansas City, September, 1915, he was elected one of the four General Superintendents. In this capacity he was serving when he died at his home in Pasadena, December 19, 1915.

Source: A Sketch entitled: "Life of Rev. W. C. Wilson" by M. O. Childress found in "Life Sketches of Two Great Religious Leaders Who Were Rich in Good Deeds" published in 1916 by the Associated Student Body of Nazarene University, Pasadena, California (The two leaders were: P. F. Bresee and W. C. Wilson.)

* * * * *

THE END