

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1993--2002 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

ISAAC C. HUNTER

While at Pomeroy, in Meigs county, I heard of the illness of Rev, Isaac C. Hunter, and early on Monday morning I started for his residence in the town of Gallipolis. On my arrival I found him much better, and his friends all encouraged to hope for his speedy recovery. However, we were all doomed to a sore disappointment. He spent a feverish, restless night, and was considerably annoyed by a severe cough. His disease was inflammation of the lungs. On Tuesday morning, during prayers, he seemed much engaged in prayer for himself, and often responded audibly to petitions offered by us.

On arising from our knees he took my hand in his, and in answer to my inquiry, "Brother Hunter, how have you enjoyed yourself during your affliction?" he responded with a smile, "Very well, very well, indeed. Ah! brother Gaddis, I sought and found the Lord in my youth, and have not only given him the morning but noon also. Yes, I have spent the prime of my life in his service, and I feel that he sustains me now. For twenty-three years I have labored hard in his vineyard, and never lost one appointment on account of ill health. Sometimes I have felt like writing bitter things against myself for laboring so hard; but upon a review of the whole I do not regret it now. During the past winter I labored unusually hard upon my district; but then God has blessed my labors, and we have had glorious revivals."

He seemed cheerful, and continued to speak of his religious state for more than an hour. Not long after this he was seized with a violent spell of coughing, which lasted nearly thirty minutes. Although he was a man of great muscular power, this paroxysm quite prostrated him. This was soon followed by still more unfavorable symptoms and signs of approaching dissolution. He seemed very anxious, as he said, "to know the worst of his case; and after speaking with his family on the subject he requested Doctor Morgan, his attending physician, to hold a consultation in his room with all the doctors in the place. They were summoned immediately, and after spending more than one hour together in close consultation, they rose up, one at a time, and quietly left the room without making known to brother Hunter the result of their deliberations.

I was sitting in the parlor below as the last one of their number was about to depart. Sister Hunter accosted him as follows: "Now, sir, I can not let you go till you tell me whether you think Mr. Hunter will die or not." He replied, "Well, madam, I am sorry to tell you that it is our united opinion that he will not recover from this attack." This deeply affected her, and she went upstairs and burst into tears she took her seat on the foot of his bed.

As I approached his bedside he took my hand in his and said, "Well, brother Gaddis, they think it doubtful whether I will recover, do they not?" I then replied, "I will now do with you, brother Hunter, as I wish my friends to do with me when they consider me dangerously ill -- not to conceal it from me, but let me know my true condition." To which he calmly replied, "I hope you will do so." I then informed him that it was their united opinion, that his recovery was extremely doubtful, but his attending physician had some hope yet.

This was a solemn hour, never to be forgotten. He lay calm and composed for some time, apparently wrapped up in profound meditation. I then ventured to ask him the following question: "Brother Hunter, in view of approaching dissolution, do you still feel your confidence firm and unshaken in God?" To which he responded, "O yes, I feel that the Lord is my portion," and then added, "I want you all to pray for me now." And then he placed his hands upon his breast, and lifted his eyes toward heaven and prayed thus with a strong, unfaltering voice: "Now, O Lord, if there is aught of guilt stains, or any impurity yet in my poor heart, cut short the work in righteousness and wash it all away. I know the blood of Jesus is sufficient." He lay still for some moments, and then exclaimed, "I know it! I feel it! This precious blood has cleansed me from all sin!"

He then took hold of my hand and said, with much tenderness, "Now, brother Gaddis, if I die I want you to tell my brethren of the Ohio conference that I love them, yea, I love them in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Yes, I love them better than any set of men on earth. They are the most charitable, generous, and affectionate men that I have ever known on earth." Then looking at his weeping wife and children he said, with great emotion, "Tell them to remember my wife and dear little children."

After a short pause he proceeded to remark: "You know, brother Gaddis, upon most all the subjects brought before conference I generally spoke my mind freely, and if at any time, with some apparent harshness of manner, I seemed to cross the path of my brethren, I loved them none the less. I believe they all thought I was honest and sincere, did they not?" On being assured of the reciprocal good-will of his brethren, he continued to remark, "Were I to live I know I could do a little good and be of some service to my family; but, then, I know the Church can do without me, and God will take care of my family."

His joy was now very great, and he could no longer restrain his feelings or tears, and he cried aloud, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" With his eyes fixed upon heaven he repeated,

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,

And pleasures banish pain.

All o'er those wide, extended plains,
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Son forever reigns,
And scatters night sway."

After which he raised himself up in bed, clapped his hands, and shouted aloud for joy. "O," said he, "I feel much better! Thank God, I feel half well!" He said he was not afraid of death, and the grave had no gloom for him now; and then added, with his usual power of voice,

"An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;
Yet legions of angels can not confine me there."

I bade him adieu the next morning. On Sunday he gave directions concerning his funeral, and for the information of the conference gave the time and place of his birth, and then told his friends he was ready -- "that he could look away over hill and dale, valley and mountain, to the land of everlasting bliss."

After I left brother Hunter he was visited by Rev. Mighil Dustin, who remained with him till he breathed his last.

The following letter from brother Dustin will be read with great interest:

"Dear Brother Gaddis, -- You requested me to give you some account of the last hours of Rev. Isaac C. Hunter.

"His death, as you know, occurred June 27, 1842, in Gallipolis, Ohio. His field of labor at that time was Marietta district, and mine was within the bounds of his district. Having heard of his extreme illness, I started immediately to see him. I reached Gallipolis in the afternoon of the 26th, the day before his death. I found him very ill, and suffering at times most intensely with a pain in his right side. He was in the full possession of all his faculties, and conversed freely and familiarly on different subjects. He seemed most inclined, however, to talk about the condition and prospects of the Church within the bounds of the district.

"He suggested a plan by which the quarterly meetings could be fully supplied with ministerial labor till the close of the conference year. After this he conversed a little in relation to himself. He said he was fully conscious of his imperfections, and had been all his life; but his trust was in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he felt then that Jesus was present and precious to his soul. He said during his ministry he had often found it necessary to preach against erroneous and strange doctrines, and in some of his controversial discourses he had been accused of uncharitableness toward his opponents, and even some of his brethren had not altogether approved of his course in this respect; 'But,' said he, 'in my opposition to false doctrines I have been honest before God. I may have erred in judgment, but it has been my first wish to please God, and then, as far as I could consistently, to please man for his good to edification.'

"He then spoke of his approaching death, but as calmly and deliberately as if he had only been talking of a little journey which he was going to take. He gave full and minute directions in relation to his funeral. He said it would make no difference to him where his ashes lay; it was as near heaven from one place as another; but as he had a son buried at Burlington, it would be best, he thought, that he should be buried there. His friends, he presumed, would prefer it. He said, as the weather was so excessively warm, it would be necessary to make preparations for his burial as soon as possible after his death. He said, with that peculiar energy which was characteristic of him all through life, 'Procure a large skiff and put the corpse on board, and get three strong men, and let them row with all their might till they get there.' None but those who knew Isaac C. Hunter can be fully aware of the emphatic manner in which these words were uttered.

"The next day he was worse. The pain in his side was more acute and intense, and his strength was very much prostrated. His mind, however, was calm and tranquil, and his faith in Christ was unwavering. He said the doctrines which he had preached he believed to be the truths of God, and the religion of the Bible was no cunningly-devised fable. The doctrine of the witness of the Spirit he said was a 'glorious doctrine.' He then quoted the text, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' This was a favorite passage. He often quoted it, and it seems to have made at some time a very deep impression on his mind.

"In the afternoon it was manifest that he had failed very much and was fast sinking. Sometimes he would lie in an apparently-dying condition for half an hour or more at a time and then rouse again. Once, after having waked up from one of those stupors, I asked him if Jesus was still precious. He said, 'Yes, yes.' In a few minutes he sank away again, and we thought we had heard his voice for the last time. He spoke, however, once or twice afterward, but only a word or two at a time. An hour or two more passed away. The day was drawing to a close. The news had spread through town that the presiding elder was dying. Messenger after messenger came softly to the gate and inquired, 'Is he dying?' Every one spoke in a whisper. The whole village seemed still as the house of death. With breathless anxiety the people waited at the gate to hear whether the strong man had yet fallen. I sat by his bedside. Rev. A. M. Alexander was sitting near me. Two physicians were also present, beside the family and some other friends. We were expecting every moment to be the last.

Suddenly he waked up from that death-like stupor, and looked calmly around upon the weeping group. I asked the question, 'Have you still a bright prospect of heaven?' He could not answer in words, for the power of articulation was gone. But there is a language of signs, and sometimes it is more emphatic than verbal communication. It was so on this occasion. A heavenly glow spread all over his countenance; the fire of ecstatic joy flashed from his eye; he looked up, raised his right hand as far as he could reach, and with his fore-finger pointed upward, as much as to say,

'There's my house and portion fair, --
My treasure and my heart are there!'

It was enough. No testimony could be stronger. No demonstration of the power of victorious faith could be more complete.

"He sunk away again, and just as the last rays of the setting sun were seen above the horizon, he passed from earth to heaven.

Source: "Foot-Prints Of An Itinerant" by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis

* * * * *

THE END