



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

The Sanctification of Elliott Hodge

A Short Sketch of My Life

Rev. Elliott Hodge

(Complete in 22 pages)

PREFACE

To all the dear saints of the Most High, greeting. I have been requested by a number of our dear saints of God to write about my hospital experience, telling how the wonderful God of Heaven manifested His great healing power on me when all else failed. But, first, I want to give you a brief sketch of my life while I was in sin and since God saved me from sin.

Now I am not much of a writer, but in my crude way I would like to tell all who would be interested about how deep in sin I went, and about my miraculous conversion to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to whom I give all the glory.

EARLY WANDERINGS

I was born in Bluefield, West Virginia, on the twenty-sixth day of December, 1885. I was the firstborn of Mr. And Mrs. George Hodge. We lived in that part of the country until I was about twelve years old. When we moved to western North Carolina my mother and father separated and, in the course of time, a stepfather came into the home. We moved from North Carolina to Evansville, Indiana. And from this time we went from one place to another.

From Indiana we went to Illinois, and from there to Missouri, then to Arkansas, and then to Kansas. There dear old Mother passed away in the year of 1904. My own father lived one year after that; and as far as I know both died in sin, having never made peace with God. I was left an orphan boy at hardly seventeen years of age with a step father whom I didn't like, and who didn't like me; so we didn't get along together. And from here my career began.

Now, as I said, in the year of 1904, on the fourth day of February, mother passed away; and I left home on the twenty-second of the following February. Having a rather wanderlust feeling, and not having any certain place in view to stop, I went south from a little town named Litchfield, Kansas.

I did not know where I was going, and didn't seem to care much, only just to get away, I felt as though I had no home or friends, no one to look to for advice; I felt as David said he felt. "I looked on my right hand...but refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul," Psalm 142:4. I drifted south aimlessly, and at last stopped at a little town

known as Neosho, Missouri.

I worked there a few days for a former friend of ours, C. C. Peterson, in the house moving business. Still having the roaming fever, as some would call it; still feeling that I had no friends in the world, and not knowing how to make friends, I went again, I stopped this time at a town called Denning, Arkansas. We had lived there before when I was but a boy, and I thought perhaps I might find someone there that I knew. So I went to work in the coal mines at that place, making what was then called a road stake. I felt that I just must go on, feeling that I never wanted to stop. No one seemed to care for me. Not very many kind words had been given me since mother died, and by this time I had begun to realize what a mother meant to a boy or a girl in this life. With no home and nowhere to go, and no real friends, I decided to make another move.

Listen, if you never were in this condition, you can not realize the longing that comes to a boy's heart when he finds himself homeless and friendless in this great big round world. So with no object what ever in view, one evening about three o'clock I went to the headquarters of the Coal and Coke Company where I was employed, drew my time and paid my board, then started once more on my wandering journey.

That night I stopped in Atlas, Arkansas, where I went to a circus owned and controlled by Busby Brothers. This show was known as The Busby Brother's One Ring Circus. While the performance was going on that night, my curiosity was aroused. I thought I would like to travel with the show.

I wondered what part I could play in the circus. I found out who the manager was and what he looked like, and I approached him in a boylike way. You see, people, all this was new to me; and up to this time I didn't realize how big and wide the world is that we live in.

When I found the manager, I hardly knew what to say to him, so I rather timidly asked him if he needed more hands. He looked my frail form over and asked me in a rather gruff voice, "Where do you live, boy?" I answered, "Anywhere." Then he asked me where I was going. Again I gave him the answer, "Anywhere." He then said to me, "What can you do, young man?" He still looked at me as if he didn't care whether I lived or not. I told him that I could do a little of anything that anyone else could do a whole lot of. He then asked me how much I weighed. I said, "About 130 pounds."

Looking me over three or four more times he called to another gruff-looking man who seemed to be a foreman of some kind, and told him to come over. "Jerry," he said, "have you got a place you could put this kid?" He looked me over and asked me a long string of questions that I just answered at random. "Son," he said, "I am going to put you with the Kansas gang. I don't believe you can do very much, but you look like you got a lot of nerve; so I am going to give you a try-out anyhow."

So I went to work for the Busby Brothers One Ring Circus. It was my first experience in the show business. Everybody seemed to be in a hurry. No one seemed to have a kind word or anything that seemed encouraging for me, so an hour or two of real labor driving stakes with sixteen-pound sledge hammers, lifting big bundles of canvas, putting big poles up, unwinding big ropes, and having everyone curse me made me think more of dear old mother than ever before.

The tent was pitched and the seats put up, and we were called to what is known as "chow" in the circus world. After supper we were stationed around the big tent with a club in our hands, watching for little boys that were going to crawl under the tent. That night, when the show was still in progress, we started to tear down and get things ready for shipment to the next place we were to show, After everything was down, it was loaded and hauled to the train and taken to Van Buren, Arkansas, our next stop, and the same performance of work was repeated.

Now time would fail me to tell you every place I went with that show, and of all the hard knocks and hard questions and gruff answers that came my way. All this time I was wondering what would ever become of me now that I didn't even have any one that I could tell my troubles to. How my head ached! How I longed to see dear old mother again or to have someone to go to for a kind word or friendly advice!

Finally, when I was tired of the circus business, and longing for a change of scenery and occupation, we showed in Mena, Arkansas. While our show was in progress, I didn't have very much to do and I strolled around through the show grounds to find someone who would speak friendly to me, just one time. Finally I came up to the front of a show where a man was making a speech on what he had to show in his little place. I listened for awhile and I thought that it might be a good place for me if I could sign up with him.

When the man had ended his talk and the people were told that the admission was ten cents, they began to file in. This man looked on me kindly, eyed me up and down, and said, "Go on in, if you want to." I went in; and when I came back out, this man touched me on the shoulder and asked me what I was doing. I told him who I was with, He remarked that they didn't pay much. I told him they didn't. He told me that, if I could do what he wanted me to, he would like to have me go with him.

He asked me if I could sing, and I told him I could just a little; and he asked me if I could dance.

When I told him I could both sing and dance, he said he believed that he could use me. So then and there I signed up with Otis Larue's Snake Show. This man afterwards proved to be a real friend. So accordingly I played the role of a comedian.

We toured through Texas and Arkansas until winter; then we quartered in his home town, Selestee, Texas. Now, if I remember right, we went into quarters late in October; and, of course, all the company must seek an occupation for a livelihood until spring when the shows would open again.

Larue said to me, "You had better stay with me awhile. I think I can find things around here for you to do, and perhaps you can find work in the cotton mills until spring because I hate to let you go."

For the next month I picked up odd jobs around town until one morning when I got up to go to work my head seemed all in a whirl. I knew something was wrong. I thought perhaps I might have been out a little late the night before, and that was the reason I felt so bad. I tried to eat breakfast, but nothing suited me; so I walked uptown, feeling very bad. I strolled into a doctor's office and told him how I felt. He felt my pulse and examined me, and said, "Young man, where do you live?" I told him that I lived in Crawford County, Kansas, when I was at home.

He asked me if I had any friends or relatives there in the town, and I told him I didn't have any relatives but was staying with a man that I had worked for. He said, "Now look here, you may not know it, but you are a very sick boy. I want you to go home, or where you are staying, and go to bed, perhaps you will be over this in a few days if you are lucky.

He gave me a lot of medicine, and I went back to my boarding place. I realized before I got back that I was very sick, because I had to stop and rest three or four times while going those three or four blocks. When I got there, I went right to bed. The folks at the house asked me what was wrong, and I told them that I was just about as full of malaria and other fevers as I could get. From that minute I realized that I was not wanted at that place. Then I thought, "Oh, for dear old mother!" And for the next two weeks if that thought came to my mind once, it was there a thousand times.

A TEMPORARY STAY AT PARIS, TEXAS

After a couple of weeks, fate turned my way; and I got up, walked down to the switch yards—going some where, I did not know where. I again realized that I had no friends. By that time, it was up well in December, and that northern Texas wind was coming down across the prairie like some of the gushing blizzards that I had seen; and I thought, "Oh, if I had just one dollar or some place where I could earn one just now!" But I didn't have it, so I just

must let fate take its course now, and wait for what seemed to be the end.

About dusk that night (that I won't forget very soon) I crawled into a box car full of hay, and after awhile I realized that I was moving. I couldn't tell which way I was going but I knew that I was going some place. About nine o'clock the train stopped, and I got out of the car and found myself in Paris, Texas, a town near the northern boundary of the state. Not knowing where to go, I started out north.

I did not know where I was going to stay that night, but in a few minutes I found myself on the square. There were saloons on both side of me, and a restaurant or two down the street.

In a restaurant men and women were having lunch, and men were drinking as though they were having a good time. I walked into the saloon and sat down behind the stove. I looked the crowd over wondering if one of those men would give me as much as twenty-five cents, the price of a meal at that time.

As this did not seem probable, after sizing up the crowd, and having gotten warm by that time, I walked out into the street again. The night was very cold; in fact I don't believe I ever saw a colder night in Texas. It had been snowing all day and was still snowing thick and fast. The wind was howling from the north, and my summer clothing didn't keep me very warm. I felt as though I would like to have traded it off. I stood in the saloon door a few minutes, looking up and down the street, wondering which way to turn or who to speak to. I thought this was a very cruel old world and that no one in it cared whether I lived or not.

All this time my mind would drift back to my boyhood days when mother and father were living.

It really made me sick to think of my condition; but I knew that something must be done soon, so I stepped out into the snow and started up the street. Just as I got to the corner a friendly looking man stood there by a peculiar looking little wagon. As nearly as I could describe that wagon it was the running gears of a large baby buggy. The bed was made out of a box about eighteen inches wide and about eighteen inches deep and, as well as I remember, about three feet long.

This man smiled and spoke rather kindly to me and said something like this, "Little cold tonight!" "Yes," I said, "especially to someone who still has on his summer clothing." As I walked on, I couldn't help but look back at him. I had gone but a few steps when I had the feeling that I should go back and talk to that man and find out more about him, because he had such a friendly look on his face. So accordingly I turned around and went back.

As I passed him, he asked me if I was looking for someone; and I told him "Yes and no." When he asked me where I lived, I said to him, "Mister, you are the friendliest talking man I have seen in a long time, so I am going to tell you a few things and ask your advice about them." I told him as near as I could where I had been in the last three or four months, where I had come from that night, and all about it.

He said, "Boy, I feel sorry for you, and I know what you need. Are you hungry? Yes, you are hungry and tired and cold and sleepy, now aren't you?" I said, "Mister, you sure hit it." He then told me that if I could eat what he could give me, he was going to feed me all the hot tamales that I could eat. I said, "Mister, I never saw one of those things, but if they are good to eat set some of them out here."

So he grinned rather friendly and said he would set them out as I ate them, because if they get cold they are not good. So I ate the half dozen that he set out for me, after he had showed me how to take the corn shucks off them and just what part I was to eat. To me that was one real supper. I looked up at him rather apologetically, and he told me to go right on, that he loved to see me eat. So I believe I ate three dozen hot tamales that night. The man asked me my name; and when I had told him, he said, "I don't believe you can find a place to stay, so you had better go home with me tonight." I looked around about me and wondered if it could really be true that God or somebody else had arranged it so that I was going to have a place to stay that night. Of course I accepted the invitation. I didn't know what kind of place it was, and didn't care much; so in the course of about one-half hour he said that we had better turn in for the night. So we started to his home.

After we had walked about eight or nine blocks, we came to a comfortable looking residence in the west part of the town. Just before we got to the house he asked me again what my name was; and I told him to call me Tom Jenkins.

You see I was going under my stepfather's name at that time. That accounts for the Jenkins part of this story. We approached the house, and he left his little buggy over on one side of the walk leading up to the house, opened the door, stepped back, and told me to go in and to feel that I was at home. My, that sounded good!

We went into what proved to be the dining room of that house. The light was lit and, sitting by the dining room table, sewing, was a large middle-aged lady who, upon our entering the room, looked over her glasses and spoke in a motherly way, "Good evening." Now this man's name was James Crowson. He said, "Katy, I brought home a friend of ours from up in Kansas. I want you to meet Mr. Jenkins." We greeted each other and, really, I can't tell just how I received the introduction because the change in the run of things had taken place so quickly, and everything seemed so entirely different from the pace I had made before, that I suppose I acted rather queer.

Upon being invited, I took a big rocking chair behind the stove, and he began to relate just how he had met me and told all about it. Of course, she wanted to know about my mother and father. As you know, the story was sad that I had to tell; and seeing she really wanted to know, I opened my heart to her. It seemed as though my new-found friends had taken such an interest in me that I must tell them all about myself. After talking awhile and discussing a little of my history, she said that she supposed we would like a warm cup of coffee and that she never could tell just who Jim would bring home with him, and they always liked a cup of coffee.

She told Jim to entertain me while she got us a small lunch. Now listen, right then is when I realized that there were some good people in this world, anyhow. When we had a warm cup of coffee and a lunch, he told me that I might sleep in a room just off the dining room. The good old lady lit the light in the room, turned down the covers in of a large feather bed, and spoke so kindly to me that I wanted to stay there all the rest of my life. She told me that I might retire any time I wanted to; and, of course, I was ready right then, and I felt very much in the need of sleep.

Upon entering the room and closing the door, I sat down on the side of the bed and took off my shoes. I still wondered what kind of people I had met up with; they seemed so kindhearted, so different from anyone I had met before since I had left home. Long after I retired, I lay awake still thinking about my new-found friends, and wondering how long this would last until finally, I don't know what time it was, I fell into a peaceful sleep.

The next morning it was very cold, and I had no object in view, whatever. I did not want to go home, and didn't care about going to work because I didn't know what I could do. I knew just this much—I had found what I thought was a real friend. Mr. Crowson asked me what kind of trade I had, and I told him that I was a coal miner. "How long have you worked in the mines?" he then asked me. "I went to work in the mines when I was about twelve years old," I replied.

He then asked if I knew where I was going or if I had a job in view. When I told him I didn't know where I was going and didn't care where I went, just so I didn't go home, of course they both seemed interested and they asked me why I didn't want to go home. I told them that I really didn't have a home. They seemed so good to me that I opened my heart and told them my whole history.

I couldn't help letting a few tears fall for I really thought I had no home and no friends. (Now right here, my friends, I want to say this much—when you have lost your mother, you have lost your best friend.) As I told them my story, they looked very thoughtful and sad, and all they could say was, "Well, well." Mrs. Crowson sat with tears in her eyes, and Mr. Crowson said to me, "Now look here, son, I believe I can fix it so you can stay here this winter with us and be just one of the family.

I will fix up another wagon, and you can take it and go down by the depot, and we will run two wagons instead of one. I will give you half of what you make, and you can board with me, and your board won't cost you anything, and half of the money you take in will be yours."

Now, I still had a roaming feeling, and really couldn't get away from that feeling. I wanted to stay with them, but I wanted to go on, too. I looked out on that blizzard still coming from the north; it was so cold that you could hear a horse walk through the snow a block away. I studied the situation over, and I asked myself which would be better for me.

Mr. Crowson told me to study it over very carefully. “Because, of course, I can’t use you when spring comes as trade will go down so as to make only enough trade for one wagon. I feel sorry for you, and I really want to help you, and that is the only way I know of to do it,” he said.

So I looked once more out on the blizzard and wondered how I would like to sell hot tamales, because I really didn’t see much to be made at it. But when I thought of the nice warm bed I would have every night and the real food I would have to eat, I decided to stay. I told them that I didn’t know a thing about selling hot tamales; the only thing I knew about them was that they were good to eat.

They assured me that this would be all right and that it would be a good way for me to get some clothes. They said they thought I had made a wise choice. So the matter was settled, and Jim and I went down and got our supplies for the day so that we could make our hot tamales. About three o’clock that afternoon we had them all ready, and I pushed my wagon down in front of the depot to sell my load.

Before eight o’clock that night I had sold out, and I had about \$1.75 for myself. This seemed a lot to me because I had been working for a dollar a day. But I would work for fifty cents a day before I would steal, because, when I was about eight years old, my mother taught me a real lesson to the tune of a hickory stick for stealing just one big white onion.

I worked at this job until spring, and then there was not enough business for two wagons. I had a little money saved up, and my clothes were good, so one morning in March I told the Crowsons that I believed I would try to see some more of the world. So after receiving an invitation to come back to see them whenever I wanted to, I left my good friends and went down to the depot. Now, it was out of the question for me to pay train fare anywhere, but I caught what was then an outgoing train to Hugo, Oklahoma.

CONTINUED WANDERINGS

I went from Hugo to Mena, Oklahoma; and as well as I remember, I met a young fellow on the road by the name of Harvey whom I had met before in Denning, Arkansas. Together we went back to Denning, and from there back into Texas, just roaming around until we finally got down into a town known as Texarkana. Here Harvey and I separated, and I got acquainted with another young man by the name of Bailey. He suggested that we go east toward Hot Springs, and I said, “All right, it doesn’t make any difference to me.”

So we started on our way. Bailey suggested that we go down to the depot and see if we could get a train out. He said that we couldn’t stay there long; for if the police found out that we were on the road and out of a job they would put us in the workhouse. So accordingly we went down to the depot, and walked inside.

Now, I had always believed in that black cat story, that when a black cat crosses your path you will have bad luck. As we were coming to the depot, a great big black cat ran in front of us. I wanted to turn back, but Bailey said that I was a fool and that he didn’t believe God would make a big world like this and allow a black cat to rule it. So we laughed and went on. But all his laughing and making fun of me couldn’t get my mind off that cat. And we were in the depot about five minutes when three men stepped inside.

The room was a large one with two doors to it; and two of the men who came in stationed themselves, one at each door, while the third asked every one in the depot where he was going and what train he was taking and where he lived. When he found out we were all on the road, he lined all of us up and showed us a star on his coat and marched us up to the city jail, nineteen of us, and locked us all up.

Now this was in the winter time, and that jail was very cold; and you can imagine how I felt being in jail for the first

time. I didn't sleep much that night because I kept wondering what fate had for me now. About nine o'clock the next morning it seemed to me as though the whole police force came into the jail and told all of us to line up outside. They said that we were going up to the judge's office for a preliminary trial.

We were marched to the city hall, and a long string of questions was asked each prisoner. Finally my name was called, and I stepped up before the judge. He looked at me rather hard and said, "Lad, where do you live?" I told him that I lived in Litchfield, Kansas, when I was at home. He then told me that I was charged with vagrancy and for stealing my way on freight trains, and asked me if I was guilty or not guilty.

I said, "Judge, I suppose I am guilty." "Where were you going when the police arrested you?" he asked. When I told him that I didn't know, he asked where I would go if he turned me loose. "I'll do my best to get home," I quickly answered. "Young man," said the judge, "this is something I hardly ever do, but I am going to turn you loose and see that you go home." And so with some good fatherly advice he told me that home was the best place for me to go. But he didn't know that I really had no home.

A CAREER IN THE ARMY AND IN PRIZE FIGHTING

I left Texarkana and went north toward Kansas, and in about a week from that time I came back to my old home town. Everyone seemed glad to see me, and I was glad to see them; but I wasn't satisfied because I still had the roaming fever. I worked in the coal mines there for three or four months, and during this time I got acquainted with a young man by the name of Louis. We were rather good chums, and he said to me one day, "Jenks, let's you and me join the army."

"Well," I said, "I might as well do that, as I have tried everything else there is to do." I wanted something to satisfy my soul, and I had never found it. We went to Pittsburg, Kansas, and applied for enlistment and were sent to the Jefferson Barracks. On January 29, 1908, I was put in the United States Army, in the branch of the service called the coast artillery.

Of course, this proved to be the end of my road fever because, once in the army, you have to serve your term out. I realized that my tramping days were over. I thought I made a mistake, because I had to be confined to one place longer than I had ever been before; but I resolved to make the best of it.

I really had an aim in life now. It would take all my time to tell you all that happened during those three years of enlistment; but in a few words I'll say that I did a lot of gambling, a lot of drinking, and went from, what seemed to me, bad to worse.

I took up prize fighting, whipped some good men, and got some hard whippings. But, anyway, I stayed three years and went through some hardships that are too numerous to mention. I saw many things and did many things that I thought at that time were a lot of enjoyment, but yet there was something that I had longed for that I had never found.

Just before the expiration of my term of service the Commander of St. Columbia, Washington, called me and had a talk with me. During these three years I had gained many titles or ratings; and when I met the officer, he said to me, "I notice that your term of service is about up. What do you think you will do? Are you going to enlist?"

"Well, I was thinking about it," I said. "We need you," he said, "and we must have you with us."

I told him that I wanted to go home and see my people. He said he would fix that, and he said he would give me three months, and added, "We will raise your salary three dollars on the month." I told him I had decided not to re-enlist at the present time but if in the allotted time I did decide to re-enlist I would join his company.

I went to Mulberry, Kansas. I could see many good times before me, and many people had me all fixed for a prize

fight, and it wasn't long until there was fighting match for me. I was to fight Tom Curly of Scamon, Kansas. Of course, we had to have some training so I went right in and trained for the fight. May 4, 1911, I fought my last prize fight. The fight lasted five rounds, and I won; but it was by a knock-out.

MARRIAGE AND FINAL BOUTS OF DRINKING

Now I had met up with a young lady by the name of Iva Prettyman, and on the thirteenth day of May we were married. In a little over a year our first baby was born. He lived just seven months and five days, and somehow God saw fit to take him from us. In about another year our second child was born, and we were happy, so to speak, again.

As I have told you before, I was a hard drinker and had become so bad that I would take the last fifty cents out of the house and spend it for drink and gamble it away. Of course, the wife would rebuke me for it, and I would promise to stop but I couldn't. There were lots of times that I would have given anything to stop drinking, smoking, chewing, and gambling of every kind; but it seemed there was no remedy for me. This just shows you how far in sin I had gone. Time would fail me to tell you of all the bad deeds I had done.

I had joined the Order of Odd Fellows and was going at awful speed. After lodge one New Year's Eve I was starting home when I happened to think of a big party that the boys were going to have, so I went, There were some good debates there, and I had taken part in some of them. One question was "Resolved that whiskey is more destructive to mankind that it ever was"; and I was given the decision on the debate.

Just in the room next to us there were sixteen and a half barrels of beer and eight gallon kegs of whiskey and all the eats that we could possibly want; so after the debate we went into that room, and I thought I would take just a few drinks and then go home and say that I went over New Year's without getting drunk. But by six o'clock the next morning we had that beer all drunk and were trying to get more. It was about eleven o'clock when I got home with one shoe on and one off, and I had lost my hat and was covered with mud from the soles of my feet to my crown. My wife had just stepped over to her mother's and had not seen me come staggering home.

I went into the house; and when she got there I was lying on the bed on top of her clean bedspread, mud all over. About eight o'clock that night I came to, and it seemed as though my head would burst.

My wife was sitting by me, crying, bathing my head with water first hot and then cold. I was still just as I had come in; and she said that she had left me just as I was so I could see how I looked. And she said to me, "Are you ever going to quit drinking? Am I going to have to live this way all my life? I wish you could have seen yourself today as you came in; I know you would never do this again."

Now I don't believe I had ever suffered so much as I was suffering right then. It seemed as though my head would burst wide open. I looked up into Ivy's face, and she was crying, and again I looked at my clothes and felt the mud in my hair, and I said, "Ivy, I am going to tell you something I never told anyone in my life. I'll never do it again." And I have always kept my word.

CONVERSION

In about seven or eight months after that there came to Mulberry a tabernacle meeting. The workers were known as the Firebrands. The wife began to beg me to go; she said they were having lots of fun, and she would like to go if I would. So we went, and it seemed right interesting that night. I thought they were the most funny acting people I had ever seen. There was a woman preacher by the name of Nellie Johnson; and when she got up to preach, I

thought she was telling that whole crowd everything I had ever done. Of course, I had to go back again two or three nights.

To my great surprise, when she gave the call for people to come to the altar and seek God, who should go up there but one of my friends whose name was Floyd Martin? We always called him Dub for short. He and I were both crap shooters and gamblers and just all-round rough necks. When I saw him going up there, I thought, "Well, of all the crazy people in this world, there goes old Martin joining that crazy outfit." I said, "If old Martin gets it, and it makes a man out of him, the old woman knows what she is talking about."

The place was crowded, and everyone was watching old Martin. They had what we call the mourner's bench, with straw all around it, where people went and knelt down and prayed. All at once old Martin jumped as high as he could and let out such an awful yell that I thought he was going crazy. He ran and jumped and kicked and yelled. I never heard such screams in my life before. He looked back over the crowd and seemed to single me out, and he ran back there and patted me on the back and shook me so hard that I tried to get away from him.

He cried and told me that he had it now; and from that day on I, too, wanted what he had. Of course, I got mad at him because he had quit the crowd and would not run with us any more. It seemed to me that it was the height of foolishness, the way he was acting; but through all the knocks that we gave him that boy stood true. At that time, although I never let anyone know it, I wished lots of times that I had the Christ he had; but for eight or nine months I went on as I had been.

One night God called him to preach the Gospel, and he started a service in our own home town.

He lived in Crowburg at that time, which is about two and one-half miles west of Mulberry. He started this meeting in what was known as the Citizen's Hall. I decided one night to go over and hear what he had to say as I had talked to him a great deal during those eight or nine months.

When I stepped into that meeting house, I saw that he was altogether a different man. The house was full when the meeting started. The meeting was a great success, and the air seemed to be filled with the Spirit of the Christ. It seemed to me that it was a long time until the meeting started the next night; I just could hardly wait until time to go. Martin came back to me and said that he was going to pray for me and that he believed God was going to save me. I told him that I was too mean, but he said that God had saved him and that he was just like me before that time. I told him to go ahead and pray if he thought it would do any good.

We went to meeting the next night, and I never heard such preaching, and I felt that there was going to be a change of some kind in my life. Martin came back to me and said, "Tonight is your night." I started toward the altar, but I don't just remember getting there. I didn't even remember kneeling down, but that night I prayed my best prayer; and God listened and in a short time I found what I had longed for all these years.

The glory of God flooded every part of my soul. God had really saved me from sin. Everybody seemed to be so glad that the change had come over my life, and Brother Martin went around and around waving his arms and shouting, "Glory to God."

I went home that night feeling as I had never felt before, and everything seemed beautiful around me, and life took on a new meaning to me. The next night my wife was converted. Our home now was a happy home. We established a family altar, and everything seemed to be blessed with the glory of God.

SANCTIFICATION AND BEGINNING IN THE MINISTRY

One night in January, 1919, God sanctified me wholly. Now God began to call me into the ministry, and I began to

lead the prayer meetings. God was wonderfully blessing our home, and I knew that I had found the thing that my soul had longed for ever since I was just a boy. The things that I used to enjoy and love were nothing to me now, and the work of God had taken their place.

One day I received a letter from Brother Martin asking me to come to Sherman City, Kansas. He said that they were holding a meeting there and that they wanted me to help them. On the Thursday afternoon before Easter Sunday I went to Sherman City where the Gospel story, both in sermon and in song was being told to that part of the lost world. Everyone seemed glad to see me. Almost everyone wanted me to come home with him and stay all night. This was quite a change from the way it had been. On Easter Sunday night I rose to my feet to testify; and before I knew what was going on, God had, for the first time, anointed me to preach the great Gospel of Christ.

As I was holding a revival service in Arcadia, Kansas, one afternoon I went down to the Frisco depot to meet a dear brother in the Lord who was coming in on the train. While waiting for the train, I walked around to the other side of the depot and there saw a man sitting on one of the tracks. He looked as though he had never had a friend in all his life. The knees of his pants were out, the elbows of his coat sleeves were ragged, and his shoes were almost gone.

I knew by his appearance that he was a tramp, so with all the love I could muster up I walked up to him and spoke as kindly as I knew how. I asked him if he lived in Arcadia, and he told me that he had no home. He told me he was going to Tennessee where some of his folks were.

I asked him if he had ever been converted or if he knew anything about religion. He seemed interested at once, and said, "Mister, you are the first man that has mentioned that to me for years.

Twenty years ago my mother died, when I was about seventeen years old; and she was one of those old-fashioned Methodists. I heard her shout so many times, and when she died, I promised her that some day I would take the road she took, but I never have."

"Would you like to?" I asked him. He said he would if he hadn't gone so far that it was too late.

I told him that I was conducting a meeting in that big church on the hill, and that he should forget about looking for a train and just think about his soul's welfare and to come up to church that night.

He said that he was not fit to go and that his clothes were not fit to wear.

I told him that he couldn't take those clothes to Heaven with him, and asked him to come on and go up there. I told him that at one time I was in the same shape that he now was, and that God had delivered me and told me to tell it to others. I told him that I knew God would save him if he would only give Him a chance.

That night as the church was filling up, my eyes were searching for that one man. As the service started, he came in and sat down way in the back of the house. That night God gave us a grand service, and sinners began to come to the altar to pray; but my mind was on that man, so accordingly I went back and spoke to him encouragingly and invited him to come and kneel and pray for his soul.

I saw that he wanted to come but that something was holding him, and I knew it was his clothes.

I told him not to mind his clothes but to come on with me. He arose and made his way to the altar and knelt in humble submission to his God. He began to shout, and rose to his feet with the glory of God on his face and said, "I can meet mother some day in the skies."

If you could just realize what great happiness that man had at that time! That night I made up my mind and made a vow to God to do my best to see many more of this kind saved. I have had many trials, but so far I have managed to keep this vow.

God has kept me through all the trials and hard places. You see, dear reader, a great many people that are professing religion will tell you that it is impossible to live above sin. I had often said that myself before the Lord saved me; but after I received the Christ of the Bible into my heart, I changed my mind. I tried to find the place in the Bible where it says, "He that saith he liveth and sinneth not is a liar and the truth is not in him."

But, dear reader, it just isn't there, and I was actually living above sin. God would come down every now and then

and bless my soul. I would shout the victory in the face of the devil, and people could never tell me any more that I had to sin just a little whether I wanted to or not, You see, when folks are serving the devil he gets them into such habits—lying, cursing, telling smutty stories, chewing, smoking, getting angry, wanting to kill, committing all kinds of other mean things. But when we serve God, we live above sin; our habits are completely changed and, instead of sinning unto death, we have righteousness unto everlasting life. Oh, beloved souls, all things work together for good to them that love God; and I love Him with all my heart.

He surely has been good to me, and I have always found a friend in time of need. Always when I need Him the most, He comes in time; and I have learned to believe Him and all that He said in His Word. Of course, all has not been smooth sailing for me; but out of every temptation He has promised to make a way of escape, (1 Cor. 10:13) and He can keep everyone that will come to Him.

People will tell you that the days of miracles are over; but, dear reader, if you are not saved just come to Jesus and be saved and you will say a miracle has been performed on your soul. He is still in the soul-saving, heart-changing business. He has delivered me out of so many hard places and has kept me when the enemy has tried to drag me down. I got all of Egypt I wanted while I was there, and I don't mean to go back down there. God brought me out with a high hand, and I have been over in the land of Canaan almost ever since. Praise God forever!

He will help you to convince skeptics and infidels and Holiness fighters that there is a reality in salvation. He can “do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). I was working in the coal mines at the town of Crawsburg, and my boss was an infidel. He got very angry when I was converted, and he said there was nothing to religion and there was no heaven or hell. The more I testified to him, the more he would rage about it. He would laugh and scoff at salvation; and some of the men would believe him, and some would wonder which one of us to believe.

I knew what God had done for me. I was a mule driver, and this infidel boss of mine wanted to change me with another driver because the other man was not giving satisfaction at the place where he was. It was a very dangerous place. It was a rule that the older man didn't have to change unless he wanted to; and as I was the oldest man there, it was up to me whether I made the change or not.

The boss came to me one day and said, “Hodge, that man is not getting along very well with those mules over there, and I wish you would change with him. “Of course,” he said, “you don't have to unless you want to, but you would be doing me a great favor if you would do it.”

Now God had taught me not to be contentious, so I told him that if he thought it would change with him.” “Of course,” he said, would change. We made the change—he took my team and I took his. The danger of this place was that the cars of coal we had to haul ran on a track, and in coming out with them it was hard for the team to outrun them going down a hill. I had to shine a light for them to go by; and one day while we were going down this hill, my light went out and left us in total darkness. The largest mule hit his head against the side of the entry and fell backward on me, completely covering me up.

My body was crushed down in the coal, and the mule's hames were pressing down into my temple. About 1200 pounds were holding me down. There was no one near me, and I was really in need of help but with no way to get it but from God. Oh, such a friend is He! So I began to pray, and it seemed all at once some unseen power raised the mule up just enough to let me crawl out and laid him back down.

As I crawled out, I said, “Thank You, Jesus.” After a while the infidel boss came to hunt me; and when he found me, he said, “How did it happen, Hodge?” When I told him, he said, “Well, how in the world did you get out of there?” I told him that God helped me. He asked me who was with me, and I told him Jesus and the mules. He said, “Now, Hodge, you surely couldn't have done it yourself.” When I told him just how it was, he believed and was convinced that there is a God in Heaven, and he never did fight God any more.

I said, “Lord, if that is the way you had of convincing a Holiness fighter, I am satisfied even if I am bruised up a little.” God will give you a chance to prove Him if you will obey His voice.

FRIENDSHIP WITH ED TIMMONS

About this time I got a letter from Independence, Kansas, asking me to come and hold a meeting there. On arriving, I found the saints all anxious to see me. They were having some good meetings; and attending those meetings were men and women who had light on Holiness but they did not come right out and say so. They were willing to do anything to help the Holiness work in financial matters and were ready to defend Holiness at any and all times. Among these was a man whom I had noticed many times, and I was told that he had attended meetings at that place ever since Holiness was first preached there. He seemed to be always ready to help in the offering, and all the saints seemed to be interested in his welfare; yet he was a sinner, though he had seen many wonderful miracles performed through the power of God.

It seemed as though this man had a real dislike for me. I had never done him any harm, and had extended him the hand of fellowship. I understood that he had been a real admirer of my old friend, Brother Floyd Martin. When the meetings began, he would listen with all interest to the songs and testimonies of the saints of God; but for some reason or other, when I would take my Bible and start to preach, this man would put on his coat and leave the meeting house.

This, of course, did not trouble me as I had known of lots of people who had left the meetings before. I learned that this man was a traveling salesman who put in most of his time traveling for one of the large wholesale houses of Independence, and was well liked by all the business men of the city. His name was Ed Timmons. I mention his name here because, although he had a great dislike for me, in the course of time God made him the greatest earthly friend I ever had.

About three years after this meeting our Annual Conference was being held at the same church where the meeting was held; and it being New Year's this man, Timmons, was on a vacation and he and his family were attending the Conference. The second night of the Conference there was a great crowd of sinners at the altar seeking God; and to my surprise this traveling salesman was right there crying out for mercy, and almost all eyes were on him. Someone said something like this to me, "It will mean something for that man to get Holiness."

And while we were looking and praying for him, he rose to his feet with the glory of God gleaming in his eyes; and upon seeing me just above him, he threw his arms around me and cried with a great voice, "I am saved." He asked my pardon for the mean thoughts he had about me while I was holding my first meeting there, and I assured him that I had freely forgiven him. He went from one to another in the house, blessing and praising God.

Conference was over in a day or two after that, then Mr. Timmons asked me where I lived. When I told him in Mulberry, Kansas, he said, "What do you do when you are not holding a meeting?" I told him I was working at a garage at that place. He said he was glad to find that out and that he would be over to see me in a few days. He said he might find something better to offer me in the way of making a living. He then told me he was a traveling salesman and that he would like to have a talk with me some time. The people wanted me to stay on and hold a meeting after conference; but I told them that I had some work to look after, and accordingly I went home.

One day while working in the garage, three weeks after the conference, I heard someone at the front of the garage ask if there was a man working there by the name of Hodge, and the manager told him Yes, and that I was back in the garage working on a car. It was no other than my new friend, Timmons.

After we had greeted each other, Mr. Timmons said to me, "It looks pretty hard for a Holiness preacher to have to work in a dirty garage this way." He then offered me a position to start to work for him in my spare time, at a good salary and a commission. He told me that when I wasn't preaching or doing anything else in the service of the Lord, I could have this job. He said that he would look after my work while I was preaching. He gave me thirty days to think it over and decide what I wanted to do.

This looked like a good proposition to me as I wouldn't be under any obligations to him or anyone else. I could stop when I wanted to and start when I wanted to. So after about two months of praying and studying over this matter I went to work for Ed Timmons, as a traveling salesman for the Tyco Oil Company of which Ed Timmons was the general manager.

Mr. Timmons decided to go with me the first week so as to instruct me in salesmanship and to let me know where my territory was. As we were ready to start, he told me that this was to be the one week that I would preach as he had made appointments for me. The first night we stopped at a little church in Fulton, Kansas, and to my surprise I met old Brother Gamble whom I had known before I was saved. He had built this church in Fulton and was just waiting for someone to come and preach for him. We had notified the people that we were coming and they were looking for us.

The next night we were in Rich Hill, Missouri. Upon arriving at the hotel we asked the landlord if there was a meeting of any kind in town; and he told us there was a Latter Day Saint meeting going on, and a Bible Reading. So instead of going to a show or something like that, as we had something different in our souls, we went down to the Bible Classes.

The pastor of the church was teaching the tenth chapter of the Acts, from the twenty-sixth to the forty-fourth verses, and he was trying to teach nothing but water baptism. Brother Timmons and I had answered some of his questions when he asked us if one of us was a preacher, and Brother Timmons told him that I was.

Then he asked me if this was the way I looked at this Scripture— that these people were to receive a spiritual baptism and that the people in modern days were to receive only water baptism. I asked him, "Brother, is this the same baptism that this same Peter was preaching about and that the people received on the day of Pentecost?" He said, "Yes, the same Peter preaching." I said, "This same man said that day, This is for you and your children. Yes, we get it. We must have it. I have it." It seemed as though he didn't know just what to say, and finally he said, "I can't get that interpretation, but we will adjourn the class for the night and we will ask Brother Hodge to preach for us."

Now, I had promised the Lord I would enter every open door; and here to my surprise was a door wide open, so I stepped to the front and preached to those people as I had never preached before.

Before I got through, the people were crying and God was there in truth. The people asked me to come back, but I could see that the pastor didn't care whether I came back or not.

As we left the meeting, I looked at the moon that was just coming up over the hill, and said to Brother Timmons, "Tim, I would like to get on that hilltop and pray." He said, "We have a good car here and we can go." We went to the hilltop, and on our knees on the bare prairie we heard from God. It seemed as though the heavens opened wide and blessed our souls with the fulness of God, and I cried out, "Lord God, guide our car to a red-hot Holiness meeting tomorrow night."

About seven o'clock the next night we drove into a little town called Eldorado Springs. We were told that a meeting was being held there that night. We went in and sat down. The songs of Zion were ringing, and we knew we were in the right place. God was really there. The people invited us back, and we told them we would come if the Lord willed it.

The next night we came to a town called Butler, and we stayed at what is known as the Cottage Hotel managed by a man by the name of Harvey Johnson. We asked him if he knew of a Holiness meeting going on in town, and he said that there was a prayer meeting at Brother Wright's Church.

We went to the meeting. It was wonderful. We were invited back there also, and I have been back, and found a very good friend in Brother Wright. That Saturday, when I went home, I felt that I had had a wonderful week with my new-found friend.

SHOOTING ACCIDENT AND HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE

On the sixth day of November, 1926, my wife and boy and I got into the car and went to visit my wife's sister. About five o'clock we arrived at our destination, and I went out to kill a few squirrels before sundown; my brother-in-law told me to get his shotgun and go into the timber, and I could get a few. I had been out about thirty minutes when, while standing on a big rock near a little stream with the butt of my gun resting on a rock, the gun slipped from my hand and the hammer hit the rock the gun going off and the shot hitting me about the elbow, tearing about nine inches of bone.

The two little boys that were with me began to scream, and I said to the older one, "Go, and get some help." The boy ran for help, and I looked down at my arm; the blood was dripping off, and I began to get sick, I walked down the stream in order to get my feet good and wet as I thought that would keep me from getting sick, They got me to the house, and in about an hour and a half the doctor came. He gave me what first aid he could, and said, "Get him to a hospital as soon as you can as I have done all I can do."

My brother-in-law said to me, "What do you think about it?" I said, "Take me to the Mount Carmel Hospital at Pittsburg, Kansas, and don't stop until you get me there." This was a Catholic hospital, but it was the one nearest my home, and I knew the doctors there.

We sent a telegram to our family doctor at Mulberry, for him to meet us at the hospital. We started to drive, and had gone just about half a mile when the driver ran the car into a stump. The car was damaged, and I was thrown from the back seat into the front seat. They got another car, and took me on. We reached the hospital the next morning about one-thirty. I was taken to the third floor, and the last thing I heard said was, "He has lost so much blood that he can't live."

After awhile I came to myself, and our doctor was there. He asked me some questions and said he would fix me up. I heard him say when he went out, "There's not much hope for him." They took me into the operating room and told me that my arm would have to be taken off. I told them to save it if they could. They stopped the blood and took an X-ray picture of my arm. After looking at the picture the doctors held a consultation and decided it was best to take the arm off.

So about four o'clock that afternoon they took off my right arm. My friend Timmons began to hear of my misfortune and came running to the hospital. Of course, I wanted to see my new friend. The doctor told him all about my arm and how I had pleaded for them not to take it off, but that I had lost so much blood and all that after consulting a number of the best doctors they had decided to take it off.

They found, after the amputation, that some of the wads from the gun had lodged in my shoulder blade and that Gas Phiciles infection had set in. Of course, this didn't mean very much to Brother Timmons because he didn't know what it meant, but, upon being informed that there had never been a case of this kind cured and that the best they could do was to make me comfortable and wait for the end, he saw just how bad it was.

He said, "Surely there is something you can do. We can't let him just lie there and die." The doctor said, "Mr. Timmons, I assure you that everything possible will be done, but I can't give you any hopes." Tim came in then, and he asked me if I knew him. I answered, "Yes." He then asked me how I felt, and I told him that I felt pretty weak. I then said to him, "Tim, you shut that door and come over here. I want you to tell me just what the doctor said about me."

He came over and took my hand in his, and said, "Hodge, old boy, you are a very sick man." I said, "I know I am a very sick man, but that isn't what I asked you. I asked you what the doctor said."

Tim avoided my question as much as possible and referred me to the Doctor who had saved his soul in Independence. He said that Jesus was still on the Throne; but I knew from the sound of his voice and the way he held my hand that as far as any earthly help was concerned Tim had been informed that there were no hopes of my recovery.

My mind wandered back to the time when God had put peace in my soul. It looked very much as though I was going to be called upon to pay the last debt that we have to pay on this earth, and that I was soon to be in the presence of God. As I thought over the subject, with Tim still holding my hand and the tears falling from his eyes, a great peace stole over my soul which is for those only who know God in the free pardon of their sins.

Now, dear reader, when your friends gather around your bed, and you see that they don't want to tell you just all you want to know, it is time you are knowing one thing, and that is that you are ready to go. There I lay on the hospital cot, with my best friend looking me in the face, and I knew what was in his mind. My mind went back to where God had delivered me from the bonds of sin. We talked awhile; and all along I kept on trying to find out what the doctor had said about me, but Tim would talk about other things. Finally I said, "Tim, I want you to stay with me tonight because I know I am going to have a bad night, and I want you here." He told me that he would stay with me as long as I wanted him to.

Brother Zeb White, a dear brother in the Lord, came in, and he and Tim both said they would stay with me. Brother Tim said to me, "Brother Hodge, have the saints been notified of your accident, so they can pray for you?" I told him that they had been notified, so we settled down for the night. All through the visiting hours from seven to nine o'clock, people would come and go. They all went away with the same thought, "He will not live until morning."

The night nurse would come in from time to time, and it seemed that she was just passing by.

Brother Timmons and Brother White were taking turns at watching, and I was just waiting for the time when that grim monster, Death, would come and I would go home to Glory. As I lay there in deep meditation, the thought came to me of how Jesus, the King, had tasted death for every man; and I looked back and again I was glad for the salvation that came through the shedding of His precious blood.

At times these faithful brothers would say a kind word to me, and I would try to answer but I was getting weaker every moment, and they could see it. We three just waited for the end. My heart would cry out at times, "Thank God for Jesus!"

About one o'clock Brother White spoke to Brother Timmons and said, "Tim, I believe he is going." Tim then asked me how I was feeling, and I answered him that I was very weak. My head was to the south; and now as I looked around, things in the room began to move. The west wall just moved out of sight as though it had been blotted out of existence. Brother Timmons was standing on my left. I said, "Tim, are you there?" He answered, "Yes, what do you want?" I told him to take hold of my hand, and at that moment I saw the east wall of the room move away as did the west wall.

Then Brother White was standing at the foot of my bed, and the wall behind him moved out of sight like the others did, and Brother White fell on his knees and started to pray. The ceiling above me just checked up in pieces and disappeared, and I looked into open space to what seemed to me like millions of miles. As I looked, I felt myself going up at a lightning-like speed; and all at once I came to a beautiful gate about thirty feet wide.

I stood in space before the gate, about twenty feet away; and, O, dear reader, I beheld the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. The upright pieces in the gate looked as though they were about the size of a man's wrist and they were made of pure pearl without a flaw or a shade, and they were bound together with flexible pearl chains. The latches of the gate were made of fine gold.

As I looked, the gate opened in the center and moved back into a place on each side, and I began to see inside of the place that our dear Lord said He would go to prepare for us. Human tongue cannot describe the place, neither can any artist picture the great splendor of it. There I was really looking into Heaven. Just over the door were the draperies made of precious stones and hung with tiny pearl chains; inside were the streets made of pure gold which led up from the beautiful gate; and on each side of the street there were fields and beautiful flowers and gardens. I had often pictured Heaven in my mind and built air castles about it, but this far exceeded anything I had ever imagined.

The glory of God was there so that a sinner would be smitten by its brightness.

As I looked upon this beautiful scene, I felt myself going backwards at about the same rate of speed that I went, and I heard some people talking. I began to look around to see where I was, and I saw a nurse standing by me, and at that moment I found I was in the hospital again. Someone said that I was dead six minutes, without a pulse or a breath. Brother Timmons said it was twenty minutes. The nurse had pronounced me dead, and God had kept His promise to be the “resurrection and the life,” and I was alive again. Praise God, He is the best friend I ever had!

The nurse called the doctor, and I heard her say, “Your patient will not live until you get here.” The doctor came, and was told how I had died and come to life again. He called Brother Timmons out into the hall, they talked there, and I heard him say, “We can’t give you any hopes because we haven’t a serum that will touch Gas Phiciles infection. We can only make him comfortable and wait.”

Brother Timmons went to the telephone and called Sister E. H. Johnson, at Independence, and told her what the doctor said, told her to get all the Holiness people together and to go to prayer for me, that the best doctor in Crawford County, Kansas, had given me up, and unless God undertook my case I would have to go. She told him to go and tell me just what the doctor had said; so he came and asked the doctor if it would do to tell me the truth about my condition.

The doctor said it would be all right for him to tell me; so all of them left the room but Tim, and he sat down by the bed and asked me how I felt. I told him I felt pretty weak. He asked me if I knew him, and I told him that I did. He then asked me if there was anything he could do for me if anything should happen to me. I said, “I am not going to die.” He said, “Buddy, I am going to tell you the truth, you have just about an hour to live.

The doctor said you would take another spell in about an hour, and you can’t possibly live over another one. Do you want me to send for your wife?” I said, “When she comes, tell her I died praising God.” He said, Brother Hodge, I love you as my own soul; can’t you just give me something to do for you after you are gone?” I said, “Tim, if I die, have Brother Levi Burkhart preach my funeral; his text will be Psalm 26:9. Hold the service in the church at Arcadia, Kansas, and bury me in the Mulberry cemetery.” I told him about the great scene I had just witnessed and said I was ready to go or stay.

Dear reader, it surely sounds doleful to hear the best doctor and all your friends talking when they think you can’t hear them, and saying that you can live only an hour; and I began to feel that I might go, and began looking forward to the time when I might start. Brother Timmons sat there and talked to me, and in a few minutes the doctor and the nurses and Brother White came back. I could see them standing around my bed just waiting, and I thanked God that I had a Friend dearer even than my mother, that the world knows nothing about.

The doctor tried to keep me still; but I thought I had only a few minutes on earth and I wanted to tell people about God, so I just kept on talking. I told them about the great scene I had just witnessed, and of the wonder of it.

When about an hour had gone by, I felt myself going again. Now, dear reader, I went the same flight as before and stood before the same gate in open space and looked into the gate, and there was everything that I saw before; the gate was open to meet me that time, and I saw farther in. Time and space would fail me to tell you all about the place God has prepared for us.

I stood and looked up the street that was made of gold that glittered like glass, and just in the horizon loomed the city John told us about in Revelation, twentieth chapter. The city was all aglow with the glory of God. There were no lights, but the city was a light itself. Oh, I wanted to go in! There is no use of my trying to tell you of its wonderful splendor; I can only say that it is there and that I am a witness of it.

After a space of time I was back in the hospital, and I looked into the doctor’s face and shouted the victory, and said, “Doctor, I didn’t go that time, did I?” He said, “Hodge, you surely have a lot of nerve.” I said, “Doctor, don’t call it nerve; call it grace.” All of them left me but Brother White.

Brother Timmons said to the doctor, “What do you think of him now?”

The doctor said, "Mr. Timmons, don't hold any hopes because we know that he can't live. In just about an hour he will go again, and he will never come back. Never before, to my knowledge or in history, has any one that had what he has lived over the second spell. It is just his iron nerve that is holding him now."

He told him he would be in the sun parlor, as he needed some rest, and if they needed him to call him. Brother White and Brother Timmons sat down beside me, and between them they tried to make me feel better. They said it was hard to say, but that I must go. I said, "All right, I am ready." I told them what I had seen the second time I had gone, and they were both glad to learn of the faith I had in God. And so we talked on.

At last I felt that I was going to go again, and I asked Brother Timmons the time. He told me that it was five-thirty, and at that I lost sight of them, and again I was standing before the same gate and looking into the same beautiful city. Now, dear reader, I had never experienced such a night as this.

I witnessed this same scene three times and looked on the same street, into the same city; and to say that I know just where I am going would be a mild way to express it.

As I looked at the place, I felt myself come back; and when I came back, every one was there and they were all working with me. I looked up into the little nurse's face and said to her, "If you would just leave me alone, I would go and get out of your road." She said, "Mr. Hodge, you will never go as long as I can help it." The doctor said he never experienced a night like this before; he said, "I still can't give you any hopes, but I never have seen anything like it."

Brother Timmons took the doctor by the shoulders and turned him around and looked into his face with a look that made the doctor wonder, and said, "There is hope in Jesus Christ, and, Doctor, this same Christ is going to take his case." With this he left the doctor and called Sister Johnson and told her that I was still alive and that I was going to get well, so I declared. He told her to get some more of the dear saints to come to the hospital and pray for me. She said, "Tell Brother Hodge to look to the Lord as we will be there as soon as we can get there."

Brother Timmons came into the room and told me I was going to live because God wasn't going to let me die. He asked if we could have a special nurse, and the doctor told him that we could have the best nurse he knew and that he would go and get her at once. Brother Timmons and Brother White stayed with me until my wife got there, and then Brother Timmons had to leave on business; but Brother White stayed on with me.

About twelve o'clock that day the nurse told me that I had some visitors. The door opened, and a crowd of saints came in, about fifteen in all. Brother McIntyre, Brother and Sister Cole, Sister Johnson and Sister Neva Dodson of Independence, Kansas, were there. They asked me how I felt and asked me if I knew them. I told them, "Yes." Brother McIntyre said, "God is going to take your case." About this time the nurse told them to step out into the hall a few minutes.

The nurse was Miss Irene Miller, of Mulberry, Kansas; she was the nurse that Brother Timmons had asked the doctor to get for me. She fixed my arm for me, and I said, "Miss Miller, those people out there in the hall are my people, and we all believe in Divine healing. All of you say I can't get well, but I want you to let them pray for me." She said, "Yes, they can pray for you," and the authorities of the hospital gave their consent.

The saints came back into the room and laid their hands on me, and called God's attention to the fifth chapter of James. I never heard such praying in all my life. The saints of God screamed and shouted, and God answered and took my case. The hospital authorities were so frightened they thought it would kill me; but when the nurse came in looking scared to death, I told her that prayer was what I needed and that God had taken my case. And from that day I looked forward to the time when I would leave the hospital. After ten or fifteen minutes of shaking hands and praising God, the saints left assuring me that all was well.

After they had gone, the nurse sat down by the bed and began to watch me. I went to sleep, and slept until four o'clock; and when I woke up, she was still sitting there watching me. She said, "Mr. Hodge, since those people prayed, I believe you look better.." I said, "Miss Miller, that was what they prayed for, and from now on you can

expect me to get better. This is one case you won't lose." She said, "Mr. Hodge, I never heard such praying before; and if you get well, we are going to blame it all on the Lord."

The doctor came in about six o'clock and looked at me, and said, "Hodge, I believe you are feeling better." I said, "You can't kill me with a gun after God has taken my case." He didn't know what so say, so he just looked at my arm and went away. Friends would come and go, and ministers would come and talk to me; but they were all waiting for the end.

One day the nurse and the doctor came in to talk to me as I had been very low the day and the night before. I had heard enough of their talk to know that they were talking about a blood transfusion. At last they turned to me, and said, "Mr. Hodge, if any of your big friends come in here today and offer to give you some of their blood if necessary, you just send them down to the laboratory to have their blood tested; because, as soon as we can find someone with the right blood, we are going to give you a blood transfusion."

Now many friends had made this offer. About ten o'clock that day Floyd Davidson and his father from Sarcoxie, Missouri, and Brother Pendington of Fredonia, Kansas, came in; and I told them what the doctor had said. Brother Davidson said, "I feel pretty well; and if any of my blood will do you any good, you surely can have it." The nurse took him down to have his blood tested; and he came back smiling about something, and he told me I was going to get some of his blood.

On Friday, November 18, they gave me a blood transfusion. They had Brother Davidson on one table and me on the other; and as they were transferring the blood from him to me, I said, "Brother Davidson, this makes us blood relation." He said, "Yes; and, thank the Lord, we are both sanctified."

The night after that I had a sinking spell, and it looked as though I would go. For an hour and thirty minutes I breathed just once every thirty-five seconds. Some thought I was going to die, and my friends came rushing to the hospital. I couldn't talk, but I knew God was going to take me through.

When I began to get my breath a little better, I told them not to be afraid, that I would make it, and that I wanted to go to sleep. The nurse said, "Mr. Hodge, you can't go to sleep now because you have to sing one of those good songs you have been singing for me." I said, "All right;" and God gave me the song:

I dreamed that the great Judgment Morning Had dawned,
and the trumpet had blown;
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
To Judgment before the white throne.
From the throne came a bright shining angel,
And stood on the land and the sea,

And swore with his hand raised to Heaven,
That time was no longer to be.
And oh, what a weeping and wailing,
As the lost were told of their fate;
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,
They prayed, but their prayer was too late.

As I finished each verse of that song, I asked if they liked it. Nuns and nurses were weeping and crying, and one answered, "Yes, we love that song; for God's sake sing it." From that day on I got better.

One night the nurse came in and sat with me for awhile. I said to her, "Miss Miller, I am getting better." She said, "Yes, you are going to live now." I said, "Miss Miller, I would like to say something to you about your soul." She answered, "All right." She was a Catholic, and I knew it, and I felt that I was going to leave the hospital soon and that I was gaining enough strength to deliver my soul by speaking to her.

I asked, "Miss Miller, are you saved or not?" She said, "Why, I belong to the church." "Miss Miller," I said, "I never asked you if you belonged to the church; I asked you if you were saved." She said, "Well, I belong to the church." I answered, "Miss Miller, belonging to the church will never do you any good. What you need is to be born again. You are a good nurse and a good girl, but you belong to the Catholic Church, and you confess to the priest and pray to the Virgin Mary; and this only serves to send you to the devil's hell."

She asked, "Now, Mr. Hodge, just what do you mean by being born again? How can I be born again when I am a woman." I said, "The third chapter of St. John tells of a man that asked the same question." Then I told her what she would have to do to be born again—to be saved. She was interested, and said, "Mr. Hodge, what shall I do to be saved?"

I answered her, "Look here, girl, you get down on your knees and call on Jesus Christ of Nazareth and ask Him to forgive your sins, and He will do it." Miss Miller said, "Mr. Hodge, I pray three times a day." I asked, "Do you pray through?" She said, "What do you mean by praying through?" "Well," I said, "to show you we will say that your name is John Miller and that Sam Jones lives on the other side of you. You both have telephones. You go to the phone and ring his number, and say, 'Hello, Mr. Jones, I want to borrow your wagon as mine is broken, and I want to haul some things to town. I will be down after your wagon right away.'" I asked her if that didn't sound about like what she would say, and she answered, "Yes."

"Well," I said, "suppose Mr. Jones was down in the barn milking and didn't answer the phone, then what?" She said, "Well, I just wouldn't get the wagon." I said, "That is just the way it is with salvation. You can pray until you drop; but if God doesn't answer your wireless telephone and give you peace and salvation in your soul that you have never had, you just didn't get the wagon."

She said, "Why, I never heard of such a thing before." I talked to her, telling her how to pray through and find Jesus until I was so tired I had to quit. I have seen her since, and she tells me that she has never had the joy in her soul; but if she really obeys the voice of God, He will redeem her.

Not long after that the doctor came in, and said, "Hodge, I have a surprise for you this morning;" and he said, "You have had one of the worst cases the world has ever known, but this morning you have got just a sore arm." I asked him if I was the first that ever recovered from this, and he told me that I was the first. He said that they had found nothing in medical treatment that would do that any good; and I told him that we ought to call on a higher power. He answered, "I guess you are right, Mr. Hodge." He told me that he was going to let me go home in a few days, when I got able to be up and around. I asked him if he thought I could eat Christmas dinner at home, and he said I could.

Now, dear reader, I put in thirty-five days in that hospital, died and went to Heaven three times, and was resurrected all three times; I almost died seven other times, but the Lord whom I serve spared me so that I could still preach God's eternal truth. Just a few days before Christmas I was brought home.

There was a great lot of saints waiting for me and a lot of other friends; and, as I got out of the car, there were my wife and boy running to meet me. A great shout went up from the group, testifying and praising God for the great things He had done for me.

Of course, having been in the hospital all this time was a great expense. And while I was in the hospital, our bank at Mulberry failed; and what little money we had was in that bank. I owed one thousand and forty-one dollars to the hospital and the doctor; but I began to realize that God owned everything in this world, so I never worried but just began to obey the Lord.

My first revival services were held in Independence, Kansas; and while I was finishing there and wondering just how God would work this financial problem of mine out, this dear Sister E. H.

Johnson of Independence, brought me two letters. One was a receipt for my hospital bill, paid in full, and the other was one for my doctor bill.

It looked too good to be true; and, while I was thanking God for the great things He had done for me and the way that He had supplied my needs and helped me in my time of trouble, I received a receipt for the nurse's bill paid in full. Now this was hard for me to believe, but right there before my eyes it was; and from that day to this, I have made up my mind to obey my Master at any cost.

In conclusion of this book let me say I hope you will take all mistakes you find in it as good wishes. With all our heart and with all our soul we wish to express our hearty feelings of gratitude and thanks to the dear saints for all they have done to help us; and can only say in our weak way, as the man said when he looked upon the great painting of Jesus Christ and caught the meaning in his heart of what the picture stood for—we can only say as he said, “Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Thou canst depend on me.”

*This article was sourced from the Wesleyan Heritage Library CD and is to be distributed free of charge.
Edited and published by T. E. Plumb and volunteers 2001. We hope this selection has built your faith to
enter His own Rest...*

For further information or purchase details for the complete CD see <http://www.EnterHisRest.org>
