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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

JOHN T. HATFIELD (*2 Items)
(Methodist)

*Item 1

For eight years I battled along against that subtle enemy of the human heart, known as inbred sin. During these years I heard not a word on the possibility of deliverance from this inward foe. One day my pastor, Rev. James Leonard, attended a Holiness camp-meeting at Hartford City, Ind., conducted by the National Holiness Association, and in this meeting he professed to have obtained the blessing of entire sanctification. When he returned he was not the same preacher, and his sermons were not the same. He had something new, and there was fire in it, and you could feel it burn. His theme was holiness as a second definite cleansing work of God's grace, and it made me feel very uncomfortable to sit there and listen to him. He soon had me on the fence, and he had me guessing, but still I was interested. I knew I needed something, and he seemed to have the thing my poor, hungry heart was craving. At last I became very deeply convicted for it, and told my wife that I was going to have that experience or die seeking it. Immediately I began to seek he blessing, and often in my prayers I would become so fervent and intense that I would receive great spiritual enduements, and at times I often wondered if I had truly been sanctified wholly; but when I came to dealing with things about the farm, I would become impatient and lose my temper, and this was a clear evidence to me that I did not have it. I spent much time in prayer seeking this blessing. In the woods, in the field, at the barn, at family prayer, in church, at Sunday-school, in the class meeting and in prayer-meetings I could pray down fire and wonderful blessings upon my soul, but nothing that would remove inbred sin.

I was walking in all the light I had, I was not under condemnation, but I had an intense hungering and thirsting for a clean heart; yet the secret of how to obtain it had never been revealed to me. I was persistent and held on like a dog at a root, but I would have my spells of fits and starts. I remember once of hearing Bro. C. W. Ruth say, "Forty fits to one start," but that did not apply to me, for I never allowed but one fit until I took a start. I always took my pain-killer (repentance) after I had my fit.

Before I received this "second blessing," one evening my wife and I went out to set a hen; we had to move the hen from her nest to a more desirable location. My wife placed the eggs in the nest while I held the hen, which, when all was ready, I very gently placed upon the eggs, then quietly withdrew my hand and up came the hen. I gently placed her back again, and again she arose, so I put her back again (only not quite so gently as before), and again she arose to her feet. I set her down this time with more authority, and the way I stuck my fingers into her old back and ribs was enough to give her to understand that there was something going to happen but the end was not yet. By this time my wife was getting a little anxious, for she knew the fellow that was handling the hen. We had already broken some eggs, but the hen still, with all past experiences, refused to set, and I was determined that she should, and so we had it, and before we got through that hen was well-nigh picked, and feathers and broken eggs were the fragments that covered that battlefield; but that poor old hen, where! oh, where! was she? "Ask of the moon." This was very clear that I did not have the second blessing, and I was very much in need of another dose of pain-killer.

At another time my wife and I went out to the barn to teach a young calf to drink out of a bucket. We went into the stall where the young calf was and I caught the calf and was very gentle with it; I put my fingers in its mouth and tried to coax it to put its nose in the bucket, but instead it would stick its nose in the air. With much effort I succeeded in getting its nose in the bucket, and giving it a taste of the milk; this made it frantic, it went wild, it pranced and jumped around, and stood on both hind legs. Presently I began to talk pretty loud to my wife, telling her first to hold the bucket up and then hold it down. At last, every other expedient unavailing, I leaped a-straddle of that calf, grabbed it by both ears and downed its head in milk up to its eyes. It suddenly gave one big lurch which upset my wife, spilled the milk, threw me over its head, and we all went in one pile together. I never thought to help my wife up, I was busy in helping that calf out of that stall with my foot, threatening to kill it, but it survived the treatment and was ready for its milk at the next meal. This was again very clear that I had not received the second blessing and the calf had gotten the first.

I often said that it took my wife too long to get ready for church on Sunday morning. Invariably I found it necessary to wait for her, until at last, one Sunday morning, while she was pressing me to bring on the buggy that she would be ready to go, I said, "I will have the team here, but if you are not ready when I drive to the door, I will drive off and leave you," and sure enough she still had the old failing; she had to go back in the house after something, but when she came out I was gone, and was soon at the church. I took my usual place in the front seat, and presently my wife came in and took a seat by my side. You would never have known anything had happened by looking at her, for she was as calm as a May morning and as patient as a jug of molasses under a kitchen table; but to have seen me you would have seen a different picture. I had a guilty conscience, the sermon didn't done much good, I was bothered with other reflections.

After the sermon (fortunately the pastor did not call on me to pray), my wife and I got in the buggy and started for home; I felt guilty, mean, little and wretched. I could endure it no longer, so I said, "Amanda, that was a mean trick in me this morning to make you walk to church; I want you to forgive me." She knew my weakness and it was willingly done; she very well knew that I could no more keep the "old man" down than I could keep down a sick stomach. I just felt that for that one act I would like to have her take me in the parlor and pull every hair out of my head, but that would

not be like her; she had a different disposition. Her even Christian life was a source of conviction to me for years. I never saw her excited, impatient, scared or lose her temper in all our thirty-eight years of married life, and she did not profess to be sanctified wholly. She possessed the characteristics before she was converted, and I still displayed mine, after I was converted. I needed the second blessing, and that was what I was seeking.

The night before I received this sanctifying work of grace in my heart, while working in a revival in my home church, I received such a wonderful blessing that I ran all about the church shouting and praising the Lord, and yet, when I went to milk my cow, because she did not stand to suit me, we got into a scrap, and I lost my temper, as well as a bucket of milk. I got the milk all over me and the cow got the bucket all over her; the "old man" within, and the devil without; so, as a case of necessity, I was compelled to take another dose of pain-killer, but by the time for the service that night I had gotten relief, and was ready for another meeting. The Lord was good to me, He greatly blessed me in my soul, and gave me great liberty in working in the congregation and leading sinners to the altar to seek the Lord.

I never felt the need of a clean heart, and full deliverance from an evil temper so much in all my life as during this night's service. It was intense. My pastor called on me to lead in prayer. he altar was full of weeping sinners. I began to pray for them, but soon my prayers were turned to praying for myself. How often had I prayed for a clean heart, and how often had I been blessed in praying for it, but the "old man" still remained; but this time, by the aid of the Spirit, I was given the key to the situation. Heretofore I had been praying myself up into blessings without exercising any faith, but when I reached the place where I said, "Lord, I do believe," instantly the fire fell, and I knew the work was done. The "old man" was killed, and I have never seen him since, and that has been more than thirty years ago.

I had passed through six months of desperate struggle amidst many a cheering hope and many a blasting fear, but, thank God! I knew I had the blessing this time. From my knees I looked across at my pastor and said, "Brother, I've got it," and he said, "Got what?" I said, "I have been sanctified wholly." Some of our people in the church were very anxious for me to get the blessing, for they said they were getting tired of hearing me pray for it. No doubt they were, it was putting conviction on them. I did not have it many hours until they were wishing that I had not gotten it.

It was not long until I had a splendid chance to tell whether or not I had the blessing. I considered my cow a bad one to milk, and I suppose the cow considered me a bad one to milk her. It was sometimes hard to tell which was worst, me or the cow, for while the cow threw hoofs and horns and milk and bucket, I was not slow in keeping myself busy playing the milk-stool to her back and my boots to her ribs. Everything went well in the cow stable that morning until the milking was done and I arose to leave the stall; I was so filled with the joy of my experience that I never thought of the cow, but she had not forgotten me, for just as I arose from my milking, evidently fearing that I intended striking her with the stool, she gave a sudden kick which struck the bucket and spilled the milk all over me, but now, instead of jumping at her and trying to pull all the hair out of her back, I stepped to the front of the stall, put my hand gently upon her back and began to make my confession and tell her my experience. I said, "Lill, I have been mean to you; I have kicked you and cuffed you and beat you with milk-stools and buckets; I have pulled hair out of your back, but now I want you to understand I am sanctified; I've got the blessing and the kick is out of

me; you can kick if you want to, but I'm done. I love you, Lill; you are a good old cow. It has been my fault, but you will find me a different man from now on, for I am here to tell you that I am sanctified."

The old cow seemed to understand my testimony. I convinced her that there was something in holiness, even though nine-tenths of the preachers in the country considered it fanaticism. At once she relaxed every muscle, put her head in the manger and began to eat, and I walked out victor over the world, the flesh, the devil, the cow and myself. I did not need any pain-killer this time; I had taken a dose the night before that had killed the "old man," and that put an end to the use of pain-killers. Next to the cow, my wife was the first to understand that I had the blessing. When she saw me coming up the path that morning from the barn, my clothes be-spattered with milk and my face covered with a smile, this was enough for her, she was satisfied that I had the blessing.

Over thirty years have passed away since that morning and God's grace has kept me through all the trying scenes of a busy life. I have worked balky horses, milked kicking cows, been kicked clear out of the stall, taught calves to drink out of a bucket, set stubborn hens, put up stove pipes, helped my wife clean house, sat in the carriage and waited for her to come and get in, been set down on, criticised by preachers, have faced more than a thousand backslidden holiness fighters, have had unnumbered lies told on me, preached while four and five babies were squalling at their best; but through it all I have been able to maintain my experience, and, to my best knowledge, I have never made a break in all these years. Now, let all the people say, yes, let everybody say, Amen!

Source: "Thirty-Three Years A Live Wire"
by John T. Hatfield

*Item 2

John Hatfield was known as "The Hoosier Evangelist". He was converted at the age of 21 in an old-fashioned Methodist revival meeting. Of that experience he wrote:

"I claimed the promise and the light of heaven flashed instantly in upon my soul. The burden rolled away, new life sprang up within, and angels struck their golden harps and broke forth with rejoicing. The heavenly melodies burst upon my soul, and I was as light and free and happy as a bird in springtime. I sprang to my feet fairly submerged in the billows of glory that swept my newborn soul."

Eight years after his conversion he was sanctified at a holiness camp meeting in Hartford City, Ind.

"I felt the need of a clean heart," he said. "Before, I had been praying myself up into blessings without exercising any faith; but when I reached the place where I said, Lord, I do believe, instantly the fire fell, and I knew the work was done. The 'Old Man' was killed and I have never seen him since."

Concerning how to keep sanctified, Hatfield wrote:

"The way to keep the Old Man out is to keep filled with the Spirit. Every day we should have a fresh anointing ... A violin will get out of tune playing 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' likewise a holiness preacher will leak out preaching holiness if he doesn't keep being filled by the Spirit. An empty Christian talks out of his head, but a Spirit-filled Christian talks out of his heart. The Holy Spirit does not live in our brains but in our heart. A head religion will talk anything, but a heart religion talks Jesus and the Holy Spirit."

Source: "On Whom The Fire Fell"
by LeRoy Brown

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THE END