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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #067

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A few years since the writer was on a train in a southern State going to one of his appointments. He was passing down the aisle, when a lady stopped him and said:

"Is not this Dr. C.?"

"Yes, madam."

"I thought so," she continued, "from a picture I have seen of you in one of your books."

She then told me that she lived in the State of A_____, several hundred miles away, and was a traveling agent in a money making business; that a few days before she was out on one of her business trips and heard on the cars that I was holding a Holiness meeting in Meridian, Mississippi; that she was struck with the name "Holiness," and as a Christian she felt sufficiently interested to determine to stop off and hear me.

On going up into town, she discovered that the special services had closed some days before. She was greatly disappointed, but under the providence of God was thrown the same day into the company of two ladies, who, hearing her express her regret that she had arrived too late to attend the meeting and get the instruction on the subject, informed her to her great joy that they themselves had obtained the blessing, and if she would go home with them, they would do what they could to lead her into the blessing.

She spent three days at the home of one of these women of God, and the visit resulted in her receiving clearly and powerfully the blessing of sanctification .

Then she continued:

"Hearing that you were about to hold another meeting in this State, I determined to give up my business trip, lucrative as it is, and go down to Vicksburg and hear you preach there, and find out all I can about what I have got, and get established in the doctrine and experience. So I have written to my husband in A_____ what I have done, that I have given up my trip and gone to hear you for twelve days or two weeks in Vicksburg.

"In fact," she added, "I am on the way now, as I understand you open up there tomorrow."

I told the bright, happy-faced woman that I was glad to hear the good news of herself, and felt assured that the services would prove a great blessing to her.

In parting from her at the depot, she said:

"I know when my husband receives my letter he will think I have lost my mind."

Sure enough he did, and on the next day Mrs. S. met me on the street and showed me a telegram from her husband, which read:

"Stay in Vicksburg until I arrive."

The woman's face was radiant as she showed me the dispatch, and said:

"This is just what I wanted and was praying for. My husband is an unconverted man, and I crave to see him saved in your meeting."

On the following day, in the morning service, I saw a gentleman sitting by the side of my new friend, Mrs. S., and supposed at once and correctly that it was her husband. After dismissal, she brought him forward and introduced him, when I said in acknowledgment:

"I am glad to see you, Mr. S., and you must allow me to congratulate you on having a sanctified wife."

Mr. S.'s face immediately became a study at this remark, but prominent was a bored, skeptical and disgusted look.

In a couple of days Mr. S., who at first arrival saw that his wife's mind was all right, got to listening with increasing interest and conviction to the sermons, and at last came to the altar and was soundly converted to God.

For two or three days it was a pleasure to see his face, all illumined with the new love and life upon which he had entered. I could but rejoice to see how things had been so overruled by the providence of God as to hook this distant soul by the bait of a false alarm and reel him to the shore, and put him on that ever increasing string of redeemed ones.

But in a little while the deeper Gospel of a pure heart, or holiness, began to break in and take hold of the man, and one morning we saw his face overspread with gloom and an expression

come up dark and forbidding. As the congregation was dispersing at the close of the service, Mrs. S. passed me in the aisle and hurriedly whispered:

"Get hold of God for Mr. S. Something is the matter with him, but he will not tell me what it is. I am sure that it is something that God wants him to do, and he is running from it. He says he is going home on the train at midnight. Join with me in prayer and ask God to keep him from going. It will never do for him to leave at this time. He must get sanctified now. Everything depends upon it."

The woman's eyes were full of tears as she turned from me and vanished in the crowd.

Of course I "held on," as the wife had requested, while she, knowing more than I did about the man and how much was involved in his full salvation, made every breath a prayer.

To all appearances our prayers were in vain, for at 11 o'clock that night Mr. S. began to pack his valise, and half an hour later, in spite of the tears and protests of his wife, he descended the stairs, walked out on the pavement and soon his departing footsteps died away upon the ear.

But still his wife prayed on, saying,

"Lord, do not let him be able to get aboard the train. Prevent him by your power some way and bring him back."

At 1 o'clock as she lay wakeful upon the bed, she heard his step coming slowly and heavily up the stairs, the door open, the valise drop on the floor, and Mr. S. himself sink down in a chair as if he was made of lead. In a minute he spoke to the silent but expectant wife.

"I could not get off. Every time I put my foot on the car step, some strange power seemed to pull it down and draw me back."

The room was dark, and the man's face was scarcely less dark or gloomy, but there was one bright countenance in that room and one thankful heart that had already begun to praise God inwardly for answered prayer.

The next day the wife saw that a terrible conflict was going on in her husband's breast. She felt it best not to question him, and he did not offer to explain, only dropping the words that he had something to do back in the town where he lived that would kill him to perform.

She tried to encourage him, but being ignorant of the trouble that oppressed him, she was at a great disadvantage; besides he was not in a mood to be encouraged.

Late that afternoon, and before the regular preaching service, we held our usual prayer meeting in a class-room of the church. About twenty people were present. Mr. S. was there with his wife. He was kneeling back of the writer and several feet away. The presence of the Holy Ghost was very graciously and powerfully felt, and the writer was leading in prayer. He was

repeating the words of Christ, "Father, sanctify them," when a voice cried out in most thrilling accents,

"I will do it, Lord!" When, crash I we heard a human form fall on the floor.

Glancing around, we saw Mr. S. stretched out full length, and looking upward with hands clasped and face covered with happy smiles. He had received the blessing of sanctification in the very moment of crying out, "I will do it, Lord."

In explanation of it all, it seems that a year or so before a prominent man in the town where he lived had in some way offended Mr. S., and so one night he went around to that gentleman's house near the hour of twelve with the full intention of calling him to the door and shooting him down. By some merciful providence of God the deed was prevented. Moreover, at our meeting our friend had repented and obtained forgiveness for the spirit of murder that had been entertained in his heart. But when he commenced seeking the blessing of sanctification, the Lord recalled the occurrence to him and said,

"Are you willing to write to this man and tell him how you intended to kill him at midnight at his own door, and how I have saved you from it all?"

Here then commenced the struggle in the breast of Mr. S., just as it comes to all who seek holiness, for God puts severe tests of obedience to all who want the pearl of great price. No man can obtain the grace unless he says yes to every command of the Lord. Hence the texts alluded to on the line of perfect, unquestioning obedience. With some, He puts a number of demands. With the person of whom we are writing, the main and crushing exaction was a written confession to the man whom he had intended to shoot.

Sometimes people overlook the full divine design in a confession like the one mentioned above. It works a double purpose. It tests the sincerity and faithfulness of the seeker after holiness, and it, so to speak, breaks to pieces the man to whom the admission is made. So the acknowledgment is tremendously effective at both ends of the line.

Anyhow, it brought about a death struggle with Mr. S. He tried to fight off the impressions but it would not leave. He then endeavored to argue it away, but it would not be convinced. He then pleaded with God about it.

"Why, Lord, I will not be able to look the man in the face when I return home."

"Will you do as I bid you?"

"But, Lord, the whole town will look on me as a cut-throat and assassin, and I will be ruined."

"Will you obey me?"

And so the spiritual battle raged, the Devil tormented, God quietly but steadily urged perfect obedience, and the face of the unhappy man became dark, stern and forbidding.

Now then came the determination to imitate Jonah and run from God, and then the announcement to his wife that he was going to return home that night on the midnight train.

The reader knows the rest--how two of us got hold of God to keep him from leaving, how he felt a strange power hindering him from boarding the train, how he stalked back to his room at one o'clock, came to the afternoon meeting, and suddenly yielding to God, cried out, "I will do it, Lord!" and as suddenly was filled with the Holy Ghost and knocked flat on the floor by the power of the Almighty.

All this happened seven years ago. Now and then we heard in regard to the brother that he was doing well in the Canaan life. Several years ago we met him and saw that the report was true. A few days since we received a letter from the wife, saying:

"Knowing your interest in Mr. S., I write to tell you that he passed away from earth to heaven this summer. It was a death of peace, triumph and rapture beyond all words to describe."

In the light of this small portion of the letter we see more than ever that in the comings and goings of our lives, the meetings here and happenings there, God comes and with His blessed overruling, directing and shaping power brings out the most unexpected and yet blessed of results. In the case we have just considered, a rumor of a revival meeting, and a conversation on the train, brought regeneration to one soul, sanctification to two, and glorification since then to the subject of this sketch.

Source: "Pen Pictures"
(Chapter 21) By Beverly Carradine

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