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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #068

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Occurrences are continually taking place in the moral world that so break into and over what we call rules and laws in the spiritual life, and so upset certain standards of judgment, that we are for a while left almost breathless, and even after that for quite a season are disposed to be chary of our ex-cathedra utterances upon human life and its destiny, and are willing to allow God to run the world and manage the church and the nations for at least several months.

When we see and hear of people whom everybody thought established in the Christian life, going off into false doctrines, into various evil habits and into sin and unbelief itself; one of those wondering occasions is at once beheld. Great is the clatter and chatter of tongues for a while. The argument of an establishing grace seems to be knocked down. The increased power of resistance to evil said to come from the practice of righteousness appears for a period to be a mistaken idea. And so men are bewildered.

On the other hand, when we see a man who has lived a profane, impure, lawless, godless life for forty or fifty years, suddenly turn to Christ, get saved and then sanctified, and live like a saint, die in triumph and go shouting home to glory, another moral wonder has taken place, and another set of laws, oracular utterances and solemn prophecies have been upset.

The devil of course is around to put his interpretation on both occurrences, and get people to buy his commentaries on all such happenings; and yet the principles by which the two sets of laws were established are perfectly true, and what we see are only exceptions to the rule. In establishing our standards of judgment we simply failed to allow for the presence and power of an Almighty God not only in the world but in each life, and one perfectly able, with his knowledge of the heart and his omnipotence in this world, to amaze us with the dealings of his permissive and positive Providence.

Moreover, none of these startling things in the spiritual life about us, but have been already spoken of, and fearfully and wonderfully illustrated in the Bible. The Dying Thief was snatched from the lowest step of Ruin and caught up into Heaven. On the other hand, Saul, Judas, and Demas, when well up the stairway of Salvation, stumbled, slipped and fell with a crash to the bottom of an endless Perdition.

So Satan it seems steals messengers of light from the side of the Lord, while in blessed contrast the Lord plucks brands from the devil's burning, and transforms them into great fixed stars of righteousness and truth, to shine forever in the heavenly world.

The sketch we here present is a gracious instance of the goodness and power of God in the latter case.

A man named S_____ was a steamboat mate on the Missouri River. No one ever remembered to have seen him at a church, or heard of his attending one. Moreover, there was nothing about his life to lead one to suppose that he ever had a religious thought, or suspected that he possessed a soul. At the age of sixty-five he was as wicked a man as ever stormed and swore at a set of hands on the deck of a steamboat.

One day while the boat was approaching St. Louis on a homeward trip, he, without a single premonitory sign, was stricken down with that lightning flash and thunderbolt of diseases -- paralysis. No one thought he would live through the remaining hundred miles of the trip, nor did he expect anything but immediate death. He heard, as it were, the clods falling on his coffin lid, and expected that the bottom of his grave would next break through and let him slide or plunge into hell.

On arrival at the wharf a litter was made and four men trudged through the silent, empty streets toward his home. From the moment he fell on the deck, and with every step of his litter bearers, S_____ was praying to God for mercy. His constant cry was, "Forgive me, Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ." Before he reached his house, twenty or more blocks from the river, God spoke peace to the tortured soul, and S_____ was laid upon his bed in his room a saved man.

Some ladies, belonging to the church of the writer, who did a good deal of visiting among the sick, heard of the case and called upon the sick man. In the midst of their visit they happened to speak of sanctification, when, quick as a flash, S_____ asked what they meant by sanctification; and they replied that it was a beautiful, blessed Grace that God had for His children.

"What!" said S_____; "is there anything else?"

"Yes," they answered, "a second work that purifies the soul and fills it with rest and perfect love."

Turning a pair of wistful, pleading eyes upon them, the gray-haired man said, with a broken voice, "I want it; tell me how to get it."

They, however, did not feel competent to give directions, but said they would send their pastor to call on him and show him the way.

The writer, however, was so busy with the numerous and different calls of a city pastorate, that he did not reach the home of S_____ until the tenth day; when, on entering, he found to his surprise and pleasure that the sick man had obtained the blessing alone, without any more human assistance. Asking the rejoicing person lying before us how he did and what he did to secure "The Pearl of Great Price," he said, with smiles and tears intermingled:

"I wanted it so bad that I couldn't wait. So I kept saying, 'Lord, please give it to me.' Hour after hour for eight days and nights, with every waking moment I would lie here, look up and say, 'Lord, please, for Jesus' sake, give it to me,' and one day, while I was sighing and crying and pleading, the blessing came and I have been full and overflowing ever since. O, Yes, I've got it; there's no doubt about it."

As the writer stood by the sick bed of this old river man, one who had not attended church, knew nothing of theology, and had spent his life amid hard and sinful men, and yet was here in the possession of a blessing that bishops are denying and theologians wrangling about, he was filled with such a tide of contending emotions of wonder and awe of God, and love and praise of God, that words could not properly and satisfyingly describe.

We doubt not that the man prayed himself to the point of a complete consecration, and we all know that from the end of such a rod will bloom and bud the flower of a perfect faith in God to cleanse the heart from all sin and fill the soul with the Holy Ghost.

Thus, without preachers, sermons, and altar rails, Brother S_____, a poor, ignorant steamboat mate, looking to Jesus, and led by the Spirit, crossed the Jordan and entered the Canaan of Full Salvation, or Perfect Love.

After this it became a crowning wonder to visit him. From the hour of his sanctification until his death, six months later, there never seemed to be a cloud in his sky. His joy was not only like an artesian well, but overflowed everything, and everybody. It was a benediction simply to look upon the shining face of the man, and a privilege to listen to his conversations, or, rather, monologues, for one had only to be with Brother S_____ a minute to be perfectly willing that he should do all the talking.

We were not only surprised but amazed as we listened to the beautiful, blessed things that fell from the lips of the patient and rejoicing sufferer. As we remembered the churchless and sinful life, we marveled at the man's spiritual knowledge. Where did he get all these gracious thoughts that overflowed in such apt and unctuous language was the constant query of the mind? And the only answer was that here was a man who been emptied and filled and was now taught of God.

In the beginning of our pastoral attentions we went down to cheer and help the poor old brother, as we called him. But on the very first visit the tables were turned on us. The invalid helped the well man. The gray-haired man we called old had the youth and freshness of Heaven in him. Instead of being poor, he was richer in faith, love, joy and other heavenly treasures than any

one of us who entered his sick room. He was a blessing to everybody who called upon him, and the feeling of the visitor at departure was, that one of the windows of Heaven had been opened just above that sick bed, and an angel had been met unawares.

More than once we caught some of our faltering, fainting members with guile, as the apostle expresses it, by asking them to drop in and see "poor old Brother S____," who was lying in his room awaiting the second stroke of paralysis to call him home. They always came back open-mouthed and open-eyed, full of wonder and praise, and with their own faith stimulated and Christian life strengthened at the miracle of grace they had just beheld.

The second visit of the mysterious disease came as was expected. It found Brother S_____ not only prepared but yearning to depart and to be with Christ. The first stroke found him a sinner and bade him prepare to meet his God; the second blow knocked down the door that separates earth from Heaven, and Brother S_____ justified, sanctified, exulting and triumphant! walked through the open portal, and looked upon the face of his Redeemer.

Source: "Remarkable Occurrences"
(Chapter 13 "A Brand Plucked From The Burning")
by Beverly Carradine

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