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

Vol. II -- Unnamed Accounts

ACCOUNT #069

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In one of our Western states lived an unconverted man, who owned a store and was doing a prosperous business. Among other things which he sold was whiskey by the bottle, jug or barrel. He was thriving so well that he gave his store new coat of paint and treated it to a brand new sign, which swung and creaked in front.

One day a farmer, who was a friend and acquaintance, came into the store and asked him to let him have a drink of liquor, that he was tired and cold. The merchant in reply gave him a key to one of the barrels and told him to help himself. A half hour or so rolled by, and the merchant had forgotten all about the circumstance, when a gentleman strolled into the store, leaned on the counter and said to him slowly and solemnly,

"I see your sign is lying flat in the road."

"What!" exclaimed the storekeeper, and rushed out on the gallery expecting to behold his new sign down on the ground. To his great relief there it swung in its place near the ceiling.

"No," he said, turning to his informer, "my sign is not down; what made you say so?"

"Yes it is," persisted the gentleman. "It is farther down the road."

The storekeeper followed the pointing finger and beheld, forty yards down the street, in the middle of the highway, the prostrate form of the man to whom he had given the key of the whiskey barrel. He was dead drunk.

The sight was like an arrow to the heart of the beholder, and crying out, "My God, is that the sign of my stores" he walked into the house and closed the door behind him.

He never sold another drop of liquor from that hour.

Then followed days of unspeakable anguish of mind and heart through the convicting power of the Holy Ghost. He could not eat, sleep, rest or attend to business.

There grew around the town, and extending deep into the country, dense thickets. Taking his axe he penetrated the jungle and cut out a place in which to pray. He spent an hour in his leafy cavern, and failing to find relief, he went out and, a hundred yards away, hewed a second nook for prayer. Still finding no deliverance, he prepared a third. But as he prayed in it his burden seemed to increase. He then returned to the first, next visited the second and wound up in the third, praying in great and growing agony in them all.

Thus he did for several days, until one morning while in one of his caves calling on God for mercy, the blessing of salvation was poured into his heart and he shouted for joy.

His hallelujahs were heard a quarter of a mile away at a United States military post, and officers and men both thinking that it was an outbreak of the Indians, a corporal and squad of soldiers were sent running toward the town. Guided by the whoops and yells, they dashed into the thicket where our new convert was having the whole war to himself.

Filled with a rapturous love, he flung himself on the corporal and hugged him, and attempted to embrace all the soldiers, when the corporal, at first stupefied and now still mystified, but also deeply disgusted, cried out to his men:

"About face! Double quick!" and went back in a swinging trot to the garrison.

After this our brother joined the church and for months greatly enjoyed his new found salvation.

One of the idols of the past life, however, which he would not give up, was his pipe. He felt disturbed about it at times, and had occasional gloomy spells, but still was moving along.

Soon after this there came to his western village a Holiness evangelist, when he found that under his searching sermons his moodiness was increasing. But still he puffed away at his tobacco and did considerable grumbling.

One morning the preacher, who was watching him load his pipe preparatory to putting a coal of fire on it, said:

"My brother, would you be willing to swap that filthy old pipe for a clean heart and a sweet family altar?"

At once he became very angry in spirit and with difficulty kept from being rude to the minister. He felt that he was being very hardly dealt with, that his rights were ignored, his privileges trampled upon, and he was being tormented before the time. In a word, he fumed. He

remained in this state several hours, getting what consolation he could from his pipe; and he never obtained less.

Toward the middle of the day he was a mile from town in his two-horse wagon, filling it with large stones for one of his fences. The pipe lay un-smoked in his pocket, and the rocks seemed to get in his breast. Grimly and with groans he worked until the vehicle was nearly loaded.

He stopped a moment to rest as he stood on the boulders. A sweet inner voice whispered, "Surely you would not keep out the Comforter because of an unclean habit."

At once there sprang into his mind and heart the determination, "I will give up everything for God!" Running his hands in his pockets he pulled out his pipe and tobacco pouch and threw them as far as he could into the forest. They had scarcely left his hands when the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire fell upon him.

With cries of joy and tears of rapture rolling down his cheeks, he gathered the reins in his hands, turned the galloping horses homeward, and came flying down the road, filling the air with his shouts and the highway with all the stones he had gathered.

The town, attracted by the outcries and rattle of the wagon, turned out to meet him as he swept into the square. They thought he had lost his mind, but he told them from his wheeled pulpit that it was his carnal mind that was gone. Oh, how he preached! His wagon indeed was empty, but he himself was full. He had given up the last of his old idols, and got in exchange a clean heart and a sweet family altar--in a word, the blessing of full salvation.

The writer saw him two years after the transaction had taken place, and he was still preeminently satisfied.

Source: "Pen Pictures"
(Portion of Chapter 17)
By Beverly Carradine

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THE END