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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

**THOMAS P. ROBERTS**  
**(Called "Night-Hawk Tom" by "Bulldog Charlie" Wireman)**

This is the preacher, under whom Charles Little Wireman, otherwise known as Bulldog Charlie, was saved.

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When I was between the ages of 8 and 9 years, there was a revival in the Baptist Church that I attended. There were only two churches in our community, the Baptist and the Methodist. They were having an old-fashioned "mourner's bench" revival. I went to the altar and got saved and have never doubted that God came into my young tender heart that night. But I later heard a preacher say, in one of my camp-meetings at a children's service where there was a number of them saved, that it was as easy for a child to backslide as it was for them to get saved. He said you will see that these children will come back without a profession in a few days. What he said is so, unless they have someone to encourage and teach them. Oh, how we need Godly parents and Christian influence around our children as it was with me. Had it not been for my Godly mother encouraging me and praying for and with me, the devil might have made me doubt that I was saved that night. But, as I have already said, I never doubted it. I believe I was called to preach before I reached my teens, but I did not obey the call, hence I lost my experience. However, I never got away from the call and when I would hear a preacher preaching the gospel I would say down in my heart, how I wish I could preach like that. And though I was living a backslidden life, I wanted to get back to God. I knew if I did I would have to answer the call to preach. I felt I was not qualified and that I would never be able to preach. I lived in that condition for eight long years, and no one knows but those who have had a similar experience what a miserable life it was. I was reclaimed a number of times, but every time the call to preach was renewed and I would try to compromise with my Lord telling Him that I would teach a Sunday School Class, superintend a Sunday School, lead Prayer-meetings, anything, except preach. But I found that He was no compromiser. It was preach or backslide. I remember hearing a young preacher say while I was in school, that he did not believe anyone was ever called to preach until he had done everything possible to keep from preaching. So, for ten years I lived the up and down life. I never refused to

pray when called on. I would testify whenever I had an opportunity, but would always say, "I am not where I want to be and where God wants me to be and I want the prayers of God's people." I always detested hypocrisy, I never wanted to claim something I did not have.

Awhile after we were married, my wife and I, were attending a revival in Little Rock, Kentucky; (Bourbon County). Dear, saintly S. H. Pollitt was doing the preaching, and those who have heard him know what a mighty preacher he was especially, on holiness. On a Sunday morning I went to the altar seeking holiness with my head, but my heart was seeking reclamation, and God always answers the heart need and not the head. I was reclaimed, and God flooded my soul with great joy. Those about the altar thought I was sanctified and insisted on my claiming the blessing of full salvation, but I knew I had just been reclaimed. I believed that I would know the difference between the Blessing and the Blessor. I am sure this mistake has been made by many seeking sanctification with their heads, when they needed to be saved or reclaimed, and thereby a reproach has been brought on the cause of Holiness.

The following Monday after my reclamation they were having cottage prayermeetings for the revival. Wife and I, with a number of the neighbors, attended this meeting. I opened the gate for the ladies. I closed the gate and as I started up the path to the house, I put my hand in my pocket and touched a big twist of the "devil's chewing gum." I took that twist of tobacco out of my pocket and threw it as far as I could into a weed field, and turned my back to keep from seeing where it fell. My back has been turned on that filthy habit ever since. Thus, I was cleansing myself from the filthiness of the flesh. I had been making my consecration ever since I left the altar on Sunday and I thought when I threw the filthy weed away I surely had completed the last act that would keep me from being a joyous Christian. But when I got on my knees in that cottage prayer-meeting, there was that long-debated question: "Will you preach my Gospel?" "Anything Lord," I cried, "Only meet the need of my hungry heart." Like a lightning flash breaks through the blue, the fire fell and the glory filled not only my heart but the room where we were assembled. I think everyone in that prayer-meeting was on his feet shouting and praising God. It must have been similar to the early Church, when in the "upper room." He came and filled all the house wherein they were sitting. It was a veritable Pentecost and a great epoch in the life of this preacher.

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Source: "Highlights of My Life and Ministry" by Thomas P. Roberts

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THE END