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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

MR. SPEARS

Some time since while on a southern trip, we encountered a character at the table of a hotel. He possessed a querulous voice, fault-finding nature, and was of course a discontented man. He wore the wearied look belonging to such a spirit. As we studied his case, he seemed to be continually apprehensive that various and sundry personal rights would be taken from or denied him.

One morning at breakfast he called for "aigs," as he termed them. As the waiter started to leave, he cried out after him,

"I don't want them aigs hard boiled."

Then followed several minutes of anxious waiting upon his part. He kept turning his head restlessly toward the door which led to the kitchen. Finally, at the expiration of four or five minutes, he fairly wailed out to the invisible servant,

"I just know them aigs is hard boiled."

It would be impossible to transcribe in words the look of trouble on the man's face, and the accent of sorrow, not to say despair, in his voice, as he prophesied and grieved about the eggs.

The air, look and voice perfectly agreed in protestation and lamentation. It was evident to anyone at a glance that at this moment, to this man, the world was a mockery and life itself a failure, and all because "them aigs were hard boiled."

As we continued to study the bereaved individual before us, we realized again not only the blessedness, but the philosophy of full salvation; that God had a work of grace for the soul, which enables one to rejoice, not only when certain things are not to one's notion, but even in the loss of all things to be self-contained and happy. The perfectly tranquil life is that, where the man says Amen at the severing of every cord which binds him to earth and earthly things. It is these very

terrestrial objects which create such disturbance in the human heart and life, and so that grace of God, which breaks their charm and sweeps away their power, will of necessity bring a reign of unbroken peace and holy gladness to the soul.

Some months after this occurrence we were spending a few days in a large boarding house in a city several hundred miles from the town just mentioned. One morning, while glancing over a newspaper, in the large reading room allotted to the guests, there came in through the open window from the gallery outside a perfect string of vocal jerking sounds like Bah! Pooh! Pshaw! Bosh! Nonsense! Botheration! These were accompanied by an angry rustling of a newspaper, scraping of the chair, and now and then the fall of a heavy heel on the floor.

The voice with its nasal, whining intonation was masculine and strangely familiar. Rising up and going to the window, we saw, tilted back on two legs of a chair, with his feet high up against a post, our friend who had wailed so over the "hard boiled aigs."

The lady of the house happened at the time to be passing through the rooms, and we asked her if she knew anything about the gentleman who was reading the paper out on the porch.

At once she began smiling, and taking a seat remote from the window she, with difficulty, straightened her face, and said:

"That's Mr. Spears. Everybody around here knows him. He is a man of some little property and travels around a good deal. He is too restless to stay anywhere long. He seems to be soured with the whole world and nothing pleases him."

"Is he a sick man?" we asked.

"No, indeed. There's nothing the matter with him that way, though he insisted for a long time there was. He went to all the Springs in the country, and every health resort in the mountains or on the sea shore. He has had every physician in his town at one time or another, and discharged them all, saying they didn't have sense enough to know what was the matter with him. He said it was the doctor's business to find out the trouble and cure a man, and that they could if they were doctors; but they are all quacks these days, he says."

Very much interested, I kept silent, while the lady went on.

"The last physician discharged Mr. Spears and told him there was nothing in the world the matter with him, but to follow a pair of plow handles to make his own bread, instead of having it come in to him without a struggle. He told him that any man who ate as much as he did ought never to go to the Springs for an appetite, or say he was sick. Mr. Spears fairly foamed at this speech, but he had to take it, for the doctor was a big man and fully able to stand by what he said."

"What is the matter with Mr. Spears this morning?" I inquired. "He seems to be all out of sorts."

"Oh, he's just reading the newspaper. He allows what he sees there to completely upset him. He believes all that the reporters and editors and correspondents say, and is thrown into a regular fever every time he takes up the paper. He is firmly convinced that everything is going to the dogs; declares there have been no great men since the days of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, no president since Andrew Jackson, and that the nation is on the verge of ruin. He even insists that the corn does not grow as high as it did when he was a boy, and says the Mississippi River is filling up and will soon spread out, cover all the plantations with mud and then dry up."

Our informant had gotten this far when she was interrupted by a loud, petulant exclamation from Mr. Spears on the gallery, while he dropped both his heels on the floor with a resounding thwack.

"Just as I expected," he groaned, "What on earth is to become of us?"

"What's the matter now, husband?" said a good humored voice farther down the gallery.

"Everything's the matter," said the worried looking man, referring again to his paper. "Here on the first page is an account of how the big trees in California are being rapidly destroyed, and on the second page an article telling of the rapid and wholesale disappearance of the pine forests in the South by the sawmills and turpentine business. Why, wife, there soon won't be a tree left."

"Yes, I read the article before you did," she replied soothingly, "and when you read farther, you will notice that the writer admits that while what he says is true, yet so vast are these forests that it will take several centuries to entirely denude the land, and you know that you and I will not be here then."

"That may be so," replied Mr. Spears, looking a little appeased, "but there is our posterity; what's to become of them?"

"Oh," said the cheerful wife, "don't you worry about your posterity. They will take care of themselves."

Here Mr. Spears resumed his paper, indulging now and then, as he read, in sudden snorts, and loud pooh-poohs, and grumbling comments, that sounded not very much unlike a dog snarling and worrying over a bone.

Finally the wife said soothingly to him:

"Mr. Spears, lay aside your paper awhile and take a walk down town. It will do you good."

"I can go," he replied, "but it won't do me any good, for the whole town is going to the Old Scratch as fast as it can."

And so growling and grumbling about ballot boxes being stuffed, and miners not getting their rights, and whitecaps not being put down, and the Chinese and Hawaiians and Pilipinos

filling the whole country and no room left for a white man, Mr. Spears got up and stalked down the street, hitting the bricks with his walking cane as if he wanted to break every one of them.

After he left, we were introduced to Mrs. Spears, a good, comfortable soul of fifty years or more.

On expressing our regrets that Mr. Spears had found so much to be worried about in the papers that morning, she laughed a rich, merry laugh, and said:

"It is not just this morning, but every morning with my husband. He has changed his papers twenty times, but still continues to read them; has joined four different churches, and belonged to three different parties, Republican, Democrat and Populist. He is now thinking of going back to the Republican party."

After a few more words with Mrs. Spears, who had all unconsciously aroused our profoundest sympathy, we said to her:

"Will you deliver a message to your husband from me?"

"Certainly," she replied.

"Tell him," we continued, "that what he needs is a good case of regeneration, followed immediately by the blessing of entire sanctification, that if he gets these, he will ever after feel all right, whether the world is right or not."

Two years from that morning, we met Mr. Spears for the third time. He was at a Holiness Camp Meeting and was standing on his feet testifying. His face was all aglow, his voice rang out with holy fervor, and we scarcely could recognize him as the same man. His wife sat near him as he spoke and she looked to be brimming over with joy. We heard this much of his testimony. He said:

"I was the most miserable man that walked the earth. I worried about everything, and found fault with everybody. I marvel how my dear wife here managed to stand me. I wonder somebody didn't kill me for being so contrary.

"Well, one day my wife told me that a preacher had left a message for me. I snapped out, 'What is it?' She said he requested me to say to you that you needed a good case of regeneration, and then a clear experience of entire sanctification.

"Somehow that message went into my heart like an arrow. I said, if a stranger sees I need two things, I must be bad off.

"Of course I fussed about it, and called the message a piece of impertinence, but I could not get rid of the words. They put me in the way of salvation thinking, and salvation getting. I made some big mistakes at first, and thought it was water baptism I wanted; but my wife told me I had been sprinkled when I was a baby, that she heard my mother say so. Well, then, I said I wanted to

be sprinkled as a man; what does a baby know about baptism? So I was re-baptized. Still I felt no better.

"At last a Baptist preacher met me and told me what I needed was to go UNDER the water. So down I went and came up in the Baptist Church, but still I had this gnawing, worried, restless, unsatisfied feeling here. Then somebody told me that there was a man in Chicago who believed in Triune Immersion, and so I took the train, made application, and went under the water three times, and came up in still another church. Wife there, bless her heart, went with me, not only to Chicago, but under the water, and under three times. I verily believe that woman would have made a didapper duck of herself, a regular mermaid, to have helped me to get right."

"Here we looked at Mrs. Spears, who was covered with pleased smiles, as with a garment, and was beaming on her husband.

"In spite of all this," continued Mr. Spears, "I did not feel satisfied. I began to remember that the third time I went under the water my right shoulder was not entirely covered, and was thinking of going up to Chicago and having the whole thing done over, when I heard there was a big Holiness Camp Meeting to take place on this ground. This was a year ago. I came because I was miserable and didn't know what else to do. Then I had some curiosity, from all the reports I had heard, about the Holiness people.

"Some of you will remember how I came to that altar the very first night for salvation, and how I got it on the third day. Then, you remember, I commenced seeking for entire sanctification. The preacher had said I needed two things, and now I knew it. Thank God, on the last night of the meeting, after six days' seeking with prayers, tears, groans and faith in Christ, God gloriously sanctified my soul. You all saw me, and heard me, too, that night.

"The instant I got it, I felt that that was what I had been wanting all my life. For one year I have lived not only in Canaan, but in Heaven. I feel the glory in my soul all the time. I can hardly keep from hollering on the street. I went to a small town the other day on business, where I didn't know a soul, but I met an old Negro and took him aside and told him I was sanctified. We both shouted behind a blacksmith shop.

"Ugly as I am, when I look in the glass it seems I am getting good looking. My wife there looks like she is sixteen years old. The crops look better this year than I ever saw them in all my life, and the apples taste sweeter. I believe the world is getting better every day, and I don't see what there is to keep back the millennium. Glory to God, I am saved, sanctified and satisfied. The blessing in my soul is getting richer, sweeter and bigger every day. I don't see how I can hold any more. Thank God, Jesus lives in my soul all the time, and I am at last a happy man."

Source: "Pen Pictures"
(Chapter 20) By Beverly Carradine

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THE END

