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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

A. H. TIPTON

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A REDEEMED INFIDEL, DRUNKARD AND GAMBLER

You asked me to write my experience, to be published for the glory of God to show how
God can save a poor drunkard, so here it is:

I was raised by Christian parents who were old-time Methodists, that knew how to pray.
Our house was the preacher's home from my earliest recollection. I was converted when a boy and
tried to live a Christian life for a short time but soon began to look at the inconsistent lives of the
church members around me and that got my eyes off of Christ and I found myself in sin as bad as
ever. A short time after I was grown, I was deputy United States Marshall for two terms in North
Georgia; hunting wild cat whiskey makers in the mountains near my home. I stood well with my
home people and the officers of the law; but it was here that I learned the ways of sin as never
before. I learned to drink, gamble, and that with officers of the law who were church members. I
often heard them swear; I drank whiskey with them, and some times I would gamble with them; and
sometimes visit houses of shame with them, and some of them were officers in the church at that.

This sort of association soon drove me into infidelity, and I became an avowed skeptic. I
said there are no true Christians, as I had had a chance to see their best ones, and they all proved to
be frauds, and would tell a lie in a trade as quick as I would, for I had a chance to try them. I said
there was no God, and I went from bad to worse, till I was a confirmed drunkard and a gambler,
and so profane that my wife was ashamed of me. I had not been to church for twelve years; had
spent most of my life in trading horses and drinking whiskey. I often told my wife that I never
wanted to hear another song sung, or another sermon preached, as I was already damned if there
was a hell; and that I would make the best of this world that I could.

Four years ago I heard of a holiness meeting at VanAlstyne, and I decided to go just for
amusement, and see what kind of people they were, as I had heard so much about them.

On Saturday I promised my wife and children that if they would get a certain piece of work done, that I would let them go to the holiness meeting. I did not want to hear the preaching myself; but thought that I would get my wife and children in the meeting, and then I would have a big time up town with the boys. But praise the dear Lord, when I got there they were singing such songs as I had never heard before in all my life; and they all looked like they felt every word they sang. Then they all turned preachers and commenced to testify, and I had never heard such before. This seemed like the very gate of heaven to me. I heard all old man testify that nearly killed me. He said, "Bless God, I have still got the blessing this morning, and I am saved and sanctified now." While he talked the big tears rolled down his cheeks, while his face shone like heaven. Then they sang:

"Jesus saves day by day,
Sweetly keeps all the way;
All my burdens He bears -- every care;
Soon I'll lay my armour down,
And at Jesus' feet sit down.
And receive a starry crown over there."

Somehow this made me think of my mother, and the songs she used to sing when I was a boy, and the prayers that she so often prayed for me. I soon forgot my infidelity, and thought that I had met some people who really knew God. Then the preacher said he wanted to add his testimony: and told how God could save and sanctify a wood hauler, and call him to preach a full salvation; that was the power of God to save the worst of men, and all that would come to Him. He then read his text, and preached a red hot sermon on repentance; and the Holy Spirit burnt the message in on my heart, until I felt like I hung over hell on a hair, and my doom was sealed if I did not repent.

My sins stood before me like mountains; every old debt that I had sworn that I would not pay, and had outlawed, looked me in the face, and every sharp bargain that I had ever drove stood before me like a hissing viper; and every old doctor's bill that I had sworn that I would not pay, demanded a settlement, and all the lies that I had told in mule trades rang out in my ears, and even the chickens that I had stolen in drunken sprees began to crow at me until I felt like hell was caving in under my feet. I was the most miserable man alive that day. As the preacher went on he said it was restitution or hell: that to repent meant to straighten up all the past life and to make all your wrongs right so far as it was possible for you to do it.

The devil came up to me and said, "If it means that, you can never get religion, as you have gone too far." As I sat there on that bench I could almost hear the screams of the damned that night. I heaved a sigh and said, "Lord help me." I went back to church the next day and sister Jernigan preached, and told how God had actually saved a poor fallen girl, and made a preacher out of her. She told how God could save a fallen man as easy as he could save a fallen woman, and how she had worked with the fallen in the dives of deepest sin, and God had blessed her work.

I looked around and all the congregation was in tears, and I found myself crying like my heart would break for the first time in years. I said I would give the world for a religion like that.

As we drove along the road home my wife said, "Harve, what do you think of those people? Do you think we could live without sin as they tell us we must?"

I said, "If we don't we will all go to hell."

She said, "Harve, you have always talked that way when you would talk about religion at all; why don't you get it then, and show people that you can live it."

I replied, "If I was to get that kind of religion I would have to quit trading like I do, and you and the children would starve to death or go naked; it would break up a rich man to pay back all that I would have to pay."

Then tears came into her eyes as she looked at me and said, "I had rather go in rags and live on bread and water than for you to be lost."

I tried to quit studying about the meeting, and was up early the next morning ready for work, but I could not pick cotton; and all that I could hear was that song: "Jesus saves day by day." It kept ringing in my ears till I sent one of the boys to the house to ask their mother if she wanted to go to church; and she said yes. So I hitched up the mules and off we went to meeting again.

When we reached the tent the meeting had begun and the people were singing and shouting, and that same old fat man was on his feet testifying again, and as I came in he looked at me with tears all over his face; this made me more miserable than ever. When they called mourners my wife went to the altar; and I was glad of it, for I had heard them say that if she got sanctified it would keep her from getting mad, and I wanted her to get it; and thank God, she did get reclaimed that night and never did stop till she got sanctified.

The meeting closed and left me at the altar still unsaved. I went home determined never to give up till God did save me. I would read the lesson in the Bible and my wife would lead the prayer at home from the first night that she got saved. I went to every meeting that I could hear of, and prayed all the time, until one day all alone in the cotton field, as I prayed between two cotton rows the Lord seemed to whisper into my soul: "What about all those old debts that you owe; will you pay them? and what about those men that you have beat in mule trades; will you make that good?"

I fell on my face and cried to God, and promised to pay back as fast as I could. Then the Spirit began to talk to me about the whiskey and tobacco that I was using, and said, "Will you quit that too?" I sent the children to the house, and began to clean up right. I threw away a box of snuff and a piece of tobacco, and kneeled by the wagon tongue and prayed though, till I knew that God had forgiven all the black past. Praise His holy name.

I confessed and promised God to straighten up all; and thank God, the fire fell and heaven was turned loose in my soul. I went to the house rejoicing, and from that hour I have not touched whiskey or tasted tobacco, or sworn an oath. Instead of the bottle, we have the Bible. Instead of growls we have prayers, instead of tobacco, we have testimonies; instead of rows, we have song; instead of going to gambling hells, I have gone to prayer-meetings; and instead of going to saloons,

we have all got into the wagon and gone to prayer-meeting and church. Thank God for a salvation that will clean a man up and make him straighten up all the past, and pay back and sign notes till all is clear. This salvation cost me \$800.

When I got converted my wife said, "Harve, you ought to get sanctified before you stop." I told her that what I had was good enough for field hands. But it was not long till I found the uprisings still in my heart of the old carnal nature, that disturbed my peace, and one night at a prayer-meeting the Lord sanctified me wholly. Praise God!

Then I wanted to go to my old home and tell all my old associates what the Lord had done for me. How He could save an old tough like I had been, and then sanctify him, and so completely destroy all the desires for former things out of my heart; and stop me from fusses and quarrels, and make a decent man out of me. I wanted to go back to Georgia, my old home, and tell my old mother what great things the Lord had done for me, and tell her how God had answered her prayer at last, and saved her drunken boy. I started, but the day before I got there the Lord called her home to live with him.

It seems like I can almost see my Savior meet her, and say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, I have good news to tell you;" and as he sat down with the redeemed saints above, he pointed to earth and said, "Look! that drunken boy of yours has been redeemed at last." Then I can almost hear her shout as she joins the white-robed choir, while they sing, "Redeemed through the blood."

Four years have passed since God saved me. I have had some hard testings, and trials have been hard, but by the grace of God I mean to go through with Him at any cost. May the Lord bless this testimony to the good of some poor struggling soul as I was, and help him to find a Savior that can save, sanctify and keep.

Look up, brother! If Jesus can save a wretch like me, he can save all that come to Him. Let all who read these lines pray at least one earnest prayer to God that I may be saved in heaven at last, where I want to meet Jesus who redeemed me, and mother who prayed for me in childhood days, and while I was in sin, and Bro. Lewis, whose testimony convicted me, and Bro. Jernigan, who so faithfully preached repentance to me, and Sister Jernigan, who first told me that Christ could save the worst of men. A. H. Tipton, VanAlstyne, Texas, December 16, 1904

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Source: "Redeemed Through The Blood," by Mrs. Jonnie Jernigan

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THE END