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## **LIFE STORY OF JERRY MCAULEY**

**By Jerry McAuley**

Edited by Duane V. Maxey

Repairer Publishing Company  
Atlanta, Georgia

Printed Booklet: No Date -- No Copyright

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Digital Edition 12/04/2000  
By Holiness Data Ministry

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### **01 -- ABOUT THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION**

THE CONTENTS OF THIS TRACT-BOOKLET: -- The tract-booklet from which this digital publication was created contained two different stories: (a) The Story of Jerry McAuley, His Conversion, Establishment in Grace, and His Water Street Mission work; and (b) The Testimony of Colonel H. H. Hadley, titled: "No Smoking on the Upper Deck." I have separated these and the reader will find both of them on the HDM CD, listed each under its own title and author.

POSSIBLE DATE-RANGE OF PUBLICATION -- Judging from the foxing (browning) of the pages of this little 32-page, pocket-size, paper-back booklet, it seems possible that it was published somewhere between 1920-1935, but this is only my estimate. Some of the content seems to indicate that it may have been published as early as the late 1800s. The foxing of the pages was so dark that I could not use either our Type-Reader OCR program or our TextBridge OCR program to scan them. It was necessary to first scan the pages using Adobe Photoshop and I then adjusted the brightness/contrast using its Extensis Intellifix function.

CONVERSION OF MCAULEY'S IRISH DIALECT INTO PROPER ENGLISH -- In the printed booklet, McAuley used such dialectic-English as (me father) instead of (my father), (an') instead of (and), (livin') instead of (living), etc., etc. I converted such words into correct English, and this editing also involved the changing of entire phrases and portions of text, such as the following: "But I was tall o' me years an' strong, an' had no fear..." -- changed into -- "But I was tall for my years and strong, and had no fear..." I made these changes in the text as a matter of personal preference, and also I felt that these changes might tend to make the message of the book more readily and more easily understood by most readers. -- DVM

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## 02 -- EVIL IN MCAULEY'S EARLY LIFE

My father was a counterfeiter and ran away from justice before I can remember him. There was a lot of us and they put me with my grandmother. She was old and a devout Romanist, and many times when she was counting her beads and kissing the floor in penance I'd steal near her just to hear her curse and swear, and then she'd go back to her knees.

I got well beyond her or anybody in the family by the time I was thirteen. They let me run loose. I had no schooling and got blows for meat and drink till I wished till I wished myself dead many a time.

I thought if I could only get to my sister in America I'd be near the same as in Paradise, when all at once they sent me to her, and for awhile I ran errands and helped my brother-in-law. But I was tall for my years and strong, and had no fear for any man living and I was a born thief as well, so much so that stealing came natural and easy.

Soon I was in a den on Water Street, learning to be a prize-fighter, and with a boat on the river for thieving at night. By this time I was nineteen and don't suppose a bigger nuisance and loafer ever stepped above ground. I made good hauls, for the river police didn't amount to much in those days, and it was pretty easy to board a vessel and take what you pleased. The fourth ward belonged to my kind. It's bad enough now, but today it's heaven to what it was then.

So, I'd committed enough crimes to send me to prison forty times over, and I knew it, but that didn't make it any easier to go there for something I hadn't done. A crime was sworn on me by some that hated me bad and wanted me out of the way.

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### 03 -- FIFTEEN YEARS AND PRISON AND CONVERSION

That was the sentence I got, and when I was not twenty years old. That hour going up the river was the toughest I'd ever come to. I was mad with rage, but handcuffed and forced to keep quiet. It was in my mind to kill my keeper, and I marked him then.

"Wait," said I to myself, "I'll be even with you some day even if I have to hang for it." And when I put on the prison dress and they shut me in, I knocked me head against the wall, and if I had dared I would have killed myself. At last I made up my mind I'd obey rules, and see if I couldn't get pardoned out, or maybe there'd come a chance of escape, and I set my mind toward that.

I tried it for two years. I learned to read, had a pile of cheap novels they let us buy, and I learned carpet weaving. No one had a word to say against me. But then I grew weakly; I'd been used to the open air always, and shut-in life told upon me. Then I got ugly and thought it was no use, and then they punished me. Do you know what that is? It's the leather collar that holds and galls you. You are strapped up by the arms with your toes just touching the floor, and it's the shower bath that leaves you in a dead faint till another dash brings you out. I've stood it all and cursed God while I did. I was so desperate that I would have killed the keeper, but I saw no chance to escape, even if I did.

It was one Sunday morning. I'd been in prison five years. I dragged myself into the chapel and sat down; then I heard a voice I knew and looked up. There by the chaplain was a man I'd been on a spree with, many and many a time -- Orville Gardner. He stepped down off of the platform. "My men," he said, "I've no right anywhere but among you, for I've been one of you in sin," and then he prayed till there wasn't a dry eye there but mine. I was ashamed to be seen crying, but I looked at him and wondered what had come to him to make him so different.

He quoted a Bible verse that struck me, and when I got to my cell again I took the Bible and began to hunt for it. I read awhile till I found something that hit the Catholics, I thought, and I pitched me Bible down and kicked it all around the cell. "The vile heretics!" I said. "That's the way they show up the Catholics, is it?"

It was the verse that says: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

"I'll have a Catholic Bible," I said, "and not this thing that no decent Catholic would touch with a ten-foot pole." So I got me a Catholic Bible from the library, but it was pretty much the same, only more lumbered up with notes. I read them both, and the more I read the more miserable I was.

I wanted to be different. I thought about the new look in Gardner's face. "What makes it?" I said, "and he's different, why can't I be? Now if I send for the priest. He'll set me doing penance, and saying so many prayers, and all such like. The chaplain says I'm to be sorry for me sins and ask God to forgive me. Which is the way, I wonder?"

You wouldn't think I'd have minded, but if ten thousand people had been in my cell, I couldn't have felt worse about praying. I knelt down, blushing as I had never done before in me life. Then I'd get up again, and that's the way it was for three or four weeks, till I was just desperate. Then came a night when I said I'd pray till some sense comes to me, and if it didn't I'd never pray again.

I was so weak and trembly that it seemed as if I could easily die. I knelt there and waited between the times I prayed. I wouldn't stir from my knees. My eyes were shut. I was in agony, and the sweat was rolling from my face in big drops, and "God be merciful to me a sinner!" came from me lips. Then in a minute, something seemed to be by me. I heard a voice, or I felt I heard one plain enough. It said, "My son, thy sins which are many, are forgiven."

To the day of me death, I'll think I saw a light about me, and smelled something as sweet as flowers in the cell. I didn't know if I was alive or not. I shouted out, "Oh, praise God! Praise God!"

"Shut your noise," the guard said, going by. "What's the matter with you?"

"I found Christ," I said. "My sins are all forgiven me."

"I'll report you," he said, and he took my number, but he didn't report me.

Well, then, seeing how it had come to me, I began to pray for others. I was quiet and content all the time, and felt that God would find a way to let me out of prison. I didn't pray for it for two years, but just worked there to save others, and many a one turned to a new life and stuck to it.

Then at last came a pardon when I'd been in prison seven years and six months, and I came back down the river to New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- LED TO BEER AND BACK INTO A LIFE OF SIN

There was never a more lonesome man, alive. I wouldn't go back to the fourth ward for fear that I'd be tempted. So I wandered around looking for work, till one day I met a friend, and he took me to a lager beer saloon. Lager beer had come up since I went up the river. I didn't know it was any hurt; they said it wasn't. But that first night did for me. My head got in a buzz, and in a week or two I wanted something stronger.

I got work in a hat shop, and had good wages, but a strike came, and I led it and lost the my job. It was war-time and I went into the bounty business -- a rascally business, too. Then I had a boat on the river again. I'd buy stolen goods of the sailors, and then make them enlist for fear of being arrested, and I took the bounty. The end of the war stopped this, and then I stuck to the river buying and selling smuggled goods and paying all I could in counterfeit money. Do you remember when the Idaho burned in the East River? My partners and I rowed out, not to save life, but to rob; but when we saw them screaming in the water we turned and helped them, though one of my partners in the boat said we'd make a pile picking up coats and hats.

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## 05 -- RECLAIMED AFTER NEARLY DROWNING

Often I was shot at. Do you think I didn't remember what I'd had given me [Salvation from Christ] and how I'd lost it? I didn't pray, didn't dare to, I kept thinking, for I said God was done with me. and I was bound for hell sure and certain.

About this time, one night I'd gone over to Brooklyn, very drunk, too drunk to do my share of the work we had laid out for that night. As my partner boarded the ship we were after, I slipped and fell overboard and went under like a shot. An eddy carried me off, and the boat went another way. I knew I was drowning, for I went down twice, and in my extremity I called on God, though I felt too mean to do it. It seemed as if I was lifted up and the boat brought to me. I got hold of it somehow -- I don't just know how. The water had sobered me. When I was in it, I heard, plain as if a voice spoke to me, "Jerry, you've been saved for the last time. Go out on the river again and you'll never have another chance."

I was mad. I went home and drank and drank and drank. I was sodden with drink and as awful looking a case -- more so than you've ever laid eyes on. And oh, the misery of my thoughts. It was the John Allen excitement then and I heard the singing and was sick with remembering, and yet drinking day and night to drown it all.

One day, a city missionary came to the house on Cherry Street where I boarded. He shied a bit when he saw me at the top of the stairs -- a head like a mop and an old red shirt. He had been pitched down stairs by fellows like me and I'd done it myself once. I hung around while he went in a room, thinking maybe he could get me a job of honest work. When he came out I told him so, and he asked me to step out on the pavement. He said afterwards that I was so evil-looking he was afraid of me and he didn't know what I might do. So out on the street I went, and he took me straight to the Howard Mission.

There we had a long talk, and a gentleman wanted me to sign the pledge.

"It's no use," I said; "I shall break it."

"Ask God to keep you from breaking it," he said.

I thought a minute, and then I signed it and went home. My partner was there, and he laughed himself hoarse when I told him. He had a bottle of gin in his hand that very minute.

"You!" he said; "here, drink; I took the glass and drank.

"That's the last glass I'll ever take," I said.

"Yes," he said, "till the next one."

I'd hardly swallowed it, when who should come in, but the missionary. We went out together, and I told him I was dead broke and hungry, and I would have to go on the river once more, anyhow.

"Jerry," he said, "before you shall ever do that again, I'll take off this coat and pawn it."

The coat was thin and old. I knew he was poor, and it went to my heart that he'd do such a thing as that. He went away a minute, and when he came back he brought me fifty cents. An he kept on helping. He followed me up day after day, and at last one night at his house, where he'd had me to tea, an there was singing and praying afterwards, I prayed myself once more and believed I would be forgiven. There wasn't any shouting this time, but there was quiet and peace.

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## 06 -- A SECOND FALL CAUSED BY TOBACCO

It was a hard pull. I got work now and then, but more often not, and then everybody thought I was shamming for what I could get out of it. I didn't wonder, and helped it along by doing what you'd never believe -- I caved in again. Three times I was drunk, and do you know what did it? Tobacco. That's why I'm down on tobacco now. Chew and smoke and there'll be a steady craving for something, and mostly it ends in whiskey. A man that honestly wants the Spirit of God in him has got to be clean I tell you, inside and out, He's got to shut down on all his old dirty tricks, or he's gone. That's the way I found it.

[After this second fall back into sin, McAuley was obviously reclaimed, and in the following paragraph his words about his wife, Maria, seem to indicate that she may have been instrumental in his spiritual reclamation, but he gives no specifics about how he was reclaimed. -- DVM]

I was married by this time to Maria, and she's been God's help from that day to this, and often we talked about some way to get at the poor souls in the fourth ward. We were doing day's work, both of us, and poor as poor could be. But we said, "Why have we both been used to filth and nastiness, and should we not use our experience in this to help some others out of it?"

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## 07 -- THE BEGINNING OF MCAULEY'S WATER STREET MISSION

One day I had a sort of vision. I thought we had a house in the fourth ward, and a stream of people were coming in. I washed them outside, and the Lord washed them inside; and I cried as I thought, "O, if I could only do that for Jesus' sake." "Do it for one, if you can't do it for more," said Maria, and that's the way we begun, in an old rookery of a house [perhaps meaning an old house that had been a gambling den] in one room, and a little sign hung out: "THE HELPING HAND FOR MEN."

You'd never believe how many that sign drew in. We did what we could and when Thanksgiving Day came, friends gave us a good dinner for all. Afterwards there was a meeting and it was so blessed we were moved to say that they all should come the next night. From that day to this -- first in the old building, and then in this, the new one -- there's been a meeting every night in the year, and now it's hundreds -- yes, thousands -- that can say the Water Street Mission was their help to a new life.

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## 08 -- BEING BUSY FOR GOD HELPS PREVENT BACKSLIDING

Day and night we work -- you know how. My life is slowly but surely going from me. I feel it, but living or dying it's the Lord's. All these years He has held me, but I don't know now but that I'd fallen again if I hadn't been so busy holding on to others. And that's the way to keep men -- set them to work. The minute they say they're sick of the old ways, start them to pull in somebody else. You see when your soul is just on fire, longing to get at every wretch and bring him into the fold, there's no time for your old tricks, and no wanting to try them again. I could talk a month telling of one and other that's been here.

Oh there's stories if one but knew them. And not a day that you don't know there isn't a bumner in the fourth ward so low down but what the Lord can pick him out of the gutter and set him on his feet. That's why I tell my story and everything right out plain. There are times that I'm sick of remembering it, but I have to do it, and those very times seem to be the times that help the most. As long as tongue can move, may I never be ashamed to tell what I have been saved from.

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will He teach sinners in the way."--Ps. 25:9.

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him (Jesus), seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."--Heb. 7:25.

The Old Water Street Mission was opened in October, 1872. A new building was erected in 1876. After Jerry left to found the Cremorne Mission in January, 1882: Superintendent S. H. Hadley, took charge of the work. Jerry McAuley died September 18, 1884, a pioneer in the cause of Rescue Missions. Let no slave of drink or vice despair. Christ has saved thousands. He can save you!

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09 -- THE MILL AND THE STILL -- By N. L. Smith

The bright golden grain grew out in the rain,  
And under the golden sun;  
Her intentions were good, she grew only for food,  
To strengthen man's brain and brawn.

When gathered by men, it so turned out then,  
One load was sent to the mill;  
To tell of the other, my heart aches, my brother,  
'Twas sent to the whiskey still.

Busy wheels went round, and the wheat was ground  
At the mill into beautiful flour;  
In the home there is bread, and the family is fed;  
There is health, and vigor, and power!

The other load got in a vat to rot,  
Until poisoned by hell's dev'lish germ:  
To complete the sad ill, it was passed through the still  
To the coils of the serpentine worm.

At home there is hell, where peace should now dwell,  
Because cursed liquor has come  
Rags, hunger and strife, and murder are rife,  
In the home where husband drinks rum.

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THE END