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

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

MARY COMSTOCK
(Methodist)

The Misses Wilson and Comstock led the school in scholarship (at least among the girls), and were both highly prized. Miss Wilson was a fine mathematician. She was a girl of refined manners, and dignified life, but was not a Christian. The matron of the school was an earnest worker, and had interested herself specially in Miss Wilson's salvation. She did not yield at once, but about the middle of the meeting she gave her heart to God and became a marked follower of the Lamb.

Miss Comstock was the daughter of Dr. Comstock of Joliet, Ills., also a Methodist preacher. She had grown up under the most careful training and was scrupulously moral. She was really a Pharisee of the strictest sort, although she had never become a church member, nor had she been converted. She was entrenched in self-righteousness. I had strongly desired the conversion of those two girls especially in view of their influence upon others. I found Miss Comstock a perfect lady, but a very difficult case to reach. When Miss Wilson was converted I thought through her Miss Comstock would come down, but she stood stiffer than ever before. She would look me right in the eye and say: "Mr. Haney, do you think I could ever identify myself with the church?" Her views of her own moral standing were such that she really felt it would degrade her to come to the level of God's people! But prayers unceasing went up for this poor, deluded soul.

One evening before sunset Prof. Martin came down, somewhat excited in his manners, and said: "Miss Comstock is very anxious to see you!" I answered, "What does that mean?" and he said, "I think she has changed her views." On reaching her room I found her majesty prostrate on the carpet with agony of soul she had never tasted before! Miss Wilson and the preceptress were in tears praying for her salvation. The Holy Spirit had lifted the veil from her deceived heart and given her a view of her real self. The abhorrence with which she now looked upon herself I probably have never seen equaled. The Lord wanted to save her, but He proposed that she should first find out she was lost! That she should see herself in contrast with His real people, and apprehend the subtle devilish power which had held her. O, what self-loathing, what confessions of her deceived condition, what inward horrors, as God showed her that she was a vile leper in

His sight! But the point of utter despair, of self-extinction was reached, and it seemed to her like the darkness of the second death begun, when Jesus came and the battle was ended!

Her conception of the exceeding sinfulness of sin was so clear, and fearful, that immediately after her conversion she was a candidate for complete inward holiness. Her conversion was so marked and wonderful that it could not be doubted, but it brought her such views of God's holiness, that her glad soul hastened into the fountain of cleansing. Her experience of entire sanctification was equally clear and definite.

She was possessed of a wonderful power to bring others to the Christ, and rarely failed to rescue those she sought. There was a girl in the seminary who had resisted all entreaties, whose chums in the school and her sister had been converted; but she remained obdurate. Mary came one day to her boarding place, and this girl was seated on the opposite side of the room. She walked with a quick step to where she sat and knelt right down before her and never got up till the other was converted! Nor did this die with the excitements of the meeting, as will be seen from the following incident:

In the third year of the war, I think it was, I came home at Conference time. One day a large number of ministers were extending friendly greetings, when a brother said to me: "Dr. Vincent was inquiring for you." I had known of the Doctor as a great man, but had not met him, and wondered why he should desire to see me. It then occurred to my mind, as I was just from the front of the Western army, that he was in pursuit of war news. So I said to the brother: "Where is he?" And he led me to the doctor and gave me an introduction. Doctor Vincent seemed as glad to meet me as if I were an old friend and said:

"I understand, Brother Haney, that you profess the blessing of holiness." I said: "Yes, I do ;" and he proceeded to give the steps which led him into that grace. He was stationed at Joliet, Ills., and the first Sabbath of his pastorate he had a general class meeting after preaching. Among others who spoke there was a girl who gave in her testimony to the experience of sanctification, and Vincent said: "I did not like it and resolved that I would prevent its being repeated. She seemed to be a modest girl, and so before the services closed I gave a hint that it was not best to set ourselves up above our brethren."

But the good Doctor was surprised in the next meeting to hear her repeat her former testimony, as though nothing had occurred! He then made statements more direct and extended against such testimony, and felt sure that would end it; but the dear man met with a still greater surprise in a third meeting to hear the renewal of her testimony, as though everybody believed it! She made no reference to what her pastor had said and gave no symptom of a resentful spirit. The Doctor made up his mind, then, to see her at her home and get this heresy out of her. So he made her a patient, but persistent visit, and insisted he was her pastor, and the Bible exacted obedience to ministers, etc., etc.

She insisted that she was loyal to her pastors and did nothing with design to affront or disobey them, but was, on the other hand, aiming to do all she could to help them. And when they met again she witnessed, as before, that God had sanctified her soul! The Doctor added: "She

conquered me, and I got the blessing!" I asked the name of this girl, and he said it was Miss Comstock.

At this distance of time I may not have given the exact words of this interview, but the facts I have faithfully recorded, in view of meeting them in that day. This great man's soul, under the moulding influence of the indwelling Holy Ghost, was as simple as a child's and beautiful, as he walked with God in the light of new-born love made perfect. Mary is in heaven, and Dr. Vincent one of our Bishops. I wonder if his great soul is still flooded with this glorious light?

Source: "Pentecostal Possibilities
or Story of My Life" by M. L. Haney

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THE END