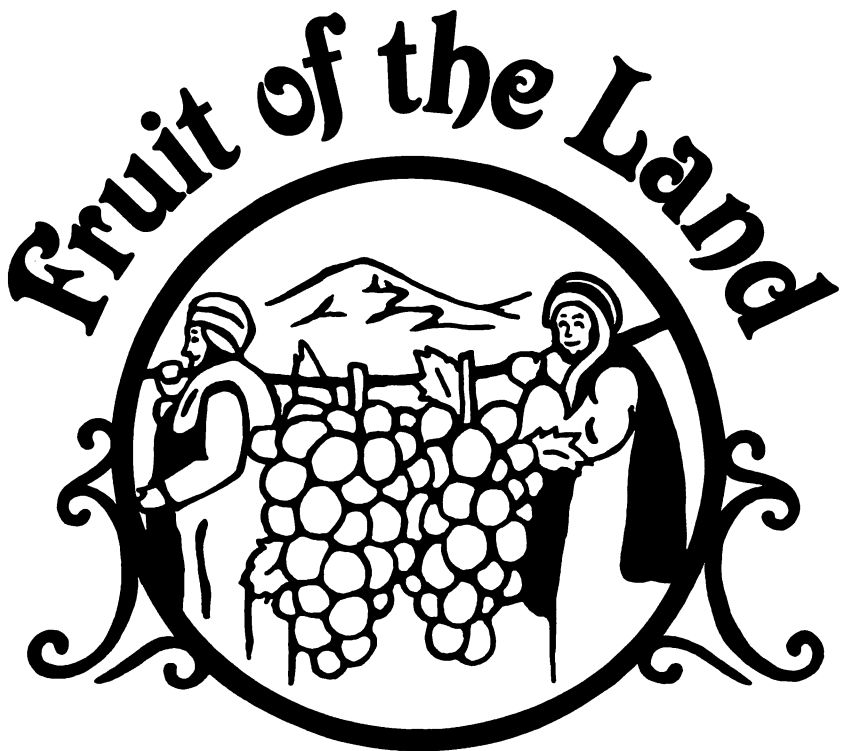


Fruit of the Land

(Formerly "ARROWS OF TRUTH")



JOHN WRIGHT FOLLETTE

1989

FOLLETTE BOOKS

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JOHN WRIGHT FOLLETTE
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Wright Follette was a gift to the Body of Christ. He was one of the most outstanding Bible teachers of his time—a chosen and illuminated spirit in the field of spiritual reality. He paid a dear price for Truth which he first experienced himself before he gave it out. He would say:

“Truth is costly; it will slay you because the Lord is not interested in this carnal, natural setup. It has to go by way of death before it can be released in life.”

His words and life were one in purity and power. He felt like one who had to forge ahead—a forerunner that goes on to the territory and finds the terrain; knows its pitfalls; its gorgeous and wonderful scenery and then comes back again and says, “Come, it’s marvelous over here, come along.”

He doubtless could have made a name for himself for he was not only a gifted teacher, but an artist and a poet as well as an author. He chose, however, the lowly way of the cross and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than fame or name. His ministry took him around the world after giving his life to teaching—first at Elim Bible School, Rochester, N.Y., and then at Southern California Bible College. He received his college training at New Paltz and his ministerial at Taylor University and Drew Theological Seminary.

His forebears were of Huguenot descent and the Patentees of New Paltz, N.Y. where today his ancestral home still stands as a monument of religious freedom which his ancestors sought. It is now a National Historical Shrine. He passed away in New Paltz, N.Y. on Oct. 3, 1966, just short of his 83rd birthday.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The contents of this book consist of articles and poems written for various Christian Publications and spanning a period of forty years. It is the rich fruitage gained from a man of unusual sensitivity, spirituality, and intellect, who left a deep influence upon those who heard him.

This book is published with the prayer that the spiritual impressions John Wright Follette left on those who heard him will likewise be made on a new generation and the ones to come. Truly,

“He being dead yet speaketh.”

C.S. & S.M.S.

Other Follette Publications by Author:

Golden Grain

Paul's Sevenfold Vision and Method of Attainment

This Wonderful Venture Called Christian Living

Smoking Flax and Other Poems

A Christmas Wreath . . . poetry

The Threefold Witness of God

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

The Rule of Three

Gideon

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GOD SMILES

I SAW God smile today
In a dash of silver wings,
Flashing 'gainst an azure sky,
Tipping, swaying, sailing high
Over noisy city streets
Crowded with a thousand things.

So may it be some day
When the changing season brings
Trouble to my peaceful sky,
That a song replace the sigh
While His smile my spirit greets
In a dash of silver wings.

CHAPTER ONE

A Twofold Reaction to Tragedy

Did you ever test yourself as to how you react to tragedy or great trouble? In life's school we find very often God uses a severe blow or misfortune to prove our faith and to test our character. Tragedy has a way of stalking down the road and so many times meeting us when we least expect it. I am sure we all know that such proving and testing may befall us without our being any personal or direct cause of it. Many, many times it is quite beyond our control. If it were otherwise we would probably avoid all such testings and keep an easy path. Let us remember it is all a part of the divine arrangement and has a place on our program as well as the hours of sunshine and music. Trouble or severe testing is not necessarily a sign of sin, failure, or lack of spirituality. It is often a sign of spiritual life and growth which God must test and prove. We are His workmanship.

You have noticed in life the twofold reaction to tragedy. Either it will break us in spirit, mellow us, melting the hardness and bringing us in our helplessness to God; or it will throw us upon our feeble resources and human reasoning. This in turn hardens

us in spirit, making us critical and times even cynical. It robs the heart of the great privilege of trusting God and developing the life along rich and helpful avenues.

I want to give a little personal experience which I hope may be of help to some who are anxious over the welfare of loved ones. I remember very well when a lad of sixteen—a very trying period for young lives when important decisions are made and the first steps are taken which often determine the destiny of a life—tragedy came into our happy home. Out of a clear sky, in no way the fault of those of whom I speak, great trouble cast a shadow over our family. My father was a Christian, a member of the church and had a fine moral character. But his faith in the experimental matters of the daily life was weak. He could *not see God* in the matter and so turned away from the whole idea of God, or the thought of trusting Him. His human reasoning got the better of him and plunged him into unbelief and bitterness. He made no great outward fuss; in fact, he said very little. But his few remarks told us his attitude. He dropped his church life, ceased to say grace at the table, and had absolutely no interest in the things of God. He knew he was not to blame and so naturally reasoned, "*Why* has such trouble come?"

After we live long enough we learn that trouble does not come always because we are to blame, but when it does come we should interpret it in God's light and cause it to serve us. It may be one of the greatest teachers to instruct and discipline us. I was a lad in high school and a worldly Christian, a member of the church but without any vital touch with God. I do not relate this to show I had faith or was

any better than my father. I want simply to show you how the same trouble may work differently on hearts. I was not old enough to have a background of reasoning. I was frightened and knew the trouble was too big for me. Therefore, I flew to God. Out of desperation I plunged my heart and life into Him. How I prayed!

There were no spiritually-minded people to whom I could go. God saw to it that I was shut away from any human help. I had no "crutches." I had to walk alone and trust God or (as I thought) perish. I suffered greatly for years until later I found God in a clearer experience. So many things came to pass in the years that followed. The trouble kept me pressed into God. For eighteen years it continued. Father was still bitter in heart, though to us as a family he was kind and a good father. He provided for us and was interested in our welfare. But I knew all the time he carried in his poor, dear heart a great hurt. No human could help him and he would not let God, so he bore it in silence.

During those eighteen years in which he was a backslider, naturally I tried to help him. But I soon learned a great lesson—the difference between *my* interest and *my* way and *God's* interest and *His* way. I had to take the usual criticism of interested friends. Some, you know, are forever wondering *why* the minister's and Christian worker's folk are not all saved, sanctified, and baptized. I have had plenty of misunderstanding and criticism all my life; this was but a part of it, to keep me in God. I learned I had to keep my hands off whether the people understood or not, and so to many I seemed indifferent to my dear father's soul. I prayed *through* and committed him to

God. After that I was not indifferent but restful. Faith is not indifference, unconcern, and apathy. It is most vital attention held in profound rest and assurance. I *knew* God would take care of him in His own time and way.

As I said, eighteen years passed by. Others were saved and many had their loved ones brought to God. Friends who were anxious (but did not understand my position) prodded me on to *do* something. "What if he should die?" and other scare stories were held up to me. My father was not the scare kind. To go to him with that was just the wrong tactic. He was safe in the hands of God. It was eighteen years later in June and I was teaching and away from home, when word came that father had contracted a severe cold and was very ill. I was *not* in a panic, but I felt fresh prayer being born in my heart for him. I prayed that God would deal as He saw good. That was all; I had *no* suggestions as to *how*.

In about two or three weeks I went home for a few days and found Father quite broken in health and unable to continue his business. He was up and around but able to go for only a short walk each day. One day when I knew Mother was out shopping and I thought Father was out walking, I sat down at the piano and began to sing. I felt I needed a little refreshing from the Spirit (as I have no member of my family in Pentecost and none would understand me). As I sat there I sang, "God will take care of you." Then I felt to sing it again and even the third time. The Spirit was there and I felt His sweet presence.

I was thirsty and so stepped out to the kitchen for a drink of water. To my utter surprise, there sat Father in tears. I did not know he was in the house.

I shall never forget the pathetic look in his eyes as he buried his face against me. All he could do was to draw close (oh, so close) and bury his face against me. He was all broken to pieces and between sobs said, "Dad wants to hear it now. Yes, talk to me; I want to hear it." No need to say God was there. We had a most blessed time. It was *God's* time and I had nothing to do with it. God brought him wonderfully to a new place by His side. He broke and opened to God like a crushed and broken flower, one that had not given its beauty and fragrance to the world, but which now needed the light and warmth of the sun and had found it. He just seemed to drink God into his thirsty soul.

A few days later he suffered a stroke and went to his deathbed. He stayed only a few days. The pull from the other side was too great and he kept saying, "Oh, let me go! I want to go." The day before he slipped away he spoke to us all about the things of God. He quoted Scripture verses I never knew he had in his head or heart. Then while resting upon my arm on his pillow, he went home.

Dear ones, have you met tragedy? Have you dear ones who are yet unsaved or backslidden? How are you interpreting your trouble? Can you trace God's fingers in the outline? Do not try to reason it out—pray it *through*. Run to God and bury your tired heart upon His breast. Lean hard; lean hard. Those eighteen years were long but full of God. Our little natural interest and help never get us anywhere. Put the loved ones and backsliders into God's hands and let Him work out the problem. Faith is not indifference; it is most wonderfully keen and awake, yet restful, and can even sing.

CHAPTER TWO

Faith in Operation

Early in life each of us discovered that there are certain fundamental laws of nature which we must recognize. God has established them and works through them. If we ignore them we will have trouble and confusion, but if we line up with them and adjust ourselves accordingly, life will be livable.

But many Christians seem to think that the realm of the Spirit is a kind of "happy hunting ground" in which we may run around as we please, regardless of spiritual laws, and then expect to have an orderly, well-balanced Christian experience. They are mistaken. In the spiritual order God has principles which are as basic and real as are the principles in the natural world. The laws which operate in the realm of the Spirit are just as demanding as the others and require a like obedience.

In regard to faith, I have discovered that there is a certain basic rule consisting of three steps. In John's Gospel we read that Jesus had blessed fellowship in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; but since He was away when Lazarus took sick and died, they sent Him word to that effect. When He arrived, Lazarus

had been dead for several days, but He raised him from the dead. It is a dramatic scene, wonderful and beautiful. In this story we find Jesus giving voice to a little word which is the digest or the epitome of the whole process of faith.

After He had brought them to the place of confession of their faith and was about to bring forth Lazarus, He turned to Martha and said (John 11:40), "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" In that simple verse He disclosed to them the entire process of faith development in us.

He uses identically the same pattern today. He starts with the phrase, "Said I not unto thee?" That is point number one, and it refers to something spoken, something given: a testimony, a word, a promise, a covenant, a bit of revelation which comes within the brackets of "Said I not unto thee?"

Said what? "That, if thou wouldest believe. . . ." This is point number two. What was she to believe? Only what He had said to her, not everything in the entire Bible. Jesus tried to pin Martha down. He wanted her to come right out and say that she believed He could do what He had promised. He was not seeking a general declaration of faith, but faith in a specific matter, the word He had spoken. But she had only replied, "Yes, I believe in the resurrection."

That was lovely, but not what He wanted. Finally in verse 26 He brings her to the point of faith—"Believest thou this?" There is always a *this* (the word He speaks). And if she would believe *this*, the result would be that she would see the glory of God. The very thing for which she had believed would be demonstrated before her. Here is the divine process,

the statement to which faith must attach itself. Faith must grasp the Word of the Lord, and if we dare to be obedient to that law which He gives, we will not have to worry about any demonstration of God's power; it will come forth as a natural result, because it is a basic law in the spiritual realm. If we have believed, we have done our part and the rest is in His hands.

This is the divine arrangement and pattern. It is the method of Jesus. What did He say? What particular thing did He want Mary and Martha to believe? He would not have said to them, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe . . ." unless He had mentioned something they were to believe. He had told them what to believe concerning this situation, in verse 4—"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." Also in verse 11—"But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." And again in verse 23—"Thy brother shall rise again." All these statements are positive words of victory. There is no shadow of doubt.

When Jesus met the sisters, He gave them this word: "Thy brother shall rise again." So now His question referred to that promise. That is the thing He had said, the truth He had given; that is what He had in mind relative to this terrible tragedy.

His purpose was that Lazarus should live. All Martha and Mary had to do was to believe what He had said and then watch God fulfill His promise. They did not have to worry about the tomb, or who would get the brother out of it, or whether there would be anyone to help them roll away the stone. They needed only to say, "Thank You, Lord! You have spoken the word, 'He shall live,' and that is all we need to know."

This is the threefold process of faith. Why does there

have to be something stated first? Because faith is never operative unless it has something on which to venture out. You have to believe something. There is no such thing as just believing.

Sometimes I am disturbed when watching people work with seekers at the altar. They say, "Brother, just believe. Lay hold and believe." We must give the seekers something to believe. Faith calls for a promise just as the sundial calls for the sun. A sundial is useless without the sun. So it is with faith. I must have something in which I can place my faith, something on which I can venture out, something that invites my confidence.

God does not ask people to believe unless He has given them something to believe. Give the seeker some simple, basic truth to which he can hold. Your salvation and anything else you have received from God have been obtained through that process.

And once you believe what God has said, you may be sure that God will get glory. The Bible is the "Said I not?" of God. Why? Because all that He has ever said pertaining to eternal things and the supernatural life are hidden in this divine revelation. It is the Word of God, the voice of God. In this Word He has given us promises, covenants, intimations in the Spirit sufficient to transport everyone of us from death and darkness to spiritual birth and resurrection, from the bondage of an old creation to a place in the heavenlies with Him.

All of this is in the Word of God. The whole program for us as Christians is in this Word. Do you need salvation? There are many promises relative to that. Do you need healing? Is there a "Said I not?" concerning wisdom? Suppose you are troubled and tempted

and oppressed by the enemy. Have we any "Said I not?" for such a situation? Yes, God has a promise for all of these circumstances.

There is no condition or circumstance in which you may find yourself, for which God has not provided something in His Word. There is a "Said I not?" of God for every situation one may face in this life. It matters not where you get pushed, in what environment you may find yourself; there is a "Said I not?" of God to meet your need, and He expects you to believe what He has said. That is all. The rest is in His hands.

When there is a situation in life which demands faith, Christians usually go to the Word of God, which is very natural. And then they say, "Oh, yes, here is a promise," and they try to appropriate it. Some go to the promise box and hunt for help. They say, "Now, it says this in the Bible, and it fits right into my need." Then they pray and try to force God to fulfill that verse for them.

Such a procedure may be dangerous, for they are taking the initiative. They are appropriating a promise which they think relates to a particular situation, and they expect the Lord to answer according to their wishes because they are claiming one of His promises. But He does not ask us to find a promise which we think relates to the case, or one that seems to fit the need perfectly. We are too limited in our knowledge concerning all the ramifications involved in such difficulties or situations. So when one selects a promise he usually takes one which indicates speedy deliverance and victory, not knowing if it complies with the purpose of God concerning the matter. In 2 Peter 1:4 we read, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and pre-

cious promises." Let God speak the word of promise to your heart, for He will give the exact promise which relates to *His* will and *His* purpose. The promise which you select in order to cause God to answer your prayer may not apply at all. All the promises are true, of course, and there is no question about the authority or validity of God's Word. But we are not often wise enough to know how God wants to answer our prayer.

When we select a promise upon which to stand, we can only hope and try to believe there may be spirit and life in it. But when *He* speaks the word to us we know we are safe in believing; and as we continue to believe, our faith grows. When God speaks the word it has two definite qualities. It is *authoritative*, and it has *creative power*. The Word is quickened by the Spirit. Faith lays hold of and wraps itself around that word. It is our garrison of strength and security for faith. Its creative power ministers to our faith and strengthens it.

Always be sure that the promise you are using is the one God gives you, not one which you think is applicable and which you think God is obligated to answer. Promises are not for us to take to God to make Him do something for us, but for Him to give to us as a means for strength, authority, and power to build and encourage our faith.

I have met disappointed people who have said, "I don't know where I am in my faith life. Pray for me that I may have faith." It is not a question of faith. Let me tell you where the trouble lies. When Jesus said to Mary and Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" What was it He expected them to believe? That

the Lord created the world in six days? That is in the Bible, and it is true. But He was not testing to see whether they believed the Old Testament. No, He wanted them to believe one specific promise, one little word out of all the hundreds of thousands of words, one little promise from Him which pertained to that particular situation. That is all they had to believe. They could have found all the promises in the Bible and tried to believe them for this situation, but they would have been defeated, for those other promises did not pertain to this occasion. However, there was a word from Christ which related to it and He wanted them to believe that.

You have to ascertain the mind of God in a matter. And if you walk in the Spirit and commune with Him, He can communicate it to you. Then all you need to do is cling to that one little word which He speaks to your heart. Do what He says to you—not forty other things. Go before Him and say, “Father, here is the situation. I could get twenty-five promises out of the Bible, but I refuse to do that because I have been defeated too many times by following that method. Lord, what do you desire in this matter? Reveal your will to my poor troubled heart; just give me one word. Whisper to me in my spirit the attitude that you wish me to take; and if it be your good pleasure, give me a promise. Perhaps you can bring me into contact with someone who will be your messenger to me. Good Shepherd, speak to me. I am your sheep, and you said that your sheep know your voice. What is your thought about this situation? All I want is to take the right attitude towards it.”

Even if it takes days or weeks, should the situation permit, wait until God speaks His word to your heart.

If you will do so, neither heaven nor earth will move you, because that word has come from God, is established in your heart, and your faith has laid hold of it. Believe the word God gives you—cherish it—because that will bring forth the glory He desires and the deliverance you desire. It may be foreign to anything which people are trying to get you to believe, but stand with God. They who trust in Him shall never be confounded.

CHAPTER THREE

Give Ye Them to Eat

And when it was evening, his disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matthew 14:15-16).

The Setting.

To provide a proper setting for our lesson, let us see what had just happened and also note the effect it had upon the Master. John the Baptist had just suffered martyrdom for the truth's sake, and the disciples had buried his body. Jesus was much moved by the news and desired to be alone. So He withdrew to a quiet, secluded place for meditation, prayer, and refreshment. But there seemed to be no opportunity for rest. The multitude, and it was a great one, was needy, and so they followed Him; they came on foot (ahead of Him) and were there waiting to meet Him. It is ever so; when the need is desperate enough, you will seek Him out and find Him. Faith persists and will not be denied. Faith goes on foot, by land, even to a

desert, if only she may find the Christ and lay the need before Him. Are you desperate and hungry enough to press on even into a desert of personal experience in order to contact the Christ?

Christ cannot deny faith and a need like that. He forgets Himself and His own heart and need, and helps them. He always does. Wonderful Christ! He sees the multitude. He hears the prayers of faith from this needy, asking multitude, and is moved with compassion, and feeds. He always gives when conditions are met and faith persists. And so He ministers to them.

But the afternoon of blessing is soon tinged by evening shadows. The glory and wonder of His healing and ministry are spent and the people are soon in another great need. The first need, you will remember, was healing. But that done, the body must now be fed and taken care of, or the first miracle might almost not have been wrought. Sometimes, yes, often, the deep-seated need in life is only discovered to us and made known by a surface need.

How human to send them away.

The evening comes. We do not remain indefinitely in the light and the glory of the first ministries of Christ, even though they hold the atmosphere of a miracle. The heart must also know the eventide of testing and become familiar with the lengthening purple shadows which cross the path.

When the deeper or more vital pangs of hunger for God, truth, and reality distress us, we do the same as did the disciples. We become so conscious of our limitations and barrenness that we send the crying, hungry needs of life in a thousand directions hoping there may be some food yonder, always yonder to

some village. How very conscious we are of the evening, the declension, the failure, and the desert! We are so keenly aware of the negative and needy side of the picture. Oh, its barrenness, the long stretches of human failure, the stark emptiness of the human to supply anything for such deep, deep need, and such intense hunger! So we suggest the only thing we know to do—turn them away and send them to the nearby villages for food. And what are the villages? Are they not the distant outposts *away* from Christ? Let us remember He is always central and the supply is all the time in His very presence. Oh, how near He is to the most needy heart right now!

Dear ones, when the hungry multitudes of your heart and life, the deep hunger of your being for truth and God, seem impossible to satisfy because of the desert, I beg of you do not send them away. The answer is not away out there—the sequel is near, so very near. Too many times people have sent their hungry hearts to such distant villages as new thought, philosophy, pleasure, service, and many other *escape* villages we often concoct.

Are you not weary? Your tired feet have traveled many miles, wandering from village to village of human and natural construction in quest of bread. Personally, I remember a number of such villages to which I sent my heart before I found Him—the Bread of Life—my heavenly portion. And as I minister to needy people and feed the sheep, I am amazed at the variety of needs in the multitude and the curious villages also. Do the hungry multitudes in your life reach out for God and truth? They may have to press even to a desert, but rejoice, the Christ is even there.

Don't Question—Listen to Him.

How wonderful to hear Him speak! And now listen to the strange words: "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Do not question Him, but *listen* to Him. The natural mind or heart never will understand Him.

Christ always is conscious or aware of the need and *also* of the disciples' conception and method of interpreting it. Therefore He takes the initiative to help them. He does not rebuke them for coming out there and making no provision for the trip. He is the most understanding Christ one could ever desire. Do not be afraid of Him—only trust Him. The poor, short-sighted disciples are, after all, honest at heart. He values that. They acknowledge the condition (the need—that is honest) but they fail to *count* Christ in on the situation. It is always a defeat when all you can count is fish and bread and cannot count Christ also. When one does that he sees *only* fish and bread, and of course he sends or desires to send the need away. You see, their vision is too influenced by the present need—the hunger, the desert, and the limitation.

It was all very true—there was the evening upon them, the hunger, the multitude, the desert, and the pressure—but that is only one part of the picture. The Central Figure, the Source, the Bread, has been eclipsed by the local, pressing need. So they do not *see* Christ, yet all the time He is standing in the center of the need. How amazing! But we do the same; so let us not wonder.

Has He not just healed their bodies and can He not now provide for them to keep them alive? Did He not bless **and** feed you before, dear child, and

deliver you, and can He not *now* provide for you and complete the good work He has begun?

So the disciples do not send them away. They look at and listen to the Christ standing in the midst. And now listen to His strange words, "Give *ye* them to eat." How? It is very simple if one will obey. He is the Bread of Life and when He is recognized as such, it is unnecessary to send away *any* item of need in the human heart. Stay close by Him and let Him work for you. "Give *ye*" seems such a contradictory word to say when they are so conscious of their limitation. But they are not to look at things seen (that is not scriptural), they must hear and heed His, "Give *ye* them to eat." At once the natural comes forth and they begin to count upon their human resources of fish and loaves.

How many times we turn to the natural and count, plan, and scheme, and try the human and the best that flesh can afford. And in the end we find only two small fish and five loaves. He lets one do that over and over again until he learns. The natural must have *first* say, and reason must at last give place to faith. Nature must have her recognition first and then fall at His feet and let the Spirit and faith produce. Peter did the same, as we read in Luke 5:5: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." He seemingly cannot be obedient *at once*, but must talk, *and reason*; then upon the pivot (nevertheless) he swings into faith.

"Bring them . . . to Me."

Next let us see how the Lord deals with them even when they count on the limited supply. He is so kind

and patient and understanding. He looks beyond and does not heed their reasonings. He simply speaks to them, "Bring them to Me." They are no longer to count, look at, measure, comment upon, or judge their limitations. He only desires to have them *bring* them to Him where He can get *His hands* upon them. Wonderful Christ! Adorable Lord! That is the only *safe* place for them: in His hands, not in ours with our hearts and minds confused, overwhelmed, and shadowed by unbelief.

Let us consider again *what* this very limited supply might be. We see it is nothing with which He is displeased, but rather something He desires. Remember He never condemns, judges, or destroys life—He wants it. He does not destroy personality or individuality. He longs to possess us that He might *build* life and produce a personality. "Just as I *am* without one plea" is the song here. Do not think because you have no outstanding gift or promising ability to offer that you are to bring nothing. He desires our lives just as we are. Let them be weak, limited, commonplace, and very ordinary—it matters not. It is *His touch* that makes the difference. It is the altar that sanctifies the gift. He is the Holy Altar—the meeting place for God and man. We meet *in* Him. Hallelujah! When we touch the altar, the gift (our lives) becomes sanctified and set apart for Him, a sacred and peculiar possession of Christ. He washes, cleanses, fills, heals, and does all the redemptive ministry necessary.

"Bring them to Me," He says. This requires a voluntary service, a bit of cooperation on our part. He does not force any soul—He asks for us. Our duty is to bring; He does the rest. But usually people are more concerned with His part or trying to do His

part of the transaction and so fail to do the bringing. And He can do nothing unless *we bring* them to Him. As you read this chapter or at its close, *can you not make it a bringing time?* This picture is that of a wholehearted bringing—all they had. He desires a complete surrender and a full consecration of body, soul, and spirit. And that is because anything left unsurrendered becomes a snare and a means of defeat. All unsurrendered material and items in life, great or small, are *unsafe* in our keeping. We never dream of the undeveloped possibilities of unsurrendered (unbrought) items in life. Remember it is purely voluntary, and the result of obedience to a command, "Bring them to Me."

His All-important Blessing.

"And took"—He always takes whatever we bring to Him. What grace! What love! What eager desire to enter into an understanding with us! Usually the first things we bring are our sins, unbelief, failures, broken hearts, and defeated lives. And wonder of wonders! He takes them all! He takes *us*. He puts the failure and defeat behind Him and holds us in His mighty hands. He takes the life once given to Him. From what did He not take us? From what unholy and unhappy places He has taken us!

"He blessed"—He takes us that He might bless us. The five little loaves and two fishes *never* before had been in such strong hands. Do not fear the taking. His are strong, creative hands; tender, ministering hands; saving, nail-pierced hands. How safe! "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Now He blesses, and that with all heaven's wealth and provision. "All things are yours."

We could tarry long here and mention the blessings.

They touch us in every department of life. They move like great clouds, heavy with rain, over the desert of the heart. They are like bulwarks of strength garrisoning the tired life, and from their lofty peaks the winds of heaven fan the fevered thoughts to rest and refresh the whole life. It is blessing, blessing, blessing. He loves to bless. This all reacts upon the life, and we long in return to have our lives count for Him. We are conscious of the new life and empowering. He blesses with salvation, healing, the glorious Baptism, guidance, perhaps a call, ministry, service, and a deep heart-fellowship of which the world never has dreamed. The life is so filled and the heart so delighted, and one is so conscious it is *all* of Him that one longs to return thanks and be spent for the Lord. We long to melt and be poured out a libation at His dear feet. The heart sings; it weeps; it dances; it nestles low at His feet and rests in His love. But listen! Are we now ready to serve? Thus blessed, are we *safe* to move out and truly minister?

The Necessity of Being Broken.

“And brake”—What? Are you sure that is next? Yes, dear soul, it is always so if there is to be a *giving*. The blessing is *unto* breaking. Do not misjudge Him and the divine plan and method. A heart preserved in unbroken blessing is rather too selfish; it is not to His glory and giving. It misses the objective and the purpose of the first steps—the bringing to Him and the taking. The Christian life is *unto* giving, and so we must needs trust the divine discipline, training, and culture to make the life (already blest and enriched) a *safe* feeding portion. The breaking is not a punishment for sin, a judgment for lack of love, a stroke because of failure to believe. Christ knew no sin, no

failure, no unbelief, and yet He was, oh, so broken! The life was broken, the spirit was broken, and, finally even the body He bore was broken. "The disciple is not above his master." This truth is many times side-stepped because one is fearful the heart may become self-centered, morbid, or depressed—not active and aggressive.

Christ's life was broken. It was wonderful as He lived it out in unspeakable devotion to the will of the Father. His character, developed to such glorious perfection, is pictured in the *whole* loaf. He was beautiful and triumphant in the "whole loaf" aspect of His life. But His life, all glorious, triumphant, and beautiful unto perfection, was all the time *unto* death, and breaking. We are saved by His breaking—His death.

The blest life (full of beauty, joy, surrender, and devotion) does not and cannot pour out the blessing when still preserved and held in the strength and the beauty of its perfection. God must break it to release and set free the blessing and the inspiration, and *so* feed. *He* breaks it. Do not try to do it, I beg of you. Do not worry about it. He knows *just* how! That is enough. He does not do it to torment or to make you unhappy, morbid, and self-centered. It is one of the most mysterious and blessed experiences one can have. No human words can exactly explain it. It seems a divine paradox. He blesses and He breaks. But when the heart is united to Jesus and the contact is held in the Spirit, the breaking is *sweet* and even desirable—not to the flesh but to the heart of the one who walks in the Spirit and understands its purpose. I cannot tell you *how*. I only know it does become desirable. When He moves on you in this manner, you will understand my language.

Life Is a Great Giving.

“And gave”—Yes. He gave them something. And what could it have been? Nothing less than the very life and all its limitations which one day were so tearfully and wonderingly placed in His hands. Yes, He gave them back the life (fish and loaves) once surrendered to Him—no longer to be lived in selfish pursuit and self-will. But now how *safe!* For now these little elements had touched His hands. It is Christ who took! Christ who blessed! Christ who broke! And now He says, “Give ye them to eat.” O heavenly language! Glorious command! Are you giving? It is not hard, but it is the most spontaneous and glorious result of all the preceding steps. Life (in Him) is only a great giving. It is filled with joy and wonder. Let me quote from one of my poems, “In Friendship Room”—the people in this room are likened unto candles, placed there to burn, cheer, and minister in that place.

“We are candles. All are burning
In this friendship room today.
O, the *ecstasy* of living
While we *burn* our lives away.”

I covet you for God. I want you to be blest (but not in a simple, popular sense of being emotionally stirred). I want you in your innermost being to contact the mighty, glorious, eternally beautiful, holy, sublime Son of God, even the Christ of God. He is the Truth, the Life, the Way.

Do not fear the desert. Do not take so long to count and recount the fish and loaves. Up! Up! Run to Him! *Bring* your life to Him! Let Him, oh, let Him do the miracle! And God will make you be bread for a needy, perishing world.

BLESSED HAY

O BLESSED hay, all broken, marred and crushed,
What happy memories must haunt thee now!
Do humming bees still move in eager quest
For sweetness hidden in thy clover heart?
Do happy birds still swing in lowly sweep
Close to thy breast upturning to the sun?
And do the fleeting clouds still bless with rain
Thy thirsty form stretched naked 'neath the sky?
At eventide when twilight spins her veil
Of loveliness, do gentle dews distill?
O blessed hay, what memories are thine!
Today I see thee stretched upon the ground
All dry and broken 'neath the seekers' feet.
The hungry hearts kneel upon thee now.
It is not thee they seek—not thee, not thee.
How sweet thy willingness to have it so!
It is not theirs to know thy life or heart,
What care have they for what thou might have been,
Or what thy heart may hold for days to come?
They only seek a place to rest their knees—
The cruel earth is harsh to seeking hearts.
Then let them kneel or rest their weary forms
Upon thy broken beauty, once so dear.
Sweet waving grass in summer, sun-kissed field,
Though blest with all that nature may provide,
Is never hay till *cut* and wholly *dried*.
O blessed hay, how sacred is they lot!
The hungry soul may kneel upon thee hard,
May mar thy form and press thee to the dust,
But you are helping them to God just now.
It matters not what form our service takes—
Just *be* the thing the Master may desire—
Yes, hay upon the tabernacle floor.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hay upon the Tabernacle Floor

In other days more often than now, the floors of the tabernacles on our camp grounds were dirt covered over with hay. I would like to share with you an interesting spiritual experience I had at such a camp meeting. This forms the background for my poem and how I happened to write it.

I was the Bible teacher at the camp and was sitting on the platform waiting to speak. The usual preliminary song service was going on. I had a few thoughts moving about in my heart. As I sat there looking down at the hay I noticed more closely its character. Before me I saw what had been sprays and bunches of lovely clover and beautiful wisps of grass. But now it was quite shattered, pressed, *dry* and scattered over the hard ground. The thoughts I had brought along in my heart all took wings. I could not seem to think of them. The Holy Spirit began to move upon me and to flood my heart and mind with a fresh, Spirit-born message.

So I stepped down from the platform and picked up a handful of the hay. And as I stood up to speak, I held up the handful of hay and said, "Here is the text of my message today." God wonderfully blessed

the Word and took us out into a *fresh* field of thought and *convicting* teaching.

It seemed to me that the hay (had it reasoning powers) might well have thought itself quite a failure because it did not fulfill the general and prescribed order of becoming food in a manger. There it was, far away from any manger where it might have been valued as provender. It never heard the proud farmer say, "What fine hay! What a grand treat for the cattle!" Instead, it had been tossed out of the haymow and away from the stock, and now found itself spread out upon the ground, not even lifted up to the manger level.

Here it became a floor covering for a tabernacle. People trod upon it, kicked it about under careless feet, pushed it under the benches, knelt upon it, and broke it up in general. Surely such treatment would not be coveted or sought!

But the hay was too shortsighted in judging its life a failure. It lacked the power of interpretation. The view was too local, too much from the hay standpoint. Actually, its ministry was most beautiful and blessed.

The farmer had a right, since the hay belonged to him, to do "as seemeth good" to it. There was *other* hay for feeding, but this was fine hay and he wanted it for a floor covering for a tabernacle. Someone seeking God needed hay upon which to kneel; some hungry soul wanted to get low before the Lord and prostrate himself before Him. Then too, the ground was so dry and dusty, and hay would keep down the dust. What a blessed privilege to serve in so happy a ministry!

Now you can see *why* I kept that bit of blessed hay. It served in a tabernacle where there were be-

tween two and three thousand people needing to be helped to God.

Are you distressed over your humble place of service? Let us remember that as truly as the hay belonged to the farmer, we belong to God. Do you sing, "Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way"? "Oh, to be nothing, nothing"? How sweet and humble it all sounds in a prayer meeting! If you are truly His, then the form of the service is nothing. To do His will is the *highest form* of service for angel or man—be it sweeping a street or anything else.

Yes, God has a tabernacle, too. It may be His will that you serve in His tabernacle as a floor covering instead of hay to be fed from a manger to hungry folk. Have you ever had some hungry or needy soul to "weigh down" upon you? Well, keep humble and low and let them kneel, for you are then blessed hay. Some of them are heavy weights, I know, but God gives grace. Are you so able to pour out your life that it becomes a safe place for people to venture upon?

When the dust of confusion arises in the tabernacle are you the blessed hay that keeps down the dust? There are so many who can *raise* a dust—God needs more who can *keep it down*. "Love covereth."

The hay became broken under the tramping, shuffling feet. (Perhaps we may not be permitted to retain the beauty of the natural.) The long, graceful bunches of clover were crushed, the sweet blossoms were dried, the seed scattered, and much of the original identity of the green grass was lost. But the farmer knew the value of the hay and also its use. He did not spread out hay with brambles, sticks, and harsh weeds in it. He knew his hay.

Take courage! If you do not find yourself where *you* think you should be—feeding souls in an open manger—do not fret, do not worry. God needs blessed hay which He can trust to become the kneeling place for hungry hearts. Someone must bear the weight of seeking souls. Someone must keep close to the ground to lay the dust. “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Do not limit the ministry of God’s children to two, three, or four manifestations. If some hay is destined to be blessed hay in a lowly place, please do not try to pitch it into a manger. Let it alone.

Can you stand the tread of feet? While put *under* a seat (and not *on* the platform) can you still sing, “Oh, to be nothing, nothing”? Oh, for more consecrated blessed hay! He, our adorable Lord, was that continually—listen: “But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

The day after that particular camp in Wisconsin came to a close, when nearly all the people had left the grounds, I went over alone to the tabernacle and knelt down in the hay to thank God for His sweet presence during the time we had fellowshiped together. He had met me, too, during those days, and blessed me and refreshed my tired heart. Then I took up a handful of the hay and slipped it into an envelope, and kept it in my desk—a gentle and lowly minstrel.

It was a long time afterward, while looking through some notes and papers in my desk, that I came upon the envelope with wisps of hay. It was such a refreshing reminder of God’s faithfulness and the *originality* of the Holy Spirit. At once my spirit recaptured much of the hay’s singing message. And as I quietly and softly talked to the hay—it came out a poem.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lessons from the Potter

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (Romans 9:20, 21).

But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand (Isaiah 64:8).

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel (Jeremiah 18:6).

The art of fashioning the plastic clay into various vessels of beauty and utility is one of the most ancient and interesting of the arts and industries of men. Ancient ruins and museums of the world are full of the curious and graceful specimens of ceramic taste and loveliness, more costly even than the precious metals. There is no figure that more strikingly suggests the lessons of divine grace and the work of the Fa-

ther's hand in molding the lives and characters of His people according to His will.

There is a lesson suggested by the clay. When we walk out in the fields and along the river bank and see the clay, how perfectly useless it is, but in the sight of God, how valuable. Have you ever thought of the many beautiful things God has made from the common clay? It is the material out of which He made the world, and probably the shining constellations above us. Out of the clay He brings the verdure and bloom we see in garden and valley and field. Then when we look still higher we see that man, the crowning work of God's creation, was made from the dust of the earth—clay. And yet higher, when God wanted to redeem us back to Himself, what form did He take? That of humanity—clay. What a humiliation! God, the maker of the universe, the infinite One, came to this earth in a temple of clay, dust, but indwelt by the Holy Ghost, by the power and glory of God.

But the clay itself is helpless without the living touch of the Master's hand. The lump of clay by the roadside cannot evolve its own destiny. It remains in utter uselessness and helplessness. How like the clay we are! Without God's hand to mold and shape our lives and characters, how far short we fall from the thought and purpose of God for us!

We hear much today about God's power or the need of God's power. I wonder sometimes if God is going to pour out His Spirit in any marked way until He can find a company of people who realize they are nothing but just common, ordinary clay. This is one of the most difficult lessons we have to learn, and most profitable.

This is illustrated in the Old Testament in the

story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Names were given in those days not because they were thought pretty or from mere fancy, but every name had significance, meaning, and character. Jacob bore the name he did because the word meant "supplanter." The character or nature of Jacob was shown in the name he had. You remember how the angel wrestled all night with him, and it was not until morning that the angel touched him and he broke down. What was the one question the angel asked him? Jacob really wanted a blessing; he prayed, no doubt, long, fervently, and earnestly. But what was the question the angel kept asking him? What is thy name? Poor Jacob wanted a blessing, power, and a touch from God, but it was hard for him to raise his hand and say, "I am Jacob." That was Jacob's place of power. You remember the result. He received a blessing and a precious word from God. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men" (Genesis 32:28). All want blessing and power, but so few are willing to make full confession. God wants to do wonderful things for us and through us, but no one wants to confess themselves common clay. But that is all we are.

God is so good, so kind! He does not give us a revelation of our natural life just to embarrass us and put us in utter dismay, but rather that we may see our new life and power in Him, that He might make out of us princes. Praise His name!

And now a little word about the potter. Notice first the sovereign power of God. You remember the verse, Jeremiah 18:6. To me that verse holds out such a picture of His might and the greatness of His plan and purpose and His absolute control over the clay.

Then I like to read with it Isaiah 64:8; quoted at the beginning of this chapter. See the difference? This holds hope and comfort rather than a cheerless picture of absolutism or fatalism. We are in the hands of a tender Father, a loving God, a mighty worker.

A word here about His plan. The Potter has a purpose for the clay. Back of the shapeless mass He sees a figure of beauty which His hand is shaping and patiently creating. God has an eternal purpose for every life. The act of consecration or sanctification, is only the beginning. It merely brings us more perfectly into the plan, and makes it possible for Him to really work out His highest and best. Your Pentecost is not the climax or end, it is the beginning of a precious life in the Spirit. I like to think of life as the river of time that sweeps down over the ages. The people are the banks of this river, and God the Lord stoops down and picks up the little pieces of clay which make up the banks. He picks them up and molds them as He pleases. Some of the clay is along the water's edge, and some up on the bank high and dry, yet He has a thought for all. Does He seem long in developing them? Read for comfort, Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 139: 15-18.

What a privilege to have such wisdom and power working for us! It is wise to say, "Lord, not my will but thine be done."

Have you ever watched the workers in a pottery? The workman stands before a wheel which revolves at terrific speed, a great many revolutions a minute. On this wheel he works the clay. As it spins round and round he presses and works it into the desired form. It is necessary to bring the wheel into every position so the potter can conveniently accomplish his

purpose. This represents the various experiences and vicissitudes of life which come to us in the providence of God. There are joys, sorrows, trials, heartaches, and misunderstandings. And so the wheel turns, the clay revolves, and the Potter's hand presses, molds, and works. Thus the providence of God becomes as sanctifying as His grace, and we learn at length to say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

There is a lesson here of the tenderness of God in His love for our souls. "We are *his* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). No hand but His own is permitted to touch the delicate and exquisite work of sanctifying a human soul. And I dare say no human artist ever watched with so good care or love the evolving of some choice design of grace and skill, than God does as He works out the perfection of the vessels of His grace. Perhaps we do not see anything very valuable in our own hearts or the hearts of others, but He must have seen the value or He never would have sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to form, shape, and fashion us into His image.

But the vessel was marred in the hand of the potter. What made the vessel break just as it seemed so perfect, so lovely and beautiful? There was a little piece of stone, a tiny pebble, or a piece of dry leaf or stick, something not pliable or yielded. It ruined all his work, and the fractured vessel is taken from the wheel and thrown aside. It seems all has been in vain. This picture is sadly true to life, for the human vessel has indeed been marred. The fall of man seemed at first like a fatal blight upon all the work of God.

But the prophet tells us, "He made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it" (Jeremiah 18:4). God was not surprised or baffled even at the dreadful failure of man, but instantly He began to reveal that wonderful plan of redemption which had been prepared before the ages. Have you ever found any foreign substance in the clay of your nature? Have you broken and felt a failure? Praise God for it. Perhaps *you* were surprised at some of the breaking and the causes for the same, but He was not surprised. Nor is He discouraged. He is working. All of the old saints who meant anything to God had to break, and sometimes more than once. Everyone who wants to go on with God has to break down in His hands, and see the material of which he is made. Jacob became a prince after he found out how to break and yield to God. How beautiful to see the patient love of God as He worked out the pattern of his life.

Look at Moses as he begins his life with ill-considered zeal, and then flies from the effect of his recklessness. For forty years he is turned around and around like a potter's vessel in the desert of Midian. Finally he is ready for the great work to which God had called him, and he meets the commission with shrinking modesty instead of the reckless presumption with which he had sprung to the front forty years before.

Look at Elijah as God turns him around and around on the potter's wheel, showing alternately his weakness and his strength. Finally he too is ready and he is taken up in a chariot of fire; and like a benediction we have from that strange life the gentle and mighty Elisha.

Look at Simon Peter. I like Peter because he was

so perfectly human, so perfectly natural—just clay. He was marred in the hands of the potter until at last it seemed the clay was shattered into fragments and never could be used again. But we see that out of it all came a chastened and victorious life, prepared by its very failure for the path of crucifixion. We may have to break many times before we get into any place where God can use us. But God is with us while we break, holding us lest we fall apart, watching that the fragments are not lost along the wayside.

In the early days of Pentecost we used to hear a great deal about breaking in God's hands, surrendering our wills, yielding our lives to His control, dying to the self-life, and overcoming. How beautiful it all sounds in a prayer meeting or when lifted up by a mighty touch of the Spirit! But how different is the process when God calls upon us and tries to work out in actual experience the prayers we so frequently pray. How the old life holds on to its name, dignity, calling, and place, and how it struggles (in a nice way) to preserve itself.

Our desire to die to the self-life, and the general result when God gives us an opportunity to yield, brings to mind an incident in the life of a friend of mine. One day when a child she and her sister had not been obedient and were to receive punishment. While the mother was attending to one child, the other sat on a chair crying and thinking of her dreadful abuse. Her little bosom was full of self-pity and thoughts of her mistreatment, so she cried out, "O just kill me, just shoot me, shoot me!" She thought she was so abused. A neighbor woman hearing the disturbance, and seeing the situation in its proper light, thought she would help the child out in her

desire to depart this life, so taking an old shotgun, unloaded, not having been fired in fifteen years, she rushed into the house and asked where the person was who wanted to be shot? Of course it had its desired effect in quieting that child, for she *suddenly* resolved to remain on earth; and having *no* desire just then to see her neighbor, she flew out of the kitchen, through the garden, past the barn to a great haystack which just then seemed to afford her comfort and shelter. She remained there the rest of the day. Friends, have you in your Christian experience ever run to a haystack? Have you ever prayed that you might die to the self-life, but when God opened a very promising way to do so, you made an escape (often hastily) to a comforting haystack? Self-pity, a moist-eyed creature, lurks there, and as long as you linger and are willing to be coddled by her, just so long you will hinder God and lose out in overcoming.

And now a word about the decorations on the vessels. Not long ago I visited an artist as he worked on some choice pieces of pottery. I was much surprised to find the vases he had apparently finished and placed on a shelf to be fired, looked so crude and inartistic as to color. The forms were very symmetrical, with fine lines and graceful curves but the colors were very unlike real artistic taste. But I kept quiet and soon learned a precious lesson. The work was perfectly correct, the colors were *exactly* the needed ones, but I was *ignorant as to the outcome*. God is doing the same thing today. He is now decorating His people and putting on the colors, the patterns, and designs. Those who are not artists (have no discernment as to spiritual things) cannot understand. We look so strange; we are so peculiar; we are so narrow; we let people run

over us; we do not fight for our rights. Never mind, the Lord is the artist and He is only putting on the decorations. Our turn will come sometime. Sometimes we or our work looks so drab, or gray, or dingy. There is no *open* and manifest showing of power, no great doings. We feel uneasy, and think there must be a mistake or failure or error. Yet, there is none and we *are* conscious of a sweet fellowship with the Lord. We are unable to *explain* just *why* things are as they appear in the assembly, or sometimes in the lives of the saints. God lets us *appear* in such a strange light and does not explain to everybody *why* He is doing so. Never mind. He is putting on the decorations. Again you may be bright and appear cheerful and gay, and be greatly blessed, but in spirit be very much burdened and unable to explain the apparent paradox. Just more of the colors. Let people say what they will, judge you thus or so, it matters not—walk before God and let Him do with you as He pleases. In the end it will be to His glory and also to your blessing.

And now just a word about the firing. The pieces of pottery, as I said, were set aside for firing. They were beautiful in form and line but horrible in color. They were then placed in the oven and the heat turned on. How it burned, burned, burned! How hot, you ask? Two thousand degrees! Have you been in the fire? Did you ever feel as if the touch of God lifted and you set aside? Praise God for it. The fire is what does the work. Later I saw the vases taken from the oven—what vessels of beauty! The form was the same, but the crude colors had all been changed by the *action of the heat*, and now each one seemed a bit more choice than the other as the delicate tints

and rich shades of color played in the decoration.

How unfinished the work would have been, and the thought of the artist never would have been developed or given to the world, had not the *fire* done its work. Friends, do not shrink from the fire of God. He has chosen you to make out of your life something rich and beautiful. Do not expect people, or even your nearest friends to understand you, for God is jealous of you and will purposely make the fire so hot that you will in haste *hide* in Him. But always remember God understands, and will one day bring forth a company tried and perfect. Hallelujah! Someday He will be able, if we are true in the tests, to make clear the discipline, the breaking, the colors, and the firing, and present us by His grace transformed into the image of His own Son. Amen.

CHAPTER SIX

Creaturehood and Sonship

Many of you no doubt have seen articles in our papers and magazines proposing the desired character of a new world. Many times the reading is suggested by a question: What kind of world shall we build? What kind of new world order must we have? Among the lessons we are to learn, many of the writers and leaders who are planning a new world order tell us, is that we must remember that all men are brothers in a great family and that God is the common Father of us all. In other words, they are bringing to our minds the old phrase, "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

This is a phrase used by ministers, teachers, and reformers a few years ago, and because of its very generous and human sound it found lodgment in many hearts. There is something so broad and tolerant in it, so kind and benevolent in the thought suggested, that people who are tired of war, quarreling, and sectarianism are happy to swing out upon such a broad and charitable bit of philosophy.

But one must not be so easily moved by so fine-sounding phrases. Words, phrases, and slogans (which

have such untold power over the minds and hearts of men) are not always truthful. But some people, even Christians, are not careful enough to find out if there is truth in the phrase or not as long as it seems to work and get results and so produces action. Here, for example, is a very high-sounding phrase, generous and very liberal in its scope. But it is *not* scriptural, neither is there a shadow of truth in it as it relates to the human family.

The Bible nowhere suggests or teaches that all men are brothers in a great family with God as the common Father over all. Nothing could be more foreign to the Bible. It sounds well but is disastrous because it is misleading. If one holds to the teaching that all men are already children of God and in the family, then he does harm at once to the great truths, such as the sinfulness of man, the absolute need of regeneration, the necessity of faith in the work of Christ, and the plan of redemption in general.

To say that man as a creature of God is a child of God, is at once to deny his sinfulness and death, and so his need of regeneration. If he is already in the family of God, then why be born again as taught by Jesus? To teach the broad thought of man's brotherhood and the fatherhood of God is to deny the very essence of Christianity.

The trouble with those who hold this error or teach it is that they fail to make a distinction between *creaturehood* and *sonship*. One must be careful here to know and respect the difference because of its close relationship to the other great truths of the Bible. What one believes as to creaturehood and sonship influences his faith and attitude in regard to the great doctrines of Christianity.

Let us look at these two bits of truth which when confused bring one to defeat and loss. Creaturehood has to do with creation, while sonship dates from the new birth or regeneration. In creation God made Adam the federal head of the human race and so the races of mankind are the creatures of God. In contrast we find that Jesus Christ is the federal head of a new race (a spiritual race as real as the natural race). This race is entered into by a new birth and thus only are the believers made children of God. In creation God gave to Adam the power and established in it a law that mankind should come into the world by the process of generation. Man thus comes into the world by the natural law of human generation while in the new creation in Christ we become the children of God by an act of the Holy Spirit—even a new birth or regeneration.

The natural birth which brings one into a creaturehood life or existence is human and natural. It forever links man thus born with the earth and life upon a purely material plane. It entangles him in the confines of an Adamic nature and setup bound by the law of sin and death. He finds himself to be a *dead* man (as far as spiritual life is concerned) and destined to eternal ruin and death. The heritage of creaturehood is a sad and melancholy failure. All mankind is born naturally in this ruined pattern. They are creatures of God indeed—for He is the Author of the principle of life which actuates them and gives them conscious existence. He gives the life but man by sin has broken the mold.

Sonship links man with Christ, the federal head of a new race—a new man. He has all power and has triumphed in all realms. He is victor and holds the

keys of death and hell. A new law operates now in the life of the believer, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." By the new birth one becomes a child of God and therefore is a partaker of the divine nature, holy and spiritual, and is destined to eternal life and glory.

Usually those who teach the error, so subtle and devastating, go to the Word of God for "proof texts." But again we must be careful. Even the devil knows the Bible and can quote and use it. Merely to use the Bible and quote verses and spin out theories and build philosophies from its sacred pages does not guarantee the truthfulness of the very matter one may be propounding.

A teaching or doctrine built upon an isolated verse, taken from its proper setting and context, is dangerous and disastrous. One who builds his doctrine on one or two such verses is like a man who tries to balance a triangle upon one of its three points. The one point may be a Scripture verse and all the rest spreading out and up, making the two sides, with a "broad," flat top—made usually of suppositions, suggestions, references, and indirect teaching, and the like. The whole structure rests upon a verse or two; and a breath of the Holy Spirit from the Word, the eternal truth, soon blows it over. It is top-heavy, has but one isolated point to hold it, and so falls. How much better and wiser to see *all* that the Bible teaches concerning the question in hand. Get *all* the scriptures telling the *same* thing. Now lay them down, side by side, and build *up* the triangle, using the direct statements and *facts* from Scripture as a foundation. Let *all* converge and move toward the top point, and let that be the subject with which you are dealing. Let *all*, from

base up, converge and *focus* upon the main truth and *no* wind from the devil or man's natural mind can blow it over. The truth stands. Praise God!

One of the pet verses or scriptures used by those who teach "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" is in Acts 17:28, "For we are also his offspring." When one takes the phrase from its setting and uses it to read (I am sorry to say) as the English wording gives it, one at once thinks he has quite *proof* enough for his teaching. "Look," he says, "does not the Bible say, 'For we are also his offspring?'"

Now at first reading one would think he needs nothing clearer. Does it not say in clear *English* that we (humanity) are His (God's) offspring? Yes, that is exactly what the *English* translation says. But we must remember that though the Word, the Bible, is inspired (and I believe the very words in the *original* are inspired, chosen, and breathed by the Holy Spirit), yet the translators were *not* inspired, and often did not choose or select as expressive or even correct a word as they might had they known always the fullness or depth of the teaching involved.

To more fully appreciate the teaching of Paul in this incident, let us go back a little and build up our background and keep in mind just *what* Paul is teaching and presenting. We remember from our school days the wonderful Greek myths, and we also know the deep hunger which characterized the Greek mind. They were seekers after truth. The Christian faith presented by Paul against the heathen philosophy is superb and makes the mystery of godliness, the Christ, our one solitary light and glory, amazing and compelling.

Let us read Acts 17:16-29 inclusive—a long lesson

for comment upon *six* words, but very necessary. The Greeks are polytheists while Paul, being of Israelitish stock, is a monotheist. They have many gods (no one revelation). Paul has the one eternal God to present. By way of help for those who do personal work or those who wish to help others who oppose or do not see the truth—learn a lesson. Paul has a desire to help these people and yet he knows they are in rank heathenism. See how very tactful he is. And see how he makes a very present and understood thing (even a heathen altar) the point of contact.

And now let us be careful to note that Paul tells us distinctly the general thought concept which he is presenting. He says, "*Him* declare I unto you." Therefore the question is not that of fatherhood or sonship, but he is going to *declare* and reveal the *nature* and *kind* of God they wanted to know about. It is a study in contrasts. They have inanimate gods, made of marble, gold, silver, and so limited and of the earth—products of their own human, darkened imaginations.

In exposing their idolatry he presents God in His creative work and finally the consummation of man. And we know what he believed. Genesis 1:26, 27; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15-17. He is not speaking of God as a father but as a creator, and consequently he treats mankind as a whole, basically alike—one blood, etc. He is dealing with creaturehood—man in natural creation.

Now we come to the place of failure on the part of those who use the word "offspring" to prove their doctrine. Let us not fear the word (we need not fear what God really says). The word is Greek, *genos*, and means *race* or *kind*. It is not the word which

means offspring as we know it, meaning *sons* or *children*. Had Paul meant that we were sons or children of God, he would have used the word *teknon*, which means a son or child. But you see he is not teaching sonship or fatherhood—he is *declaring* God. And to make it still clearer he says mankind in image and likeness *is of the same kind, stock, or species*. Since God and man are of the same stock or kind (same in image) He cannot be likened to a dumb, senseless, dead idol.

He uses the word *genos* which means *kind or stock or species*, not *teknon* which means *son*. He is presenting God as a creator and, finally, His very personal and living attributes as a supreme being. He places man purely in the relation of creaturehood and not as a son of God. He is not dealing with regeneration or salvation.

The only fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man taught in the Word is that in a new creation, a new spiritual race and order. All true believers (born-again people) are one family in Christ, united and bound by the ties of spiritual life, divine love, and divine nature. Thus in the new creation God is a heavenly Father. Jesus taught us thus to pray. He was not teaching the unregenerate world or sinners the prayer. He taught believers, His disciples, to say, "Our Father," and so gave the members of the family of God a prayer form. So in Ephesians 2:19 and Galatians 6:10 we are said to compose a household—thus we have a Father and we are the offspring or His children.

ETERNAL URGE

Thy holy breath hath quickened me to life.

I joy to feel thee move upon my house,
This tenement of clay in which I live.

I joy to share thy life which makes me know
I am a part of this great cosmic whole.

But deeper rests the ecstasy divine
That burning in the inner, sacred shrine

A fire of God, fanned by His eternal breath
Illuminates my spirit and I see.

A miracle has come to grace my life.
A threefold consciousness completes my grasp.

All that combines to make me who I am
Is turned into a hunger infinite.

My being is a thirsty desert lone.
Though nameless incompleteness haunts me here,
God feeds me with immortal Bread and Wine,
A fount of living water pours within.

Strange paradox that life should thus be lived!
Eternal urge, sweet token of God's faith,

Though infinite thy task, thy end is sure.
Completion and perfection of His thought
Shall yet be known in every phase of life.

The complete poem may be found in his book of poetry, "Smoking Flax".

CHAPTER SEVEN

God's Holy Fire

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:9, that we are called "Unto the fellowship." As a rule people think that the call of God rests in the matter of God calling us to heaven. But here we find a call to a fellowship which precedes heaven. This fellowship is a phase of life right here and now on earth while we tarry, and is for a specific and necessary reason. It is a relationship established by God and deepens and comes into maturity as one yields to the demands and requirements laid down for its realization. It reaches past the external life of sense.

Many hear Him call them from sin and the world, but I am not now speaking of that call. I speak of a call coming more definitely to a Christian after the initial steps of salvation, Baptism in the Spirit, and spiritual visitations and gifts. It reaches the ocean floor of the heart—the place of desire and motive and the veiled recesses of selfhood. This call reaches the more subtle forms of the ego. Here God gets at the real person and longs to bring the soul into a conscious relationship with Himself as *fire*.

Fire does so many things—it cleanses, frees, reduces, refines. The fire is heavenly and must be since no natural force or process planned by man can accomplish the necessary miracle. It demands *all* of life. The Lord is not dealing with sin, but life. When I think of the eternal ages ahead and know I am born for them, then this little life is but a single hour—oh, but what an important hour! Here and now I must settle and plan the issues which project themselves on into the eternity with God.

Christ knew that, and in His teaching concerning the deeper and fuller life in Him, He let His followers know it was no easy matter. It is not, “Now just confess your sins and accept Christ, and *all* things are yours.” He makes very stringent and searching demands if we are to come fully into what He has for one who thus hungers. See Luke 9:23, 24; Matthew 10:39; Luke 14:26, 27.

“And why?” one may ask. Oh, friends, a miracle awaits the one who thus dares to yield. The fire frees and releases the soul, and not only does one find freedom from earth bondage but the soul experiences a rich spiritual illumination. The fetters of tradition, old forms, religious habits (religious, but not born of the spirit), unscriptural dogmatism, and so much of the natural setup of the religious life are burned off. All this and more goes down in the fire of God. This flame is like the Word of God—the lovely *truth* which now has a ministry in the inner life, as the Blood had for sin in the days when one was coming out of the first stages of death and sin.

As the Blood cleanses from sin, so does the Truth,

this heavenly *fire*, cleanse and set free the soul from hindering and binding things which mar and hinder one from getting into God and coming into a fuller understanding of His glorious purpose. Thus freedom will I find. This is the true liberty God has for those who pay the price. The Christian life is a series of crises and cycles of growth. There is a deep and glorious spiritual evolution for those who meet the demands He requires. The new life becomes a schooling and a divine process of becoming. Here we are disentangled (a word I so like) and extricated from the old, Adamic setup. Life becomes a series of divinely planned experiences in which God is faithfully working to release us and *adjust us to a life in Himself*.

How our hearts thrill at the thought of ultimate victory. Toward this end all creation moves and is now waiting. The heart once set on fire and illuminated in this fellowship can never, never rest in any form of earth patterns and forms of this life. A divine discontent, a heavenly restlessness is its holy obsession. Here and now we may begin, though we may not fully realize. Here and now we give birth to the character qualities in which we shall move in the ages to come.

We find all these noble and ideal qualities in Christ. He is the embodiment of all and the personification of *truth*. O marvelous and wonderful Christ, we adore and love Thee! We are changed as we behold *Him*. The hidden depths of perfection are *in Him*. Look, beloved, and adore and worship Him. Let the beauty of the Christ be upon you! We shall return! We are homeward bound! Again, again this restless heart shall melt and move in God. We will not lose our identity or personalities. The unique personality persists

through the ages. But we shall find a oneness (which Christ prayed for and will yet work out). I shall yet find a completion for which I was given a new birth. Yes, we shall continue to burn, glow, and move in God; there shall yet be a *satisfied desire*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Have You Patience?

These are days in which we hear much about preparedness and how little or much is considered sufficient to play safe and meet any demands in such uncertain times. How interested all are in being qualified. Great care is exercised in all departments of life to qualify for the best or highest paying positions. And yet all this care and precaution to meet future demands fall along natural and fleeting lines of life. They are commendable and even scriptural, but when they are allowed to lead in life we are sure to suffer loss spiritually in the greater and eternal issues. We are, as Christians, qualifying. We are not experimentally perfect and fully matured, but are in the process of becoming so. It is here and now that we develop the character and necessary qualities which enter so largely in the positions to be held in the next age.

Among the necessary virtues demanded for the rounding out of Christian character is patience. This grace is not only beautiful and greatly to be admired in the Christian, but we find that in 1 Timothy 6:11 it is commanded. It is not arbitrary on our part whether we are pleased to have it or not, but the Word com-

mands that we "follow after" it. In the Early Church it was greatly commended. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, we read, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." 1 Timothy 6:11, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

As we move on into the more perfect revelation of God's will for our lives and as we become more concerned with the development and culture of the spiritual life, we find patience is not a gift to be added merely for the asking. According to James 1:3, "The trying of your faith worketh patience," and Romans 5:3, "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience." We find it is acquired through trial and tribulation. In these verses we find ourselves again face-to-face with the fact of qualifying. We are in the school of the Holy Spirit and He is faithful to set before us necessary lessons to teach us. He will see to it that we grow and come to the "full stature."

It would be interesting and helpful to note the Bible illustrations where patience was worked out in the lives of the saints. Job, as we all know, is a striking example. James 5:11, "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." But in this chapter I would rather not trace out the reasons why patience was needed, or the methods used in producing it. Rather let us note that there is a threefold requirement for patience on the part of a Christian.

1. He is to be patient toward all men.
2. Patient toward God.
3. Patient toward himself.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14 we are commanded to "be patient toward all men." It is a difficult matter to arrange these phases of patience according to degrees of possession or ease of acquiring. We are all so different in our natures and temperamental qualities. However, we shall think along the line of patience toward all men.

First, we very often are concerned with people and outward conditions before we get very near God or understand our own hearts and needs. We must be patient toward people who are wrong. Many find a difficulty here. Confusion is caused by thinking that to be patient toward such means that we must sanction the wrong or uphold the person in his evil way. To be patient does not mean we are to compromise or let down the standard of moral and ethical values. We are to be quiet and "let God work." He has the situation in hand and is all wise. No doubt he has what we so sorely lack in such an issue. He has faith and can be "long suffering and kind."

Even Moses did not have all patience worked out in his life. Psalm 106:32, 33, "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit so that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips." And again we find the people were not patient with him in regard to the question of his marriage. In Luke 9:54, 55, we find James and John were not patient toward men. "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come

down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Jesus did not tell the disciples what He thought about the Samaritans, but He did turn the disciples' attention to the question of their own spiritual attitude. This evidently meant more than a miracle to Him. Jesus knows how to run his kingdom and to mete out judgment. He will take care of His glory. He is so wonderfully concerned with our spiritual attitude and set of will.

Again in being patient toward all men, we must bear with the young and immature lives. We exercise this grace in nature in everyday life. We are willing to let the green apples hang on and enjoy the sunshine and rain until autumn. We patiently wait, knowing that green apples do not necessarily mean poor apples or no apples. They are *good* apples in process. Young Christians (and even older ones) have moods and cycles of experience, and characteristic and perfectly normal phases of growth. We have to be patient while each passes through his or her period of testing. Failure on the part of a Christian is often his greatest blessing. It breeds tolerance in his heart. Having failed, he is not so quick to judge. He is more patient and more often stands in the shadow and prays. Jesus was patient with Peter and stood alone in the shadow and prayed for him. The older we grow the more mellow our spirits become (or should), and tolerance and understanding come into their own. Does it not take faith? Such faith is choice in His sight since it has cost the Christian his price.

Did we only know and understand the human heart and life better, and had we more patience, how much

more helpful we would be in our touch upon life. I remember one time the Lord allowed me to be greatly misunderstood in a difficult position. I was in fierce conflict and God was giving me the victory. But it took time. Often during that period I could *feel* (not by special acts, but in spirit) the questioning attitude of friends—Christians. At times I was near discouragement, but believed God and found His grace enough. One day while under pressure I found these verses and will pass them on for others who may need help.

If I could know the agony of pain

 In which my brother wrought, yet gave
No sign,
His bungling work would take on graceful shape,
 And glory would illumine every line.

If I could know the heartache bravely hid

 Beneath the smile of courage, day by day,
I'd not withhold the kindly deed and thought
 To cheer my friend upon his lonely way.

And I can know! Come, Son of man, Divine,

 Flood all my soul with sympathy benign,
Until my very life is love imperaled,
 And pulses with the heartthrobs of the world.

Secondly, we must be patient toward God. Such patience is often lacking when He does not seem to answer prayer as quickly as we think He should. But listen to Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Romans 8:25, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Hebrews 10:35, 36, "Cast not away therefore your

confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." God seems to use delay as a choice process in the development of Christian character. For examples we have Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Job, and others. In all these cases the individuals had to exercise patience toward God and believe Him. Afterward they were safe and able to serve. They were patient while God manifested such extraordinary, far-reaching faith that bridged failure, sin, disappointment, difficulty, minor victories, on and on to the end.

It is such a comfort to know that Jesus has faith (even in us) when we don't have a scrap left. So we are to have faith toward God while He works the "all things together for good" for us. So often I have said to the students in the Bible school, "I wish people would let God alone." He knows exactly what He is doing.

And last of all, we are to have patience with ourselves. This is hard for some—especially for the introspective or morbid type, or those who wish to attain the ideal too quickly. Some people are too proud. I do not mean the common or vulgar manifestation of pride so often seen. The pride to which I refer is hidden and is more or less of a spiritual nature. It is a subtle form and hates to fail. It is much hurt when it fails to meet demands of higher spiritual requirements. Often there is lurking a faint hope that some good or some strength might still remain in the old creation. One goes on bravely for a while, and God rather encourages and humors the soul. But sudden strength or manifestations of spiritual life and growth often blind the heart to its real condition.

In order for that one to be brought out successfully, he has to come face-to-face with failure. This is most horrifying to a sensitive soul, and the conscientious one is humiliated to find he is capable of such doings. In time God brings that person on to where he is able to stand the shock of seeing himself as he really is, and the subtle pride is crucified. Then the soul stands with God naked, looks at the old creation (good and ill), and patiently lets go. He is not so surprised anymore at his failures. He knows what is possible. And, best of all, God is *never* surprised.

Christians waste much time excusing things or explaining them to the Lord. So again we must be patient with our own hearts and let God work it all out. To call ourselves names will never change our character. We do not excuse sin and harden our hearts against conviction. We must judge sin and failure and *trust* and *patiently* wait for Him to bring us through. Listen to James 1:2-4, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Luke 21:19, "In your patience possess ye your souls."

If we are to grow in grace and have patience worked out in life, we must expect discipline and correction at God's hand. We must expect faith to be tried, and must learn to recognize first as last the failure of the old creation and its subtle forms of pride which only hinder the soul in its onward movement toward God. Let us therefore "run with patience the race that is set before us," knowing that the faith and love of God ever reaches beyond us, and "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

THE POET'S PRICE

I caught a flash of truth one day—
How daring ignorance can be!—
And shut it up within my heart,
A flame that danced and sang for me.

It scorched hypocrisy and sham
And from earth bondage set me free;
Its beauty searched my trembling soul
And bared my inner self to me.

In spite the pain, I loved the flame
Which woke within my hungry heart
Ten thousand songs I cannot sing—
Too subtle for my broken art.

And, wretched I, devoid of shame,
Reach out my bony hand for toll
To let the gazing public see
The fleeting shadows of my soul.

And while they gaze, they call for songs
I pipe upon a broken reed,
For I must pipe to earn my bread—
Mine is a hungry heart to feed.

The alms I gather as I pass
The flame consumes both night and day,
My heart gets little for its song
But feeds upon the ashes gray.

O flash of truth, O cleansing flame!
Thy burning cannot do me ill,
Though captive to thy mystic power,
I hold thee as a captive still.