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**LIFE AND LABORS OF AUNTIE COON**  
**As Related To E. E. Shelhamer**

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**PREFACE**

It is hardly probable that we fully comprehend what is involved in becoming acquainted with another. Some fifteen years ago, while attending school at Wheaton, Ill., I met for the first time Mrs. H. A. Coon, more familiarly known as "Auntie Coon." I stepped into a little church where Auntie Coon was conducting a close class-meeting, and it was so heart-searching that I settled it then and there to dedicate myself fully and forever to God.

The spirit and appearance of this old-fashioned saint wonderfully impressed me, but it did not once occur to me that I should ever have the honor of publishing her life.

In 1902, she came South and made her home with The Repairer family, in Atlanta, Ga. It was then that she dedicated the story herein told. Her memory is remarkable for one so nearly fourscore, but, nevertheless, it has been a task to combine and abbreviate some incidents in order to make it more readable. I owe much to some of the workers who have assisted in this. No pretensions have been made to style or literary merit, but rather to produce facts showing how the matchless grace of God can take a backward woman and make her a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well.

There are at least two characteristics of this mother in Israel worthy of note and example. First, the way she has for years triumphed over her intense bodily sufferings, and continued active in the work of the Lord. This ought to be a rebuke to many preachers and others who allow some little illness to hinder their religious zeal.

Secondly, the way she continually feels the worth and burden of souls. Most people lose this when they cease to give all their time to the active work of God. Not so in her case, but rather

an ever-increasing concern for souls, and when intense suffering and inclement weather have prevented going after them, then prevailing prayer has brought them to her.

Trusting that the perusal of these pages may be a source of inspiration to all, but especially to those who say they have "no might," and consequently do not attempt much for God, even to these is this volume respectfully dedicated.

E E. Shelhamer

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## CHAPTER 1

Birth -- Parents -- Early Religious Impressions -- Moving West -- Hardships -- Prairie Fire

I was born in Geauga County, Ohio, on the ninth of February, 1829.

My father was a perfect gentleman, but bitter toward everything that pertained to Christianity. My mother was a Methodist, but from my earliest recollection we never had family worship. I thought much about God; I was very much attached to my mother -- not willing to be out of her sight one hour. She was sickly and we often thought her dying, then I would say, "If she dies, put me in the grave with her." I sat by her side and learned to sing old-fashioned hymns at the age of four years, with tears running down my little face.

There was a dear old lady by the name of Searles, very devoted, who came frequently to our house, and often would she tell me that I must be God's little girl; she would put her hands on my head while speaking, and I felt the power, not only of the words but of the hands; then came the inward inquiry which I dared not express, "What makes this old lady so, where does she get it from?" I often went away to weep alone. Then again she would take me in her arms and say, "Oh, do give me this child." But no power could have taken me away from my mother.

About the time I was five I had a strange, yes intense, desire to learn about Jesus. We were never allowed to read the Bible in my father's presence, and my mother seldom read it to us.

I asked my mother one day if I could go to meeting. She said, "I do not suppose your father would hear of such a thing." There came a colored man through our part of the country, a preacher, and asked the privilege of preaching in our home. No one else would let him in and my father said, "We will let him preach here." I was delighted and began to hope that my mother would not put us children to bed. She soon began to make preparations to do so, however, and I begged for the privilege of staying with the rest to the preaching. She said there was not room and that I would be obliged to retire. I was put to bed in the corner of the room where he preached. It must have been during prayer that the old colored man's hand came down on my head, and with tears running down his black face, we wept together. He told us about Jesus, and how to come to Him, in such a way

that it followed me every day of my life. That was the only religious meeting I ever attended (as I remember) during my childhood.

I was seven when we moved to Illinois. We traveled with horses and came all the way in an old covered wagon, journeying until cold weather. My feet and limbs were frozen to my knees. We stopped for the remainder of the winter at White Pigeon, Indiana, and in the spring we came to Illinois, passing through the present site of Chicago which was then a muddy place with only a few log cabins. We went sixty miles west, where my father bought a beautiful farm near the river. There were just two white men besides my father within twelve miles. These three men rolled rough logs together for our home. We lived six months without doors, windows, or fireplace. Mother took a dry-goods box which she sunk in the earth (we had no floor), and all the cooking that was done was in that box. There was an opening in the top of the house to let the smoke escape as best it could; we were generally out of doors when that was done. We did not have a spoonful of flour during these six months except what my brother and myself ground of buckwheat in our coffee-mill. The first year we ground forty bushels. I went barefooted one-half mile into the woods for water with little tin pails, sometimes carrying as many as twenty in one day to wash with.

In the fall, father made doors and window-sash ; mother put in the glass and hung the doors with pieces of old boot-legs ; lifted the door latches with strings cut from deer skins. We had just floor enough to put mother's bed on. There were large enough holes between the logs for a cat to go through until snow fell, then father put in chinking and mud mortar enough to fill them. He also built a chimney of sticks and mud, and our cooking was done by putting the kettle on logs with a good fire. We were very thankful for such comforts. As it was impossible to get shingles, the roof was covered with clapboards which let the rain and snow through like a sieve. We children were put upstairs on a floor made of these clapboards and I always expected to fall through from the time I went to bed. Our stairs were round pegs driven into auger-holes in the logs. Sometimes the snow was two or three inches deep over our bed-clothes. On mother's bed we put umbrellas and tin pans to catch the streams of water.

Locusts were plentiful, also wolves and foxes. Snakes were in abundance and came right into the house. Indians were near and a wigwam was only a little way from our house. I was so frightened sometimes that it seemed as though I would lose my mind. I was born a coward and was afraid of everything and everybody excepting my father, mother, oldest brother and sisters. Because of this my mother feared that I never would amount to anything and often wished that I was dead, yet felt that she could not keep house and bring up her children without me. Every cry of a child brought me immediately to its side. I had a baby in my arms from the time I was three years of age. My youngest sister never walked until she was six. No baby-buggies in those days, not even a home-made cart, and I must have carried that little girl hundreds of miles to keep her still.

There were many strange and fearful things to me that made me want to keep close to mother. One day she stepped to the door and smelling the smoke of a prairie fire said, "Children, we are in danger of being burned to death in a short time. You little ones stay here with the baby and I will go and tell the boys how to fight the fire so as to keep it from burning the house." She picked up a few pieces of shingles and said, "Now, don't be afraid and run out, but all stay together." She went half a mile and found the boys fighting vigorously. When she saw the flames coming so fast it seemed as if the world was on fire. The wind was carrying it right on towards the

house; would soon reach the boys as well as herself and she cried to her two children to fall down on their faces quick, which she did herself, and throwing her woolen frock over her head prayed, "O God, stop these flames, don't let my little ones be burned up." In one moment the wind changed and blew the flames in another direction, and we were saved. Of course she found me weeping, for I thought my mother was killed. When she came into the house she said, "Thank God, He has turned the flames, and we are safe." Then the fire was going in the direction of our stacks of hay, which father had gotten for the stock for the winter. Mother said, "Boys, I know you are tired, but I see no other way than for you to go to the stacks and fight back the fire. You know what I mean, for I showed you how to do that." But by the time they had reached the place, the stacks were on fire, and were destroyed.

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## CHAPTER 2

Father's Prolonged Absence -- Mother Prays for News -- "And It Came to Pass" -- Safe Return -- New Town Named Marengo -- Goes to School in Chicago -- Experience Among the Mormons.

At this time my father was away in Chicago doing carpenter work, that we might have extra for the winter, as we were left penniless in that new country where there was nothing to do. Father had been cheated out of all his property. He had sold our Ohio farm, and had taken the first payment to get to this country. He had left his notes with one of his neighbors, without taking any security and that neighbor had collected the notes and used every dollar. While he was away we could not hear from him for two or three months and mother was afraid that he had been killed. She had not told her fears to any of us, but I had noticed that she wept as she sat up at night to knit until eleven o'clock, and I sat close beside her. At first we sang hymns, for I loved to sing old-fashioned hymns when quite young, and when she wept I said, "Mother, tell me why you cry so much." She said, "I don't like to tell you for everything affects you so." "Well," I said, "I want to know what makes you cry." "I can not hear from father," she replied. The only way we could get any mail was that a man went on horseback, and left the mail one and one-half miles from our door. Then I wanted to know why father did not write. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she said, "I fear he is dead, and God only knows what will become of us." This continued for weeks. One day I said, "Is there no way to find out?" She took the old Bible in her hands, sat with eyes closed, opened it carefully, and then looked, and I heard her whisper, "And it came to pass;" then she scanned the pages again and whispered, "And it came to pass;" then she closed the Bible and her eyes and opened to another place and the third time said, "And it came to pass." After doing this she said, "Your father lives and is coming home." "How do you know, mother?" I said. "I asked God if he were living and coming home to let me find on opening the Bible three different times, 'And it came to pass,' and He did." In a short time father came home and had plenty of money, and said, "I have written you before and sent ten dollars." It was strange that the letter had never reached home, but it soon came and the money in it. We rejoiced more, I know, than the children of a millionaire with every comfort they could have.

The Scotch people were settled around us; and one of them owned a beautiful farm in Pleasant Grove, just the size of my father's, on the opposite side of the river. The owner was very

anxious to trade, in order to be near his own people. Father was indifferent, but mother, who was far-seeing, was in favor of it. She said, "There is going to be a village on that side and a stage line direct to Chicago, which is some day going to be a great city, and your farm will be wanted for town lots in a little while" Though incredulous, yet he made the trade after living two years on the former place, and we moved into a log house in Pleasant Grove. True to mother's predictions, after some time a tiny shoe-shop was opened on the corner, later a dry-goods and grocery store combined, and finally a post-office. My father's farm as well as that of another man just opposite was laid out in town lots, by a young lawyer, Mr. Coon (afterwards my husband), and he named the village Marengo. The stage did soon run into the new town. Never will I forget the sensations I felt when I heard the stage-horn blow in the distance. A nice hotel was built and a good frame schoolhouse. Father's town lots were in demand and he stopped farming, built a frame house, and kept a dry-goods store in the front room.

When I was fourteen years of age I was sent to the city of Chicago to attend school. My mother's half sister wanted me in her family. Because the schools with us were small and poor, my parents thought that the thing to do. We were obliged to go with horses those days; so we were two days on our journey, and every hour I was afraid of being killed. Several farmers drove along together with bags of grain, and I was obliged to sit on one and lean against the other the entire journey. We had not gone very far before I found that they had jugs of whisky, and they stopped a number of times each day and had their drinks together. I wept much of the way.

We arrived at Chicago without any serious accident. All seemed glad to see us, but my heart was so heavy I wept again.

I was put into school and obliged to work night and morning just as hard as I could and not one moment's time was given me to study on Saturdays I was put into the washtub and on my knees to scrub floors, and with not much sleep nor appetite could not but run down physically. 'Twas not long before my aunt's brother came to make her a visit, and while he was there she brought a so-called dressmaker to make her a dress, and I wondered where we all would sleep. What I heard and saw that night it would be impossible to describe.

I really was afraid of my life and wrote to my mother to bring me home as quickly as possible, but the letter never went. Every line from my pen was put into the fire.

'Twas not long before another stranger came He was a tall handsome man and I was told he was a minister, and I said, "If he is a minister what is he here for?" My aunt replied, "We belong to the same church he does." "What can that be?" I asked. "The Latter Day Saints," she answered. I had never heard of such people. They were all going to meeting that night and I wondered what to do with myself. This man was going to hold a protracted meeting, and when time came to go my aunt said, "Get your things on." I made answer that I did not want to go but was afraid to stay alone. She said, "Well, of course you will go." She walked with her husband, and that would leave me to walk with this wonderful "Latter Day Saint," which I utterly refused to do. I left him to himself and took hold of her dress and walked along beside her. When the meeting was over and the members were shaking hands with the preacher, my aunt started for the door with her husband and as I kept close she said, "I should think you would want to walk with such a gentleman as he is." I replied, "I never walked with any man or boy, nor am I ever going to."

The next night they invited some into their home, and I wondered if they were going to have a prayer-meeting. After they had laughed and joked in a very familiar way, they proposed a mock marriage. That was that I should stand by the side of this preacher, and some man should perform the marriage ceremony, such as the elders did, which I declined. My aunt said, "Now, nobody is going to hurt you, we just want you to see how they marry among the Saints." I said, "I don't choose to know what they do among the Mormons, and I will not take hold of any man's hand."

There was a little woman in the back of the room that I noticed looked at me very anxiously. Every turn I made seemed to spoil all their fun. I said to my aunt, "You are already married, you would not be afraid, and as you want to have a mock ceremony, you stand up there." There was no more talk about the marriage. I could not have suffered more had I been surrounded by wild beasts much of the time till I sent word to mother. Next morning this friend of mine called me to her door and said, "My little darling, I am so sorry for you, but I am glad that you refused to do what they told you to do. My husband is a Mormon elder also, and he was to perform the ceremony and you would have been his wife. You must not slip one word of this for my life would be in jeopardy as well as yours. Write a letter to your mother, do it in school, and I will see that it goes." I did so. By that time I had been there about three months. My mother sent father after me just as soon as she could.

As I laid my head in my mother's lap I said, "Let me cry all I want to, then I can talk." Mother said, "Now, rest; I can see by your looks you have shed too many tears already; I will never send you from my side again." She said, "I am proud of you, for if it had been your younger sister she would have been ruined and among the Mormons to day."

How I praise the Lord that from a child He put a hedge about me and kept me from all evil. I often think that my cowardice and bashfulness with all the suffering it brought me has been my safety. In less than two weeks this Mormon elder married a beautiful young girl and carried her off to Nauvoo, Ill., then the headquarters Mormonism.

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### CHAPTER 3

Acquaintance With Mother Cob -- Cottage Prayer-Meetings -- Religious Convictions Revived -- Father's Opposition -- Conflict of Mind

To return to the religious influences of my childhood, there was nothing which had a tendency to help me much until "Mother Cobb" came West, and settled in the country seven miles from Marengo. She immediately commenced to visit and have prayer with all the neighbors for miles around. She came to our home among the rest, which marked an epoch in my young life. Her husband was a backslider and opposed her, but nothing could stop her in working for God and souls.

I was about nine years old when there came a strange knock at our door, which mother opened quickly, and there was a woman with a blue calico dress, a sort of drab coat, drab Quaker

bonnet, and fair face that charmed me. Her little soft white hands came down on my head and face as she said, "You beautiful little creature, do you love my Jesus?" I longed to say, "Yes," but was afraid. She caressed me and said, "I want you for Him," and after speaking with every member of the family she told us where she lived, and that she had just run over seven miles, on foot, to see if she could find any families to pray with. Of course my mother granted her the privilege of prayer. With tears streaming down her sweet face, she blessed me again and again. I felt, "How can I ever let her go out of my sight?" She asked mother how many families were near us. I believe there were at that time three or four. She then asked if she might get them together next week for at least a female prayer-meeting. My mother told her how bitter my father was against the praying people; she said, "We won't mind it, we must pray." Mother consented, and I wondered if little girls would be shut out of that meeting.

When the time came, Mother Cobb called every child she could see or hear, and again said to me, "You can be a little Christian too." Mother never talked to us about these things, except when she was in trouble, then I would hear her pray by herself. (Always did I wonder why she never prayed with us children, but never dared to ask her.)

Mother Cobb continued to come to this prayermeeting through all kinds of weather, seven miles on foot, until the schoolhouse was built several years later. Her husband had horses, but would not permit them to be used to carry her to meetings. At one time it had rained until the water had formed a slough right across her path. She said, "I kneeled right down and asked Jesus to show me some way to get across the water, for He knew I must go to that prayermeeting, and when I opened my eyes I saw little boulders all the way across and stepped from one to another, and did not get my feet wet at all."

Again, one day when she was dressed for meeting, as she stepped outside, a neighbor drove up and invited her to ride with him. Just then her husband, who had been drawing a bucket of water, threw it all over her. She came on to meeting, just as she was; letting the sun dry her clothes on the way. She would tell these little experiences in the service, not by way of complaint, but to show that hardships and persecutions were to be expected and rejoiced over by the Christian.

She was very spiritual and very plain, always wearing a blue calico dress.

The meetings were moved to the new schoolhouse, when it was built, and sometimes a preacher would come along on horseback and preach for us. She would be so happy that she would run all through the congregation, laying her hands on the people, blessing them, and talking to us in a wonderful way. By the time we had meetings in the schoolhouse a year, there were six or eight to pray. Often she would fall under the power, and lie for hours; I used to long to sit down on the floor by her side and put my hands on her and love her, but was afraid.

Early in my teens a protracted meeting was held in a private dwelling. I asked mother if I might go one night. She said, "If your father should know of your going, he would punish you severely." I had gone with my mother to the meetings in the day-time, held by Mother Cobb, but these services were held at night, a mile away from home. One day I said to mother, "I want to go to that prayer-meeting; can't you let me out of the back window after pa has gone to bed?" She said,

"Yes, I will, but you must take the consequences." It would be impossible for me to tell my feelings as I slipped out of that room, for I would have rather died than to displease my father. He had never laid hands on me in punishment. They were praying when I got there; a few were weeping and seeking the Lord. I slipped quietly into a corner, but was soon observed, as I was weeping also. They asked me to give my heart to Jesus and I felt, "Oh, that I dared to do it." I did not have the courage to tell them that my father was the cause of my being a sinner.

It reached my father that I had been among the praying people. He was very angry and forbade my going, but I was in deep trouble; so much so that my mother greatly feared the consequences. After a few nights, I ventured again, and as I knelt with the rest, a great horror and darkness settled down, until it seemed I was sinking, sinking into a horrible pit; my whole frame shook with terror. A gentle hand was laid upon my shoulder and a voice so sweet to me said, "Pray, pray, you must pray!" I opened my mouth and light came; peace took possession of me. I arose to my feet and said, "Jesus loves me, I am His child." I could not be kept still. My father was very, very angry, and I had not the courage to speak to him about my soul, but thought I would live for Jesus in secret until I became of age.

I sought the little girls and took them with me to pray with them. Soon we became afraid my father would follow us; so we dared not continue these little meetings. I was too much of a coward to pray, especially now since my father was so angry at me. At this time he took us to little shows and anything that happened to come along, and with my ideas and convictions, it nearly made me lose my senses. To go, was to see and if I caught myself smiling at anything, when I got home, I would always feel remorse. It was not long before there was fiddling and dancing. Mother Cobb's grown daughters went, though they were converted in the same meeting that I was. My father immediately wanted us to go, and mother was not very much against it, but it seemed that Mother Cobb would die to know that her children and my mother's were on a dancing floor!

The violin always took me, when Jesus was not in my heart; I never slept nor rested when I heard one. My father was very proud of us and thought we were the loveliest children on earth, and would tell mother how well we danced. But I never came home to sleep, but to weep, and to say I would never go again.

So much darkness and gloom rested continually upon me when there was no music that my father gave my older brother all the time he could possibly spare to play the violin. When he was in the house he would get us to dance every night that he could. There were five of us large enough to engage in such. This went on with the addition of singing-schools, sometimes in our home and often in the schoolhouse. We had no churches then. This continued until I was sixteen.

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## CHAPTER 4

Mr. Coon Visits Her -- She Detests Him -- He Will Have Her in Spite of God, Man and the Devil -- Finally Consents, but Longs for Death -- Married -- Siege of Sickness

Mr. Coon, a young lawyer, well acquainted with my father, began to visit our home, during this time. It was not long before my mother informed me of his intentions; that she could see already that he was determined to have me. I spurned him as I would a viper. I had no intention of ever marrying any man, much less him. His visits became very frequent; sometimes he would come in the morning at nine o'clock and often tried to shake hands with me, but I as often refused. I never allowed myself to be in his presence alone. He frequently asked if he might accompany me to church or spelling-school, but I always declined. His visits became so frequent and unbearable that I begged of my mother to put a final stop to them. She had a plain talk with him and he said, "I love your daughter; and what are you going to do about it?" She said, "She has no regard or respect for you; and it is her desire that you never come into the house again." He said, "I shall come." I was really afraid of him.

Then father went to his office to talk with him; and told him he must not come to our home. Mr. Coon turned the key in the door to shut him in and said, "Mr. Damon, I love that girl, and God, man, or the devil shall not prevent me; I shall have her." Father came home and talked with mother alone; but I heard him say, "He will have that girl if he steals her, and takes her out of the country." "Now, mother," said he, "don't ever say another word to her, you will drive her crazy." Mother took a wrong view of it; she thought I must be secretly encouraging him or he would not be so persistent. She said I must not see him any more.

He came again the next morning; I took off my shoes and went to my washtub, barefooted, thinking I might disgust him and he would stay away. He sat down beside me, moved his chair so that he could look right into my face, and said, "Miss Arvilla, have you no shoes?" I made no reply, just kept at my washing. He said, "I will buy you a pair of shoes." I answered that I would receive nothing from him as long as I lived. Of course mother was in the room; I would not be in his presence one moment without her. When he was gone, mother told me, "You must encourage him in some way or he would not dare to come." I wept that day, and night also.

The next day when he came, I was still weeping, and as soon as he saw my face he came close to mother and said, "You intend to kill this girl, don't you? do you dare to lay your hands on her in anger?" I was then seventeen. Mother said, "I do not know, sir, that this is any business of yours." He said, "Aunt Damon, look me in the face; if you dare to use any violence or treatment to torture this girl, who is worthy of love and esteem from all of us, I will see to it, for there is a law to protect helpless females. I want you to listen, I intend to make this girl my wife." I said, "I intend, sir, to never look toward you and I want you to leave this home forever." He was there in the morning. I simply said, "If you will load father's rifle, shoot once and end this business; it would be a great favor to me." He remained two or three hours. He said, "I am coming twice a day, more if I choose, but you mark my words, Aunt Damon, if I find this girl crying next time I come I will attend to it." He did not seem to realize that he was the sole cause of it all.

He then wrote me a letter, telling me all his feelings; that, though he was thirty-one and I seventeen, it was fixed that I should be his wife. He left it with my aunt, who lived next door to us. Next day she sent for me to come to see her; handed me the letter, and while I was reading it, he walked in and sat down by my side; just then mother came in. Of course I immediately went home. What my mother said and her manner I never can tell, for my brain reeled, and I was nearly ready for the asylum. That day I would have taken my own life, but believed there was a hell. He came

over right away and it was a terrible scene. It seemed to me that he was angry enough to kill my mother on the spot. He tried to take my hands, which I tore from him. The next day I received another letter stating he would leave the place and leave me what he owned, to save my life, or he would put an end to his own. He also said that he had never intended to marry, never having seen any one that had any attraction until he met me, and he believed he could not only make me comfortable, but happy. "Your mother," he said, "has taken a course that will make you miserable all your life; now I leave it with you, consider it well. You have no friend; your mother is your bitter persecutor and tormentor. I beg of you to let me take you and take care of you, and be a loving husband and kind protector." As I read the letter, a terrible life passed before me both for him and myself, if I utterly refused. I thought, "I shall die in a little while any way, and to die in my home would be better than torment here day and night." While these thoughts were running in my mind, in he walked again, not to my father's home, but Aunt's, where I had gone to get my second letter. My aunt strongly urged me to accept without further hesitation and I said, "Yes, I will, for I am going to die in a little while anyway," but as soon as I had said the words I begged for death.

Looking him in the face I asked, "Did I say yes?"

"You certainly did and you will never be sorry," he replied. I said I wanted somebody to take my life before I came in mother's presence.

I told mother where I had been and what the contents of my second letter were, and that when almost crazed I had said "yes" to him. "I don't want to, and I never will marry him. Who will dare to shoot me?" And yet how dared I die!

The next day he dared to come back to father's house. I was still weeping. "May I see you a few minutes alone?" he said.

The same answer, "No, sir."

He said right before mother, "I want to know when you set the day for our marriage."

I said, "I shall never do it."

"Well," said he, "I will get the minister or justice of the peace, just as you say. I don't care about a wedding; I would as soon marry you in your wash-dress as anything."

My mother said, "You are bold; you talk as though she was going to marry you."

"We are certainly going to be married," said 'he. "I set the day in just two weeks."

When we were alone mother said, "If you are going to marry him, you had just as well marry 'him in two weeks, as longer, but I shall not witness it."

Father was good-natured and gentle; mother was angry and terrified me constantly, but went on making preparations for the wedding, and sent out invitations to one hundred to witness the ceremony. When she told me what she had done, I thought she must surely intend to kill me that

day, it seemed to me that one hundred were coming to my funeral. From that day every wedding has seemed such to me. I was taken very ill that week. On the ninth of February I was seventeen, and we were married the eleventh of May. My health was very poor. Female troubles developed and I suffered tortures all these months. Longing only for death, I would not let a physician come near me, so that I only might die. We boarded at my mother's home, and here I slept in a cold room, up stairs. My husband seemed crazed; seemed to worship the very bed I was on. Mother was careless and harsh, and nothing could be done.

In January I was taken with the worst form of typhoid fever. It came violently on my head and I cried, "Oh, where is my mother?" Both mother and father had gone off to spend a week in Wisconsin. Just then they drove into the barnyard. That was the last I remembered for six weeks. My husband called the best physician, but he was wholly unable to handle the case. He had the counsel of three. They gave me calomel and quinine continually, and after six weeks left me to die. Two of them pronounced me already mortified.

My husband was compelled to stay out of the room, for I had an impression that he was going to kill me. After talking with the physicians one day he came into the room, Mother said, like one in the agonies of death. "If she dies I will shoot them," he said, "for they said they would certainly cure her." Mother replied, "If you will stay out and keep the doctors out, I will take this case in hand."

Father and mother were both physicians that used roots and herbs, and never allowed a doctor in our house before. She told me afterwards that she boiled a pailful of white beans to a pulp and spread this on a sheet; then picked me up, laid me in it and wrapped the sheet all around me. She kept this on one week, changing when necessary, and that drew out the black that looked like mortification, into one hundred worms with black heads and white bodies. When she was taking these out, clear from the bone, my mind returned enough so that I knew my mother. It was a long time, days, I think, before I knew who I was and what I had passed through. I constantly cried, "Mamma, mamma, mamma!" -- the only word I could speak for weeks. I could not spell the word "to" or "for" or think of my name. They were three months in teaching me how to walk and talk, I walked with a cane a long time, lost my hair entirely and wore caps for a year. I hardly know how to express my husband's sorrow. He restrained his feelings all he could. He often laid his hand on my head and said, "Oh, that beautiful hair, but it is all gone." Before this my hair was as thick as my arm, long and glossy. A cough set in immediately and I was pronounced a consumptive. It appeared like it for nine months. Mother's constant directions and remedies got my system partly under control, but I suffered with weakness a lifetime.

After living one year with my parents after our marriage, my husband bought a little home next door, and we kept house. We had only two rooms, the front room for some time was parlor, sitting-room, lawyer's office, and bedroom, for we had a bed in the corner with curtains hung around. Our table was made by my husband, and our tablecloths were made from cotton cloth, fringed all around. But this was our home; though we were poor, and I was as well satisfied as later when we had a nice home with every comfort.

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## CHAPTER 5

Motherhood -- Death of Her First-born -- Awful Sorrow -- Deep Conviction -- Hears Redfield -- Is Converted -- Husband's Opposition -- Laid Aside Her Silk -- Visits from House to House

After three years we had a little golden-haired, blue-eyed daughter. We worshipped at an earthly shrine. She seemed only an angel, lent. If there was the least unpleasantness in the home it affected her to tears, and when only one year old she would look into her father's face and whisper, "Take care, take care," until everything was all right again. We had our little darling just fifteen months and five days. I had a presentiment of her death, five days before she went. Children were dying all around with scarlet fever. I had my only one in my arms looking out at a procession just passing, when it was as if some one had spoken and said, "Yours will be the next." I cried out as if she were already dead, "O, God! I can not live if she is taken." My husband came in soon afterwards, and finding me weeping asked the cause. My baby is going to be the next one to die," said I.

"Don't think of such a thing," he said, "is she sick, dear?"

"No, but she is going to die."

That night she was taken with the same dreaded scarlet fever, and went in five days. I can not remember what happened for some time. I was obliged to keep that little dead body in my room. People were horrified. They said I would die as sure as I lived, and I hoped so, for I wanted to be buried in the same grave. There was nothing left to me in the world, and I cried, "Dead, dead, dead, O God, dead!" Could neither eat nor sleep, and did not smile for one year. I could feel, at night, my fingers digging down to that little grave in the gravel. Some one stayed with me day and night during the whole year. I could not listen to any conversation, and if people conversed in my presence I did not hear. At the end of that year I seemed again to have consumption.

They persuaded me to attend some parties; there was no pleasure in anything in this world. Mother Cobb often came and tried to comfort me. She had often said while I had the child. "She is too pure and lovely for earth, you will not keep her." And when she was gone she said, "Darling, you can follow her to heaven, Jesus has her in His arms waiting for you."

She persuaded me to attend church. I went; do not remember whether I went to any altar or how it came about, but I began to pray, first with the feeling that God did not love me or He would not have robbed me of all that was dear. No one dared try to help me or talk to me but that beautiful woman.

She said, "Jesus wants all your love and affections, dear Sister Coon."

Her words were like balm to my soul. A long time before I could feel that God loved me, I awoke fully to the rebellion that was in my heart against Him, and I sighed and prayed until light came again and I found peace. Then the Spirit talked to me about family devotions, but the fear of man had always been my trouble, and it was still there. I never dared to talk with, nor pray in the

presence of, my husband. They urged me to join a class, a Methodist church. I told them of my trouble, not being able to bear my cross at home, not even ask the blessing at the table. They simply told me that many people were Christians who did not do these things, and by constant urging I allowed my name to go on the class, but knew that I had not the grace I should have to belong to the church. Never attended a class or prayer-meeting with a satisfactory feeling, and begged them to drop my name, but as often they refused and said, "You will feel all right after a while." I allowed the pastor to baptize me by sprinkling, but felt worse instead of better. I lived on in that terrible condition until I was in my twenty-ninth year. I then had one daughter living and one son.

The church members and others held selected parties. I was invited. My husband had a carriage and we went. He took me to the hall, and there was the violin and dancing again. As my husband never danced, he said to a young man, an acquaintance, "Take good care of my wife until I come in again."

I supposed he went into another room to play cards. A strange feeling of horror and darkness took entire possession of me. The young man took my hand and held me to the floor. I stiffened in a moment and was as one cold and dead. My teeth began to chatter. I said, "Where is my husband? Bring him in, quick." I saw into the open pit of hell and cried out, "We are both going in. Two men put me into the carriage and drove me home, and for two weeks I walked close to the brink of the pit burning with fire and brimstone. My husband told people I was hopelessly insane. My mother and relatives were frightened exceedingly. All the comfort I could find in those two weeks came from my little boy. He followed me everywhere with his arms around my neck, and his little hands wiping away the tears, constantly saying, "Mamma, I love you."

Our pastor commenced a meeting right away. Mother Cobb was right there by my side saying, "Dear Sister Coon, come to the meeting." I went, but there was nothing there for me.

All the dancing ceased in that town for years, and a great awakening overtook the entire place. Our pastor couldn't touch it, nor do anything for the people. Father and Mother Hart, the parents of Rev. E. P. Hart, were my near neighbors. They were deeply concerned and said one to the other, time and again, "What can be done?" But in taking up a newspaper Father Hart read about a meeting in Elgin, and Dr. Redfield was the revivalist. They were well acquainted with him in the East.

He said, "I shall drop everything and go to Elgin on the first train."

He did so, and Dr. Redfield promised to come in two weeks, which he did.

Dr. Redfield's first sermon brought nearly the whole membership to the altar as seekers, and the next night I think there were only two remaining in their seats. His preaching was entirely to the church. Such power accompanied his words as we had never known. Every one was possessed with the feeling, "Somebody has told Dr. Redfield all about my life." Every sin that could be committed was held up before us in every sermon. When he preached against fashionable attire in church members, I was angry, for I loved to wear silk and velvet, but little jewelry, as I was not very fond of that. I made up my mind I would not go any more. My husband was very angry

because I went at all, and told me that I must either cease going or forever leave my home. I was absent one night, but felt that I could not live in that condition. I must go. When I was ready he said, "Are you going to church again?"

I said, "Yes, sir .

"I shall drag you from that altar," he said, "if you dare to go, if I take you out dead."

I dared not talk with any one about my state and feelings, and no one dared approach me in the state my husband was in. I felt that I could not be a Christian, but still I could not live unless I was. I thought I never could pray with my husband and do the duties of a Christian, so of course, I must be lost.

There were afternoon meetings and I went. Dr. Redfield preached from this text: "Perfect love casteth out fear," and told us where we could find it in the Bible. I felt, "If I can get that, I can be saved."

I went to the altar but could get no help. It was clear it was my duty to pray with my husband, as it was not possible to get an opportunity nor courage to talk with him. I came home that night about eleven o'clock and knelt by his bedside with this determination in my heart, unuttered, "I shall pray if he gets out of his bed over my dead body." What words I uttered I never can tell nor how long I knelt thus, but that night I slept for the first time in ever so long.

When I arose in the morning determined that I should ask a blessing at the table, husband said, "If you do I shall throw this cup of hot coffee right in your face." My little boy, then three years old, siding close to his father laid his hand on his arm and said, "Papa, don't speak another word. If you should hurt mamma, God might kill you." Then he climbed down and putting his arms around my neck said, "Mamma, you will ask the blessing and I will too." We did so.

Husband said: "Are you going to meeting any more?"

"Yes, now I am going right along, something wonderful has hold of me."

Just then the Spirit whispered, "Not only go to meeting, but get up and tell them that you have given yourself to God, and that for life."

At the hour of meeting, husband was at home. It was Sabbath. "If you do go, never turn the latch again, and never enter this door," he said. My little boy said, "Mamma, you go to church, and if papa don't let you come home any more, I will come where you are, mamma." The older child was frightened and when I left the door both stood at the window throwing good-by kisses. When I entered the church door everybody seemed so small. The church was packed and I felt myself no larger than a man's hand, but felt that I must go just as near the pulpit as I possibly could. I looked into the pulpit and saw Jesus standing right beside Dr. Redfield, and with such compassion and love as He looked into my face. Tears not only streamed down my face, but it seemed every one else was weeping.

The doctor talked from his text, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."

He ceased speaking, staggered against the pulpit and said, "I can't preach, there is a martyr in the house. I think it must be some timid female that is going to be burned alive. I never had such a feeling but once before in my life, and that was when a young lady was converted close to where we lived. Her father was so angry he told her he would just give her three days to make up her mind, she could either give up Jesus and all this rabble that professed to be Christians, or leave his home forever. If she went she could just take her common clothes, tie them up and go, which she did. On that occasion these verses were composed:" With tears running down his face, he sang,

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow Thee."

When he came to these words,

"And while Thou shalt smile upon me,  
God of wisdom, love and might,  
Foes may hate and friends disown me;  
Show Thy face and all is bright,"

the heavens opened and stars fell on me and all around. I was on my feet, clapping my hands and saying, "I've got it!"

"Are you the one?" he said.

I started for home, singing, down the aisle and right down the street,

"O happy day, that fix'd my choice  
On Thee, my Savior and my God,  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad."

My little boy opened the door and said, "Come in, mamma, dear." My husband was back of me forbidding me ever to enter, with terrible invocations and curses upon all the Christians and all the meetings, and threatened to shoot Dr. Redfield.

The meeting was broken up and the people were coming along the streets. I was outdoors shouting "Hallelujah!" "Where shall I go?" I asked

"Come in the house; people will think you are crazy." He flung his arms in anger, saying, "Go to the devil." I walked through the sitting and dining-rooms into the hired girl's room; tried to put my arms around his neck; felt such unutterable love it seemed I should be consumed. He thrust me from him. I fell on my knees at his feet with such inexpressible love and crying, "Savior, O Savior, the Lord!"

He left the house. My family altar was erected that day never to go down. We not only asked the blessing at the table, but shoved my chair back a little ways and sang beautiful hymns, then returned thanks again.

His opposition and bitterness can not be described, and it continued for twelve long years, a fiery furnace. He stayed away every night until late, sometimes until in the morning. As soon as he had his breakfast he left the house. As I laid aside my worldly attire, he said:

"If you lay aside your silks, you will go without clothes, for I will never let you have a penny."

But as he was gone to his business, attending court a great deal of the time, he was obliged to leave just enough money to set our table, not intending to leave a dime over. I saved a nickel now and then, until I had enough to buy a calico dress. This was my first plain dress, and to me it was the prettiest garment I ever wore. The ground of it was black and white, what we called "pepper and salt." The figures were rings that were linked together, one white and the other black. I felt that that was the way Jesus and I were linked together, never to be separated. Everybody thought it was beautiful.

Then I saved money, pennies and nickels, until I bought a shaker. This was a plain drab bonnet, very simple, but to me it was beautiful. The shape was very much like Mother Cobb's Quaker bonnet, which she always wore. We all wore shakers to church, in the summer those days.

I was so full of praises for the wonderful deliverance that it seemed my very bones were on fire; and went from house to house praying and singing. Universalists and Spiritualists opened their doors wide. They wept and said, "Come again, every time you feel like it." Went to store, office and bank, and if any one tried to hide away, I followed him up until I delivered my message. They said to one another in my presence, "Oh, how changed!" My husband went around after me, all through town, saying, "My wife is insane; she prays and groans all the time when she is not singing." One very wicked and profane man looked him in the face and said: "Coon, you know better; you know she is all right. If any one were to tell you she was crazy or wrong you would kick him right out. You are a fool, Coon; go home and behave yourself."

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## CHAPTER 6

Presiding Elder Sanctified -- Glorious Camp-Meetings -- Compromising Preachers -- Great Opposition -- Many Intimidated -- Holds Meetings in Her Own Home -- Leads to Organizing Free Methodist Class.

After Dr. Redfield had held his revival and gone from us, there were about three hundred professing holiness in the Methodist church where I belonged. Our presiding elder came to hold our quarterly meeting, and one Sabbath morning during the love-feast, as he was talking, he looked all around, seemingly upon everybody, then staggered back and took hold of the pulpit, and said: "I was never in such a place, and never expected to be this side of heaven. I am under conviction, and

must have it." Then he went on with his sermon, and after we were dismissed he came to me and a few others and said, "I want you to come to the June camp-meeting, without fail." He told us it was to be at Roscoe. That was quite a distance from Marengo. We took a tent and went. Then he tried to preach, closed his Bible to step down to the altar, and said: "I am a seeker for sanctification." Others followed. His wife being there, went to his side weeping, and knelt, speechless for a time. He said to those he knew enjoyed it, "Come close to me; I must have it before I leave this place." There were a number of compromising ministers on the ground, and they gathered close up to him also, and said: "Elder, you are all right; you are only just terribly tempted." He looked them in the face and said, "I never enjoyed it, but I shall die if I don't get it."

They left the altar, and we gathered closer still. A preacher filled with the Spirit opened his Bible to this verse: "For this is the will of God even your sanctification," and other like passages. With tears streaming down his face, he said, "Yes, I know it, but my heart don't take it." His wife said, "If my husband is seeking the Lord, I must get my sins forgiven." In about two hours he came clearly through. She still stayed until she received pardon, for he was there to help her. When she began to sing, "Jesus saves me just now," he raised up from his knees, picked her up under one arm, and ran around the camp saying, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! I am sanctified and my wife a Christian!"

The compromising preachers left the ground quickly. The work of God went on with power, many souls were converted and many sanctified. At our family prayers one morning the people literally tore one side of the tent down to get in, so full was the doorway. I was on my knees, and seven others. When I came to know who I was there were five women lying across my body; all of these had obtained the experience of holiness in the meeting and had lost their strength. They were obliged to pick me up and lay me on the bed to rest. We hardly had time to cook or eat. All that summer he begged us to follow him to every meeting, both camp and quarterly. We did so, and everything seemed on fire wherever we went.

The next year they took our elder from us and put a compromiser in his place. His way of opposition to the real work of God at first seemed easy, and studied, and careful, but when he found the tide so strong, that we were not at least affected by him or his teaching, he used other and stronger measures. He likened all the people to an empty wagon that rattled and made more noise than one that was heavily laden; told us to be very brief when we testified, and often confined us to passages of Scripture, and called on us to pray. I was distressed, and asked the Lord what I should do. The next time he came to hold quarterly meeting he made it still more oppressive, and I saw many losing in their experience, intimidated, toned down and quiet, and before I was aware I stepped close to him in front of the pulpit, and said: "Don't do it! don't do it! We are God's people, and know just when to speak, what to say, and when to pray." He looked me in the face, and I said: "If you give me a slate and pencil, sir, I will draw you a picture of the harness you have made to put on me; but I can not wear it, for I am heaven-born, my soul is on fire."

The Spirit came in power -- we leaped, ran, shouted and screamed -- the first time screams ever came upon me, and by that time there were a dozen or more running up and down the aisle, shouting and clapping their hands, and the elder settled back in his chair and was looking through his fingers. Then were we aware of the attempt to choke, strangle and put us to death. But we had victory every time the elder came. The pastor could not do anything with us. He was a good man,

but not sanctified; under conviction, but dared not move out. I had a class of fifteen, and the room filled up right away; we had altar service, and people would get so filled they would lose their strength, and would leap and jump up in class-meetings sometimes for three hours. They gave me a class of sisters, but the brethren could not stay out; they would seem more like campmeetings on fire than anything else.

The next year they gave us another pastor, a sleek, genteel, silk-hat man, that said "Hal-le-lu-yar," and professed holiness. He preached about mountains and rivers, lakes and flowers. When he said, "Sister Coon, we will join with you in prayer," I prayed: "Lord, save the preacher and take both his hands off from Thy people, for we are going through on the keen run." Then we were at it again, on the run through the house, and spoiled all that pretty thing he had made to hold us, but when out of meeting I was in distress about it. There were as many as fifty who were frightened into silence. I went to the parsonage and labored with him alone, but to no purpose. Many preachers called us "Redfieldites," others "Nazarites," which was a beautiful name to me. The Lord began to talk to me in a wonderful way, and showed me that those who were being frightened and held back would soon become worldly. He talked to me about Freemason preachers and elders, and gave time to look it all over, then said: "Go out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues." We remained in the M. E. Church four years. When I spoke of leaving the preacher remonstrated and begged of me to remain, for my work was certainly there. He had become a better man, had changed each year, but was not sanctified. I gave him my reasons, and told him I could not stay and save my soul. He begged of me to wait a week, which I did, then called for my letter again.

I had opened my own home for meetings, in the meantime; I think about a dozen came the first night. While we were praying my husband came in, and looking upon us all, said, "You get right up out of here, or I will help you out." Laying my hand on his arm, I said: "We are praying for sinners, and we can't stop." "Let this be the last meeting of this kind in my house," he said, and went out. I announced another meeting of the same kind for the next week. The congregation increased and the power also. These meetings continued in my home for two years, twice a week, until forty were ready to join the Free Methodist class. We then rented a hall on the main street up town, until our church was built. There was wonderful power and manifestations, which increased with every service.

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## CHAPTER 7

Camp-Meeting at St. Charles -- First Free Methodist Conference -- Glorious Times -- Many Saved and Sanctified -- Describes Living in Tent -- Later Has Nice Tent -- Mr. Coon Goes to Camp-Meeting -- Likes the Singing -- Can't Stand the Groans -- Another Meeting at St. Charles -- Wonderful Manifestation of Power -- Scores Sanctified -- Undue Magnifying of Faith-Healing -- Insane Woman Slaps Dr. Redfield

I now speak of the first camp-meeting I ever attended at St. Charles. My husband had positively refused to let me go, so I had given up all hopes of attending. Large numbers of our class

had gone. About the third day, I think, after the meeting had commenced, Mr. Coon came in, seemed excited, and said, "All your people have gone to the campmeeting, haven't they?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, I know you want to go."

I replied, "You told me I could not, and I had no money, so gave up all thought of it."

He said, "If you can find a man and his wife who are going today or tomorrow, I will buy you a ticket and you can go."

He went to look for somebody himself, but I stayed at home to pray about it. He came back in a little while, saying that our next-door neighbor and his wife were going. I think he paid their fare to get them to go.

The next day we were at St. Charles campground, but when we were within a half a mile of the meeting the singing and shouting took such entire possession of my spirit that I felt like getting out and running faster than the horses could go. Our driver was very staid, sober and prosy, but the songs and hallelujahs kept coming out of my heart and mouth until we reached the ground, and when I was there the shouting, weeping and laughing was wonderful.

Here the first Free Methodist class was organized in the West. Other places had suffered as we did in Marengo from holiness-fighting preachers. At St. Charles, a number of the most spiritual members had been read out of the church. Correspondence had been carried on with Brother B. T. Roberts, who, with others, because of similar persecutions in the East, had organized the F. M. Church there, and he came to this campmeeting. The first conference was held sitting on a rail-pile. Those of Marengo who had maintained their spirituality united with this new church.

I must describe the living-tent which was for about fifteen people. We were not able to have nice tents then as they do now. We put in just cotton cloth, which was thrown over a ridge-pole, and came down to the ground without any walls. Straw was thrown down, and ticks filled with straw were put on it. The brethren took the outside of the bed and the sisters the inside, being all brothers and their wives. I waited until they were all in bed, and about ten o'clock somebody called me, and I went to the tent. They said, "You must come to bed."

I said, "Where?"

"Right in here between us two sisters."

I said, "Don't mind me; I am going to see souls saved before I sleep anywhere."

"Well," they said, "we have to take care of you; you will work yourself out the first thing you do, so lie right down here; this place was reserved on purpose for you."

I did so, with my clothes right on as I wore them through the day, and went right to singing and shouting. It seemed to me heaven was everywhere.

"Well," they said, "you are not going to let any of us sleep at all to-night, are you?"

"Well, let me go; then you can sleep."

One of the old mothers that had prayed for me for years, said:

"Let her alone; I don't care if she shouts every night all night long. I prayed for her for years that she might be a Christian, and now I want everybody to keep their hands off."

I was soon out of the tent, and wherever I heard a groan there I went to see if some one was in trouble about their soul. I saw some blessedly saved before I went back to my tent again, laid down same as before by the side of this old saint that seemed my protector. Possibly I had been there five minutes when my soul became so full I began singing; went out quickly, found other seekers and everybody too sleepy to pray with them. Thus I went on every day and night while the camp-meeting lasted. I can not remember being sleepy or hungry once; took a little when the rest did. It was marvelous to the whole tent and camp-meeting, but it did not seem anything strange to me at all. I should think one hundred souls were saved in that meeting. Young men and women would come to the ground without even a lunch, and came to our tent to be fed, and while they sat around the table I preached and asked questions. When we were through eating, had them turn round and kneel at the same seats. Many wept and gave their hearts to God. I followed that up every year until the impenitent were almost afraid to come to my tent and ask when they were hungry. When we went home I told my husband about the tent I stayed in.

He said, "Well, that's all right; they are all good folks, and you will have to get along the best way you can about the tent, for I can not buy one."

For years I used sheets, quilts and cotton cloth, when I could get it, and made a home for ten or fifteen, and always expected every one that came into my tent to be converted, and it was so. After my healing some years later my husband bought a nice tent for me, made a table with his own hands that was easily taken down and packed and as easily put together, also made a nice cupboard and bedstead that was put together in the same way; had a little stove made to order, and made a box with handles on it to put it in; bought boards for the floor, had them marked and hauled to the ground, and gave me fifteen dollars to run the tent.

I took in the young men preachers that had no mothers or wives, and young sisters that had no one to provide for them. I took all the beds and bedding. The first meeting he helped me pack my things, get the dray and send them to the depot.

He said, "When you get it all fixed up I am coming down to stay a day."

He did so; came on Saturday and stayed until Monday morning.

He said, "This is nice enough to live in all summer, and we will put it up in our door-yard and sleep in it during the hot weather when you are done with it."

He was not only delighted, but carried away with the singing, and said:

"Put me on my bed behind the corner and let me lie here and hear the singing; it takes me all to pieces, but don't let anybody come in here to groan or talk to me a word, because I can't stay if you do."

But it was impossible for us to have family devotions and no one pray for him. My own heart was so burdened I could not refrain, and others were the same. The Spirit got hold of him until he shook like one having ague chills, but when urged to pray would say, "I am going to some time, but can't now." And so he left the ground, and many were weeping. He often said, "If you would not groan I would go two or three days to every meeting; I can't stand it; our own home has all the groans and agonies that I can stand and live."

I will now speak of another meeting in St. Charles. From the beginning the Spirit of the Lord worked in great power. People came from York State, Canada, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other parts. We had no large tabernacles then. Our meetings were held inside an altar rail.

One day we were holding ring meeting. I was talking when a lady came up close to me, right in front, fell on her knees and took hold of my clothing. She said I held my hand on her head, which I was hardly conscious of doing, and said, "Darling, Jesus wants to bring you right out into the clear light and fill you with Himself." Our altar was filled with seekers, who came through in a little while. Great was the manifestation of that hour, and this one followed me wherever I went until she found an opportunity to tell me she had been seeking the Lord twenty-one days in her own town. She was a Congregationalist school-teacher. The Lord in great mercy soon helped her out into clear light and fully sanctified her. The meeting increased in power; the stand was filled with manifestations. One was put up to preach, took his text and fell like a dead man; in a few moments recovered, stood on his feet, repeated his text again and fell to the floor. Brother Roberts was conducting the meeting and said: "God is preaching today; let everybody who are not clear in their experience come to the altar."

A preacher by the name of Fox, from Wisconsin, an M. E., gave one bound from the stand and laid with his face in the dust. Others followed in quick succession, preachers and people, until the entire camp were on their faces, and for three hours all that one could hear was, "Power, power, power!" Not only that Brother Fox, but scores came into a clear experience.

I was in my tent, also Sister Roberts in hers, at the time this meeting began. Neither of us could sit in a chair, couldn't tell whether we were sick in body or what the terrible pressure could mean, and when all fell on their faces we staggered out of our tents and started for the meeting. I did not get there, but when I came to myself, found my arms locked around a little sapling. It seemed to me that little tree and I kissed ground both ways for half an hour. There was no strength left in me when my arms were loosed. That meeting ran three days and nights without a sermon. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory to God! It seemed to me and some others that there were thousands of angels in our midst. Dr; Redfield went round and round in that meeting saying, "Take off thy

shoes from thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground." I can not remember the number saved, but I think hundreds. Some of the unsaved would try to run from the ground and would fall over logs and stumps, crying for mercy, and my heart cries out as I repeat these things:

"Remember, Lord, the ancient days,  
Renew Thy work, Thy grace restore,  
And while to Thee our hearts we raise,  
On us Thy holy Spirit pour."

I want to speak of another scene on the St. Charles camp-ground. It was a time of great visitation from on high. Wonderful topics were discussed, and faith-healing was strongly held up. A certain woman talked about healing of the body in every meeting. Quite a number followed on the same line. A terrible sadness came over me. I left my seat and went outside the meeting, stood up against a tree and wondered what was coming, looked into the pulpit and saw a woman run up the steps and through the pulpit. Dr. Redfield was standing leaning against the pulpit. This woman glided up to him and struck him in the face and said, "If you were a saved man you would get healed."

The doctor was calm, and took his seat with tears streaming down his cheeks.

Of course every Christian then knew that she was either insane or fast going that way. The meeting received a wound from which it did not fully recover. The sadness was over every one, and what to do with the woman no one seemed to know, constantly afraid that she might do some other terrible thing. Some one having authority asked me what I thought about it, and I said that I would certainly send her home, for the Lord is grieved, and the meeting will not recover with her here. I told them that she was not in a condition to be labored with now, and you can send some one home with her. They did so. All who felt as I did turned our entire attention to the salvation of souls, and there was no more unduly magnifying of "faith-healing" in that meeting. There were very few unsaved people in the meeting when this occurred, for which we thanked God and took courage, so when they came to the ground we were ready to pray for their conversion, but those of the other party had no burden for the lost.

I learned a lesson at that meeting that I have never lost, that the salvation of souls should be the uppermost thought and ambition all our lives, then when any were sick among us the spirit of faith and love and of a sound mind would be ours, and it would be just as easy to pray and lay hands on the sick and see them recover as to eat when hungry.

After I went home this woman came to my house. Her home was fifteen miles from my own. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings as she came in at the door.

"Do you remember me?" she said.

"Yes; I shall not soon forget."

"Then you know what I have come for?"

She went on to say: "There is no one that seems to care whether I am saved or lost; I have been in this state of mind ever since I saw you at your camp-meeting, and suppose I must perish forever."

I said: "I suppose everybody is afraid of you."

"Yes, they act so."

"Have you tried to repent of your terrible act?"

"You mean that day I went into the pulpit?"

"Certainly."

"I suppose that was wrong, but I felt that God wanted me to do it."

"Don't you know enough to know what power that was that took possession of you ? If not, then pray until you wake up." I called her by name, and said: "You never believed like this all your whole lifetime, did you, that the Lord should do such a thing to send you around slapping the Christians in their face? Did you ever see anybody else do so?"

I talked to her along this line until she was aroused, and said: "Is there no mercy for me?"

"Yes, when you repent and ask that holy man for forgiveness, also of everybody that was on the camp-ground, as fast as you see them."

"Well," she said, "I will."

"Have you been tempted to do some other terrible things since you left the camp-ground?"

"I have, but have kept myself as well as possible."

"Well, are you now ready to renounce the devil and all his works?"

"I am."

"Then let us pray."

God helped us, as He always will, and while I prayed holding the Bible close to her, said, "Depart, ye infernal spirits; go out of this woman and enter no more into her."

She came to her right mind while we were on our knees and joined in the petition commanding them to go out forever. She went home justified, and had peace with God. Took things out of the way as far as possible, lived a few years and died a Christian.

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## CHAPTER 8

New Church at Marengo -- Conversion of General Superintendent E. P. Hart -- His Mother's Joy -- He is Called to Preach -- Auntie Coon Goes with Him -- Is First Pastor at Marengo -- Called "Young Redfield " -- Camp-Meeting at Ashton -- Tongues of Fire -- Glorious Victory

The next year we built our little plain church at Marengo. I felt it would be an unspeakable privilege to help a little, but was not permitted to use a dollar. I asked for a little to put in. He said: "Not one dollar; there are churches enough in this town already." I put my gold watch and chain in. We were asking God for a preacher.

Mother Hart and myself were burdened, and had made a covenant that we would hold her son and my husband before the Lord until both were saved. Her son was associating with companions who drank, and was wild and dissipated. His mother was powerfully exercised for her lost boy, and often ran half a block to my house, crying, "Sister Coon, my boy is lost forever." Always at such times my faith would be strengthened, and as often I said, "We shall have that boy for Jesus." After prayer she would go home comforted. This continued for one year, while he continually grew worse and worse.

She came one day, saying, "I shall die; I can not bear this disgrace." I said, "God will never save that boy until you give him up to go to the lowest depths, until all the people of this town shall know, if need be, that he is as low as he can get."

We went to our knees while she made this consecration, and when her spirit and mine comprehended it she lifted her hands and said, "Yes, yes, any way, only save his soul."

Our faith triumphed, and we felt that he would be saved. Her agony I can not describe.

We were holding meetings, and she came over and said, "Oh, if I knew where my lost son was today." When husband came in he told me, and she said, "I am going down to get him, and then I will meet you at the church."

We met at the church door; she had found her boy, and as soon as she touched his arm, he said: "Yes, mother, I am going with you to meeting." We went down the aisle together, and did not wait for the sermon, but fell on our knees at the altar, and were all crying to God for help. We remained until he was converted. The whole house was in tears, and when he stood to his feet to witness, all rejoiced together. His mother ran up and down the aisle, with the hair hanging down her back, saying, "Oh, what shall I do; I do not know anything; don't mind me, but go ahead with the meeting."

Her joy was as great as had been her agony, for there had been times, that year, when people had said, "Mrs. Hart is certainly going insane."

They could almost say the same when her joy came.

He was called to preach. It was not long before the call was so loud, and ministers pressed him, and we were still praying. We had heard him say while on his knees, "O God, I will, I will preach!" But when the opportunity offered it seemed impossible.

The elder wanted him to take work outside the town, but he said he never could.

She came over to me and said, "You must come right over; Edward says he can't preach."

After talking with him a few minutes, I said, "We will pray."

God helped us to lay it before him, the condition of lost souls.

He said, "Sister Coon, will you go along and exhort?"

I said, "Certainly, I will; that is just what I want to do."

I usually went with him to his appointments, whether near or far.

My husband always said: "Stick to him, now that you have got him; don't let the devil get him again; you go with that boy to preach the gospel."

I usually went until he was married, and for years after we worked together when it was possible.

When our church was finished, he was our first pastor. We had a great revival; the church was literally packed every night. Sometimes men and boys would stand on the stove. A great many were saved. They used to call him "Young Redfield."

I rode sixty miles with him in a buggy to our Ashton camp-meeting. We had not gone far when it began raining, and we were fairly soaked, and the buggy-box was nearly full of water.

When we arrived at the camp-ground it was evening, and a more cheerless, muddy ground I never saw. All faces looked gloomy and sad. They helped me out of the buggy into a tent, but we found that I had nothing dry for a change, as our satchels were very wet also. Then the glory came and I shouted and laughed and said, "I must have, souls on this ground." Mother Hart said, "This is a terrible place for you to be in with all your suffering." I stopped her, saying that God sent me. Again the glory came streaming like torrents, and there was sobbing and crying.

The next morning, as we were pleading with God, the tent filled. The Holy Ghost came down as on the day of Pentecost and filled all the place. Every one that came under the tent was delivered from whatever temptation or pressure was upon them. We must have been there two or three hours. We all were filled with fire and power till the tent could not hold us. We marched to the ground where they were holding their morning meeting, and Brother E. P. Hart began to talk as I had never heard any one except Dr. Redfield, and cloven tongues of fire came I saw them and sat on each one of us who had cried, "It shall be done." None of us thought about dinner, and still

Brother Hart kept on, and while he talked there were halos of light, fire and glory encircling us, taking the form of the rainbow, closing a few of us in who had prevailed with God.

Brother Hart was on top of seats and on his knees, still preaching, and more than that, commanding legions of devils. I am only trying to tell it, for it is impossible. Souls came to the altar and cried for mercy while he was still talking, and that meeting ran till four o'clock in the afternoon. That power remained with him, and many others, all through the meeting, and we proved the truth of these words, "He that goeth forth weeping bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The power rested with him at least three months most of the time.

We opened the church for protracted services in Marengo. The house was literally packed, and hardly room in the pulpit. People sat in the windows, and even stood on hot stoves, that they might see and hear, and at times the power was so oppressive with light and glory that he would stamp with his feet and his hands would go up in the air, and I would find myself lifted from my feet in a sitting attitude several times during his sermon, and continued the same way for weeks in that meeting. Some of the hardest cases, drunkards and lewd people, and all kinds of sinners and many backsliders were saved in that old-fashioned way. We were not obliged to spend from one to three hours praying for sinners, for they started for the altar and were praying, screaming, shouting or falling, and people said, "He is another Redfield."

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## CHAPTER 9

Prays for Money -- Finds Some -- Mr. Coon Claims It -- Loses His Pocket-Book -- She Finds It Through Prayer and Gets Her Part -- Goes to St. Louis to Camp-Meeting -- Husband Won't Pay Fare -- She Gets Ready -- Fare Comes in a Miraculous Way

There came a time when I needed some money. We had an old preacher, must have been seventy-five years old, and I felt I must help him some, so I began to ask the Lord for some money. I said I wanted three dollars now, and I prayed that little prayer at the family altar and at secret prayer, much every day, and my husband said:

"Now, you needn't think you are going to pray any money out of me, for I won't give you a cent."

I said, "I am not asking you, but the Lord, and I am going to have it, for I can feel it right in my hands."

"You will let me know when you get it, won't you?"

"Yes, sir."

He was very much annoyed at my praying, but it came upon me. One day I was sweeping off the back piazza, and there lay six silver half dollars in a little pile, as evenly placed as could be, and I began to clap my hands and say, "Glory to God! Glory to God!"

The hired girl, a Catholic, ran right out; she had heard me praying for days.

I said, "Ellen, see here."

She put her hands together and said:

"Glory be to God! Thin do ye think, ma'am, the Lord did come down and put the money there, or His angels come down and do it? That bees the same three dollars ye axed Him for."

"I don't know, Ellen, but I have my money."

My husband came home for dinner; I asked him if he had lost any money.

He said, "What do you ask me such a foolish question for?"

I said, "Now be good-natured, and sit down and count over your money."

"I won't do it; I know I have not lost a penny."

I held the money out in my hand, and said, "Glory be to God! I have found my own."

"Well, where did you find it?"

"Oh, where the Lord left it on the back porch, all piled up in a little pile."

"But," he said, "yesterday I sat down out there to count over my money, and that is mine; give it to me."

I reached it to him, and said: "Take it, if you dare; it is my own, but if you want it, take it; but you will get into trouble."

"I will risk all the trouble I will get into." The next day he came home in the forenoon, nervous and cross, and hunted all over the room for something.

I said, "What have you lost; what are you looking for?"

He said, "None of your business."

"Well, that is a terrible way to speak; why don't you let me know and I will help you look."

He went out to his office, but soon came back -- began to pull the beds to pieces, turn every cushion in the house and pull things out in the middle of the floor.

"You act," said I, "like one that has lost his mind -- like a crazy man; do tell me what is the matter?"

He said, "I have lost my pocketbook."

And without thinking, I said, "Glory to God! and you lost all your money and mine too? Now you be still, and I will pray about this, and find out where this money is."

He said, "You are a big fool, thinking the Lord is going to tell you where my pocketbook is."

"Yes, sir, I will. Now you be good and go down town; I will put these things back in their places and go in my closet to pray." And before I could get down on my knees the answer came: "He will find his pocketbook down at Mr. Buxton's store," where he had been trading, and when he came I told him where his pocketbook was.

He said, "Well, you haven't hit it this time, for I have been down there to see."

There were partners in the store, and he had asked the wrong man for it.

I said, "Yes, it is there, and you go and ask the other man." He did so, and came home with it, saying to the man, "How did my wife know it was in this store? I have hunted the house and been down and asked Buxton, and she prayed it out."

He looked strange and ashamed when he came in with his pocketbook in his hand.

I said, "You know why God let you lose that, don't you ? Because you had taken that which was mine.

He said, "I will put just one more, the seventh, right on top of it."

I looked him in the face for just a moment, and said, "Well, there it is."

He seemed a great deal more satisfied than I did myself. Then God assured me I should have money when necessary, and I need not ask any one.

At another time I prayed for money, not naming any particular sum. He heard the prayer going up for days, and even at the table asking the blessing I said, "Lord, my hands are open to put the money in.." As often he would say, "You need not think you will get any from me; I won't give you a cent."

I said, "Husband, I will not ask you for a penny, neither will I take it from your pocketbook when you are asleep, which I could do every night, but I never will do it, not even to see how much you have, but I am going to have money when I need it. Now, when gold and costly array are forever laid aside, God assures me I shall not become a beggar nor be without money."

It was but a few days when sweeping my sitting-room I picked up a ten-dollar gold piece, and I again praised the Lord with a loud voice.

The hired girl ran in and said, "What is the matter now, mum?"

"Ellen, look at this in my hand."

"Shure, ye has been axing for it for days. The Lord be praised! Yees will have money all the time thin."

Husband came home; I asked again if he had lost any money.

"What do you ask me such foolish questions for?"

"Because I want to know. Please look and see.

"I won't do it; I know I've not."

I said, "My money is increasing fast," showing him my ten-dollar gold piece.

"Where the devil did you get that?"

"Don't say the name of your master to me; he had nothing to do with it. The Lord sent me my money. I am glad it was not any that belonged to you, for then I would not have any, I suppose."

"Well, where did you get it?"

"You have no idea any man came in here and gave me the money, for you know I would not touch it."

"You know I don't think so."

I pointed to the place by the couch where he had been lying down, and said, "There is where I found my money, and is not the Lord good to me? You ought to help me praise Him?"

He shut his eyes, for he could not look me in the face, and said:

"That must have come out of my pocket when I laid down there."

"Now I would not be Judas if I did carry the bag."

"You hand it right to me."

"Well, there it is; you take it out of my hand if you dare; do it, but remember you will get into trouble again."

He took it, sat down, closed his eyes, and finally said, "Well, I will divide it with you here is a five-dollar piece."

I said, "That will not do; you will get into trouble."

He put the five dollars in my hand, left for his office, but came back in a little while and laid two more dollars down. Not very many more days before I had the other three. He drew a long breath, and very much relieved, said, "Now you have it all."

I said, "The Lord is good; you have learned a lesson; now don't do that any more."

It was not long after that when we had a campmeeting at St. Louis. I felt I ought to go, and told my husband so. "Well," he said, "you can't go; I won't give you a thing. You go to meeting here enough at home."

I had only seventy-five cents of my own, but I packed my satchel, put in my other calico dress and other things, and was ready; set it down and told the Lord I was ready to go, but He must open up the way.

Two days before the commencement of the meeting one of our brethren, a rich farmer, came in and said:

"Sister Coon, the Lord wants you to go to the St. Louis camp-meeting."

I said, "Yes, sir, I have my satchel ready."

He, knowing how my husband felt about these things, said: "God sent me here to tell you that I would buy your ticket."

"Well," I said, "all right; I told Him I was ready and He must open up the way."

I told my husband the morning before I was to go that I was going and that I had an old motherly lady to leave with my children.

He said, "Now, remember what I say, if you go to the meeting never come back. You must never come through this door again."

I left my little boy and girl at the door throwing kisses, and he said, "If papa don't let you come in, I will come where you are, mamma." Of course I left with sad heart, but the Lord said "Go." There were six of us that went together, Dr. Redfield among the number. On arriving at the depot in St. Louis they charged us four dollars to take us to the ground with our trunks, or they would take the trunks for one dollar. I said, "Doctor, you and I will get right on the dray and go along." The drayman said, "All right, you can." And we went praising the Lord in our hearts through the city a mile, on the dray. The Lord was so present every moment I was on the ground and my work so continuous that I thought very few times of being turned away from my home.

When the meeting closed all of us got ready to take the train, I without money or ticket. This brother not even intimated that he should pay my fare back. We heard in a distance the rumbling the train. The question came, "How are you going?" I said, "I don't know, but I am going." Just then we heard a man's voice, ringing out clear, saying, "Get up, get up, get!" and putting whip across the horse, we saw him coming across the prairie. He reined up the horse so suddenly that the animal reared up on his hind legs, while the stranger cried, "Here, here, here! the Lord told me somebody needed their fare paid. My daughter was saved last night, that woman's arms were around her." I said to the preacher, "Take it and get my ticket quick." Just then the engine whistled.

I reached home safely, and found my children delighted. My little boy said, "Papa is not here, mamma, so you can come right in. Just last night I told Jesus to send you right back home." So I had two days and nights to visit and love my children. Husband came and found us happy, but not speak to me for two or three days; looked on in astonishment without asking how I got there or back.

Then I asked the Lord to put money in my hands to pay the farmer back again. It was some time in coming, for I saved it in pennies, nickels and dimes, but it came; and afterward, when this man backslid and went into terrible sin, I rejoiced the Lord had been so particular and careful and had helped me to do so. Then I told my husband how I went and how the man had whipped horse and paid my fare, and how I paid it back again, and where I got the money. He hid his face in his hands and said, "My God, you will do whatever you undertake." "Yes," said I, "for I will not undertake outside the will of God."

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## CHAPTER 10

Very Sick -- At Death's Door With Cancer -- Marvelously Healed -- Goes to Michigan -- Engages in Meetings with Rev. Hart and Wife -- Sinners Saved Everywhere -- Experience With Spiritualists -- Case of Inordinate Affection -- Attended Seven Camp-Meetings that Summer.

There came a call from Michigan for Brother Hart to come and help, if but for a short time. The church gave their consent for a few weeks. This was soon after he was married.

At that time I was taken seriously ill. Brother Hart had written for me to come and help them, as it was impossible for them to return right away. My husband answered the call that his wife was very low. Soon the doctor informed him that my case was hopeless, saying, "Your wife has a cancer, and can not possibly live."

I think that it was about a month that I was so low.

The left side was helpless and my voice was gone. I knew what the doctor thought, and overheard their conversation. The doctor said:

"If you have anything to say to your wife, say it quickly."

He came to my bedside, fell down on his knees and said, "Villa, do you know what the doctor thinks?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell me everything while you can that you want me to remember, all about the children and everything."

I said, "Only get saved and the Lord will talk to you."

"O God!" he prayed, "let me have my wife and I will behave myself."

I was so low that I could not think of one subject five minutes, only pray with my thoughts, and when he went out I called my sister, who was then a backslider, living with us, and asked her if she would keep the door fastened, and keep both the doctor and my husband out until I should give her liberty to open it, for whenever they come in they bring death with them.

She said she would, and when they made an attempt to come in, she said, "I have given my sister my word that you shall never come in until she permits it."

That was on Thursday, and on Sunday there was a rap on the parlor door, where they had carried me to keep me quiet.

I said, "Open the door; that is the Lord."

A brother came right from the church, knelt by my bedside, and began praying in a very low, tender and gentlemanly way, laid his hand on the helpless left side, and said:

"O Jesus! do not take this woman away; her children must have her; the church must have her, and the sinners all need her; Jesus, touch this body."

I had seen a hand right over me and a sweet voice saying: "Put thy hand in mine if you want to go, but I will heal you and give you souls if you will go for me."

That all passed inside of one minute.

I said, "Yes, Lord, I will."

There came like a warm wave touching the top of my head and came all over my form.

He kept on praying in this quiet way: "Touch this body again." The next time it was with greater power, and the third time strength came through my entire being. My hands were well and I was clapping them; sat up in bed and said "You can go now ; I am all right."

I told my sister to bathe me quickly and get my clothes. I was dressed, sitting in a chair and combing my own hair when my husband came in. He looked at me, then at sister, and said: "Great God! what does this mean?"

She said, "This means life, surely."

He said to her in a low voice, "Is she in her right mind?"

Then I began laughing, shouting and walking the floor.

He said, "Oh, oh, this is wonderful!"

"Yes," I said, "it is a wonderful God, and now I can use my voice, can shout, sing, pray and preach. Now, this is conditional; I must go right away to Michigan, to Brother and Sister Hart."

"Why," he said, "you would be dead before you got to Chicago."

He called for my mother, only next door, and said, "Now, mother, look at her ; what do you think?"

"Why, this is of the Lord, but I never saw anything like it."

"She wants to go right off to Chicago; you wouldn't let her, would you?"

"Yes, I would. That is better than to put her in the graveyard."

That was a day of terrible testings. My sister seemed frantic at the thought of my leaving home. But my little boy said, "Let mamma go. I know Jesus wants her, and I can pray and ask the blessing while she is gone." Their fears so took hold of me that for a moment I faltered, and again felt the hand of death, and staggered; darkness was gathering, and I cried out at the top of my voice, "Yes, Lord, I will go." Strength and life returned again. I said:

"Just let me have one plain gingham or calico dress, get someone to make it, and money enough to get there." When I was ready to go he handed me one hundred dollars, saying, "You will lose it," then sent a dispatch to Brother Hart to meet me at Hillsdale, Mich. He sent my sister and doctor to the city with me to see me safe on the train. That night we spent in a miserable hotel. Neither of us slept an hour; the live things were all around us.

When I came to change cars, there was a nice, white-haired gentleman standing near me, and I asked him if he would be kind enough to get my ticket for me. I told him where I wanted to go, and handed him a ten-dollar bill. He looked in my face and said:

"Woman, don't do that there are sharpers everywhere. Somebody might take your ten-dollar bill and never come back to you."

I said, "Sir, this is the Lord's money, and He told me to ask you."

He said, "Lady, I will do this, and bring the change right back."

He took the same train and sat in the next seat, and as I looked him in the face, I said:

"May I tell you a nice story?"

He said, "Yes, ma'am; I would like to hear it."

I told him of my conversion and sickness, and that God had healed me to send me out after lost souls, and he said like another, "Oh, great is thy faith! I never heard of such a thing."

Brother and Sister Hart met me at Hillsdale in an old lumber wagon, not even a back to the seat, to take me eight miles. The mud was very deep, and roads very rough, and he said:

"Sister Coon, it was the best we could do. No one had a carriage, not even a buggy."

He took me to a place where we could have a lunch. That was the first time I had relished food for eight months. Had a meeting already out. He took me there without an hour's rest. He preached, his wife prayed, and I exhorted. When I look at it now it seems impossible. Great grace and power was upon us all. People wept like little children, and said: "O, Mr. Hart, leave that woman with us a few days; we will pay her fare to any town you say." "I can not," he said, "I have meetings out seventeen days ahead, and she must go with us."

We traveled every day, sometimes over old plank roads; had wonderful meetings every night. This was in Raisinville. Brother Hart was anointed and people were convicted everywhere we went. Many of them afterwards got gloriously saved. I was strong enough at the end of the seventeen days to walk half a mile, and wash and iron my own clothes. We next went to Buffalo. Attended five camp-meetings with Brother and Sister Roberts. The power of God rested upon me; it seemed I hardly touched the earth anywhere. Souls were saved by scores. It was evening when we arrived on one of the grounds -- I can't remember the name. One of the ministers asked if they could take one sister into the tent, a large tent. "She has come," he said, "from Illinois," and was, of course, a stranger and visitor.

They said, "No, we can not take in another one; we have a large family of our own."

"Could you not let her in this one night?"

"No, we can not."

Of course he hoped I did not hear this. I said: "Well, I can stay in my chair by this tree until morning."

He went to a small tent where there were two women tenting alone. They quickly said:

"Yes, bring her right in."

The next morning the Lord led me out quite a little in telling my experience; deep conviction and a spirit of weeping seized many. Then I exhorted, and we had altar service with a number of seekers. I labored at the altar as the Lord directed, and found myself among those who had refused me a night's lodging. They begged me to come to their tent and stay a week, but I had found my home in this snug little tent with these two women. Before they could get out clear in their own experience, they came and asked forgiveness, and were soon rejoicing.

The meetings increased in power for the entire week, and every meeting was one of power. Ministers, some of them in the meeting, confessed out their carnality and died out; came out on the resurrection side, such as a few do in these days. Had meetings that lasted all night until break of day. Sister Roberts and others stayed with the seekers, and held them to confess to God every trait of carnality in them. At one meeting there came a strange power, it seemed no one could pray through nor prevail with God. Sister Roberts and myself remained in the tent and we felt a terrible sickness taking hold of the physical. There was a large crowd of people between us and the tabernacle. We were sent for to come immediately. We staggered instead of walked until we were inside the tent. Preacher and people looking one to the other, saying, "What is this?" Some one said, "Sister Coon, talk."

At first it seemed impossible and I asked God for help. While I was moving forward, God made manifest to me where the trouble was. I stepped upon a seat, I think it was the altar, and said:

"There is a way out of this; God wants to banish sin that the powers of hell will scatter. There are legions of devils right here, but God will give us the victory."

Three or four women came screaming to the altar, one of them jerked off her gloves, threw them down as though they were snakes, the same with her hat, and then what she had about her shoulders, then began to gnash her teeth. I said:

"Saints gather right around these souls. This is Spiritism. God shall get the glory for all that is done in this meeting." We looked to God, by faith, lest the woman should take off more of her clothing, and I kept saying, with uplifted hands: "Scatter the legions, scatter the hosts of hell."

One of the preacher's wives, a small woman, began clapping her hands, saying, "Hallelujah!" She went round and round, letting the tips of her fingers touch those at the altar, and when she touched this woman she rolled right under the altar bench. The others bounded to their feet and ran as hard as they could go. There came two or three and picked this woman from under the altar and took her away, and the power of God so came upon all the saints, some were shouting, others were dancing, running or leaping; then God gave one of the preachers a message, and souls were saved all that day and night, and many were sanctified. A few began to wonder, and said, "These people will come back and clean this camp right out."

I said, "You will not see one of these back any more. I feel that God would sooner kill a dozen of them than see us defeated." It was so; they never made their appearance, and the meeting ran with increased power until the end. Many who had professed holiness found that they had never had it; sought and obtained it. Physically I grew stronger and stronger. One day I was

holding Sister Roberts' little boy, who weighed twenty-five pounds; the spirit of exhortation came upon me, and I ran over the tops of the seats carrying that little boy, exhorting. I labored all through five weeks of camp-meeting all day, half the night, and times all the night. Oh, how wonderful! how wonderful! My soul is lost in wonder, love and praise as I rehearse these wonderful and glorious times.

I feel I should speak of one case in particular. That of a preacher and his wife; he was a strong man, she a lovely character. I was in their tent a few days as their guest. One day he said:

"Sister Coon, you ought to remain with us in our home; you seem a necessity, almost, to our life."

This frightened me, and I said: "I fear this is inordinate affection."

She answered me: "I am not at all afraid of such a thing; I feel it is impossible for either of us to love you too much."

I took her alone and said: "I am surprised that you should say such a thing; you think you know your husband, but I fear that you do not."

I feared to say less.

She said: "Sister Coon, I know my husband is as pure as an angel, and I want you to let him love you as much as he can."

I said: "You yourself will prove his downfall."

She said: "I am not afraid of it; I know my husband, and I know you."

I said: "Sister, it will not be long before some other woman will not only prove a heartache to you, but a shame and a disgrace to your family and the church."

"I know better. I know our love is pure and Christ-like toward you, and you need it; I have heard about your sad home-life. I can not bear you should go from us this way; we want to take care of you." Then I took his case alone; told him he was carnal, and said:

"I feel, when you are near me, like saying, 'You are a free lover.'"

He looked me square in the eye, and said:

"Sister Coon, what do you mean ; do you mean that I am an impure, vile man?"

"Well, I feel so; you have no right to love me; you already have a lovely wife, too good for a man that wants to love another man's wife, and were I to permit it, you would take me to hell with you; but, sir, I want you to know I have lived near enough to such spirits; I know them."

He went to his knees in the family tent; she on one side of him and I on the other; I prayed right out; she looked on in amazement, but said:

"Husband, if any of these things are true, do get them out of you."

He screamed, kicked and thrashed, but would not call things by their right name, only on the line of his appetite; that his old tobacco habit followed him; had a great time about that, but would confess on no other line. And in two or three years there came a terrible thing upon him. One of the real saints of God had to bring an accusation against him, and he was expelled from the church, or withdrew of his own accord.

On account of his wife it was great sorrow to me, but my spirit rejoiced greatly for grace and courage to do all my duty in the case.

I came home to my own family in just seven weeks after I left a skeleton, and when I returned weighed one hundred and forty-seven and a half pounds. There was great rejoicing in our family. My husband lay right down on the floor to laugh and rejoice; taking me on his knee he put his hand on my face and arm and said, "Is it solid flesh?" He never persecuted me any more as he had done for these twelve years.

That summer I attended seven camp-meetings in all, remained only a day and night at home, then went to a camp-meeting six miles away. God came in awful and glorious power. Eight preachers were literally piled right up under the power of God, E. P. Hart among the rest.

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## CHAPTER 11

Returns to Dr. Redfield -- His Last Days -- His Triumphs -- His Peculiar Trials and Sufferings -- Glorious Deathbed Scene

Up to this time in my narrative, I have not stated what became of Dr. Redfield after his glorious revival in Marengo. What I know of the sufferings of the last few years of his life is a painful recollection, and hard to relate, especially since it is omitted in the record of "his life." But perhaps I should do so to show how the most saintly are sometimes permitted to pass through the deepest waters.

After our six weeks of revival which he conducted, his wife thought they must go to St. Louis, as they had been sent for some time previous to this. He was greatly in doubt about going, but they had a farewell meeting, and when they were praying I was greatly exercised. I seemed to see him going with a weeping multitude following him And as I looked, saw him go right up against a black stone wall, and cried out, "Oh, Lord, what is this?"

He immediately crept on his knees, and said: "What do you see?"

I answered: "You are running right away from the people that want help here, and you have come up against a stone wall and you can never get over it."

"I have seen it myself," he said, "but my wife is determined to go."

I answered, "You are going to get right into trouble."

I know now this was a burden, but then such things were all new to me.

They went and commenced a meeting. The devil and wicked men were so enraged that they threatened his life, and he was obliged to have a body-guard nightly. In a short time he had his first stroke of paralysis. Immediately he sent for Sister Coon. "I have come to that wall she saw, and I never shall go any farther; it is impossible for me to get over it." I had not the faith to tell him he could never surmount it, but knew it would result in his death. One of the brethren, living a few miles from Marengo, had said to him that if anything should happen and he needed help to send for him and he would be right there.

They brought him back after about six weeks and he made the home of that gentleman his headquarters for three years. The doctor had great depressions and was melancholy at times, often saying, "I am against the wall ; my work is done," and as often his wife and this man with whom he stayed reproved and upbraided him with unbelief, saying, "If you were right and had faith in God he would heal you."

When it became unbearable to him he told me, and said, "Now, Sister Coon, tell me all your heart: am I a backslider, have I lost Jesus Christ out of my heart?"

Of course I knew better, and told him it was not the case. His wife and the man of the house took entire care of him and were together at his bedside every night. It was very apparent to me there was undue intimacy between these two, and I told them so. But they said that they had faith, communion and power such as none of us could understand.

He rallied some from this shock, and the next year we were called, at least the doctor, his wife and this man, to labor in a meeting at St. Charles. The doctor sent immediately for me, as he always did when it was possible for me to go. We were all entertained at the same house. He was very sad most of the time, and talked out his heart -- a little of what he was passing through. I encouraged him as best I could. He often asked me to sing some beautiful hymns, and when I sang "The Sun Bright Clime," he said, "That hymn was never finished, but it is the most beautiful I ever heard."

One night after he had retired (we never knew whether he had been asleep), he began to shout "Hallelujah!"

"Wife," he said, "please get up and get me pen, ink and paper. I have heard the angels singing ever since I came to bed, and I have got the rest of that hymn."

He then gave her these verses:

"Far, far above the countless throng,  
I hear a wilder note of song;  
'Twas out of great distress they came,  
Washed in the blood of yonder Lamb,  
Who live in that sun-bright clime.

"Prophets, apostles, martyrs, all,  
From mountain, cave, or lion-stall,  
From Hebrew's furnace, dreadful fire,  
Raised by the whirling tempest higher,  
To dwell in that sun-bright clime.

"Ten thousand, thousand, thousand more  
From every age, from every shore,  
Who suffered till the war was o'er,  
With God shut in forevermore  
To range through that sun-bright clime."

"Call Sister Coon up," he said, "I want her to hear the rest of that." The atmosphere was full of heaven and angels all day after this.

But in a little while his wife and the man who cared for him were talking to him about being healed.

He said, "They call me a sinner."

"Doctor," said I, "their day is coming; there is a terrible thing hanging over both of them; I hardly dare to talk to you."

He replied, "I wondered if you did not see it all the time."

They saw he was powerfully exercised, and after dinner asked if I would read to him a while to quiet his nerves, while she went down-stairs to wash out some pocket-handkerchiefs. She put pillows under his head where he was sitting on the lounge. I took up the book to read, but noticed his great dejection. He put his feet off and took his cane hurriedly. I said:

"Doctor, are you worse?"

"I am going to find Mat," and started for the stairs. She heard him, and both the man and herself came up to meet him, which they did on the first step. He commenced weeping and screaming, and she put her arms around him and begged him to lie down.

He said, "No, let me cry it out." Then calling the man by name, he said, "Didn't you tell me that this should be stopped forever; that you would not do these things any more?"

He put his arms around the doctor, and said: "Yes, yes, doctor, it shall be stopped."

"But, Jonathan, you have said that so many times."

"Doctor, forgive me ; it shall be stopped."

His wife said, "The doctor is troubled at times; you talk to him; you are the only one that can control him"

I said, "Doctor," as I knelt beside him, "is this temptation?"

"Precious child," he said, "you do not understand it all, do you ? Now, I want to tell you what this is: the blackest spiritism from hell. You are too pure-minded yourself; you do not understand it, but that is what it is."

He came near dying right there, literally cramming his handkerchief in his mouth so that the people downstairs should not hear him.

A conference was held at our church in Marengo; the Spirit was poured out upon the preacher and the people; great grace and power rested upon all. Doctor Redfield attended daily; came the six miles over the country in his carriage. The Spirit of God rested upon him in a wonderful way. His face would shine as though he had been in a heavenly world. The last day he attended he wrote five letters and mailed them, and after the afternoon session, was drawn down to our door where Brother and Sister Roberts were staying, and called us all out to tell us "good-by" for the night, saying, "I am somewhat tired, but the Lord willing I will be with you in the morning."

They drove home, and while at the supper table he bowed his head quickly; they noticed it, picked him up and carried him to his room. He was done talking, and we do not know that he was conscious of any one near him after that. They came after Sister Roberts and myself as soon as they could get the horses to us. We were there a day and night. The same spirit that used to be upon him to keep me singing took possession of them, and all through that day and night some one kept saying, "Sing, sing, oh, Sister Coon, sing!" I was singing when he left us, and when he went the palsied limb lifted up and stepped down, as though it was on the streets of gold, and I said, "There, he has done just as he said he should when he reached the city,." viz.: "I will make those streets of gold ring with music just as soon as I get there." The house was filled with a heavenly atmosphere. One sister fell, others staggered, some shouted, a few wept, but those who had caused him trouble were saying: "Oh, that I could speak to him once more to ask his forgiveness," but it was too late.

I thanked God he was gone, and said so On the Sabbath, Brother Roberts preached his funeral sermon. The church was packed with people and filled with God. It has been a great blessing to me even to have his bones in our cemetery. Again and again have I stood beside him to renew my covenant, to go the same way he went clear to the end, and often in deepest affliction I hear him saying as he did many times when with me, "Sister Coon, you will come clear through inside the gates of the city; I have seen you there." It has been like the voice of God.

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## CHAPTER 12

Her Covenant -- Deep Consecration -- Declares Unwavering Faith.

### My Covenant

October 28, 1859, I, H. A. Coon, in the presence of the Triune Deity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I do consecrate body, soul and spirit, time, talents, influence, family, and estate, all with which I stand connected near or remote, to be forever, and in the most unlimited sense, the Lord's. My body I lay upon Thine altar, O Lord, that it may be a temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. From henceforth I rely upon Thy promise that Thou wilt live and walk in me, believing as I now surrender myself for all coming time to Thee, that Thou dost condescend to enter this Thy temple, and dost from this solemn moment hallow it with Thy indwelling presence. The union is consummated! Hallelujah to God and the Lamb forever! With comminglings of intense and yet solemn joy and holy fear I would at this eventful hour resolve in the strength of the Lord Jehovah on minute circumspection in the sustainment and adornment of my body, indulging in only such things as may be enjoyed in the name of the Lord and bear the legible inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord." My present, or what may be my future possessions in family or estate, I here solemnly yield up in everlasting covenant to Thee, if, as Thy servant Jacob, sent forth to commence the pilgrimage of life alone, and under discouraging circumstances like him, homeless, even if with naught but a stone for my pillow, yet, with him, I will solemnly vow,

"Of all that Thou shalt give me, surely the tenth will I give unto Thee."

As Thou hast entrusted me with children, I hereby take upon myself the solemn obligation to train them for Thee. Resolved, that my training shall be in view to fitting them to the self-sacrificing service of God, and laying up treasure in heaven rather than in view of fitting them to make a display in the world and lay up treasures on earth. Resolved, if Thou givest power to get wealth I will still continue to regard this vow in relation to my family as sacredly binding as at the present hour; and will, by my greater abundance, lay by in store proportionately for charities and the evangelization of the world, according as God hath prospered me. Resolved, that my faith and my duties shall be regulated by the unadulterated Word of God rather than by the opinions of men in regard to that Word, and that no impressions in relation to new doctrines or new duties shall be adopted as coming from God unless an explicit reason for the adoption of said doctrine or duty may be given from the Holy Scriptures. And now, O Lord, the faithful God who keepest covenant and mercy with them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments to a thousand generations, conscious of my utter inability to keep one of the least of Thy commandments unless endowed with power from on high, I hereby covenant to trust in Thee for the needful aid of the Spirit; Thou dost now behold my entire being presented to Thee a living sacrifice. Already is the offering laid upon Thy altar; I call heaven and earth, God the Father, Son and Spirit, the spirit of the just made perfect, and the innumerable company of angels now encamped around me to witness this solemn act of entire, absolute, irrevocable renunciation of sin and self, yes, my all is upon Thy altar, O God, Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Behold the offering! By the hallowed fires of burning love let it now be consumed, let the purifying, consuming energies of the Holy Spirit now

penetrate soul and body and cause every power of mind and body to ascend in ceaseless flames of love and praise, a living sacrifice.

O Christ, thou dost accept the sacrifice, and through Thy meritorious life and death, the infinite efficacy of the blood of the everlasting covenant, Thou dost accept me as Thine forever, and Thou dost present me before the throne of Thy Father without spot. Thou dost condescend to espouse me to Thyself in the bonds of everlasting covenant in all things well-ordered and sure, and from henceforth all my interests, for time and eternity, are blended in everlasting oneness with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. My fellowship is with the Triune Deity, my citizenship in heaven! And now, O Lord, I will hold fast the profession of this my faith before Thee, before angels and before men. The exceeding great and precious promises upon which I have here laid hold have been given me on condition of complying with the terms thereunto annexed. Through the power of the Spirit alone I have complied with the conditions laid down in Thy word upon which Thou dost promise to enter into these covenant engagements with me, and now before angels and men I will declare my faith in Thee as my covenant-keeping God. As long as I feel that I would sooner die than break my covenant engagements with Thee, so long will I in obedience to the commandment of God hold fast the profession of my faith unwaveringly in the face of an accusing enemy and an accusing world. And this I will through Thy grace do, irrespective of my emotions. Resolved, that my faith in God shall not depend upon my uncertain emotions. Now, O God, my covenant engagements are before Thee. Already has the recording angel registered them on the pages of eternity, already have they been ratified before the throne in the name of the Triune Deity, Father, Son and Spirit, trusting in Thee that if Thou seest me about to break from Thee by violating covenant, Thou wilt cut short the work in righteousness and take me to Thyself in heaven.

I hereunto set my hand and seal, October 28, 1859.

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## CHAPTER 13

A Preacher Saved -- Pressure From the Enemy -- Compares Experience with Mother Cobb -- Some Cases of Divine Healing

After Dr. Redfield's death, we then turned our attention to the preparation for a protracted meeting. The Lord was with us and a large congregation of people under conviction.

The power of God was upon me, but as soon as my duty was done for that time the same pressure returned, and a voice which seemed like a person near me, would say: "There is no God, and why do you spend your life in this way?"

People used to come to my home for help, and generally came out clear. Preachers came, some from a distance.

I remember a Wesleyan minister coming and saying: "I have come to get clear in my soul." He confessed his entire lack of grace; said he was willing to be damned. That was a terrible thing to me and I first expressed myself in a very positive manner. I asked him why he came to me if he

was willing to be damned. I said: "This is the most shocking thing I ever heard -- a preacher willing to be damned, and Christ died to save you." My husband just then came in from his office, and with curses, said, "Get right out of here." "Now," I said, "you see what it means to be damned; you hear this poor man cursing, and you willing to be with such forever." This seemed to bring him to his senses. I said, "Please let us have this room until this man gets saved." He left, and we were soon at it with all our might, he crying for mercy at the top of his voice, confessed out all to God and was converted. He stayed a day or two, went to our meetings, and was sanctified.

But the same pressure that came upon me so often, came upon me again, and when Mother Cobb came, as was her custom, to spend a day, I was led to talk freely with her about this. I asked her if she had ever had any temptations to infidelity, and told her that ever since this terrible trouble came upon us as a church that this pressure came as soon as I was not engaged for somebody or in any meeting.

She said, "Yes, dear, I have." Then told me that when she was younger, about my age, ministers used to come to her frequently for help, and one year there came as many as five for counsel and to pray, and the church people took it up and said there must be an undue intimacy. The thing seemed so terrible to her and the temptation came there was no God, there can not be, for how could He allow such a state of things, and she feeling called to help ministers. "Well," I said, "did you tell them to cease coming?" She said, "No, Sister Coon, I kept right on and came out all right. You go right on; this is the power of the devil, and will all clear away. It must be so, for I know God is with you." That broke the spell. Then we began to pray for our husbands; hers was a great opposer, as well as my own, and from that day we shared each other's joys and sorrows in a way that can not be expressed, until my husband became as conscious of it as we were. He said to her one day:

"Mother Cobb, you will be going up to heaven in a little while, and you will leave your mantle for my wife, won't you?"

"My son, if it is good for anything she ought to have it." She has been gone many years, while I have been left to work, pray and suffer on.

Once when I was quite poorly, and could not get out to meetings very much for a few weeks, I asked the Lord to send in my work, and one day there came six persons, some distance, all strangers, in a carriage, and after they were seated they said, "We will introduce each other; we know you, have seen you at camp-meeting."

I said, "Yes, have off your wraps."

They said, "Well, God sent us here."

"Are you in trouble?"

"Yes; one or two of us are backsliders, and all of us unsanctified, and two of us are in very poor health."

I said, "What can I do for you?"

"We came more especially for you to pray for our healing, and we want to be anointed."

"There is a preacher over here in the parsonage, just a little step."

"Well, the Lord didn't say a word to us about the preacher, but He told us to come to your house, and for you to anoint us and pray for our healing."

One seemed to be in the first stage of consumption, and the other woman with female trouble, and hers was a very serious case.

"Well, I think it was a strange thing for the Lord to send you to me when I was so delicate myself."

"Not one of us shall be satisfied unless you anoint us and pray."

One of the men was a cripple and a backslider.

"Well," said I, "if I do anoint you I shall be obliged to use sweet oil or cream; I do not keep anointing oil."

They said, "Well, that is all right."

We knelt in prayer. I requested them to give themselves to God without reserve. While praying, the Holy Ghost came upon me and I went through according to Divine directions. Some were healed instantaneously; one sanctified, and the other justified, and I myself delivered from every malady. We gave all the glory to God, and we felt a spirit of rejoicing. I became well acquainted with them, and for years and as long as they lived where I could know, the blessing and healing remained. One sister that was so very thin and frail became a strong and fleshy woman.

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## CHAPTER 14

An Opposer Taken Sick -- Sends for Auntie Coon -- Confesses and Gets Converted -- Very Triumphant

One of our neighbors, who was a grain-buyer, was very much disturbed and enraged, talked with my husband some, and said that he would not have his wife like A. B. Coon's for anything. His wife went East, and he began to run down physically, and lost everything he had. Husband came home one day, saying, "Arvilla, Mr. Blandon is going to die."

"Why," said I, "is he not on the street?"

"Yes, but he is certainly going to die. He said he felt awful. I want to speak to him, but I hardly dare."

I think about ten days he walked the streets, then we heard he was at the point of death. My husband talked about it often, and said, "Oh, but he is going to die." One morning about four o'clock there was a rap at our door. As soon as the door was opened a man said, "Tell Mrs. Coon to come down to Mr. Blandon's room as quickly as possible. We have been after their preacher, but he is away." The same man went after Mother Hart. My husband told me to put on my clothes as quickly as I possibly could, and not to come home until he was saved.

I said, "Will you go with me?"

"No," he said, "I can't do it, but you stay with him until he gets through."

As soon as we were in the room he said, "Come right here, take hold of my hand." The M. E. preacher sat by his bedside. He motioned him away and called for us women.

He said, "Doctor, keep me alive until my soul is saved. I want you two women to promise me to stay right here by my bedside until my sins are forgiven."

I said, "Yes."

Wicked men stood all around. He began to confess to God, told Him what a sinner he was, and how, when a small boy, his mother consecrated him for the ministry. He said, "Lord, if I live I will preach the gospel." Then to me he said, "Mrs. Coon, I want to ask your forgiveness; I said I never wanted my wife to be like you are, but now I want her to be just such." His wife had been sent for and came while we were there. He told her to pray; give her heart to God. Called his cousin, told him he must get saved and preach the gospel, said, "You were in the little trundlebed by my side when mother knelt, at nights, and with her hands on our heads, gave us to God."

They promised him they would do so.

He closed his eyes and said, "Now, Lord, I have done the very best I can to repent, and I dare believe Thou dost pardon my sins."

He said, "Yes, yes, He saves me; I feel the peace of God, but doctor, don't let me die yet; I must be sanctified." He asked a few questions and what steps to take. It was easy to point the way to him.

He said, "Lord, I will preach, I will preach!" and took for his text, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire came right down on him. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord. His face beamed, his eyes flamed as with fire, and with his hands stretched toward heaven, he said, "I've got it, I've got it, praise the Lord, I am sanctified. Doctor, you can let me go now." All glory to God!

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## CHAPTER 15

A Sad Incident -- Old Man Declares He is Lost -- In a Terrible Condition -- Dies Unsaved -- Mr. Coon's Opposition to Saloons.

I wish to relate a very sad incident, trusting that it may be a warning to those who are tempted to delay seeking God.

We had occasion to call upon an aged couple. He seemed to be in despair and would not enter into a conversation with us.

The bed looked as though he threw himself on it sometimes, but most of the time he walked the room. At our prayer-meeting they spoke of the terrible case, and desired two of us sisters to go and see if we could not do anything for the man. Mother Hart and myself went immediately and found him, an old man, pacing the floor and making a strange noise not like anything we had ever heard. His wife, an old woman, sat reading a novel. I went up to him as close as I could with him pacing, and calling him by name, said, "We have come to see if we could do anything for you."

"No, Mrs. Coon," he said, "it is too late."

We began to tell him of the mercy of the Lord..

"Yes," he said, "the Lord is all right, and you people are all right, but there is no mercy for me."

"I am not quite sure of that," I said; "will you let us pray with you."

"Yes," he said, "but it is of no use. I will tell you, Mrs. Coon, three years ago you held a meeting in the little Free Church, and I attended. God was among you in awful power, and one night when you invited seekers the Lord said, 'Go,' and I said, 'I will not.' You came to me, Mrs. Coon, and entreated me to yield, and the preacher also begged me to come now, and the Holy Spirit said, 'You will go now or never; this is the last call for you of mercy.' Then I said, 'I will go to hell,' and I was obliged to hold myself to the seat with my hands, the Spirit plead with me to yield, I shook like one with a chill, and again you urged me. To you I said, 'not tonight,' but to God I had said 'never,' and that night the Holy Spirit left me forever. I have been three years in hell; this is only the beginning."

I looked in his eyes, and they seemed like the eyes of a beast, and after all he had said my heart was so broken, I said, "Will you kneel with us?"

"If I can."

It was impossible for his limbs to bend without the assistance of my hands. I helped him down, but with great difficulty, and as soon as I had spoken to Jesus his knees clattered on the floor as though they were of iron.

"Let me go," he cried, "let me go; it only makes my hell all the worse; you are all right, I know, you are holy women." He made the attempt to show us the flames that were already burning in his breast, saying, "If you only just could see, it is just and right, but if you only could see, and my four drunkard sons are going to hell with me."

With groans so unearthly, I certainly was as near hell as I could be and draw my breath.

His wife, who was reading a novel, said, "Father, why don't you do as these good women ask you to?"

"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" he replied.

He was pacing the floor in that manner when I left, and lived that way two weeks longer.

I tried to get my husband and other sinners there, but failed. He said, "All I ever want to know is to hear you tell of it. Every time you go where there is any one sick or in trouble, I am only anxious to know if they get saved." The church did all in its power for the sons. The one who was not a drunkard was saved, and held meetings in country places. One of the drinking men went afterwards to church, and for a time the habit seemed broken, and he was a praying man, but his wife being a confirmed spiritualist he had no help at home, and everything was thrown in his way to prevent him. After a year he died a drunkard.

Another son, the youngest, became very angry at my husband for keeping the saloons out of the town, which he did as long as he lived. He was prosecuting attorney, and made diligent search, and as often as he could prosecuted every one that sold anything that was intoxicating.

This younger Clark had a knife made and sharpened on purpose to kill Mr. Coon. It was taken from him, and we had the knife in our house a year, but my husband never suffered from fear when he was doing right, but suffered intensely as I never saw another sinner suffer because church-members voted for license, and on the streets many, many times he preached hell fire to those members till my son once said, "I wonder they don't kill father," but he was respected and revered by every one in the town, for with all his faults he was very generous, a widows' pleader, and father to the orphans. He provided homes for numbers of families and put them into them, and to others he gave a life lease gratis.

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## CHAPTER 16

Helps in Meetings in Iowa -- Great Opposition at First -- A Glorious Break -- Conversion of Sister Gates -- Husband Under Awful Conviction -- Finally Yields -- Free Masons Stirred -- Brother Gates Loses Job -- His Wife Washes for a Living -- Gets Blessed at Tub.

Just before Brother Hart moved to California, he and Brother Vorheis held a meeting in Iowa. When they had held for some time, Brother Hart sent for me to come. I wrote to him that it

did not seem possible. Immediately word came back, "You must come; we are right in a terrible fight, and no Free Methodists here but two old people."

My husband said, "You may go, if you promise not to overdo and ruin your health altogether." We held meetings in an old Baptist church, not very good congregations, mostly women and young people. I wondered why it was, and was told that almost every man in that city was a Free Mason. They were either afraid or did not care to come among us. God held it on Brother Hart, not only to preach full salvation, but to take a most positive radical line, until it seemed Dr. Redfield was in the pulpit. Sin of every kind was uncovered, and held up to the gaze of everybody. Repentance and restitution and all that is carnal was constantly held before the people. He told them God would take out every evil, and the appetite for tobacco and whisky, and make a perfect cure, so instead of licentiousness there would be purity in heart and life, and He would make an end of covetousness and worldliness so that our conversation would be in heaven, and though it would not make Quakers out of us; it would make us dress as plain. While talking on this line, he said, "Sister Coon, will you stand up?" I did so. He said, "Please turn around." I did, wondering a little. To his congregation he said, "Look at her; I have brought her here on purpose that you might see a sample of Free Methodism. Now that is a pattern."

I dressed the same then as now; have never worn a dress cut in fashionable style, nor high colors, simply drab or black, usually the former, since I was saved, which was the very month I was twenty-nine years old. That made a wonderful start.

"Sister Coon," he said, "you tell us a little of your experience, please."

I told them how God led me out of a fashionable church, and how the light came on my heart when Dr. Redfield preached the gospel in Marengo, and that it made me angry, as it did many others, to be told that we could not wear gold, pearls nor costly array, nor flowers nor ribbons bowed in their place, nor velvet, nor anything that would give people an idea that we were of the world or wanted to be so.

When the doctor saw the anger in so many faces, he said, "I didn't make the Bible," then told us where the passages were that would teach us how Christians ought to dress. "And if you are mad," he said, "open your Bibles at home, kneel down and fight it out with God." I found those passages, and with tears streaming down my face till the Bible was baptized with them, said, "I will get saved just like that; I will walk between the lids of the Bible as long as I live." It meant much more to me than it does to most women, as my husband had said, "If you take this line I will never buy you plain clothes, nor let you have money to do so." And then Mother Cobb standing before me with shining face in that little muslin cap, which she wore to hide her curls, and a blue calico dress, looked beautiful to me, and involuntarily I said, "Amen, I will take the pilgrim track though I should be forsaken of all my kindred forever," and when once my feet were upon the rock, my soul saved and sanctified, I felt I was sealed afterward unto the day of redemption. So I had no more trouble about what I should wear nor what company I should keep; my only ambition, anxiety and care has been for the salvation of souls, no matter how long or short my life may be. I am convinced I shall never get over it until I sit at Jesus' feet above.

Well, after this little talk I saw women weeping all around in the congregation. Brother Hart said, "Call them forward."

I said, "All who will take the uncompromising track with me, come forward to the altar," and a number stepped right out. There were souls crying for mercy, and the groans could be heard afar off, not as it is in many places now, put their heads down, and wait for somebody else to pray for them or sing them through. Brother Hart said, "Hold your heads up and talk it right out to God; there is no other way through. You will have to renounce everything and give up all you see, and all you don't see, all you know and all you don't know, so that when things come to you in your life afterwards, you will say, 'That was in the bargain from the first, and I consecrated to that, and then you will go through.'"

Brother and Sister Gates, who now live in Chicago, were residents in Burlington, and she went to Brother Hart after meeting and said, "Brother Hart, do you mean that we young people must dress as plainly as Sister Coon?"

"I did mean just that; I told you she was a Free Methodist pattern."

She thought over it a few days and said to herself, "Well, this means not only for me to take off my jewelry, flowers and ruffles, but my neckties, every one of them, and I have some of them that are very pretty, and if that is the way I am going to take it, for now the light is on my soul and I will never be satisfied with anything else."

Her husband wept, and finally said, "Jennie, are you going to be one of these people?"

"Yes, Henry," she said, "if I ever get good enough I am going to join them."

"Well, they needn't speak a word to me, and that woman you call Sister Coon better not speak to me; now you remember that, Jen."

"Well, Henry, I love her, I can't tell you how much, and I want to be just like her if possible."

She commenced with shears and knife, burned and threw away, and stamped on them until God came to her heart in power.

To her husband she said, "Henry, God has forgiven my sins." She was already a member of the Baptist church. "I could not make up my mind to go to hell, and that was where we were both going; and Henry, you are going there just as sure as you live unless you get saved in this meeting."

"I am not going any more; I am sick," he replied.

"Where are you sick?"

"All over, from my head to my feet; and Jennie, you don't know how sick I feel, and you ought not to go to church and leave me so sick."

"Henry, I would have to go unless I knew you were going to die."

She put on her things and started. They had meeting afternoon and evening. I visited from house to house, up steps and down, until in one month I walked over sixty miles.

The next day he lay on the floor and said, "Jennie, I am so much worse; don't go to meeting and leave me."

"I must go; I can not lose one of them."

"Well, that is very unkind, I think, and here I am so sick day and night and you are gone."

"Well, you are not going to die, and I must go. Henry, after meeting I follow that woman, and I find myself going clear to the door where she stays. That is why I don't get home earlier. I want to ask her so many questions, and she don't come here, so I have to do so."

"Well, she better not come here, either."

"It is not likely she will, for she knows how to obey God."

She still kept on attending the meeting, day and night, until after a few days of this he said, "I believe I will try to go."

"Do; I will help you get ready."

They went; he sat back in the church, but she snuggled right up close to me, in the "amen corner," and that day, for the first time in my life, God laid it on me to say some things. I arose to my feet, under the pressure of the Spirit, and turned and looked at the congregation in every direction, and said, "There is a terrible sadness come over me, and I wonder, are all these men to be lost?" They had begun to come in in numbers. "Are we only to get the women, boys and girls, and the men can not come and become Christians because they are all Free Masons?"

It went like thunderbolts through the house, and I noticed that Henry Gates' face blanched, and as I talked tears ran down my face, and I said again: "This is too awful; can I do nothing more that these poor men might get the light?" Then told them an experience of my husband and myself concerning the lodge. "Though they profess, and their books say so (for I have read some of them) that no man has a right to join without the consent of his wife, and one night my husband came home at one o'clock in the morning -- that was long before I was saved -- and his body was as cold as though he were dead, and he seemed very strange, and I asked him where he had been, and he answered in a cold, forbidding way, 'On business.' I heard at that moment, as though a voice had spoken to me, 'He has joined the Free Masons.' I told him what I felt and he was speechless, and then I said, 'If you have joined them you have broken your marriage vow, for you promised then, not only to love and cherish, but to cleave to me until death do us part, and no man can do that and be a Free Mason.' He said, 'How do you know?' I replied, 'I have a book in my possession that I have read through.' He said, 'May I see it?' 'You can only see it as I hold it in my hands, for I have

borrowed it, and I know you would sooner burn it than for me to look inside it again.' And I felt I was no more his wife, but a mourner forever. He went to my mother's home and brought her to our house and told her why. He said, 'Mother, do talk to Arvilla until she is reconciled.' She said, 'I shall never make the attempt, for I know more about Free Masonry than I can tell. One uncle of mine joined them and went almost insane when he found out what deviltry, lying, and underhanded work there was among them everywhere, and got out of the lodge when he did not know but that they would take his life as they did Morgan's.' So she could make it no better for him. It would be impossible for me to tell what I suffered till I was saved, and indeed, suffering increased, but I had grace to bear it. I told my husband he must get out of the lodge or sometime he would find me go right through the door with a Bible, and he would hear a hell-fire sermon that would not be pleasant. 'For I shall bring you out of the lodge or die in the attempt.' 'Arvilla,' he said, 'for God's sake don't ever think of such a thing, for you would be --' and then stopped. I said, 'Say it all; I know about those two men who stand at the door with drawn swords, and you are in such things as that, and your wife at home praying and weeping. That sounds quite a little worse than for you to curse because your wife laid aside her gold and silk, and I am denied a nickel to use as I like, and you paying money to belong to those who are as bad, or worse, as highway robbers, and I will tell you more of the knowledge I have gained when I can.'"

This coming out in a public place like Burlington, made a lively time all around, and it was only a few days till Henry Gates threw himself like a bag of sand at the altar. His cries and screams were much more heart-rending than any we had heard in that place, but he got through and he could not love Brother Hart enough, though he had told his experience with the Free Masons, and how he got out of the lodge, and of his letter written to them, and I was sent to pray about that letter with his resignation, and it was not very long before I thought his love to me was all I thought one Christian should have for another. Ever since that time he has called me "Mother."

The Free Masons were, of course, filled with bitterness and malice, and took away his position, and he could not get a job of work in that city. His wife began doing housework in the family where they were boarding until they left for the city of Chicago. They followed him there, and for years she was obliged to go out washing or house-cleaning. They lived in two little low dingy rooms, upstairs, and she was always blessed and happy in God, glad for the washing to do, and often saying to her husband, "We will drive this battle on, for we must get home to heaven." Sometimes she would lose her strength just as she was bending over the washtub to take hold of the clothes, and would stand for half an hour or so, and her face shine until I would think of Stephen; sometimes with her broom and dust-pan in her hand, would she lose her strength. I have often thought if I had her picture at one of those times I would not part with it for anything. It seemed these things took place when her husband was getting discouraged, and such a scene would break him all up again and he would say, "God helping me I will go through."

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## CHAPTER 17

Burlington Experience Continued -- Catholic Boy Comes -- Brings His Mother -- She Tells of Remarkable Healing -- Auntie Coon Visits Them -- The Whole Family Get Saved -- Ninety Converted in the Meetings -- Brother Vorhees Becomes Their Pastor.

Now to return to my Burlington experience. Brother Vorheis was then, as we called him, our sweet singer in Israel, and our congregations were very large after souls began to get through. This singing was so baptized with heaven that people could not but come in.

One day there came a boy of fourteen, and stood just inside the door, not daring to take a seat. We sang two or three hymns, then testimonies, then sang again. When the boy went home, he told his mother, who was a widow, to "come to the old Baptist church; I have been there and I believe when they sing it is like heaven, for I never heard anything like it. They can't sing well down at our Catholic meetings, where we go, mamma, and you must go with me tonight."

"I will, George, but you must not tell mother nor father; they would be angry."

They went, and sat three seats from the door, and the singing and testimonies took such hold of her that she wept. She stayed until the close of the meeting. That night I had told a little of my experience, then exhorted. As I went out shaking hands, she took mine readily, and said: "I want to see you more." I told her to come again. She said, "I want to see you when it is not in meeting, but how can I do this; for we are Catholics?" She told me of how her boy had brought her there, and said, "I want to tell you of an experience I have had, and I believe you are just like the man that brought me back to life, for I was dead."

"Certainly," I said, "I want you to talk to me."

"When can I see you?"

"I will stay now, or will come earlier tomorrow afternoon, and we will have our little conversation."

She came the next day and we sat alone and she said:

"Such a time I was very, very ill; the doctor could not help me and they told my mother I must die. They had a priest come and pray over me, but still I grew worse. One day there came a knock at the door, and when mamma opened it a man stood there, and said, 'You have a sick woman in this house?' She said, 'Yes, are you a doctor?' He said, 'No, but I must see her,' and stepped inside the door and said, 'Let me see the sick lady, please. I have something good to say to her.' 'You are a Protestant,' but he found his way to my sick-room, took out his Testament and read until I had light that I must be converted. He said, 'If you will repent of your sins Jesus Christ will not only forgive you, but will also heal you from your sickness.' I whispered, 'This is wonderful,' but my mother said, 'Go out of this house; go out this minute. I feel like knocking you down with a chair.' He paid no attention to her, but to me he said, 'Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be saved? If so, you shall be made whole. Jesus will lay His hand on you and you shall be made whole immediately.' 'I will,' I replied. I began to see the way, and said, 'I will be a Christian.' Mother was in such a rage she sat right down on the floor and shook -- as she told me afterwards -- until it seemed her bones would be dislocated, and she could not tell why she did not kill him, for she wanted to. The stranger knelt and prayed, and the Holy Ghost helped him, and he said to me he would come again tomorrow. Mother said, 'Don't you open this door again; I might

kill you.' He made no answer. She kept the door fastened some, but the next day, without knocking, he entered and came up to the bed and said, 'Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?' 'I do,' I replied, and pointed to my mother, 'she is so terrible.' He could see the power of Satan held sway in the home. Mother was raving like a maniac, and while she was cursing I gasped and stopped breathing, and she looked up and said, 'Katie is dead; go out of here; Katie is dead.' He laid his hand on me and called me by name and said, 'The Lord Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise from thy bed and walk.' And immediately I sat up. Mother staggered and sat down in a chair, and the man was gone. She looked at me and said, 'There is something, then, in Jesus Christ, which I don't know. Katie, are you well?' 'Yes, mother, I am healed, but not strong.' This is the same kind of people, and the very same power that that strange man had. We have never heard of him since, and we can find no one who has seen him, and if you let me I am going to join you people; and Auntie Coon, they call you, will you come down to my mother's house?"

"Yes, Katie, but you bring your mother to the meeting; tell her you have found the people that are like the man that brought you back to life, and she will come."

She went home and said, "Mamma, you ask me where I go, and now I will tell you. Down in that old Baptist church are a lot of people that go to meeting every day and night, and there is a mother and two men, and I don't know how many more, that are just like that man that brought me back when I was dead. Come today, mamma, with me to see them."

"Yes, Katie, I will."

She came and sat quite far back, and while I was talking in the meeting Katie made motions for me to talk to her mother. I knew what she meant, and after meeting I went immediately to them. Katie introduced me to her mother, and, as always, I said, "I am glad to see you; I want to be acquainted with you, because I love you. Mother, you see what Jesus has done for Katie.."

"Yes, I do," she replied, "and I am going with Katie to these meetings. I don't know what the priest will say or do; it might mean something awful, but I am coming."

A short time afterward she made her way to the altar, and not as so many people do in these days, she cried with all her might to Jesus, Katie's Jesus, also Auntie Coon's Jesus, to forgive her sins. She never would ask anybody but Jesus to forgive sins any more. We remained until light broke in. She testified and went home, happy in God. The next day she was there in good time. She put her arms around me and said, "Will you and that sweet singer man come to our home? It is nearly a mile, a good ways for you to walk, but you must come to our home to see papa."

"The Lord helping us, we will come," I answered.

"I want you to come for dinner, then stay for the afternoon meeting." She went home and told her husband about these people in the church, and that she wanted him to see that man and woman. "They sing," she said, "like I think they do in heaven; and papa, Jesus has forgiven my sins, and I feel so clean, good and happy. I must turn these pictures to the wall, so when the priest comes in he can see we are Protestants. We have no need for Jesus on the chain, we have Him in here" (pointing to her heart) .

We sang a number of pieces and then prayed, and the mother and daughter were much blessed, and the old man cried, and said: "I will go this way myself; I am not going to be lost and mamma and Katie go to heaven; that is the only way." Before we left the house he shook hands with us, and said, "I love you now, just as if I were a Christian."

We soon had the whole family, children and all, and oh, such shouting and leaping. The old lady would dance just as though she had been a pilgrim for years. The next winter, they said, she would go through the deep snow to attend the protracted meeting, with one child on her back and another by the hand, when many of the men thought it imprudent to go out. And so for years they lived a beautiful life, and every one of them went home to heaven in triumph.

There were above ninety conversions in that meeting. They were without a preacher, and Brother Hart thought best to take Brother Vorheis and his family from his former pastorate to Burlington, and I soon found that he was obliged to sell all his household furniture to get his family there, and as most of the converts were of the poorer class, wondered how we could get things together again for his family. If I used up the money my husband gave me to buy my ticket home would only have enough to buy them a cook stove, and so took it to the Lord. Sometimes I stood outside the door looking in every direction, asking which way I should go for help, and for two or three days looked across, at least a mile, to a large house, with the impression or feeling that I must go there, and told Sister Osborne, where I was staying, and she said, "She is a rich woman, and very aristocratic."

"God won't mind that," I replied, "and that is the place I want to reach."

The feeling increased for three days, and I took one with me and started.

As soon as I entered the door the lady said, "Well, you have come at last."

"Yes, the Lord sent me here."

"You promised me one day at an afternoon meeting you would come. . ."

"There are so many invitations I can not remember all, but God sent me here."

"I want you to see my daughter, the loveliest woman, unsaved. She is soon to be married, and I want her to get saved before that time, but I don't know what she could repent of, for she is neither selfish nor covetous, and I have never seen a shadow of impatience in her since she was born." A gentleman came in and we had prayer, and asked for the salvation of all in the house. After prayer she asked us to sing. When we were alone told her that one thing I came for was help for Brother Vorheis' family, for he was to be their pastor.

"That lovely singer man?" she asked. "Well, come with me."

She took me into the basement where there were tables, chairs, bureaus, bedsteads, and everything necessary for many people, except bedding. And she said, "Help yourself, and just take

anything you want." So that day I could drop all care concerning his family. This woman was soon converted, and was a great help for many years in that society. I have never heard whether her daughter was ever really saved.

In a year or two after this wonderful revival I met Philip Hanna, who had been spending some time in Burlington, helping Brother Vorheis, and I asked him how the society prospered. He told me that the next year or the year after a prominent preacher with his family passed through Burlington, and his daughters were wearing neckties and other worldly attire. He said it brought terrible confusion and sorrow, and that minister himself went and told his wife of the terrible work it was making with the members of the class, for they had been told by the one who held the revival, that they must lay aside all such, and she made answer, "I dress my girls as I please." Some of the class went back, and others compromised, and many a worldly spirit has followed, and as in other places the Spirit has been grieved, and very few have the Holy Ghost.

I, with Jennie Gates and others, have wept many tears, as she was the one that asked the question, "Must I take off my necktie?" and the preacher said, "Certainly, they are only worn for adorning."

It has cost me much to mention all these things. I have withheld names for Jesus' sake, and for the sake of that preacher, who seems nearer to me than almost any other except Brother Shelhamer, who now is my only son. I have no earthly reason for speaking of these things except to warn others, preachers and people, as I see the worldliness coming in so fast, and know if the preachers stand out against it, and keep the plain, simple whole gospel, the people will follow. I realize that I must soon stand before God to give an account for all I do, say, or write, and often when I see how the compromise is upon us, and how few there are to sound the alarm, and the desire that is in me to do so wherever we have a people, am compelled to do it in this way, though I become an enemy to some because I tell them the truth, God gives grace, not only to bear, but still to love. We can not expect to have a people saved according to the Bible with worldly conformed leaders, neither can they preach on these lines, and many of them are shorn of their strength, and the anointing they once had is gone forever unless they repent and do their first works over.

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## CHAPTER 18

Another Camp-Meeting -- Hypocrite in a Hot Place -- Power of God Manifested -- At St. Charles Again -- Brother Kelsey Burdened -- A Day of Pentecost -- At Palmyra, Wisconsin -- Awful Burdens -- Sinners Converted -- Saints on Fire -- Preachers Dug Out.

Many remarkable experiences at campmeetings come to my mind, some of which I will relate here.

At a camp-meeting at Ashton, Brother Roberts had charge. I reached the ground, I think, the second day, and noticed that after each service just one seeker at the altar, but no one got through, and I wondered, and took it to the Lord.

The next morning in love-feast a stranger stood up and said, "I have been sanctified for a number of years (I don't remember how many), and my wife opposed me so bitterly that she lost her mind." The words were no sooner out of his mouth than it seemed someone spoke close to me, "He lies, and is a perfect hypocrite and possessed with devils." Love-feast was dry; seemed there was no God anywhere. After the sermon another altar call, just one came up. A number of us knelt close that we might help if possible, and this man, the stranger, stepped between us and the seeker and began to groan. I whispered to Sister Roberts, and said, "What is the matter here?" She said, "I don't know."

"Will you pray about this? I believe God has told me where and what the trouble is."

"Well, take hold of it if He has."

"Well, you pray about it; it seems to me Brother Roberts ought to take hold of it."

"Why, Sister Coon, he does not know what the trouble is. I shall pray God for some way out of this, and you know the way out; God has shown you the trouble and the way out for this very purpose."

I felt directed, so went to different workers and said, "Will you get close to the next seeker, so close that that tall man dressed in black can not get between us and him?"

They looked surprised and said, "Well." Then I went to Sister Roberts and told her the same words.

She said, "Yes, we will keep him out, for I have begun to feel strange myself."

The next altar call there was just one man, the same that had been seeking, and we surrounded him, and as soon as we began to pray this tall stranger put his hand on somebody's head, and stepped right over between us, and as he stepped over, before he had time to kneel, I took him by the coat and said, "Get right out of here; get out now!" He did; then we could pray, then the power came down and the seeker got through. Sister Roberts looked on with wonder, but I felt the eternal power in my soul and God's hand on me, and a voice, unmistakable, saying, "Go clear through with this."

Brother Roberts gave opportunity for the new convert to testify. As soon as he had finished this man stood on his feet again, went through the same words about his wife being insane because he was so holy.

The pressure was on me, and I pointed my finger to him and said: "The Holy Ghost tells me you are a liar; you never were a holy man, but have abused your wife until you have driven her to insanity." He shook as though a mighty tempest had come on him. My finger and hand were stiff and still pointed to his face, and I said: "You confess it before you drop into hell." He did so, and told us of his constant abuse, and that his wife was a good woman and that he had driven her to hopeless insanity; made as though he would sit down, still my hand and finger pointed, I said "Stand on your feet and finish up your confession, for you are a murderer."

With terrible gasping, he said: "It is true; I have sharpened my knife three different times to kill a neighbor of mine." And then he fell to the ground foaming. Awful terror seized every one on the campground. Brother Roberts stood speechless, with his mouth wide open; Sister Roberts said, "Go on, go on, go on!" But I was through, and the man never found mercy. He donated five hundred dollars, I don't know whether to the class, but it was to carry on the work among us, and left the ground. The power of God came down in torrents, and souls were saved right along to the close of the meeting. I myself was like one that had no strength, was obliged to be taken care of for a time.

The two Brothers Kelsey, Brother Hanmer and Sister Cook, came to St. Charles camp-meeting the first day I ever saw them. I had a good, large tent, and I always had a large family in it. They had heard of us and came to see what we were, and God was in every service in power.

Souls were saved right along in every meeting, and between the public services, usually, there were seekers in my tent. They asked the privilege, one day, of coming in and enjoying the meeting with us, which of course we granted.

Brother Vorheis was with us then. Brother Hanmer's band, Free Methodists, M. E.'s, Presbyterians and Baptists gathered in. They asked if I would hold a little close class, and I did so to some extent. After talking a few minutes I asked if there were any there who were not satisfied with their present experience; if so to make it known. There were a number of seekers for holiness. We engaged in prayer. The Holy Ghost fell upon all in the tent, and every one was either praying or shouting. Wonderful manifestations, falling, leaping, jumping and screaming, and Brother Kelsey, for the first time, had one of those strange, awful burdens.

"Am I dying ? What is this?" he asked, looking in my face.

"You are burdened for some one," I replied.

"Will you pray for me every minute, or I am going to die."

"I will," I answered; "do not be afraid nor anxious in the least, but leave yourself right in the hands of the Lord; He will make everything plain and bring you out all right."

"If you keep praying I believe God will, but if you stop I shall die."

The meeting continued so long they were obliged to take me up and lay me on a bed, and I heard him crying, repeatedly, "Oh, Brother Hanmer, oh, Brother Hanmer, have you got holiness, oh, Brother Hanmer, I shall die." Brother Hanmer crawled close to him and he spoke softly, "Hold on, Wyke, I will get all God has for me." Kelsey said, "Amen; be sure now." Then he looked at a sister that came with them, I think a Baptist, and said, "Sister Hyde, go down; you must go down, for God is in this place. Will you go down?"

"I will," she replied, and the power came upon her in a wonderful manner. So he went on with every one with whom he was acquainted. It surely was a day of Pentecost; there was not one

in that tent but that received the Holy Ghost. It was dark before they were willing to go to their own place.

Brother Kelsey was lost to all in this world. I gave him a pillow, told him to lift his head, and I put it under and covered him up. He was there till in the morning about four o'clock, for I could not sleep one hour, but listened to his praises; he opened his eyes and said, "Where am I?" First in whispers, then a little louder, "Where am I? This is heaven." He arose, went carefully out, whispering praises, and said, "This is the most wonderful day of all my life. Presbyterians, Baptists, Free Methodists are all alike when they have the Holy Ghost." And they never got over that until at the conference at Freeport they joined us. A few years the most blessed heavenly power rested upon him. I never worked with greater unity and fellowship with any other.

At another time I went with a company to attend a camp-meeting in Palmyra, Wisconsin; also Brother and Sister Gates, Brothers Brooke, J. D. Kelsey and W. M. Kelsey. The meeting was not large, but terrible death seemed everywhere, and we wondered why we came, and some were saying we might as well go home. My tent was on the ground, and I invited the band who came with me to come in and we would pray about it. "But," I said, "in the first place we will have a little close class-meeting." I asked Brother Brooke if he knew he was sanctified. He said, "Yes, I believe I am."

"Did God send you here?"

"I thought so; of course I was invited by Brothers Kelsey and Hanmer."

"Are you ready to preach any class of truth that the Holy Ghost may suggest?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"Well, then, God will have work for you to do on this campground."

I asked Brother J. D. Kelsey if he believed that God was able to speak to the dry bones as He did in the past, and resurrect the work which had fallen away since he and the workers had labored in that same place.

He answered, "Yes."

"And have you as much of the Holy Ghost power as you ever had?"

"I believe I have."

Then I asked W. M. Kelsey if he were ready for any kind of suffering or burden that God might call him to in order to see a Holy Ghost work in that place.

"Yes," he replied.

I felt, and said so, that some of us would nearly lose our physical life if God did have His way. I told them I believed I was ready to die for the Lord Jesus Christ, my faith was not like my feelings, for I felt that God was a thousand miles away from there, but my faith laughed at impossibilities. I asked Sister Gates if she was sanctified.

"I am," she said.

"Then you are ready for anything in the will of God?"

She answered in the affirmative. Then I asked Brother Gates if he was ready to get back to God, and if he would do so right now in our own little home tent, that we might be a band of workers in heart, word and deed, that there should not be one in our tent or company who would be the least hindrance or block.

"Mother," he said, "I will."

We went on our knees, and I said, "We will not want any dinner, but we will pray through."

It seemed for a time the whole lost world lay on my heart. I can not tell how long I prayed, nor what I said, but the Holy Ghost came and Brother Gates rolled and roared, wept and screamed, like a dying man, confessed his sins and said, "I will never, never, do so any more; I will be a clean man for God." 'Twas not long before a deluge, a real cyclone from heaven struck us, and we were ready for the battle. The preachers had help in the pulpit, and some of us much help in exhortation, but the people were unmoved. I think it was the next day while the sermon was preached by Brother Brooke, that I noticed Brother W. M. Kelsey grew white and soon was gasping and turning in his seat, and it seemed he would fall on his face. I spoke to some of them to put him in a chair, quick, but it was too late; he grew stiff and cold and bent to the floor, and his cries I shall never forget: "O, God, I shall die; I shall die if they don't yield." The people were running to see -- so the meeting in that place broke up. We concluded to put him on a cot and take him to Brother Hanmer's tent; still the terrible moaning and terrible cries, "O, God, I shall die." And as they carried him down the hill on the cot he got stiff, and said, "Brother Hanmer, will you? I shall die." Brother Hanmer fell on his face, groaning, and made vows, and talked to God until everything was settled. It was too close in the tent for the burdened man to breathe, so they put the cot to the back door, and the people stood around there as thick as could be, and still he kept on crying just the same. A little boy came pushing his way through the crowd, put his arms around Brother Kelsey's neck, and put his face on his face and said, "Sweet, pretty man," then he began to cry and look around, and I found he had a mother, and he said, "Mamma, did you make this man cry like this?" She quickly put her head down. "Mamma, say, did you make him this way?" She said, "I don't know, darling."

"Well, mamma, hurry pray; mamma, pray now, so he won't die."

She soon broke down and went on her knees, and the little boy still had his arms around the neck of the burdened man. He said, "Mamma is going to pray, Brother Kelsey; she is praying; I don't want you to die, you sweet man."

Then he said again, "Mamma, pray harder; don't you want to love Jesus, or this man is going to die."

"Yes, I will," she cried. And while she was praying through I found myself exhorting everybody that was not just right to get on their knees as quickly as they could, for they might be responsible for the death of this man; he certainly could not live this way long. The burden was there until the next day. It took one or two to care for him most of the time. He saw hell and heard screams, and talked with unmistakable tones and said, "Some of you are lost forever unless you move quickly."

He was held there until nine were saved. For some time he looked like a dead man, but the powers of hell were driven from the ground and we had complete victory and souls were saved and sanctified.

Brother and Sister Webb, of Wisconsin, received a powerful anointing. They were not ashamed to kneel at the altar and cry for power. When the baptism struck Sister Webb, she joined hands with Sister Gates and they danced and jumped, as a few saints do these days, and soon their feet seemed to tread in air, and then rolled together to the bottom of the hill. Our campground was on what they call a "hog's back"; there was not a place six feet square that was even, in a single tent. While praying for souls, especially ministers, on that ground, the Holy Ghost let me see that there were martyrs made there, which not long afterwards proved to be so.

I attended a camp-meeting in Indiana by Brother Kelsey's invitation. I think the second day he put the meeting into my hands. I gave a little of my first experience and told them how God had called me, not only to leave my former companions, but to lay aside all worldly adorning, not only my gold, but my silk dresses and velvet cloak, also all high colors. The Holy Ghost was just as particular about these things as He was about my conversation and companionship. This brought heartaches and terrible persecutions from my husband and one sister. While I was talking a man rose in the congregation and came close to me and said, "I would like to ask you a question." I said, "Yes, say on."

"Why are you telling us about what you had to lay aside, and about the persecution it brought?"

"When you are through I will say a few words," I replied.

He was a preacher, and had a congregation, I think, six miles from the campground. He said much more, and I said, "It is well, sir, that you have talked out your heart; God may now have a chance to let light on you, and you will be saved if you are honest. The Bible is very plain on all these points; I will pray for you."

"You need not take the trouble."

After saying much he left the ground. Some said he would not be seen any more on the ground. I remarked, "Let us pray for him; he will soon be back again." God came to that meeting in power. Brother Kelsey went under one of those terrible burdens, and looking me in the face, said,

"God help you, Auntie Coon, God help you; there are other preachers here that must be helped in this meeting, or lost forever."

"Let us pray," I said .

The burden on Brother Kelsey became more intense. He began to cry, "How can I live?" Looking me in the face again, he said, "Are you praying for me ? You must, or I shall die." And then he looked with such pitiful agony into the face of the man close to him and said, "Brother M\_\_\_\_, will you get saved?" Then looked in my face again, and said, "Auntie Coon, be true; say all the Holy Ghost gives you; do not mind any of us, but go on with the meeting." It seemed to me his gaze was like the gaze of God, and I said, "I will." I went close to this man, as I knew he was the cause of his agony, and said, "At one time you were saved."

"Yes," he replied, and went to his knees. I asked him if he knew the cause of his fall. He hesitated a little, and Brother Kelsey screamed, "Tell it out, Brother M\_\_\_\_; tell it out! I shall die if you don't get tight."

Brother M\_\_\_\_\_ said, "I have lived before God as clean as if I had been in heaven, but since I am a married man, have compromised."

Still the cries from Brother Kelsey, "Oh, God, I shall die."

"You had better talk out your heart, Brother M\_\_\_\_," I said; "this is too much like Jesus Christ being nailed to the cross." I quoted him this Scripture, "It remains, therefore, that they that have wives be as they that have none."

"I know it," he replied.

"Will you get back to God and take the tribulation track? If you married wrong you can get through if you are a martyr; and what about the souls that God has entrusted in your care; how will you meet them in that day? God entrusted you with great light and power and with souls."

He began to scream, "Yes, yes, He did."

"Will you take the track?"

He fell prostrate to the ground and began to pray in earnest, and was blessedly saved before we arose. The meeting went on in power. The yielding of that preacher brought others to the same point, and salvation flowed like a river.

The next morning our angry preacher came back. He came close to me and said, "Sister Coon, may I speak a few words." The rest looked forbidding.

"I am not going to talk as I did last night; God has gotten hold of me. After I left this ground God showed me myself; I have tasted the pains of hell and I have some terrible work to do, and I want to get saved so I can do it."

His teeth began to chatter and he stepped up close to me, laid his hand on my arm and said, "Will you pray for me, and will you pray now, or I am a lost man."

"Yes," I said, "this is the time to pray."

"Come as close to me as you can," he begged.

I asked the saints to gather round him and he began to tell God how mean he was, and how the devil had helped him to talk, confessed the whole right out, and said he had talked to his people against this meeting, and especially against Sister Coon, and asked if we thought there was mercy for him.

"Yes," I said, "as long as you can weep and repent there is mercy."

His cries were terrible, and in his agony he dug holes in the ground with his hands and feet. He not only asked forgiveness of God, but of all the people that labored in that meeting. He took hold of my clothes as the one who wanted to touch the hem of the garment, saying, "Can you ever forgive me?" I replied, "I have not had a thing against you, but have been thanking God ever since you came that you did come and let your heart out, for you thought you were a real good man up to that time, or at least as good as most of the preachers, and God takes such a one as myself to shine light on the preachers as well as the others. I am used to it, and if I cry, it is to God."

He told the Lord he was going back that night and gather his people and make his confession, and would clean up everything just as God would show him, and then would come back, for he said he wanted to be sanctified. He held right on there until his sins were forgiven. He was happy and talked in the Spirit, went home and made a clean breast of everything, and came back the next day and enjoyed the meeting.

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## CHAPTER 19

Burdened for Young People -- They Must Work or Backslide -- Pentecost Bands, the Answer -- In Minnesota -- Later, in Michigan -- Harvest Home Camp-Meeting -- Preachers' Meeting -- Social Purity.

About twenty-five or twenty-eight years ago I began to feel terrible about our young people in the church, for I saw they were doing nothing, either to help themselves or any one else. God had given us a number of promising young men and women, but they were given nothing to do. I talked with the preacher and told him unless there was a change they would either backslide altogether or go to other churches. But things went on about the same way for eight or ten years. There was hardly any liberty for exhortation, and among us older members we felt the preachers wanted to do it all themselves. Again and again I talked to them and would find myself praying, "O God, start something that is on fire among us that our young people may not only stay among us, but find opportunities and calls to work for souls."

This increased until it was almost unbearable. At a campmeeting where the lines were held very closely, and the young people and the women were not allowed much liberty, I asked God to set something on foot right away and get saints out as praying bands at whatever cost and I would say "Amen." The answer came it should be so. I was sent for to go to a campmeeting in Minnesota. God had given us Sister Henrietta Muzzy out of a Holiness Convention in Wheaton held by Brother Carnahan, a preacher. Her father and mother had moved to Minnesota and things were so dead in that region and her soul on fire that she said something must be done for Jesus. She laid it before the Lord and was led to ask for ground to have a campmeeting and sent for me. At first I wondered, and then another letter from Brother Vivian Dake, saying, "Be sure to come; Sister Muzzy has a ground and has had a man to clear it off, and God is going to save." My husband seemed willing, and, without knowing the best way to get there, took me to Woodstock with horses and carriage, thinking that would save me one change. But I found that night that I must stop over till the next morning to get to my journey's end. I was directed by the conductor where to go for lodging. They put me in a large room, nearly dark, with, I should think, fifty or one hundred chairs piled on top of the other. There was no bolt to lock the door with, and it looked really as though I might be among thieves or vicious people, but I kept my light burning and committed myself to Him who takes notice of the sparrows. There were terrible noises of voices and knocking of, I suppose, "tenpins," or something of the sort all night, and the vermin crawling all over me was enough to keep me awake had there been nothing else. In the morning I determined I would pay my bill and get away as soon as possible. There was a woman sent to me and I asked to see the landlord. She said he was not in; that she could do what was necessary. I told her I wished to settle for my night's lodging. She asked me if I did not want any breakfast. I said, "No, thank you, the night I have spent in this place is enough; I choose to go fasting. I suppose had you known that I was the wife of some noted lawyer or judge you would have treated me differently?" She changed color and threw up her hands and said, Oh, oh, if I only had known it."

"Well, I want you to remember that you have done this unto Jesus Christ, for I am traveling for His sake; my business is to warn others to get ready for the judgment, and you tell the man so, as I can not see him myself, that what he has done to me he has done to my Lord."

"Oh, let me go and find him," she said.

"I have no time to wait, for I must get to my train, but, remember, I shall meet you again." So I went on my way rejoicing. I found my way in safety, though very tired.

Before the meeting was over Brother Dake said, "Auntie, I want to talk with you alone. They are asking me to hold meetings in so many places up here, and God has given us a number of clear conversions among the young people at this meeting, what do you think about another brother and two sisters going with me to hold meetings? I want you to go also."

I told him it would be impossible for me to spend my summer there, as there were other meetings near home where I was expected to be, and one of the quarterly meetings at Plymouth with them. I told him I could see nothing in their going as a band -- it had been done in many places -- holy men had led out praying bands, and that was what we were in the beginning of our work. There was money donated for a Gospel wagon, which he had made, and on the back was painted

"Eternity" and on one side "Holiness unto the Lord," and "Prepare to meet thy God" on the other, and something similar in the front. We rode in that to the meeting, shouting and singing as we went. Brother Dake's bands proved a success that summer; souls were saved wherever he went. The conference made him "chairman," as they were then called, and he tried to fill all their wishes, but after a time wrote me, "Auntie, I can not do it; God does not want me in just one place, and I feel as though I had wings and must fly, and this world is my parish. Auntie, I heard you praying for God to keep this thing moving through this land, and I believe He wants me loose, for at night I can see bands of young people on fire, and in different places preaching the whole Gospel and souls are going in. Write me what you think after praying." I felt in a moment that that was an answer to my cry. In his letter, which I held in my hand, he said, "I don't want to be big, nor do I want position, but I want my soul all on fire and to gather souls as long as I live." I could but answer, "That is what I ask God for you."

These bands were discontinued after some months, and Brother Dake seemed to abandon the idea for the time being. Later he transferred to the Michigan Conference, and was sent to Spring Arbor as pastor. In the spring he sent for me to come and assist him in a revival meeting.

We visited from house to house and had altar services every meeting. The professor at Spring Arbor, Michigan, was greatly helped in the meeting and was a great blessing there, and nearly all the pilgrims, if not every one, were either brought back to God or sanctified. We spent some of the nights till after midnight, and the groans and cries could be heard afar off, but the victories were glorious.

During that meeting Brother Dake came to my room (for I was staying at his house) and said, "Auntie, I can't feel at home in just shutting myself to work, either as pastor or chairman, and I have heard you have been praying for eight years that God would start something in the Free Church that would give our young people an opportunity to use their talents -- some movement that would be a safeguard against backsliding; and after much prayer I feel that we shall have praying bands everywhere." I told him that that was the form of movement that presented itself to me; and soon after a band of young women went out as the first Pentecost Band. Brother Dake wrote me that God had given him a name for the bands, and I could see no reason why it was not God-given. There were calls for them immediately, and soon there was another band. I can not place them all now, though I could for years, and he often sent the names of his bands to me, at least asking me to hold them before the Lord, for he was determined to have real Pentecostal power on every one of them. He sent for me to attend Harvest Home, which I did. The power of God was present, souls were seeking, others sanctified among the bands. Such fastings and humiliations and self-denials I had never seen in any, except in Mother Cobb. He called on me to lead close class a number of times, and I never found one preacher, exhorter, or member that pulled back or showed the least sign of resentment at the closest questions. We usually had altar service in those class-meetings. Of course, they were exclusive, none but members of the bands, unless by permission. Numbers of the members of the band were sanctified in those meetings, and when they began seeking they also began to fast, and never ate one mouthful till they were through. I don't remember of any one suggesting fasting, but the Holy Ghost did, and the entire meeting was a time of great power.

He then called on me to lead a preachers' meeting. It certainly was a cross and it made me tremble, but Brother Dake said, "Auntie, don't spare one of us, but lead that meeting as you would

if you knew you were going to judgment tonight." God helped me, and it was certainly the closest talk, at least to preachers where there was more than one, I have ever given. I not only asked when they were converted and if they had lived justified lives till they sought holiness, and then if they had kept their integrity and lived before God in the first light, for it was not possible for one to keep their first love and draw back or turn aside in the least. There were ministers of different denominations. I asked them if they were as thoughtful of their wives as of themselves, giving her the preference in everything, and as she was the weaker vessel asked if they treated her as such. I told them I had known many minister's wives sent to their graves by living with unholy, passionate husbands. Some of them wept and others went on their knees, and while I was still speaking I saw a man crouch close down by the roots of the trees. He was a stranger. I stepped out close to the man and said, "I see you are just in the close edge of this meeting, so judge you are a minister."

"Yes, ma'am, I do preach."

"Was the meeting unpleasant to you?"

The tears ran down his face and he said, "No, I never was in such a meeting, but I feel it is very profitable, and I thought you would not care if I remained."

I told him I was glad if I could be of any service or help to him, and asked him if he professed perfect love. He answered in the affirmative.

"After sitting in this meeting are you satisfied that you enjoy it, and does your home-life say 'Amen?'"

"I believe it does," he said, "and I also believe what you tell us is the truth, and I ask my wife to dictate in these matters, for I believe it is a woman's privilege."

Though that meeting was baptized with tears, it was also baptized with great joy and power. I then turned to a woman who had endured persecution from preachers because of her continent life, and I knew that she had been obliged to speak out long before she had a husband, and I asked her a few questions, then asked her to talk. She gave the most wonderful talk -- told us what perfect love was and how few it reached in their home life, that she had been told many times by preachers that if she were married she would not talk so much about these things, but that it increased on her hands. "I am wholly convinced," she said, "that this is the way to live a holy life. I have been married such a length of time, married a clean man, and I am stronger than ever in the belief that this is the only way to grow in grace. I almost wish he were here, for he would probably say some things I shall not. We live as pure as the angels, and are not obliged to take separate rooms, but God has knit our hearts together in love, and there can be no purer, sweeter love on earth than exists between us. I am convinced that this is why preachers do not have nor keep the Holy Ghost power; their thoughts, appetites and passions clamor and are not brought in subjection to the will of God."

The Spirit fell on her while she was speaking, and her face was white as the light. I believe that meeting was recorded in eternity. Such fasting, praying and prevailing with God brought power on the unconverted and also unsanctified, and the altar was filled, from twenty to forty at a

time. I speak of this plainly, because so many in these days say that such meetings would kill the work and drive the Spirit away, and, while I remember how God can use a worm, I put my face in the dust, but I find that most of the preachers of all denominations give loose reins to their appetites and passions and are under condemnation, and the souls under their care traveling the broad road that ends in despair. As I write I wring the hands of my soul and sometimes grow speechless, for I know who keeps the books and every secret thing shall be brought to light, and many of us who say we have perfect love will stand at the left hand. All within me cries out for a trumpet voice, and I long to stand before the assembled preachers and tell them why they are not holy men, and these terrible appetites and passions are handed down from father to son.

When the agony comes on my soul I cry to God for ministers that live holy lives and who can lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting, and He says, "I would, but they will not." I feel my heart is hot -- full to overflowing, and it bursts and runs out of my eyes. While I think of these things involuntarily I cry, "O my God, bring out a holy people, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." It is not only worldly, fashionable attire that is put on by hundreds among us now, but it is within, where the fountain lies, for from out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication and all these things. The worldly adorning is a small part. God is helping me, with deep anguish of soul, to give myself away to others as fast as I can, and I praise Him for these He has given me in this Southland that shall preach the whole Gospel while I am up in Heaven. The circumstances and pressures have been extreme, but I praise God for grace to bear my woes and I push and rush on after those who can do much better. He Himself hears my bitter cry and I constantly hear Him say, ask what you will, hallelujah. All glory be to Jesus.

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## CHAPTER 20

Has Hay Fever -- Mr. Coon Takes Her to California -- Meets Old Friends -- Goes to Camp-Meeting -- Found Pleasure-Seekers Instead of Soul-Savers -- Holds Prayer in Tents -- Exhorts in Prayer-Meeting -- Allowed to Lead One Service -- Some Saved -- Too Hot for the Elder -- A Preacher's Wife Healed.

When I was about forty-four or five years of age the hay fever came on in June instead of August, as it formerly had, and I felt should it continue I could not live till the next fall, and my husband said, "We will get our things packed and go to California as soon as possible." I was obliged to sit up all night, and the breathing was so hard the blood came from my nostrils. Three days from the time he spoke of it we were on our way to the Pacific coast. When we got to Omaha the hay fever was gone.

When we arrived at San Francisco and registered my husband said, "There will be some of your friends here soon, for I sent a dispatch on before us," and in a short time Brother Bishop made his appearance. The meeting was joyful, indeed. They had been former residents of Marengo. His father-in-law had been our pastor, and he married his wife in our parsonage. He was one of the dearest old pilgrims I ever knew. My husband soon rented nice parlors on the corner of Turk street. We intended to summer in Los Angeles, but my home friends were in San Francisco, and as

I had no signs of hay fever and was On the gain, our friends prevailed upon us to make our summer quarters there.

William Bishop was then preaching at the Seamen's Bethel for Congregationalists. They were very anxious I should labor with them. I did so much of the time for six weeks, walked a mile and a half and two miles and went with them to the docks to hold gospel services each Sabbath after forenoon services in the church. Occasionally some of the seamen would show signs of awakening, but none were converted, and I felt that my time was worth more than that, so I asked the Lord to direct my steps and open my way to some spot where I might see sinners saved.

'Twas not long after this that my husband was down town and met Mr. Moss, who immediately took him by the hand and said, "Now, old fellow, I have you; you didn't come down to see us as you agreed, and now I want to take you home with me. Get your wife and come with me." My husband answered, "We can not today, but will before long," and so took his card.

In a few days he was reading the newspaper and said, "Arvilla, see here; down at Montera Landing is to be a Methodist camp-meeting, and the paper states it is for soul-saving, and if you want to go I will take you there."

When the time came we took the steamboat and went the sixty miles to Moss Landing, where we were hospitably entertained for ten days. The daughter, Mariva, was delighted to have us in their own home, and soon entered into the experience of perfect love, and in talking about this Campmeeting that was to be held twelve miles from there, she said she was going with me. Mr. Moss offered his horses and a light wagon and the son went to drive, and we started close on the beach that we might enjoy the ocean and the sights along the way. The owner of the team said, "If you start early you can get there by nine o'clock Sunday morning." "Then," I said, "we will get there by love feast." But we had not gone two miles before the wagon began to sink till it was down to the hubs, and all but myself had to walk half the distance. We got there about two o'clock in the afternoon, and immediately the next morning my husband paid my board there for eight days, and said, "I don't see any meeting here, do you ? I will go back to the city." We had not heard any singing, as I supposed we would driving out to the ground, and could not see anybody, but went into the first small tent and found two women, and I asked them if this was a religious meeting, and she answered, "Yes, ma'am."

"Well," I asked, "have you had any meeting today?"

"We have had no meetings at all," she said, "and we have been here two weeks."

I told them that we had seen a notice in the paper of the camp-meeting at Montera, and that it was for the purpose of soul-saving.

"We know that," she replied, "but there has not been one service nor one prayer."

I asked if I might pray in that tent. She said I might. I talked to God with tears running down my cheeks, and I asked God what I was there for, and as the Spirit gave utterance. Then I asked the Lord to bless and save these two women if they were not saved, then on my knees I exhorted them

and held class. I asked them if they had any grace. They said they were afraid not -- that they belonged to the church and had once been converted, but now they were without the grace of God. I asked them if they would seek the Lord now. They both began to weep and pray, and that dear little Baptist lady wept and prayed and praised the Lord aloud, and the other two women were soon shouting. We went to the next tent, which was much larger. There I found as many as six women and two men, and I asked them if they had had prayers in that tent that day. Some one said, "No." I said, "May I pray with you?" They had heard the sound of prayer, and said, "Certainly." The man did not know what to do with himself; instead of taking a chair he sat down on a table and it fell over with him. He scrambled up and looked strange, and I supposed he was some boy that was hired. I asked for a Bible. They hunted around quite a little, but finally handed me one, and I read a chapter in John, and opened to just the right chapter, and as I read I talked, and said, "This is the experience of a Christian; they have the witness of the Spirit that they are born of God," and then I asked, "How many in this tent have the witness of the Spirit that their sins are forgiven; will you please stand to your feet?" My little company were the only ones with me to stand up. I said, "Is there anybody in this tent that will seek the Lord? Some of you must be professors." I little thought the man was a preacher. They seemed a little confused, and as the preacher did not lead the way nor talk, they were still. Then I said, "We will pray; please kneel everybody." I waited a few moments, then stepped to the door to see if I could find somebody else to pray. I soon had a congregation of twelve or fifteen. There were four of us to pray and the same to shout, and I found numbers were weeping and again I exhorted them to pray, and told them on my knees I supposed we were coming to a Methodist campmeeting, and then I found they had not had a service, and told them I felt as though I could not live. Two or three were praying, and one of them claimed their sins forgiven. So that made a little company of five Christians. I praised the Lord on my knees for the little revival, and told Him He must help us every minute we stayed on that campground.

Toward evening the presiding elder, preachers and the people became tired of boat-riding, bathing, and nonsense, and so came into the camp, and it was whispered around, "There is a woman here who lives without sin." The elder made some inquiry, and they told him how I felt because there were no religious services there, and he appointed a four-o'clock prayer-meeting, and put in one of the preacher boys to lead it. When we were assembled they sung a hymn, and this little trembling man arose and said, "I feel it is a great cross to stand here and so many elder preachers on the ground that decline this service, but I will do the best I can." He talked, I suppose, ten minutes, with trembling, and said, "I don't feel prepared, and I feel I need a great deal more from God." My heart burned so I prayed he might sit down and give me an opportunity, which he did. The elder was there and looked around and said, "If there is any one here that has anything to say, be free and improve the time." No one moved. He repeated it. As I raised to my feet I said: "That must mean me; my heart is burning hot, and I feel as if there was a volcano pent up. I expected to come to a religious meeting, wanted to come here to love-feast, got almost mired in the sand, and when I got here it was two o'clock in the evening, and here I only found two women. I can not tell you how my heart aches; don't suppose you can understand how I do feel, but I do want to see sinners saved, and how can sinners be saved if we don't care whether they are saved or lost." As I talked I turned round and round, and the tears ran, and I told them it was not possible for me to live if I were not at a place where souls were either getting saved or sanctified. I exhorted a few minutes, and the Lord blessed the given message. When I sat down the elder said, "Somebody lead in prayer." There was no one ready and so again he asked them to pray. The Holy Ghost prayed through my soul till my lips were on fire, and I told the Lord just how I felt to find people

without the Spirit of prayer, and so many preachers without any message, and told the Lord He must help me or I would die in that place. One other prayed after I was through and asked the Lord for help. When we were dismissed the elder came to me and said, "Will you take a meeting tomorrow at half-past ten o'clock?" I said, "Did the Lord send you?" "Yes," he said, "I believe He did." "Very well," I answered, "I will take the meeting." And he gave it out as a woman's meeting, so the men were obliged to stay out. I spent a sleepless night my agony was beyond expression.

The hour came, the bell rang, and about forty women came to the service. God helped me for about half an hour. As I read and expounded I saw one after another hang their heads. I said: "This is God's word, not my own; we must be careful how we hear, for awful results hang upon this meeting today." Tears began to run down every face. "I have never seen anything like this in all my religious experience, and my husband has paid my board for eight days; I wonder if it is possible for me to live that length of time. I have not closed my eyes; I have been with Jesus Christ in Gethsemane all night long. There are scores of people on this campground that are putting Him to death. I can not but speak; I must get rid of this sorrow, which belongs upon your souls and not mine. I do praise God for the privilege of standing before you that I may be delivered, and that your blood be not upon me in that day." Everybody was weeping. "Every one of you that want to get saved, kneel down," I requested of them. Every one knelt and the entire crowd were weeping and praying. We were not nearly through when the dinner bell rang, and I said: "If any of you want your dinner worse than you want your soul saved, go on; but if you stay I certainly shall. I think it would do us good to fast, and all I ask is that you may be saved this day." So we prayed on, and at the preacher's table the meeting was discussed, and the elder said, "I have never seen anything like this; I wonder if she doesn't know it is dinner time." Another said, "Well, that woman has got real salvation," and the elder remarked, "I don't want any such thing here." Another said, "Does she not keep to the Bible line? Does she not talk just like the Bible?" and again the elder said, "We can not have it here." The third man said, "If she talks as the Scriptures do how can we forbid her?" "This doctrine of living without sin splits the church," he made answer. "Well," somebody else said, "let it split." Again he said, "We can't have it."

When the meeting was through there were fifteen or twenty that had the witness of the Spirit, and we made the little tabernacle ring with shouts and songs, and the rest said, "I am going to seek till I get through," but that ended my meetings; they would not allow me to hold another. There were many sad hearts when they knew that the real salvation services were closed, and the discussion about the "sinless woman" ran on the entire eight days. There was not one seeker, nor could I see nor feel conviction on one soul except a few that came to me personally.

The presiding elder's daughter, a beautiful girl, came to me alone and said, "You testified to leaving off your gold and costly apparel, and I never heard before that it was wrong to wear such. My father, the presiding elder, buys all the gold for me that he can afford." She talked with tears, saying she wanted to be right, but was confused. I pointed her to passages that were very plain, such as I Peter 3 :3, 4, and I Timothy 2 :8, 9, 10, and then told her that the whole teaching and spirit of the gospel was of the same stamp, and exhorted her to read the Bible, especially the New Testament, through on her knees.

The presiding elder had novels on his table in plain sight, so any one going in could see them. God laid it on me to testify on every line; about choosing our companions among the saints,

on our conversation, and on prayer, the witness of the Spirit and on entire sanctification, and on being filled with the Spirit, and that Christians were called to walk as Jesus walked, and be as separate from the world, then they would not only get the persecution that was promised to all that would live godly, but they would find out what it meant, to have tribulations, but when they came to that experience they would be exceedingly joyful in it all.

The Lord lifted me far above their censure; indeed, He did not allow me to feel it. I must have had the experience of the poet when he said,

"I then rode on the sky  
Freely justified I,  
Nor did envy Elijah his seat."

My soul seemed like the wings of the morning, and I could not have been more at home among my own dear people, except that I could not reach the multitude as I could have, had I had the privilege of holding meetings. They followed me like sheep without a shepherd, but the talk and criticisms kept many of them back so that there were only a few that remained. I improved every possible opportunity for prayer, testimony and exhortation.

There was one Free Methodist on that ground. He had at one time been our elder on the district where we lived. I asked him how he could go on and keep so still, and he said, "I am gathering facts; I am getting all things together, and I do thank God, Sister Coon, that you go right on and don't mind anybody. I am going to see you again, and will say more to you." He had kept so in the background, not even prayed in public nor given one testimony that they were not aware of his being a Free Methodist, but found out he was a preacher.

He came to me in haste one day, and said, "Come to our tent; my wife is very, very ill, and she knows there is no elder here but you and me. She was a Baptist woman when I married her, and she would not let one of these lay their hands on her, and so she wants you to come."

I found her very sick and it seemed she might not live twenty minutes. We laid our hands on her head and prayed, and inside of five minutes she was healed. He then told me that at one time she broke her finger and he wanted to have a doctor to set it but she refused. She said, "If Jesus cures it I know it shall be all right, and if the doctor touches it he may want to take it off after a little, and I want my finger," so she told Jesus about it. The finger was a little crooked, but she used it well. She said, "When anything serious is the matter with me, if I can get where there are saints, I am always sure God will bring me out all right."

They had made great sport of this tent, as it was made of just two widths of cotton cloth, with no walls, and the bed was made of straw, but the Lord so fixed it that he was put up to preach the last day of their meeting. They had an organ and a platform, and up on some high poles they had a pair of deer's horns spreading out. The elder and some of the preachers sat in the pulpit with him. He told me what his text was, but I have forgotten, but he took up the line of the old Wesleyan Methodists. He said God so helped him that you could feel an army of those old sanctified worthies, and he said those in the congregation looked from one to the other as though they were trying to find some of these in the congregation that he was preaching about. Then he told them

there had been just such a one in this campmeeting. "And," he said, "I have known that woman twenty-five years and know she lives just what she is talking about. She is a real old-time Methodist, and you have done unto her whatsoever you listeth, and, remember, all these things you have done unto Jesus Christ, for He sent her to this meeting. She read in the paper that this meeting was for the purpose of saving sinners, and to my knowledge there has not been one saved except in that meeting that woman held, and I want to tell you, for God has put it on me, you would have treated Jesus Christ the same today were He to come here and talk as she did, or He did when He was among men and as His truth talks in the Bible. It is true you have an organ here and somebody to play it, and you have also these devil's horns up here, and it has been more a place of devilry than anything good or religious. I have been here ever since this meeting began, and before, and have seen and heard with anxiety of spirit, my very soul has been stirred to its depths, and I can do nothing less than to tell you the truth, and unless you repent of your wickedness you will perish. Heaven was prepared for a holy people, and you set at naught and scoff at such a one, and unless you do repent and get converted you will have all eternity to regret and mourn. There has been sin enough committed on this ground in feelings and talk against that sanctified woman to damn the whole of you unless you repent."

He told me these things himself, for he was living at Alameda, near San Francisco, where I spent the summer.

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## CHAPTER 21

Holiness Meetings -- An Insane Woman Delivered -- Goes to Another Camp-Meeting -- Preachers All Use Tobacco -- Gives Them the Truth in the First Meeting -- Grand Altar Service -- Three Young Preachers Saved -- A Big Stir

Sister McKendree Bishop, of San Francisco, opened her parlors for holiness meeting. At first there were only a few. As we had no preacher, they put me in charge. There were a few Free Methodists and we invited every one, had a nice room filled, and God began to work in every heart. Some were seeking pardon, others purity.

One night there came a woman with disheveled hair and a strange look in the eye, and said, "I don't know whether you want me to come in or not, but I rode in Naaman's chariot." Every eye was turned toward that woman. I soon saw that she was insane. She shook her head till her hair hung over her face, and, after looking to Jesus in silence, I said, "We have a strange case on hand, but Jesus Christ is able for all. When he was here he cast out devils by His word, healed the sick of every kind, so let no one be disturbed nor afraid, but look to God to come in power. This day we must prevail, for I am sure Jesus wants to show His mighty power today." I quoted Scriptures like Mat. 4: 24. I stepped over to her side and said, "Let us pray," and kept my hand either on her head or shoulder and stroked her hair, put it back from over her eyes, and began to say, "Jesus, touch this darling. Thou knowest how she is tormented. Oh, have mercy on her and deliver her." She soon laid her head on my shoulder and was quieted. Before this she had gnashed her teeth, and I still prayed with the laying on of hands and the Holy Ghost came in power, the little band prevailed, and our prayers went up together, and when we got up from our knees she said, "Keep

praying for me, for Jesus has heard your prayers and I believe He is going to deliver me fully." We had a precious meeting and appointed one for the next week, and the precious woman came again. She took her seat close to me and while I talked said, "Amen," and then standing to her feet said, "I am much better than when I came here last week; I have lost my hold on Jesus, but I am coming back." Then she told us she had been an Adventist and had been to one of their gatherings and had lost her mind, but that Jesus was helping her back. "My husband is so delighted," she said, "that he does not know what to do. I am going to get all right." I told her to claim perfect deliverance right here and now. She did so, and was delivered. She was a lovely character. Her husband was a very rich man, and said he would be willing to do or give anything to have his wife right again, for she was such a lovely mother, and they had a number of small children, and he had been heart-broken. She came for weeks, and was all right. She had, in that time, told me all about the Adventists and their belief, also their ways at meeting, and I warned her to keep away from them lest a worse thing come upon her, for I saw she was very easily led by any one whom she had confidence in. One day coming in, she said, "I want you to go with me to the camp-meeting." I asked where. She said, "Among the Adventists, for now I know I have received perfect love in these little meetings and there are many good people among them, and I believe if you and I go they will take the light and leave what is wrong and follow the good." I told her I never allowed myself to go among such people; if they come to me, all right, but I would not throw myself into such a place, for I have known them, or of them, for years, and there is no safety only to stay away. I told her not to think of such a thing, and if she knew of any of them that would be apt to listen, they will come to your home when they hear of your restoration and salvation. That is as far as you can go with them without again being in danger, and then it would likely last you a life time. She went. I missed her in our next meeting, and inquired and found that she was at the campground. The next week she came again, and she was as wild and much more insane than at first. That was just before I left California to come home. It has left a lifelong sadness to think of the case of that woman who likely spent her life in the asylum, if she is still living, and of those lovely little motherless children, and the heart-broken husband. This is not all I know of such things among the Adventists, but sufficient to warn others to keep as far away from them as possible.

It was not long till I received an invitation from the Methodist South to come to a campmeeting some sixty miles away. Somehow they had heard that there was a woman from Illinois that lived without sin, and were very anxious I should come there, as their meeting had already run two weeks and nothing done. My husband had gone back home and McKendree Bishop's first wife (where I was staying) took the cars, and they knew when to meet us, so they came six miles in a covered conveyance. The brother and one other were both spitting and chewing tobacco. Brother Bishop was with us and I spoke in a low tone of voice and said, "I hope they don't all use tobacco."

"Most of the men do," he answered, "and that one is the Presiding Elder."

"Well," I said, "we have gotten into a terrible thing now. You knew all these things and you were very anxious for us to come, and now whatever I say or do you can take the responsibility."

"We will see when we get there."

The tobacco juice kept flying from both of them, and when we drove on to the ground there were a group of men all smoking and chewing, and I spoke as though I did not know he was the presiding elder, "Do they allow rowdies to come right in the circle of tents to smoke and chew?"

Brother Bishop shook his finger and said, "They are all preachers."

"Well," I said, "the Lord have mercy on them and me." They soon had dinner ready, and they gave us a tent and were very hospitable and looked at us as if we might have come out of the skies, for they were dressed up folks. They took us to our little room and said, "Make yourselves at home." We were soon on our knees and she said, "Let us go back -- turn right around home."

"We will pray first and find God's mind about it," I said. We were both baptized with tears and I said, "Jennie Bishop, will you stand by Jesus Christ amid reproach and shame, for I am full of messages that burn like fire; will you stand right up close to me?"

"I will," she replied, "if I shall die."

Her husband stood and looked on, for he was not a baptized man, but would stand up for the people that were. We told them we did not wish any dinner, but felt like fasting and praying. They looked at us strangely and said, "That will never do; we know you are very tired and we want you in the first meeting, and you must take a little." And so we went with them. They put a man up to preach who tried to talk, but he made a bungle. I never could tell what was his text nor much of what he said, for it seemed to me I had the ague and shook till I groaned.

Finally he sat down and the elder said, "If any one has anything to say, let them be free to do so," and somehow all eyes were upon me, but, more than that, the Holy Ghost was in my soul. I arose, turned clear around and looked every preacher in the face and said, "I am here for Jesus' sake. I can not say my preference is here, but for His sake I can take my cross a lifetime, but never found myself with just such surroundings as are here." Then I talked to them about conviction, what people did when they were under awakening conviction, and when they came to confess they had to confess all their meanness and they were obliged to give up every appetite, and I talked half an hour about conviction from God, and then quoted Scripture about the witness of the Spirit and how converted people acted, and about their conversation and about their dress, and the way they did business, and that in these days no one, at least among us, could say they were clear and use tobacco in any form, all the tobacco mongers were cleared up, and not one could join us that used it. I turned around again and looked in all their faces. There were two or three of the young preachers that began to weep. They were down in the congregation where I could look in their faces. I said, "We are commanded to cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Ministers, did you ever read that in the Bible? If you have, you will likely have to take that for a text." Then I talked a little longer about my own experience; how God found me a lawyer's proud wife, with silk and gold, and how the Bible talked to me in Timothy and Peter about women's adorning, how that they should not be clad in gold, pearls, nor costly array, but their adorning should be a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God a great price, and soon an elderly woman sprang to her feet clapping her hands, saying, "Glory to God! this is the old-time religion." She flew around the camp, shaking hands and laying her hands on people's heads, some of the time jumping and continually shouting, "Glory to God." She looked

in my face and said, "God bless you; I praise Him you are here." I said, "I could not praise Him I was here till just now. It seemed terrible to me when I drove up to the ground, but since seeing you so happy and blessed I can praise the Lord, too, that I am here. It does look a little like I am to have a few souls here." Those three preachers raised to their feet with tears streaming down their faces and said, "We are going forward for prayers," and they, with a few women, marched to the anxious seat. Those preachers that sat close to me had blanched faces. They looked as though they would like to sink out of sight. I invited everybody to the altar who was ready to get saved. "But," I said, "I don't want to carry a lot of people on hand that don't mean anything and are not ready to pray for themselves." A number more came, and I made my way down among them. I can not remember just what became of those preachers up in the stand, but God came in our midst in power and those three young preachers prayed through into liberty and two or three women got help, and the old lady kept on shouting. I began to feel very rich, for this was beyond all expectation. Our little testimony meeting was precious. These young preachers said that they had felt for a long time that they had not had the experience they ought to have had, but that they had been afraid to make it known for fear those elders would think they were trying to be something.

"You do want to be something; you want to be men of God, and you want to go right on and be sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost and fire."

"Yes," they said, "that is what we will do."

The presiding elder and some others hardly knew what to do with us, but they put up another man preacher in the evening. There was quite a nice little congregation, but he floundered around and tried to get up some feeling. Before sitting down he said, "All of you that want to love Jesus come and shake hands with me." No one moved. Again he said, "I want to shake hands with every one of you that want to love Jesus." Nobody moved. He sat down, saying, "If any one has anything to say, say it." I talked a few moments and my mother heart went out to those strangers, and I told them how I was once far away from my Saviour, so proud and yet such a coward, but somehow God had from the very beginning of my life given me such wonderful love for little children, and since my conversion wherever I went the young people were right in my heart, and I want them all for Jesus. I said,

"It would not convert you to come here and shake hands with me nor anybody else. You will be obliged to repent of your sins and forsake them and all your evil ways and come to God through Jesus and get converted, then the shaking of hands will be in you and, more than that, the shouts of triumph, and you will find yourselves separate from the world and you will have victory every day over the flesh and the devil." The power of God struck every one of us who had the witness of the Spirit and I said, "Every one of you that feel that you are not right and your need of a Saviour, and believe that this is the way and really give yourselves up to God and get the witness of the Spirit that you belong to Him, stand up on your feet." There was a little army standing. I said, "As many of you that are ready to come in that way, kneel down." Some came, others watched to see what should be done, and so the meeting went on, but the elder and two other preachers were very glum, and soon left the ground, but I did not see any more tobacco juice nor smoke inside the circle of tents. While we were there quite a number were saved, but it seemed almost impossible for men to give up their tobacco. Of course they were held from doing or saying anything. The work went on more among the women, but these three preachers kept right on and stood nobly by

and were ready to talk and exhort and pray, and they were the only preachers that had any power in the pulpit. They asked me to always remember them in my prayers, and as often as I think of those days I do so. I found that many of those preachers not only used wine, but brandy and whisky. God helped us to hold the light up on every line.

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## CHAPTER 22

Invited to San Jose -- Preacher Thanked God that Methodism Is Not Now Like It Was in Wesley's Time -- Too Much for Auntie -- She Gives Them the Straight Truth -- Camp-Meeting at Stockton -- Glorious Break -- Preacher and Members Get Saved -- Presiding Elder Fears it "Will Split the Church" -- He Leaves and The Holy Ghost gets His Way.

I was sent for to go to San Jose. One of our local preachers had a home there and heard that I was in the city, so invited me to stay a few days with them, and came over after me. He was obliged to come by stage forty miles, and the dust was so deep, as it rains there only once a year, that I was obliged to breathe through a cloth to live the whole journey. Our Brother Stanard, (for that was the brother's name,) said, "I want you to go to church with us and see what we have to go through." I asked him what he was doing that he did not have a church for Jesus. Told him that if I only had one room fifteen feet square and there was no place where they served God, I would turn it into a prayer-room and have God raise up a little pilgrim band, and when we were in Illinois, I thought that was the kind of man he was.

"Well, Sister Coon," he said, "I have become discouraged a good deal."

"That is not doing you any good," I remarked.

Sabbath came and we went to the Methodist church. I think the preacher had heard that there was a stranger there, and he preached as though the Methodist church was now the most wonderful thing, and he thanked God that Methodism was not as it was in old Mr. Wesley's days, when they wore their broad-brimmed hats and were as plain as Quakers, and then he looked around as though he was trying to find some one of that stamp, and I thought if there was one moment given I would get up and occupy that time, but as soon as he was through he said, "There will be class meeting down in the basement." Then he dismissed them. The brother, with wife and myself, went to the class-meeting. The leader looked as though he hardly knew what to say, as he had nothing in himself to prompt, reprove or comfort, and after a little time spoke to Brother Stanard, as he knew him. He talked with quite a little courage and said, "I don't enjoy all I once had, but I feel as though it was time I did. Here is a sister from Illinois, and I would like for her to have the privilege of talking a few minutes."

The class leader granted the request, and soon after I had commenced the preacher came in. I gave just a little of my first experience, for I knew there was not much time, but in my talk I thanked God there ever was such a man as Wesley and that I had been really converted and sanctified and filled with the Spirit, and that I had ever been permitted to read of him and that I really was of the same stamp. God had shown me a line of separation from the world and that I did

not find it a play spell, for I was two weeks dying out to the world and my friends, and it meant something to have my relatives decide against me, and with threats shut the door in my face, but I find it was the same in Wesley's days, and then from the Scriptures I find that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. I had taken the clean track, and God had given me just as much of His spirit as I could live under. It seems sometimes as though one added drop would take my soul from my body, and He had also given me scores of souls. The worldly attire was the smallest part to give up. Proud as I was, God had so changed me that the plain pilgrim garb looked beautiful, and when I heard such men as Wesley and other holy men held up in derision I felt that I would stand up my bigness, with the dignity that God puts on His sanctified ones, and say I belong to them.

The Holy Ghost endorsed it, and the flow of joy was glorious.

The preacher had not one word to offer. They asked me how long I was going to stay, and I said, "This is the first and last time till we meet at the judgment." But our Brother Stanard began to get hungry, and at our family altar at his home prayed through, and he and his wife began to catch the fire, and he kept right at the work till his soul was all ablaze. I praise God that at every point He gave me a few trophies in that land of gold and idolatry.

Brother Bishop received word that himself, with brother and his wife, and every one that walked with God that he could bring along should go to Stockton, and if his brother would come, for he had labored there years before, they would pay his fare both ways and would board us all. He wrote back that there was a sister from Illinois whom he had known for years, then told some things concerning me, and he replied, "Be sure to bring her with you."

If I remember right it was forty miles, might have been sixty.

They were glad to see us, as the meeting had been running two weeks and they seemed tied up and everything was dead; no one could move. We were very tired, so they let us go behind the curtain and lie down to rest a little (Sister Bishop and myself) . Instead of sleeping, we heard a Conversation between Brother Bishop and a man whom we afterwards knew to be the presiding elder. He asked Brother Bishop whom he had brought beside his wife, and he told him a sister from Illinois. He said, "What is she?" He replied, "A Methodist."

"Well, I hear she is a sinless woman."

"She is a sanctified woman," Brother Bishop replied, "and I have known her ever since I was a boy, and she lives just what she professes."

He had some doubts about its being wise to bring such a one.

"I supposed you wanted somebody," Brother Bishop said, "that could help here, and I heard that the meeting had been running two weeks and everything was dead. When the call came I sent word that there was a sanctified woman with us, and if we came at all we would bring her." The answer came back, "That is just what we want on this campground, for there is a load here that

we are not able to pull out, and if there is anybody that can pray through and touch God we want that one."

After they were through their conversation we came out and meeting was announced, and word came that they wanted me to take the meeting. It was in the afternoon, and I preferred some one else to take the first meeting, but they said, "No, we can do nothing; there is no Spirit here." They sang an old hymn

"Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb,  
And shall I fear to own His cause,  
Or blush to speak His name?"

As I read the hymn I talked as the Spirit gave utterance. Tears were in some eyes, and my soul trembled as the leaves of a tree, not knowing the name of one except our little party. I called on the little burdened Sister Bishop to pray, then I prayed also. We told God why we were in that place; that we had no other motive, desire or ambition but to glorify Him and see souls saved, and as we prayed the Holy Spirit came and shut us in. When we arose I talked a little to them from John, 15th chapter, simply reading and expounding. The Holy Spirit helped in a wonderful way.

Then I asked how many bore fruit, how many had been cut off from the branch and had withered, and how many church members if they were to die today were to be cast into the fire to burn. Tears were running down some cheeks and I asked how many would kneel for prayers at the altar, and how many were ready to be purged, how many were ready and determined to be clean, and three brothers took their places, and others knelt, but not at the altar. Six of us prayed through, and Brother Cummins, the pastor, told the Lord all his heart, how he had been trying to be true, but every word he said and every time he prayed it was like going against a wall, and that he would get clear, and that he would not rest until he was not only fully saved, but a sanctified man. God came to him in power. The other two brethren followed and were blessed. Many turned pale and were mightily shaken, and these two preachers were ready for testimony. The pastor turned 'round and 'round, and lifting up his hand said, "I will get ready for work or die. I am sick and tired of being nothing," and then he exhorted the people to get down before God, for He had shown him on his knees that he was going to work, and he wanted the members to get out of the way so we could get the sinners, and he was ready to preach that evening. I felt sometimes while I was speaking that by the power of God I could lift up that region and see it crushed to pieces. He called on me to exhort when he was through, and all I had to do was to open my mouth, for He filled it, and when I stopped speaking the altar was filled with church members. God let His old flail come down and thresh out the grain, and with cries, groans and shouts, such as is always the case when people get to God. I did not sleep much that night, was burdened for the meeting till we met next morning. Instead of love feast we had prayer-meeting. I talked a few minutes on prayer, then asked every one that felt they could not live any longer without the witness of the Spirit, that they should turn to God and come to the altar. Again it was filled. God was in our midst and souls were saved. The presiding elder was in a terrible way. He took Brother Bishop to one side and said, "I don't like that woman to talk as she does." Brother Bishop asked him what was the matter and what was wrong, and asked if she did not teach according to the Scriptures?

"Well," he said, "I don't want it here, for it will split the church."

"When we came here there was nothing to split," Brother Bishop replied, "everything was dead and the meeting had been going on two weeks and not one thing done, and I supposed you would be glad to let God use any one."

"Well," he said, "she professes to live without sin."

"Yes, and she does," Brother Bishop answered, "and, my brother, do you live in sin?"

"Yes, we all do."

"Beg pardon, I know my wife lives without sin, and we are told in the Bible 'He that sinneth is of the devil, and he that is begotten of God doth not sin and if we are born of God His seed remaineth in us and we can not sin, because we are born of God!' My brother, what do you mean? your members are repenting and getting back to God -- to their first love -- you ought to be glad to see this going on."

When it was time for the evening service the elder took the Bible and took the service. His text was John 14:12. He tried to talk from it, and spoke like an angry man and turned around and looked at us and said, "Well, how will that do; is that strong enough for you?" he closed his Bible, put it under his arm and started across the lots for the train. So we had meeting in the name of the Lord. I exhorted a few minutes and all that knew they were freely justified I called forward for holiness, and all backsliders to come and get saved, and any who had never been converted that were under sufficient conviction to pray for themselves. The preachers who were blessed came for holiness and numbers of the members and a few sinners, and we had one real Holy Ghost prayer-meeting. where seemingly every one forgot the other and talked to God for what they wanted. The Spirit was poured out and many were on their feet speaking as the Spirit gave utterance, and though I slept very little at night all my soul was glad I was there. That evening was one never to be forgotten. While I was talking to sinners I noticed one man near the front turn pale and begin to shake, and I said, "Somebody here ought to deliver their soul right away. God is talking to some man and He wants him to speak now." This man arose and said, "It is time for me to speak. You all around here know that I am an infidel, and have been teaching it to others for fifteen years, and I have piles of books that teach this infernal thing and I am going to burn them up, I have told the Lord so. I am ready to go forward for prayers and must find God."

He stood up on the seat and asked everybody's forgiveness; told them how he felt the pains of hell for what he had been doing. "Oh," he said, "if I only could take my influence away from all the souls I have hindered from coming to Jesus I would be glad to do anything." I told him all God required was the very utmost that he was capable of doing and undoing.

"That I will do, God being my helper," he said.

Others followed, and such praying and crying and such agony of soul as causes saints to rejoice and the angels to be glad was heard. The next morning being the third we had old-fashioned love feast. God liberated many souls. The meeting ran at high tide, and so it ran on

for one week. It seemed a pity to close the meeting, but we were obliged to go. I shall never forget the hand-shakings and the good-byes and the streaming tears and the hallelujahs. While we were getting ready to take the carriage for the cars a woman threw herself beside the carriage on her knees and said, "Don't go; hold on till I am saved." We remained and prayed till she was through. I have given all the glory to Jesus many, many times for the souls I saw saved in California. I expect to meet many on that great coronation day. We went back to San Francisco to continue our blessed little holiness gathering. God continued to work in power, and when I turned my feet and eyes homeward it was with weeping. I shall never forget the saints nor the places I visited in that land of death.

There were two sisters at that same meeting. They were both in plain attire, and as soon as they could had their arms around me and said, "We know you do not live in this land, but we want to keep close to you as long as we can, and we want you to go to the penitentiary with us." I did so, and had the opportunity of speaking to three hundred in open court. Despair was depicted on many faces. One beautiful young man, or rather boy, of sixteen, my heart weeps as I see him standing before me, though that was many, many years ago. He was beautiful as a picture, dressed as neatly and handsomely as though he was going to the theater, and while I talked he wept, and when I was through I stepped close to him, and through the window or opening I said, "My dear boy, why are you here?"

"For my sins," he answered.

"Do you know that Jesus came into this world to save such from their sins?"

"Yes."

"Is this the first time you have been here?"

"No, ma'am, the third."

We wept together and my very soul was stirred and I loved him as though he had been my own and told him so. That made his tears run fast. I asked if he had a father and mother?

"Oh, yes," he made reply.

I asked how he could be there and live and know that his mother's heart was so crushed and broken?

"If I live," he said, "I will never come back any more;" then he told me that he believed that Jesus had forgiven him. I asked if I could do anything more for him.

"Nothing more for me, thank you."

I then talked with others as long as my strength would permit. They begged for reading, and asked if I could get candles for them that they might read in the evening, which they had not been allowed to do. I told them that I would see that they had reading and light. There were women

there, many that were so hardened that they looked fiendish. When I left the place they asked me to come again.

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## CHAPTER 23

Meeting at Elgin, Ill. -- Scores Converted -- Entertains Thirty at Her Own Home During Quarterly Meeting -- Sad End of an Opposer

Twenty-five years ago there came a call to us at Marengo for our pastor to come and help in the protracted meeting at Elgin. We gave consent for him to go for two weeks, and he was very anxious I should go also. I told him I felt it would be necessary for me to stay at home the two Sabbaths he was away. He went. Their pastor was a young man. It needed much work and going down among the members, and they and himself were very anxious I should come to the meeting. The church at Elgin at that time was small, and soon after I went I felt we must have a larger house, and took it to the Lord. The pastor put me in lead of class-meeting and he did the preaching. It was impossible for us to hold our meeting with only our members, for the evening meetings had made such a stir that the house would be full, but God helped us to pray until all the members humbled themselves and the Lord began to send the Holy Ghost. Some of the Presbyterians came to our meetings and were very much stirred, and offered us their church. We moved and the Lord went with us. Congregations were very large, and seekers came every night and a few were converted, others came back the next night as seekers, and again we were obliged to fast and pray that we might go down in such a way that we could prevail with God, and the seekers were held to thorough work, and they went down also. The Lord laid on the burdens and souls came through, and occasionally the upper world glory came down.

I had my home during that meeting with an old Baptist auntie -- so poor that the town was obliged to help her, as she was too old to wash any more for her living. The Free Methodists were so far away it was impossible for me to get to them. She had one little room, a bed, stove and a few old chairs, and a little old table with an oilcloth on it. When it rained the soot came down the stovepipe. I had money, so I could set the table as I liked, and she would sit up at night, many times till midnight, for we were unwilling to leave any to go before they were saved, and she would sit up until I came back. This precious old auntie would watch for me at the gate or door and would say when I came, "There comes my dear comforter. Oh, what shall I do when you are gone." She often said, "I don't want you to feel that you are making me any work, for these are the best days of my life." I found it was not best to trust her with money for she would give it away before night, and sometimes if she had a nice dress or apron that would go in the same way. I have always remembered my stay with that precious pauper as one of my blessing places. Had my husband seen it he would have been very much mortified, but to me it was a little paradise. And the privilege of being near my meeting place, that I might give all my time, strength and groans and all my soul to the service of Him whom I adored. All for souls, and He gave them. At the end of six weeks they numbered, I think, sixty-three, young men and women, a few backsliders, and two or three older ones who had never been members.

We had a district meeting in a little while in Marengo and invited all the converts from Elgin and as many others as desired to come. I told my husband we would put up all the beds, as we had done before, so that we could keep twenty-five and feed thirty. I told him about the meeting and I was so glad he was at home that he might know what I was doing those six weeks in Elgin. They came like an army, filled with heaven -- every one a real pilgrim. We lengthened the extension table and put another with it, so we had thirty converts at one time in our dining-room. When my husband came from his office I took his arm and took him in to see my children. He shook hands as I introduced him, and looking in their faces said, "Well, I declare you are a nice lot of young folks and I don't blame my wife for being proud of you, but I don't want you to be spoiled, so don't think you all have to preach, but I am glad to have you all here."

He asked me if I could take care of all at night. I said, "No, but the man that owns the hotel told me I could use all the beds and rooms I needed, free of charge." He was a very wicked man, whose mother had been a drunken Spiritualist, and his father one of the vilest, but in that way I got him to our meetings. The meeting continued from Thursday night to Sunday night. He was very much taken with them, and often attended our meetings from that time for years.

While in Elgin, word came that a rich lady wanted me as guest in her home for ten days. Sister Kimball, now living in Texas, told me to be sure and accept. She said, "They are Congregationalists, but the best kind of people. They are without children, and he is six miles away at Carpenterville; he owns the whole town there, and it has been named for him."

I went and found them very pleasant, and was asked to say grace at the table. I asked the privilege of family prayer, which was granted. I asked a few questions, as I only could see him in the evening. He said he was converted years ago. Then I asked him if he enjoyed the grace of God now. He made answer: "I am superintendent of a Sabbath-school and attend church, sometimes prayer-meeting." His wife said, "We don't enjoy what we once did. We used to have family prayers and enjoyed it, but we don't any more, and it makes me sad." He seemed quite touched. I exhorted them to seek the Lord until they again had the witness of pardon, and I also prayed that they might at once give their hearts to God. They wept; she profusely. I started for evening meeting and said, "Good-night, I suppose you will be gone in the morning." "Yes," he said, "I am too busy to attend to anything else but real business." Again I exhorted him to seek the Lord first, saying, "You may not have the opportunity long." And so it went on each night. We read the Scriptures and they knelt while I prayed. I noticed he was uneasy. Again I exhorted him and said, "My friend, I have such strange feelings I beg of you to seek the Lord right away." "I cannot," he replied, "I am too busy; I have not time to think." She burst out crying and said, "We both of us ought to seek the Lord, and I am going to." That time when we were alone she said, "I want to tell you some things. When I was saved I dressed plainer than I do now, and I did not wear these great long trains on my dress, and I am going to take them off again. My husband likes to see me like this, and I can not bear to think of making any change, but I must do it. I have not slept much at night since you came, for I see myself in such light that I can but weep, and my husband is so concerned because I am so sad."

"I can see -- at least I think so -- that he is sorry I am here," I said.

"I don't want you to feel it, for I know God sent you."

About the fourth day I said, "Sister Carpenter, any time that you wish me to change I will do so gladly."

"My husband is quite uneasy, but I don't want you to go yet; I want to get help before you leave."

She attended the meetings regularly, but not in the evening, when he was at home. He phoned her often and I could tell from her answers that he was asking if I were still there. I told her I was conscious of his feelings. "Yes," she said, "it is our constant talk in the evening and much of the night, for I can not sleep. God had hold of my heart, and oh, if my husband would only come back to the blessing he once enjoyed." I told her I felt very strangely about him. She said she did also.

The seventh evening he phoned her again and let her know he could not bear it any longer. I asked her if it was not so. Weeping, she said, "Yes." I felt so sorry, and said, "With all his feelings are you going to serve the Lord?" "I am," she said. "I don't dare to lay aside my silks and everything, as you have." I had told her my experience and how my husband felt and acted, and also how God had held and controlled matters until he felt I had done just the right thing, and that my plain clothes were just as nice as I could wear. I told her I would take my things and not come back again, and asked her if she would keep on attending the meetings. "All I possibly can," she answered. She asked me to keep praying for them. "The Spirit of the Lord told me that, and I need no other to prompt, for I have the most awful feelings about your husband, and unless you are very true to him and God he is a lost man."

The next week our meeting closed and we went home. In about another week I was sent for to come to Elgin as quickly as I could, for Mr. C was dying. We sent a dispatch and asked if he could converse. The answer was that he had been making out his will, and that his wife was made wealthy and many of his hired help and many relatives have received a great deal, but they want you to come and pray for his soul. They said he was very low and could hardly speak any more.

I talked to the Lord right away and He said, "Your work was done and the last good-bye was said," and he died without God. She almost went insane, and her friends guarded her so it was impossible for any one to have access or pray with her, for they said she would be insane on religion, she was nearly so before. I was willing and ready to go and help her through, for I knew the cause of her acting strangely as well as the sorrow of burying her husband, but I never saw her face again.

I write this that it may be a warning to all with whom the Spirit talks.

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## CHAPTER 24

Reveals Life Sorrow -- Mr. Coon's Infidelity -- She Finds Him Out After the Birth of Her First Child -- Follows Him at Different Time -- Several Women Confess to Her

I will now take up a part of this narrative that is much worse to me than death. I would gladly let it pass without mentioning, but for the sake of the heart-broken wives I undertake this terrible past. God has not only led me to comfort and encourage, but to see many such sad ones saved. My first knowledge of my husband being untrue to me was when our first little daughter was three days old. My hired girl came to me early one morning saying:

"I am going to leave, shall not stay another day, as things are going." She was a young girl doing housework. We had a nurse about twenty-two years old. I told her to say all she knew. She said, "I am afraid it will kill you if I do, but I can't stay if that nurse does." I said:

"Have you seen her do anything very bad?"

She said, "Your husband calls me out early in the morning, and then goes to her bed."

I said, "You be a good girl and stay with me, and I will see that she leaves this house today."

I was immediately taken with a chill. When my husband came home for dinner he said:

"What is the matter; are you worse?"

"But for this beautiful baby I would want to die this moment. You go and pay that nurse for the three days she has been here and tell her to leave the house."

"I shall not do that," he said, "for you will need her."

"Then I will do so," I replied, "there is no place in my house for such a character, and if you must be intimate with her it must be outside."

I immediately told her to go as quickly as possible. I came near dying, but knew he visited her daily. The young girl took the best care of me that she could. I was afraid to have a new one. Mother lived next door, and came and inquired why all this sorrow. I told her. She said, "I will take good care of your babe, dress it every day. You are in for a terrible life, but throw it off for the sake of this child." I only ate, slept and lived for my beautiful little one. I found that husband not only went to one, but spent many hours with two or three.

He seemed to love both me and our babe as much as such a man could love, and that seemed much worse than if he had shown no affection.

About one and one half years after the death of our little daughter I found I was to be mother again. Health very poor, and that constant, terrible sadness, dread of life and dread of terrible diseases that might come with such a life. Soon I found he went to one of our near neighbors and spent much time. My sister found out by going to that home and asking for sewing, as she was a dressmaker. She gave her a few days' work and gave her a room right over the one that was occupied by the women of the house. She heard different men come in, one at the time, knew

their voices, made an opening in the floor, and when my husband was there put her ear to the opening, heard and saw everything that went on. She came and told me, saying that she had a mind to kill him; that any man that would fake such measures to get me and bring such sorrow and disgrace she believed she would take his life. I begged her not to think of such a thing, for that would be two of you in hell. Twin girls were prematurely born. I begged and asked for death. They lived one hour, and again I was left in a world so lonely and dark; not one bright spot, not one desire for anything on earth, but I could not die. In two years I gave birth to another little daughter. Was comforted with her, and her father seemed delighted beyond expression, but still followed his terrible course. I lived in and for my child. In three and one-half years our son was born. Before this child was born I was quite helpless, could neither get in nor out of bed alone, nor turn over nor move my feet, so that when he was away with some one else, I was obliged to sit in my chair until he should come home, and for him to touch me with his hands and put me in bed seemed like burning my flesh with coals of fire.

One day he came in while I was suffering so, and I asked him if he would cut some wood to bake bread with, that being nearly ready to go in the oven. He replied:

"I can not stay a minute, I must go right to my office."

"You can cut enough in five minutes to bake the bread."

He said, "I must go right away, call some one else."

My sister still lived with us. After he was gone I stepped to the door, and instead of going to his office he went right to the door of this terrible house where he went so often. I could see both his office and this place from my door. I put on my bonnet and said, that if he is in that house ten minutes I will follow him. I don't see how I ever got there, but I took my little girl by the hand and knocked at the door and asked if my husband was there. Her oldest daughter, of the same character, said, "Yes, do you want him?" I said, "Tell him to come to this door as quickly as he can." He did so, and I said, "This is the way you go to the office instead of cutting us a little wood to bake with." He was speechless; tried to take my arm, for he knew I could hardly walk, had not walked that distance for months. I would not let him touch me nor the child. I said, "I want you at home now; I want to take your life." We were just passing the door of a store and he said:

"Come in, I will give you a silk dress."

"You come right home, I am going to kill you."

When we were inside the house and the door closed I asked him for his knife, for there was none sharp enough in the house. He put his hand over his pocket. I said:

"Give it to me this moment, you have lived too long already."

Of course I did not get the knife; he was speechless.

I said, "You have tortured me in every conceivable way, and why, when we had no children, did you not cut my throat?" Reminded him of how; about five months before, when I had talked to him about the terrible shame and sin, and he had with his own hand struck me in the face, and I lived in terrible fear and dread lest the child should bear the mark of the same. I asked him if he determined to make me get a bill of divorce. He said if I did he would follow me, no matter where.

Four months before the child was born I was taken with the most terrible asthma. No one thought I could live; I was obliged to sit up and take with my own fingers from my throat large pieces of clotted blood for six weeks. No one, not even my mother, as old as she was, had ever seen such a case. Had constantly a sensation as of a large quantity of matches close to me. No doctor dared take the case in hand. I told him to fix me something that would make me very sick at the stomach. I kept it where no one could see it and used it a long time, day and night. That was the only way I could live. The only thing I could take was a little gruel and porridge. All I can say is that it was not time for me to die.

At the birth of the child, which was our beautiful boy, it seemed impossible for me to live, both before and after. It seemed to me I passed through a thousand deaths, both mentally and physically, every week. It was a time of great sadness on account of my poor health, but great joy that a son had been born. My husband kissed that child from his head to his feet before he was dressed, and I hoped his life of that one terrible sin was passed, but he still went on the same. He talked as though he had never seen such a mother nor such a child; was not away as often nor as late at night.

It was not long before a strange woman came to my house; her lips were purple as though the blood was settled under the skin.

"I have come to confess my guilt to you," she said.

"If you have anything personally to say to me, say on."

She then told me of the times, places and money received, and that God had made her feel that hell was her home unless she confessed it.

I said, "What do you propose to do about it?" The least I could say to her was to confess her guilt to him, warn him and tell him how she felt about hell. She said she had to go to other women in this town and confess the same she had to me.

I said, "Don't you ever dare to do such a thing; those women you speak of have no grace; they will either kill you or leave their husbands. You confess to and warn those men, then stop sinning and turn to God with all your heart. I forgive freely if you sin no more, and I will pray for you until Jesus has mercy." She never came back any more, and I always felt that those men, some of them at least, threatened her life. She died as she lived.

The next winter we held protracted meetings in our little church. The little class were all on their knees getting ready for the work when a woman came running down the aisle and knelt by

my side, kissing the back of my hands, and said: "Whatever I do, must I go to hell?" She told me of her guilt. I said, "Why don't you stop this life of shame?"

She said, "I have tried, but I could get away from the devil easier than I could this one."

"You can if you will," I replied.

"Can you forgive me?"

I put my arms around her and said, "The day has been when I would have killed you, but I freely forgive you if you only will get to God; I will stay by you until you get through."

"I certainly will," she said; but did not. Their life of sin and shame continued twelve or fourteen years, perhaps longer. I went to her home one day, feeling sure he was there, but when I stepped in at the front door he slipped out at the back. I asked how long he had been gone, and she said about three minutes. I then put her life of sin and shame right before her face, and said that after all your resolves and promises you live just the same life of disgrace. She said:

"Yes, I can not get away from him."

"You are pushing yourself right into hell, deliberately, and God will let it come quickly, for you are ready for it."

The only word she had to say was "I curse him in my heart." She also died as she had lived.

I always told my husband at special times what I knew and when these women came to me confessing their sin, he was usually speechless.

When my little boy was three years old I felt I could not live any longer, and gave myself fully to God.

The intimacy between my husband and the woman where I went after him continued, I suppose, twenty years, also with her sister. They, the family, moved to California, and years after that when we went there to spend one summer on account of my poor health he went to see her right along. I was sure it was so, but he denied it flatly. A relative of this woman's wrote me a letter asking me if I went with my husband when he went to see this woman. I saw these things go on day after day and night after night. It seemed God would have it so. Sometimes I left my dinner or supper-table, and in looking out of my door or window, not knowing why I did so, would see him jump over the fence and go into the back-door of such places, sometimes one block and again only one half from my door. One place where he went eighteen or twenty years was right in front of the high-school where my daughter and adopted daughter attended.

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Conversion of Oldest Sister -- She Visits Auntie Coon -- Has Severe Illness but Gets Saved -- Goes Home and Starts Sunday-school and Prayer-Meetings -- Entire Neighborhood Converted -- Triumphant Death -- Auntie Adopts Her Little Girl -- Lizzie's Conversion

I will now speak of the conversion and triumphant death of my oldest sister.

Fifteen years before her death she was sent from Eugala, Wis., expecting to die with us. Her sickness was of such a terrible nature that we were obliged to stay by her to keep her on the bed, and finally were obliged to put her on the floor. The paroxysms were as of some living beast or some machine that would throw her from the bed and roll her over and over like a hoop, with her mouth wide open, and gas pouring out like fire or smoke from a volcano. We employed the best physician we could get. He said he did not see any chances for her life, but would do the best he could. My sorrow was intense because her soul was not saved, and her agony was so great that she could not pray. I kept the Bible continually in my hands or under my arm, and told the Lord He must not let her die until her soul was saved. I seemed to take her state upon me as much as I could and live, and cried day and night unto Him, "She shall not die until she is saved." She heard and saw the intense anxiety of my heart, but could not even shed a tear. In about two weeks the Lord said, "Your prayer is heard; it shall be as you say." I told my sister that I had gotten the answer that she should be saved.

She said, "I can not see how that can be."

The doctor had little hopes of her getting up, but with careful nursing in about six weeks she could sit in a chair. She seemed like one that had been dead, and I would get up close to her side every little while and read the Bible and pray little prayers, put my hand on her, and said, "Now darling, you must begin to pray." She said, "I will as best I can." It was like teaching a little child, but right away she commenced weeping, saying, "Oh, how wonderful, how wonderful that I should be sent way down here on a bed to die, and I am certainly getting stronger, and I am giving my heart to Jesus. Oh, I see it all; He was obliged to bring me through all this to save my soul. I love Him now; I shall be all the Lord's." I said, "Yes, you shall live to see your family converted." She took hold with wonderful courage for one so weak. She said, "I believe it; I shall live to go home and erect my family altar which shall never go down."

In three months she was able to go home by cars, boats, and then eighteen miles in a buggy. While still too weak to walk but little, she told them to take her carefully in a wagon to the schoolhouse, which was half a mile away. They had no church and no Sabbath-school had ever been in that community. She sent one of her boys all around to the neighbors telling them to meet her on Sunday at the schoolhouse.

The entire neighborhood was there, old and young, for they had expected to hear that she was dead, and when they came she said: "I want to organize a Sabbath-school. We all have children, and we are bringing them up like heathens. The Lord has converted my soul, and now I must work for Him and you must all help me."

They said, "We are no Christians."

"Well, you must be; I will sit in this chair and do what I can, and you must teach these children."

Of course the children were delighted. She organized them as best she could and picked out teachers for the classes, sat in her chair and prayed for old and young. The Lord began to work in power. She sent some distance and found a local preacher and told him they must begin a meeting right away. He came and said, "Yes, Mrs. Lamphere, I will do the best I can." She told the preacher that she had been converted down at her sister's, at Marengo, Ill., and said, "I want to know how many of you are Christians?" Not one could answer. She said, "We must begin to have prayer-meetings and every one of you must get saved." She exhorted the preacher that if he was not right to preach the gospel, he must get down before God until he was. The meeting began in earnest, and that winter nearly the entire neighborhood were converted to God. She held her place as superintendent, and when the snow was deep her husband and son took her on a little hand-sled. Many of the Sabbath-school children were converted at the same time, her entire family being among the number.

She lived fifteen years to sow the seed and water it with her tears, being faithful unto death. Now she wears a crown of life.

After I was too old to have any children of my own, I had a dream that I had a beautiful brown-eyed girl. God gave her to me, I can not tell just how. I told my husband, and he said he hoped it would be so. In about three years I went up the Mississippi river to see my sick sister. On arriving, I found she was going with rheumatic consumption. Her joy was almost overpowering, for she said: "I am going to die, and I want to leave my little daughter with you." We were alone, and I said that I had seen this child before. She asked how that was, and I told her my dream, and said, "This is the child."

She said, "My soul is satisfied; I can die happy, for I know you could bring her up better than I could, only don't be too careful of her; teach her to work and bring her up to be useful if she lives." The child herself looked as though she had consumption also. She said: "I know you look as though you would die first, but you will not; you will live to bring this little girl up, if she lives. You will leave her with me, Arvilla, until I get through, because she is my only little comfort." She was then in her eighth year. I stayed one month. She begged me not to go until I could take the child along, for then we would have her already with us, and if we waited until she died her husband would perhaps never let her come, and then she was sure she would be ruined, for her husband was a very bad man.

I begged of him to let them come home with me, and he said he did not have the means on hand, but would send them to me in the spring. Instead of coming to me she died in March. The day she left she had the preacher and all the neighbors for a mile around called in and told them all, right before his face, that little Lizzie belonged to her sister, Mrs. Coon. Then she talked to them about eternity, one by one, and collectively, though before this her voice had been gone for days. She then talked to the children and told the preacher she wanted him to bring the congregation that the Lord had given her to her in the skies. She said: "If this is death, let me always be dying; the happiest and brightest day of all my life. Will you join me in singing the old beautiful hymn,

'What is this that steals upon my frame,  
Is it death, is it death?  
If this be death I soon shall be  
From every pain and sorrow free,  
I shall the King of glory see ;  
All is well, all is well.'

They were weeping and could not sing, but as she outlined it so, she started out and sang it herself. And she sang:

"Bright angels are from glory come,  
They're around my bed,  
They're around my room,  
They wait to waft my spirit home,  
All is well, all is well."

We were born on the same day of the year, and she said, "Tell my sister, Arvilla, I will celebrate our birthday in glory. Be sure to send my little daughter to her. Good-by; Jesus has come."

The next June we sent my mother after the little girl. When she came into our door her first question was, "Where is she?"

"Who?"

"My mamma; my dear mamma."

My daughter made her appearance and said:

"You need not say mamma; your mamma has gone to heaven. Little girls never have but one mamma." That made it very hard for that little new girl, for she always watched her with a jealous eye. Mr. Coon said, "Lizzie, you call her mamma, for she is." The child followed me from room to room and into my closet, out to the well and in again, until it seemed impossible for me to put my feet down without stepping on her. My husband said one day, "Lizzie, why do you follow auntie so closely every step she takes?" She burst into a flood of tears and said, "I want to keep track of her."

"You shall, little darling, you shall go with her when she goes off to meetings, and you call her 'mamma,' no matter what Cora says."

She dared not do so in the presence of my own girl. I took comfort with that child such as no one can know. She told me her every wish and desire, but was very careful that we were alone. My own daughter made us a great deal of sorrow on account of the love we had for each other.

At one of our St. Charles camp-meetings I took my adopted daughter Lizzie, for I felt if she were separated for a time from all the members of the family she would be converted, for I knew she was under conviction, but dreaded to move out before the other members of the family, and without salvation it was hard for her to wear plain clothes. She was naturally proud and a very lovely girl.

There were many young people saved on the campground, and others who were not saved before. Every one loved her, and some of them often asked her to come to the altar, but without saying much would get away into our tent. The fourth day, at family prayers, God put the burden on my heart, and I felt this is the day that she must be saved. She went to the love-feast with me, and I felt conviction deepen, and after the sermon had the usual altar-call. She sat by my side, and I said, "Let's go forward." She turned pale and gasped, and said, "Auntie, how can I?" I said, "Only make up your mind that you are done with the world, and you will be the Lord's; then it will be easy for you to move."

"Let's go to the tent and pray," she said.

"It is a cross for you to move in public, and you will be obliged to take it. I would not, neither do I dare to make the way any easier for you than for a stranger. I want you to get through and stand on the Solid Rock. Take the cross and we will move right forward."

She went, but it seemed as though her breath would leave her body. She was pale and cold, and the terrible breathing still continued. Her eyes looked as though they might go out of their sockets. The saints gathered around, and I asked her to begin to pray. She shook and sighed, but not a sound. The burden on my heart grew more intense, and I said, "Lizzie, you must pray now," but not a word nor sound nor tear, but she wrung her hands, and we were in just this way for an hour. I said, "You must pray or be lost; you must not fight against God." Still she was speechless and commenced jerking. It seemed every joint in her body would be dislocated, and for a moment there came a terrible horror and fear that it might be death. Then God talked to me about the jerks they used to have in other days, and that she would get through all right if my faith was steady, and I told her she had to pray or die there and be lost, for I would never let go. Her agony was so great that it seemed her eyes would come out, and the hair be torn from her scalp. I began to cry, "Any way, any way, only save her, if she dies in ten minutes." Then she began to scream; "Yes, any way; I yield; I will hold out no more, and in a few minutes came through, happy, and face shining like heaven. She began to say, "Now Jessie [the hired girl] must be saved. I will gladly take my cross, and I can talk to anybody now, but uncle."

"You have not gotten to that yet," I replied, and if God wants you to talk to uncle, you can do that as easily as you can to Cora, and much easier, for he will not be jealous of you, but wants you to love and please auntie all you can, so don't give yourself one uneasy moment, for as long as God helps you and me we can go through anything, for if two of us agree we will never know defeat."

She enjoyed the rest of the camp-meeting, and as soon as we were at home tried to get the hired girl alone, but she saw at a glance that Lizzie was converted, and started to run out of the backdoor, and Lizzie after her.

"Jessie," she said, "you will have to get saved, for auntie and I shall never stop until you are." And in a few days at the family altar she broke down, and no one in the house to say a word against it but my precious daughter Cora, who had been jealous of our love for each other, and now still more so, and really set herself against everything that could be done for her soul, and her feelings toward Lizzie increased until Lizzie was married, and I don't know but as long as my daughter lived. She never told me that her mind was changed nor that she was sorry. She was very glad when Lizzie married, which was at the age of nineteen.

Soon after her conversion God called her to public work; texts would be given her in the night and she would get up to write. She was a good help in protracted meetings, and filled the pulpit a few times after marriage, but when she became a mother her work ceased in meetings, only just a common testimony, and of course lost the sweetness and power, and is today a formal church member in the Congregationalist church. I have shed many bitter tears over my darling, for God gave her to me for a preacher. She has begged of me to come and live with her the remainder of my life, but I can not; it would increase my sorrow, and as she is the last one of the children I have raised, it leaves great sadness on my heart continually, for I fear when I am gone there will not be one of my kindred who will stand up and boldly preach a full salvation.

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## CHAPTER 26

Cora's Jealousy -- She is Married -- Jealous of Her Own Little Girl -- Husband Leaves Her -- She Tries Business -- Little Hattie Gets Saved -- She and Bessie Sherman Hold Children's Meeting -- Wonderful Results --Hattie's Mother's Opposition.

My daughter Cora was not only jealous of Lizzie, but of her little brother also. It began as soon as he was born. She looked earnestly and intently at the new little baby brother. Her papa said:

"Isn't he a sweet little baby?"

"He's sweet enough, but I don't like him."

"Why, Cora, he is your little baby brother."

"I know it, but I don't want him here."

"What is the reason?"

"Because if he is here he will lie in my mamma's arms, and I won't have that."

"What shall we do with him?"

"Feed him to the pig."

We had three terrible days and nights. It seemed as though she would lose her mind. And when evening came, said, "Carry me to my mamma's bed." They told her mamma was very, very sick. .

"Take that baby boy right out of there and put me in there."

We tried to persuade, tried to hire, but still she said, "You need not say another word; I am going right in that bed on my mamma's arm."

I said, "Cora, that would kill me; you go to bed like a good little girl, and in the morning see how nice you will feel."

"I can't go into any other bed; I can't go. I must get in there."

"Well, I will call for a whip, and if I can whip I will have to punish you."

"Well, all right, get the whip and give it to mamma and put me on the bed and let her whip me, and then I am going to lie right down on her arm."

We were obliged to take her by main force to another room, but that jealousy was lifelong. It seemed sometimes it would kill the whole family.

She married when she was twenty-three. I had told the young man, six weeks before, of the terrible jealousy and what trouble she had caused us as a family, right before her face, and said, "You do not want to marry her." He said, "I know she is the woman God made on purpose for me." I told him my fears, and that judging from his looks and appearance every way -- he was a curly-headed, large lawyer -- he had not the best of dispositions. "Any man to live with my daughter must be the gentlest, kindest that any one possibly can be. Now I have told you, and now request that you wait one year until you get better acquainted." He had been away to school -- my husband had helped him through at Ann Arbor and he had only been at home about three months. He was often with my husband in his office, and was invited to dinner occasionally. Was only acquainted with my daughter six weeks before they were married.

When their only child was born I had hay fever again, terribly, and was taken to them in the night with my head covered, and remained a couple of days and nights. I was so ill myself I hardly knew anybody, not even my own children. My daughter was very sick, and I was obliged to take care of the child day and night, as she would not even let a nurse take it out of her sight, but in the night they were obliged to get a doctor for me, thinking I was dying. He said:

"Mrs. Coon, to save your own life you must get right out of this."

Of course she rebelled, but he said, "You must to save your life." I sent the very best nurse to her, but in three days she sent for me again, saying she should die if I did not come back. I went, but had the same to go over again, and as she was so exacting and nervous I was obliged to let the nurse go in two weeks and get another. Then she was brought home and I kept her with me just as

long as I could and live. Her life with him was hell on earth. In three years he became afraid she would kill herself, so left her and their beautiful child. I then brought them both home again. Her father and myself loved that little girl as much as we could love a child of our own, and she was jealous even of her. Would accuse her of loving "grandma" much more than her, and the dear little thing said, "Yes, I do; grandma is the sweetest grandma in the world, and mamma, you are so cross." She was then about five years old. "And mamma, you don't love anybody."

My daughter was so miserable, she said, "If you would only set me up in business, something that I could do, would be the best thing for us all."

Her father said, "There is nobody that would be in business with you, you are so mean."

After praying about this for a week I told my husband to let her go, as she wanted to go into a millinery store somewhere; it would give us all a rest, and altogether likely she would get sick of it. He did so. She gave me her little girl as my own, saying, "I shall not come back in as short a time as you think; I shall make it my life-work."

"Well," I said, "if you get converted as you know you should your life-work, my darling, will be to walk by my side until I take my place above, and then if you live longer will step into my place and fill it as best you can."

We wept together. She said good-by, and took the train. Filled her place well in a large establishment, but her health was too poor to stay longer than three months. It cost her father sixty dollars. While she was gone her little daughter, then nine years old, was converted. It was like this: She was attending school and would stop on her way home sometimes and spend some time with other little girls of her age, which made her late for dinner. I said after the third time, "Hattie, where do you stop, and why?"

She replied, "Grandma, I don't stop."

"But Hattie, dear, I didn't know you would ever tell me a wrong story. I am going to find out right where you stop; I am going to ask Jesus."

We were both sad all that day, and when she kissed me good-night there were tears in her eyes. Next day being Saturday, she was in my room a good deal. She came close to me, put her arms around my neck and burst into a flood of tears, and said:

"Grandma, I told you a lie; can you forgive me?"

I said, "Yes, darling; but I am afraid you will do just such a thing again unless Jesus forgives you. Doubtless it would be so."

She waited a few moments and said: "Grandma, can I take your Bible that has all those beautiful marked verses in it."

"Yes, take it as long as you please."

"Can I go in your room and shut the door?"

"Yes, stay as long as you like."

She was gone about half an hour, came back with her face shining, again with her arms around my neck, she said:

"Jesus has forgiven all my sins. I love him and I am going to be a Christian. Now, grandma, I want you to make me a plain dress; you can take one of your dresses. I would love to wear it, and, you know, grandma, my jewelry is all lost. You know that pretty little locket that grandpa gave me, that you prayed about, is lost. I am so happy. I won't be afraid nor ashamed to go to school."

In about two weeks there was a camp-meeting at Wyanette, south of us. Our elder, W. F. Manly, was very anxious I should attend. I took my little Hattie. The camp was down in a deep ravine, close by a beautiful stream.

At our first love-feast I felt an arm around my neck and a trembling hand on my shoulder. She glided out into the middle of the tabernacle, looked around on all the faces, and said:

"I love Jesus today, for He has forgiven all my sins. You older people act as though it was a great cross to speak in love-feasts; well, if it is, take it up, I say, take it up. I am just as happy as I can be, and I am going with my grandma to just such meetings as this."

A man rose quickly to his feet, and said: "I have been a church member twenty years and have not, today, as much religion as that little girl has." And with tears he said: "I am going forward for prayers." We had a glorious love-feast. Everybody was either shouting or weeping, and the sermon was wonderful. When the meeting was over I missed my little girl, and looking out I saw her in the pulpit and all the children of the camp gathered around her. She was reading the Bible, then she would say to the children: "I am telling you about Jesus; how many of you understand what I say? Hold up your hands you that do. How many of you love Jesus?" and again the hands went up.

"Well, now we will see if you do love Him. Do you always obey your mamma?"

Of course they could not hold up their hands then.

"Do you tell lies?" she said. "I told my grandma a lie and I didn't sleep good that night, but I asked her to forgive me and she did, and then I went to Jesus and got converted in grandma's room. All of you that tell lies hold up your hands," and many hands went up.

"How many of you want to get converted so that you won't have any lies in you; will you stand on your feet?" Every one stood up.

"Well now, Bessie Sherman, you and I know how to pray." She was nine and Bessie eleven. "Now you children come right forward to the 'anxious seat.'" And such praying I never heard for the first time any one held a meeting. Those two little children laid their faces down to the ground and were praying, groaning and screaming with agony, and many of the other little children were praying and crying also. She then gave out part of a hymn, and after singing said, "Every one of you that have got your sins forgiven get up and tell us, and nobody else, because if you don't get it we shall have another meeting and you can."

I saw Brother Manly standing just a little way from the meeting. He came toward the tent where I was standing and I said, "What are you going to do about this meeting?"

"Let them go on, of course."

"Do you think that is right for a child of that age?"

"Certainly," he said, "I feel like taking off my hat and sitting in the little congregation. She is a wonderful child and is doing more good than anybody else could in those children's meetings."

When they were through she came bounding to my side, saying:

"Grandma, we have had a most blessed meeting, and two or three of them say they were converted. We are going to keep it right up, grandma, every day."

"Did you ask Brother Manly," I said.

Looking surprised, she said, "No, I won't preach when he does."

The next day I noticed a gentleman close to the little meeting, and when she was talking to the children she reached out her little hand and said: "Man, come up here where you can hear. I don't know your name, but I want to know if you love Jesus?" He was speechless.

She said, "You can talk, can't you?"

"Yes, ma'am.

"Well, will you tell me if you love our Jesus?"

He said, "Little girl, I don't love Him as you do."

"Oh, I am so sorry; and why don't you love Him? Don't you know He died to save lost souls?"

He told me himself that he did not know how to answer the child. "For," he said, "I am an infidel of fifteen years, and have been teaching it with a stack of books, and I was afraid that if I told her I did not love Jesus it would discourage her, and I knew if I said yes, it would make me a

liar. I could get away with all you older people say, but when these two little girls pray and talk I can not get around or pass it. I never had such a feeling in my life."

He was there the third day.

She said, "Will you kneel down where we children do?"

"Yes, I will."

"And will you pray, sir?"

"I could not pray," he said, "but I trembled as those two little girls knelt one on each side close to me, with their faces close to the earth. Such cries as went up I never heard. They said, 'Jesus, we must see this man saved or we shall die.'" Such agony I never witnessed. I had seen and heard it all, but kept away. The fourth day he was there again, and on his knees praying. After their little meeting was over he came to me and said: "This is the most wonderful day; I believe I am a converted man. I am going to undo all my past work if possible, and burn up all my books."

Sunday morning we had a new and wonderful experience. Just while we were in the love-feast we heard a terrible roar and everybody was on the lookout, saying, "What is it? what is it?" It came nearer and nearer. Brother Manly ran toward the stream. It had rained all the previous night. The river overflowed its banks and rushed with terrible rapidity, and in ten minutes had reached our tents.

He said, "Every one of you come and pack your things thoroughly, if it is possible, before the water gets into the tent."

Little Hattie went around packing as best she could, with her little face shining, and saying, "Jesus will take care of us, won't He, grandma? He would not let us drown?" In about half an hour the water was four feet up on the walls of my tent. The men had to run after their horses and wagons and had to swim them to get to us. A strong man by the name of Deitro picked me up in his arms and carried me twenty rods, set me down on a bank where some trees were growing. Another man picked up my little girl. Some were put in wagons. We left the tents standing, but everything we had was safely brought to land without being wet. We were close to a large village, and the people crying, "Hurrah, hurrah! Hold on, we will get you."

They had been very much opposed to our having a camp-meeting which we were to hold right close to the village, and one or two men were so opposed that Brother Manly thought best to go into the ravine. People invited us into their homes and into their tents and to partake of their hospitality, free of charge. They even begged us to bring our tents up and pitch them on the spot where they had denied us, and we had a glorious meeting. Our people went into the streets daily, and our two little girls went along, but it was too far for me to walk. One preacher took my little girl and put her up on a barrel where the people could see and hear her, and between the afternoon and evening meetings Bessie Sherman and my little Hattie went visiting from house to house, singing, praying and inviting people to come to the meeting.

She kept steadily along until her mamma came home, which was at the expiration of three months. Soon after her mother was rested a little she said, "Mamma, I want to see you alone a little while."

I listened to see what she would say.

"Dear mamma," she said, "I want to tell you that I am converted, and I want you to be converted too."

There were tears in the mother's eyes.

"Mamma, if you only love Jesus you will be happy and won't get cross any more, and mamma, you will take off your jewelry and dress plain."

"Ah, ha," she replied, "that is why you have on a plain dress, is it?"

She hardened her heart, and said: "Now, you are not going to wear plain clothes, and you are not going to be a Free Methodist, either; I am a Congregationalist."

"Why, mamma, you are not saved; you know that."

"I am just as much saved as anybody."

"But, mamma, you know how cross you get, how cross to grandma, too, and you know you don't love Jesus, and, mamma, I am afraid you are going to be lost."

With tears streaming down her face she exhorted her to turn to Jesus.

She took the child by the arm and gave her a good shaking, and said:

"Hattie, you never dare to talk so to me any more in your life; if you do I will do something terrible to you."

She kept her from going to church with me, and constantly treated her little child in such a manner that she came to me one day, and said:

"Grandma, what shall I do? Mamma said I can not live with you any longer, and that she is going to dress me, and I shall not join the church with you. Oh, what shall I do?"

I told her that we could pray together, that her mamma could not take her away from me, because we did not intend to rent a house for just those two. We prayed together a long time, but not being permitted to go among Christians nor hold any meetings with children and with her trimmed clothes she soon became discouraged.

The conduct of her mother to the child and also toward me so annoyed my husband that he rented a house and put them in it. But she could not take the love to me away from the child, and

always if I attended street-meeting, which we had in those days, soon after taking my seat I would feel her little hand on my shoulder, saying, "Grandma, I am going to stand right by you."

Hattie was about eleven when her mother began coughing. One day while we were talking the matter over she said: "Mamma is so cross and ugly toward me it seems as though I should die."

I told her that her mother had consumption and would not be with her very long, and to bear with her all she possibly could.

Of course the girl lost her experience. She was attending school at this time.

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## CHAPTER 27

Account of Her Mother's Death -- Leaves This World Triumphantly -- Her Father's Sad End -- He Went to Texas -- Died Away from Home.

For the last twenty-five years of her life we kept mother with us when we could. But as she loved to do her own housework, my husband fitted up a house for her, right back of us, which she lived in part of the time.

She took great comfort in her home. and it was there she had her last sickness and died. She came to her death in a strange way. We had Christmas dinner, and always asked mother, my daughter and granddaughter to be with us. The day before she asked me what time we were to have dinner. I told her about two o'clock.

"Well," she said, "I want you to have a good lot of dinner, for I shall be real hungry if I wait until two o'clock."

I said, "Yes, Mr. Coon has a fine turkey and oysters for dressing, and we shall also have oysters cooked separately."

"I know you always have a good dinner, but I shall be terribly hungry."

I said, "Mother, that sounds so strange for you to talk in that way."

About one o'clock the next day she came. When she came into the kitchen-door she began to clap her hands and sing:

"Oh, I am so happy in my soul today."

She made verses and tune as she went.

"Oh, I am so happy in my soul."

Her whole countenance seemed like one that had been kept in another world. I said, "Mother, sit down." But she kept on singing:

"Oh, I am so happy in my soul today,  
I am so happy in my soul."

She danced all around the kitchen, and screamed with rapture and kept singing:

"Oh, I am so happy in my soul."

It seemed strange to me then that I did not feel glad, but I felt that something terrible was coming. When she was through she went into my room and I went with her and put her into my large chair, and she said:

"Don't look so sad, Arvilla, for I am so happy today, but do hurry the dinner, for I am so hungry."

All seemed strangely terrible to me, for there had been twenty-five years of her life that she had lived on bread and water, and it all came before me.

"May I eat all I want?" she said.

"To be sure," I said.

"Well, now you let me eat all I want for dinner."

We were soon at the dinner table. She spoke to my husband and said, "Amos, now fill up my plate, for I never was so hungry in my life."

Of course, he looked strangely at me. I said in a low voice, so that she could not hear (for she was quite deaf), "Yes, give her what she asks for."

She was soon through with that plateful and handed it back and said, "Put a good deal more on it."

"Mother," I said, "I never saw you eat this way in my life."

"Well, I never was so hungry in my life."

All around the table felt sad and strange.

The next day I missed her at church. She always attended if she was able to walk. As we were coming out of the door I said to Sister Morgan, who lived just around the corner and passed right by her door, "Have you seen mother today?"

She said, "Yes, she invited me to eat chicken dinner with her; some one made her a present of a chicken, and she stayed at home to cook it."

I then told her about her hearty dinner the day before, and that I also had filled a plate for her Sunday dinner. I did not go down that day thinking that if she were well enough to cook a dinner and have some one to partake of it, I would have no care that day. But early the next morning this old lady Morgan came to my home in a hurry, saying,

"Sister Coon, come quick, your mother is very sick; she doesn't know anything nor anybody, and I think she is going to die."

I went on the run, and found it just as she had said. The most terrible sickness for ten days; the gall overflowed, her whole body was the color of an Indian, and the white of her eyes nearly black. Her sickness was of such a nature that no one but myself could care for her. It seemed like one dying with cancer. Was obliged to have two sisters care for her at night, and I would care for her alone during the day. She talked much of the time, saying she had been put out of doors in the snow to freeze to death, and asked why I did not have her taken indoors by the fire. I told her the room was very warm, and that she was in her own nice home.

"No," she said, "such a one (calling him by name) put me here to freeze to death."

I quieted her fears and told one of the workers that we would take her from this room to another, and as we did so I said, "Now mother, we are taking you from this cold, freezing place, and will put you close to the stove in your own sitting room." She was quiet for a short time, when one day, when we were alone, she sprang out of bed saying, "Let me go home," and as I stood against the door to prevent her going out she said,

"I am stronger than you are, and I am going; I have been away from home long enough."

For a few moments she seemed stronger than I was, but I succeeded, with my arms around her, to get her back to bed. The sickness grew more and more terrible, and she cried out,

"O, why do you let me lie right across this piece of wood?" I knew death was near, and often tried to smooth the bed under her dear back, and as often she said, "Why don't you take it away?"

The next day I found that her back was turning dark, but the pain had ceased.

"Your back does not hurt you any more, mother?" I said. She brightened and said, "No, darling, but when you lay me out you will find it is mortified."

"Yes, I know it now."

Lifting up her hand and looking at the nails she said, turning them toward me, "Beautiful, beautiful, plenty good enough for the worms when I am done with them." Then clapping her hands said, "Glory to God! Glory to God! How long has it been since I read my dear old Bible?"

"Ten days," I replied.

"Ten days!" she repeated, "well get it, darling, and read John 14."

She began reading as though she had the book in her hands. When she had repeated a number of verses she said, "Beautiful, beautiful," and then began singing.

Reaching her hands she brushed as though she were already wetting her hands with the dew.

"Glory to God, the crossing must be beautiful! Sing the chorus, darling,

"O, come angel band,  
Come and around me stand,  
O bear me away on your snowy wings  
To my eternal home."

"It is just a little step across now," she said. Turning her eyes toward the door, then looking in my face, then toward the door again, she said:

"Welcome, welcome. I have waited for you many days; I am all ready, I will come gladly now."

Lifting up her hands as well as she could she shouted, "Hallelujah, glory to God!" then looking me in the face again said,

"Darling, you will find me inside the City of Light as sure as you live."

"What shall I do with your things, mother?" I said.

"Do just as you want to, darling. Give my love to everybody, and tell all the pilgrims that I love them."

Just then my son came in. She looked in his face, put both her hands on his cheek, and said,

"My dearest grandson, meet me up there; give God your heart now. Do get ready, my beautiful boy; I am going today, will you meet me there?"

"Yes, grandma, I will."

And as he went out she said, "The most beautiful man on earth."

She closed her eyes a little while, then looking up said, "There He is; He has come."

My daughter said, "Who has come, grandma?"

"Why Jesus, don't you see Him ? Good-by everybody." She closed her eyes and slept, and slept herself away in one hour as peacefully as a baby on it mother's breast. It seemed the room was full of Heaven. I had no tears; but I praised the Lord for the blessed privilege of caring for my mother so many years, then through such a terrible sickness. I closed her dear eyes, folded her hands, made her shroud, and prepared her every way for the casket.

Husband came in the next day, he had been away from home on business; went down where the body lay, and with choking said, "Mother's gone."

I said, "Yes, glory to God!"

He looked for a little while, then turning his eyes said, "I am glad I was always good to her."

"Yes, her testimony has constantly been, 'I never had such care, nor so many good things, nor took such comfort in my life as I have with Amos and you.'"

When we were together in our home, speaking of her sickness and death, my son remarked, "There was one woman who never knew fear; full of courage; a wonderful grandma."

I felt then, and have many times since, could all my family go with such assurance, and with such gladness leave this world of sorrow, and get into the old chariot and ride so triumphantly through the gates into the city, I would gladly be the last one and be left to die among strangers.

As my father never was converted he was, of course, not glad when I was saved. Though he always loved me very dearly, he had a feeling of keeping aloof from me, when before that time he could never have me near enough nor be long enough where I was. There had been several times when it was thought I must die, and it would always bring him to his knees, and when I buried my children he seemed broken to pieces, and would say, "She is the best mother, and had always been the best girl I ever saw, and if she lives she ought never to be permitted to do another chore nor any real work," for he realized that I had been put to work too young, even at four years of age. By the time I was nine or ten I had to do the work of those much older and stronger, and when he heard how I went from house to house to tell how Jesus had saved me, he acted and felt, "I don't want to hear a word." I ran up there, being next door, and as soon as I stepped inside the door and saw his face I said, "Good morning, pa." I just could hear a faint, cold, "Morning," and he made for the door.

I said, "Wait a minute, pa, I want to tell you how happy I am in Jesus."

"I don't want to hear a word," he said, "if that is what you came for, you can go back from where you came."

"I am so happy because I am saved, and papa you ought to get saved also."

"Now I want you to remember I don't want you here any more."

"I suppose I will have to come, because I am all on fire and can't help it, and I love you better than I ever did in my life."

He left the house as soon as he possibly could get out.

He soon made plans to go to Texas and take my brother, who had rheumatism and had spent all he had on doctors, and sold most of his property, and was ready to start with his family. He bade us a short good-by. We all were very sad, and as mother turned to me with weeping said, "He is going to die and be lost; we will never see him again." I asked her why she thought so. She said, "A number of years ago I had a very strange vision or dream. We were both on a journey on foot, and as we came near the foot of a mountain I looked upward and saw a little narrow path going directly over the mountain, and stepping into it turned and saw your father taking a road around the base of the mountain, and I called and said, "Don't go that way, come with me or you will be lost.' He said, 'I shall never take the trouble to climb up that mountain when I can find a good road to walk around it.' I said, 'If you take that road you will fall into a pit at the end of it, and you can never get out; but do come with me, for I am going to a land that is all fair.' He said, 'Go on; I am going this way, I don't care what you say,' and as I climbed, for it was hard work, I had to take hold of little twigs and twags to ascend, watched him as long as I could, and he went around so fast, that I felt a good-by forever, and awoke with tears streaming down my face. I know he has gone forever, though I fixed all his clothes and everything that might last for years, feel that soon he is going to die."

Safe in Texas, he wrote back to mother to sell what there was, a number of village lots and their home, and get ready herself, with my youngest sister, and come to him. He said, "I am going to get power of attorney so you can safely sell and make out your papers yourself, or at least sign them." We heard no more until a little later a letter from brother, saying, "Papa is dead. He started for the nearest town with a span of colts to get the papers made out so you should be able to sell, and the horses ran away and he was thrown out. The horses came home without him, and I searched for father a long time. At ten o'clock next morning I found him by the roadside with his back broken, and his limbs dead up to his back. He knew me, but what he said was too sad for me ever to tell."

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## CHAPTER 28

Mr. Coon's Last Days -- Many Opportunities Rejected -- Puts Off the Day of Salvation -- Little Hope in His Death.

It is very sad for me to attempt to go over the scenes of my husband's last days. There have been many times at our dear old family altar where his heart was melted, and conviction was on him deep and strong enough to take him clear through to pardon, had he yielded to the same. And he would sometimes follow me into the closet and kneel with his head on my shoulder, and his dear arms around me, and plead for me to cease weeping and groaning, saying, "I am not going to be lost, I will get saved. I must go where you are going. I want to be right close to you while you

sing." Then would say, "I would pray now, but have not feeling enough. You don't want me to be a hypocrite. The time will come when I can pray.

We attended a protracted meeting in our own little church in Marengo and my husband went twenty-one nights. Others were saved and I knew the Spirit was again calling him, and I reminded him of his promise to move when he felt more deeply. The next night while at church I noticed much uneasiness with him. Others again went forward, he was pale and trembling, looked in my face and started for the door as quickly as possible. To me it was a most terrible moment, for I was sure other prominent men were waiting for him to move. On going home I found him sitting alone and asked why he went out so hastily, and as he did not readily answer I pressed him to know the cause. He said, "I left because I felt myself going to that altar." He refused to attend the meetings longer, and when he saw the anguish of my soul said, "Do not take it so to heart. If I am lost, you are clear a thousand times, but I tell you again I shall get saved."

There was another time when we were holding meetings. He attended, and at that time a friend of ours who had been selling goods at the Black Hills for ten years, leaving his family in our town, had come home on a visit. He came to our home, so I had opportunity to plead with him to turn from his sins and seek the Lord. I invited him to attend our meeting that evening, which he did. God came in power upon all in the house. I plead with men especially to move out that those younger might have a chance. We had seekers, but not those who were especially laid on my heart. My agony could not be expressed. It was impossible for me to kneel. I thought I might be dying. I made a desperate effort and found myself going round the altar and down the aisle and as I neared my husband he reached both arms, drew me to his bosom and said, "I know, darling, what you are going to say, but I can't go tonight." I not only plead with him again, but said, "There is a man just back of you going to hell if YOU do not move to-night" I had not seen the man just back of him, but soon as I turned that man, our friend, who was there for the first time in his life, also the last, put his hands on my husband and said, "Coon, you ought to go and if you will I will go with you, for I never had such feelings before in my life." When I sat on the floor at the altar as I returned, for I was unable to kneel, I felt myself shrink away until it seemed as if I was nothing. I was obliged to lean on his arm to get home, though it was only half a block. Our friend soon left for Black Hills again, but before he left while talking to his wife said, "I must change my life," and she in a careless way said, "John, what's the matter?" He said, "I have been to the little brown church to one meeting and I never felt in all my life as I do since going. Mrs. Coon plead with the men in the congregation, then came to her husband pleading, and I told him if he would go to the altar and seek God I would go with him. I am going to wind up my business at Black Hills, this is my last year there. I am going to change my whole life." But soon after he commenced his journey he felt pains in the back of his neck and head. The next morning it was unbearable. Found a physician on the train and said, "Doctor, be quick, I can't live long this way." On examination the doctor told him it was a carbuncle of the worst kind, and was just in a place where it was certain death. He said, "You are already dying, gangrene has already set in." He looked the doctor in the face and said, "Great God! Doctor, I can not die!" 'Twas all over in a few hours. He was sent home packed in ice, and was left in the dead-house in the cemetery. My son came home hastily to tell me the sad news, as it came over the wires. Soon my husband came home, and as I walked the floor, wringing my hands saying, "That's the man," husband said, "Arvilla, you know?" and walking the floor cried out, "Great God! has it come to this, am I responsible for the souls of men?"

The Holy Spirit soon gave me to understand that his time was short for repentance and confession. In a short time, I think a few weeks, I told him if he was ever saved it must be soon, or he would commit the sin that would seal his doom forever. He answered, "That day will never come." I said, "As sure as you live God will soon remove this burden from my heart, and you will remember the anguish, groans and tears through a never-ending eternity." Nine years before his death that sin was committed, and God told me where and who. What passed between us farther I must not write, but could never persuade him to stay to family prayers or attend church afterwards.

It would be impossible for me to tell or write of my feelings or prayers for six weeks, but I asked God to take hold of his body. In two weeks it was done, so he was unable to commit such gross sins longer. He took me along into a room and closed the door, and told me all, and said, "You need never sorrow any more." From that time demons seemed to possess him every hour. I had told him it meant death; how soon it was impossible to say.

As a politician he was constantly excited, which increased continually, and as a family, there was a dread every year when election came. The last one was fearful in the extreme, and on election day my son came from the law office and said, "Mamma, if the people did not all know father, they would certainly kill him. He calls them all kinds of names, swinging his cane in the air, because they don't vote the Republican ticket. I wonder some of those drinking men don't knock him down. I can not stand there and hear it." I said, "My son, it is going to kill him, his brain is on fire and must soon burn out. Go back, darling, and take the best care of him possible." He went, but soon came again saying, "Fix the sofa, mamma, papa is fearfully sick." He staggered, and would have fallen, but they caught him in their arms. He walked into my room with the aid of my son and took his place on the sofa I had prepared. I put my hand on his head and said, "You are very ill." He answered, "Yes." He felt that I was prepared of the Lord for this that had to come, and was very irritable; could scarcely speak a pleasant word. Acted as though he thought it was something I was to blame for, and this increased for three days, until I was unable to do anything for him.

The first paralytic shock had been mostly on the right arm. In three weeks, at two o'clock in the night, a second came, after which he wept much. I found him alone, where I had put him to sleep in the daytime, tears streaming down his dear old face, and asked the cause of his weeping, and as he remained silent, asked if he had left his business in a wrong way that caused the sadness. He answered, "No." "Is it the sickness of our son?" "No." "Is it your soul?" A gush of tears and a scream. The choking and sobs were terrible. I said, "Well, let us pray." He said, "No, I can't." I said, "Darling, if you don't you never can, because your tongue will soon be paralyzed and it will be impossible." He replied, "If you don't let me alone I will go out of this house." I knelt by his side and sang, "Will you go to Heaven or Hell? One you must and there to dwell," and for half an hour continued, and sang out the burden of my aching heart. I could hear the beating of his heart like the knocking of a hand on the door, and knew that death was soon coming. The weeping continued, especially when he was alone.

He began reaching for me with the arm that was still unpalsied. Doctors told me I must not take such good care of him as he would likely live some time, and if so I would die first. I told them he would die in just a few days. The last shock came in the night. He sprang from the bed as many as four feet, with the most awful screams. He staggered and I caught him in my arms and took him back to bed, how I can not say, without letting him fall. I was obliged to keep my arms around

him to keep him from getting out, and patted and hushed him like he was my baby. Then, when he was still, I went upstairs on my hands and knees, so weak I could not stand, to call my hired girl, who was so deaf she could not hear only as I was close to her. We put his feet in hot water and bathed his head, to give what relief was possible, but he was through speaking, only "yes" and "no."

Two merchants, finding him so low, were very kind. One of them spent the last two days and nights with us. The last night they begged me to go and take a little rest, saying, "You can not bear this." I consented, with their promise to wake me in time. A rap on my door told me that he was dying. I again knelt, as he was reaching and reaching, and said, "Darling, I am here by your side, and you know I love you." He nodded assent, and I said, "If you have any hope of Heaven, if you have any hope that Jesus will take you in, turn your eye upward," and quick as thought he looked upward, back again and upward a second time. Some who stood by shouted and said, "That is enough." I replied, "No, too much light to get in this way." He was dead in a few minutes.

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## CHAPTER 29

Reasons Why Her Daughters Were Left Out of the Will -- Cora's Desperate Grief -- Her Brother Divides with Her -- Financial Reverses.

One day my little adopted daughter came home from school with tears streaming from her eyes and asked why uncle visited that house in front of the school so often, and said, "Auntie, this is why I find you weeping so often, isn't it?" I said, "Yes."

"Well," she said, "I feel as though I could not go to school any more, but I know I must have an education, and what will I say to them when they ask me again?"

"Nothing at all."

I then had a private talk with my husband about this matter.

He said, "I will make her sorry the day she ever told you these things."

I replied, "I have known these things for all these years, and is it not enough for you to disgrace the whole of us without carrying your revenge into a reality?"

"I am going to make my will over again, I had willed her \$1,000 but I shall revoke it right now."

After this I had a private talk with our daughter. She said, "Mamma, it is a terrible thing, but I have done my duty."

"Cora," I said, "do you mean you have talked to him about this?"

"I have, and told him if I was in mother's place I would kill you right now for bringing daily all this shame and disgrace upon us all. I mean it, father, I would kill you. He cursed me to my face and said, 'I will show you.' I said, 'I can not help it, father, I know the measures you took to get my mother for your wife, and the sorrow you have brought upon her ever since, and I have had bitterness and hatred in my heart toward you ever since I was large enough to know.'"

He immediately changed the will concerning both of them, and told me that he was not going to leave them a penny. Of course he was obliged to leave them one hundred dollars each, according to law, which he did.

After his death, when the will was read, it seemed impossible for me to let my daughter see it, but, of course, was obliged to. Language fails me to express the sorrow that my daughter and I passed through on account of this. He had always supported my daughter and adopted daughter nicely, and now every means was cut off and she was too frail to do anything. She came daily to the home after he was buried and looking at his picture on the wall would scream until it seemed to me that we were both dying, saying, "Mamma, how could he do such a cruel thing?" "I know why he did it, but how could he?"

I put my arms around her and said, "Cora, you will only have to say for me to break that will and I will do it, for it is unjust."

She said, "No, I can not do it, it was his own, and he could give it to my brother if he wanted to, I would rather beg, and that I will never do."

She would come in Sunday morning just before my church time screaming and wringing her hands until all through the service I could see and hear her. As soon as I dared I talked the matter over with my son, for he had been at the point of death, and was just recovering when his father was buried. I told him something must be done immediately. He said he would do just as I said. I told him that I had a mind to break the will and give her just the same as he should have, but she was unwilling to do so.

"Well, tell me what you want done," he said.

I said, "Make out a deed to the grandma-home today and give that and \$1,000 in money to her."

That only left him \$3,000. Although my husband had done business where he might have been worth \$100,000, he only had \$7,000 in the bank. My son said, "It is all right, mamma, I will do it today." I told her what we had done and she said, "I don't want him to do it." Then I said, "Cora, I will never use one dollar of what is left me, but will pray and ask God what I shall do for you, Hattie and myself." She said, "Mamma, I am going to leave this town just as quick as I can get out of it; if I have grandma's home I will sell it and go away." I said, "Cora, I want you to think soberly and begin to pray earnestly. I know God is directing me, and you go into that home and I will see you are well taken care of as long as I live. You must not go away from me, your entire physical, mind and body, is under a terrible strain; nobody will understand your case as your mother and brother do."

She said, "Mamma, I have made up my mind that I would go to Austin next week and look for a home there."

I asked her if she would rest a little and think and give me time to pray one week, and go to Sister Sutcliffe at Wheaton and find out the mind and will of God concerning this.

She said, "Up to such a day of the week and then I am going to Austin, and want you to meet me on the noon train and we will go together."

Both Sister Sutcliffe and myself took the noon train from Wheaton. We looked through the cars for my daughter, but she was not there. I felt it was in answer to my prayer, and told my friend the same. When we left the car at Austin I noticed a gentleman looking intently, and as we stepped off he came up close and asked me if another lady had gotten off the car. I said, "No, sir, we were the only ones.

He said, "I was here looking for a Mrs. Gilmore.

"Yes, sir, she is my daughter; I took the car at Wheaton and she was to take it at Marengo, and we were coming together. And, sir, will you walk along beside me, I am going to 417 South Waller Avenue, and I want to talk with you."

He said, "Yes, ma'am, I will."

I told him I had asked God to let me see him before my daughter could, and told him her condition and also her determination to buy a home in Austin, in hopes that her sorrow would not be so great, and then asked him not to sell her a house anywhere, for it would not be right for her to leave me, for her mind was then in such a condition that she was liable to become insane; that she was very frail and needed constant care and sympathy, also financial aid. I told him that I would look at some lots, if he had any vacant to sell.

He said, "I see it, I take it in. I think indeed you are an afflicted, sorrowful woman and I will make a difference with you, and promise that I will never sell her a home in Austin, for she must not leave you. I have almost any number of beautiful lots, some in Madison, and then I have many inside lots not worth nearly so much. Tomorrow I will be here in a carriage and take you and your friend around to see them."

My daughter came to Austin on the evening train. She had taken a wrong train through a junction and was obliged to run through Austin to the city and then return on the evening train. Of course we agreed all around that we would never let her know that we had seen her man, at least to have had any conversation with him. I told her he was at the depot and would come for us next day, so that she would have plenty of time to take a good night's rest. He came for us and we spent half a day looking at the different lots. I let her take her choice, and bought five lots on Madison. She seemed delighted. In two years I could have doubled the money; he had a purchaser or would have taken them back. I wanted to sell, for I knew it was the time, but all our friends in Austin were against it and said, "In five years what has cost you twenty dollars a foot you can take

seventy-five or one hundred for." And after such advice it was impossible to get her to consent to sell. The next year the financial crash came and it took all I had for assessments, sewers, sidewalk-pavings and taxes. That, of course, tied my hands, and my son carried it until he invested in a stove factory and lost everything he had. At my daughter's death three lots went into my granddaughter's hands, for I had made a deed of one to her and two to her mother. Last year my son borrowed six hundred on my two remaining lots, and we have lost all the rest. My daughter lived in hopes of realizing from hers up to the time of her death.

In reviewing this strange and terrible experience, with the crosses and losses, being, as Paul said, "In death's oft," I can say, none of these things have moved me, and I have been exceedingly joyful in all my tribulations, for God has given me souls, and when it was impossible for me to be moved out of my chair for a year and one half, God sent souls to me for help. Some letters came from people in great trouble, and just by a return letter have been brought out into light and liberty. When my sorrow has been greatest and the tempest at its height, God has blessed me with souls.

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## CHAPTER 30

Trip to Virginia -- Hardships -- Is Crippled -- "Worse Than Death" -- Granddaughter's Marriage -- Cora's Death

I feel I should speak of one time in my Christian life that I got out of God's order. At the time my daughter became so anxious to go to Virginia and for me to go with her I made it a subject of prayer, and the Lord made it very plain that if I should go I would find something worse than death. I told my son and daughter of this, but they thought it was because I disliked to go away from my work in Illinois, and argued strongly, and my daughter being in such a nervous, prostrate condition, my son said, "She will not only die right away should you not go with her, but not give us a moment's peace until she dies." I packed our things and started, with tears streaming down my face, and again while riding by the side of my son I told him my convictions and, I shall say, presentiment, that if I went worse than death for the remainder of my days would be the result. When I was blown or thrown out of the door this came to me, "I told you so."

I speak of this that others may not get out of God's order. The last meetings I was in had been a great strain to both soul and body; I was not able to cook one meal all winter. And was not able to do any kind of work, except care for my room and sometimes for my daughter. We were at Reaper's Orphans' Home in Virginia, and found fifteen or eighteen band-workers in that desolate land, discouraged, and no outsiders came to listen to the preaching of the word, but every day and night from two to fifteen were in my room for help, so I had not an hour to myself, day nor night, and still the heart failure continued.

My daughter grew worse very rapidly, and it was there I received this injury to my left limb.

The first of May we intended to go home together; trunks were packed, and I had received my permits. I was cleaning up the parlor as the matron and the other woman living at their home had gone to town to do some trading. There were two outside hall doors, I was going out at the back. A strong wind was blowing and just as I stepped out the screen blew hard against my shoulder and knocked me violently to the ground, instantly mashing the sciatic nerve into the bone. Two men lifted me up and carried me to the bed, found that my left limb was paralyzed and I suppose one hundred knots in my neck and many large ones in my bowels. They sent for a surgeon. He came and after an examination said, "This woman had better had both limbs broken twice, there might have then been some hopes of her recovery, but as the nerve is mashed into the bone I see no help."

It took two people to care for me, day and night. My daughter went home alone next week. It looked as though I should be put in a little pine box and buried in that wilderness, but after three weeks of agony, being torn like wild beasts tear the flesh from the bone, I asked the Lord to let me know whether I was to die in that place or what should be written that my son might know what to expect. The Lord talked back to me as plainly as I talked to any person, "You shall not die in this land, you are going home." And I praised Him aloud. The matron cared for me day and night, and standing by my bedside said, "Auntie, what is it?" I began singing this little chorus:

"I am not going to die in Egypt land,"

then told her what God had said to me. She shouted, "Glory to God, I shall resign my place and go to your home with you." The man that worked on the farm said, "I shall do the same, I shall help to care for that body just as I would if it was Jesus."

After four weeks' stay there were four men put me in a carriage, and this precious woman with her arms around my neck and the man with my feet in his lap rode eight miles after sundown, where we were to take the train next morning. Three days before we started I moved my great toe just so that she could see that it moved. I was carried in the arms of conductors and porters from depot to car, and then again when we changed. I was handled carefully, but the suffering was intense, but every one that took me in their arms looked upon me as though I had been their mother, and every moment I preached to them from the time they touched me till the time they put me down, telling them about Jesus and heaven, and that they must be converted, and invited them to come to that beautiful world where I was going. Some said, "Yes, I will," with tears; others said, "This is wonderful; a woman broken like this, full of smiles and caring for everybody. This is wonderful."

My son met me at the depot in Chicago. Two men had just put me in a little rubber-wheeled chair and taken me from the car to the depot, and they carried me with his help to a lounge in the waiting-room. We left near midnight for our own pleasant home in Marengo, sixty-six miles from the city, arriving there about two o'clock in the morning. The night watch took me from the conductor's arms and put me into our own carriage, which was waiting for us, carried me into my own dear home and laid me on my own bed. I told him I should not cease to pray for him, and that he must give his heart to God right away.

The winter before we went to Virginia my daughter and granddaughter spent the winter at Greenville, Alabama. It had proved such a rest and blessing to her, and that was the cause of her

being so determined to try the South again. My granddaughter was delighted with her stay there and formed many dear acquaintances. Three young ladies loved her very much and begged her to come again, and a young man, the one she afterwards married, was corresponding with her the next year, and very anxious for her to return. The young ladies wrote her if she would come and spend the winter there while her mother and myself were in Virginia they would pay her fare both ways, and as she was frail herself we thought best for her to go. We went together as far as the city of Chicago. She had a very pleasant time all winter, but in March we received a letter asking if we thought best for her to marry this young man, as they were engaged, or come home again and wait some future time. I talked to the Lord in prayer, for it seemed impossible for me to say yes. I had known so many unhappy marriages and my husband had obtained so many divorces for broken-hearted women, I felt I would much rather die than have her marry. She was only nineteen. Her mother wept much, but said, "Hattie is too delicate to care for me longer, and he is a nice young man and his love for her is all that I could desire."

I wrote her my feelings; just opened my heart to her. Another letter came, saying, "Grandma, dear, you know what a hard time I will have if I come home again, and I am so worn and tired, mind and body. I know if you could see this young man you would give your consent, and I can not bear the thought of doing anything that would make you sad, for you are all the world to me."

When I thought of what she must be and do if she came back I gave my consent. They took the cars about forty miles, with two witnesses. As a wedding dress she wore her simple gray traveling suit.

Our winter in Virginia was the most terrible that could be to both of us. The house was new and unfinished, four feet from the earth, and for six weeks we had deep snow and blizzard, and our fuel was green pine covered with snow sometimes one half inch thick. My daughter failed very fast all the time we were there, and she went home immediately after I was hurt. That was in May, and I came home first of July. She told me she wanted to go to Alabama to visit Hattie. I remonstrated, for I knew of her jealousy toward any one that loved the daughter, and I wanted Hattie to take comfort in her new relationship without anything to hurt or damp her joy, so I kept putting it off until fall, and in October she said, "Mamma, I am going." She had been sending her things when I was not aware of it. I begged her to stay with me, and told her I would put her in one of my north parlors, with every comfort, and we could carry her food to her on a tray all winter. I had two with me, the man and the woman who had carried me to my home in their arms, and both of them were willing to do so, but she said, "I told you, mamma, I am going to see my child and stay all winter." With sad hearts we helped her off, and that was the last time I saw her.

She made it very unpleasant for them until near the last.

I sent a letter to them, saying: "Hattie, your mother is going to die in just a little while; now be as patient as you possibly can."

I wrote letters to my precious child; told her I was carrying her case to God; longed to lay her aching head on my shoulder and nestle her close to my bosom as when she was a little girl; that

I loved her better than my life, and would come to her if I could be moved. She died in April. The last two days she kept my granddaughter and the colored nurse singing every hour:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high."

Day and night she kept them singing it over and over. The last night she had them singing, alternately:

"There's a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar ;  
For the Father waits over the way,  
To prepare us a dwelling place there."

Hattie said her eyes turned upward, and such light and luster she never saw. And so my life prayer was answered at last. She was brought home in a casket and was buried by the side of her father. And now I am praying for my precious granddaughter's salvation.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER 31

Woman Possessed with Devils -- Was Delivered -- Workers Burdened for a Woman -- She Rejects Mercy -- Dies Screaming, "Eternity" -- Old-Time Manifestations of the Spirit in Chicago.

Other instances of wonderful deliverances, or profitable warnings come to my mind, some of which I will mention here. At a camp-meeting at St. Charles, there came on to the ground a stranger, a woman with very black hair and eyes, spare and weird-looking. There was a powerful sermon, and at the altar call this woman came forward. Some preacher said, "Sister Coon, come and labor with this woman, will you?" As I went toward her a strange feeling took possession of me, but we knelt and prevailed with God. I laid my hands upon her shoulder and said, "Pray." She bowed writhing and with intense agony, said: "I can't." I said, "You must pray, or you'll never get saved." I begged of the saints to take hold of God anew, and said, "There is something terrible here," and when the words were spoken, God made known to me that she was a spiritualist. While we were still praying she went on to the ground and seemed carried with an irresistible power for a rod or more over sticks and logs and under seats and against trees, and it took two of us to hold her by the clothes to keep her from dashing her brains out. We picked her up; her face wore the most terrible, fiendish expression. We laid her down at the altar, for she could not sit up. With eyes rolling, and gnashing of teeth, she took hold of me and cried, "Help me; you can help me; do help me."

I asked her if she believed the devils could be cast out of her. She said, "I don't know, I've been troubled this way so long." She begged of me not to leave her. It seemed to me for a time that

I couldn't live ten minutes in her presence. I said, "Come alone and rest." She looked me full in the face and said, "There's no rest for me on earth -- no rest." She was helpless the most of the time during the camp-meeting, but when she could walk at all, she followed me, saying, "You must help me." Sometimes I felt like leaving the camp to get rid of the terrible gaze. I could not get her to pray, but she would say every now and then, "And so I must go to hell." And again, "You think I'm lost, don't you?" I said, "You are unless you can repent, unless you can believe in Jesus." She said, "You don't like to be near me, do you? But I must follow you just as closely as I can; they don't come so near when I keep close to you."

The time came for the meeting to close, and I was glad when the last "amen" was said, but the next meeting I attended there was my woman. She took a chair right by my side. We were in a love-feast, and she said, "I want you to come with me. I said, "This is a love-feast; I want to stay and hear the testimonies." "Don't you know you have to help me now?" I got right up out of love-feast and said, "Come with me right into my tent." I drew the curtains, picked up my Bible, and said, "Come in here between these beds. Now, tell me your disease; I know the devils live in you. "Yes," she said, "for three years three devils have walked by my side every moment; they are here now; I see their faces and hear their words. They are very angry, and they said if I told you they would kill me." These words came to me; "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God," and said, "Though there were ten thousand times more of them, Jesus can scatter every one of them." I took my Bible in both hands and pounded devils, legions of them, and fought them face to face, quoted Scripture, then whipped the devils again with the Bible, and cried, "Scatter! scatter!" I could hear the mad rushing as they left the back door of the tent. She fell like one dead when they went out, but the expression on her face was heavenly.

She went home happy, of course, testified several times in the meeting that she was delivered from all the power of the devil. The next time I saw her was at a meeting. She then sought and obtained the experience of holiness. She had had very severe trials with some of her relatives, and that pressed her right to the throne of grace till she was sanctified. She told me she could never keep any money as long as she was under that influence, and of course her health was very poor because she slept very little. She said they troubled her the same by night as by day. People had called her insane for years. As near as I can remember, this was twenty years ago. She has been tested in many ways in that twenty years -- has been married, and has a nice home. I visited her there. She asked me if I had ever been sorry that I had taken pains with her soul. I have always been very grateful that God helped me through it. She has lived a Christian all these years, and is one today.

At another time, in the church on May street, Brother Christie was pastor, there came a woman in night after night to the meetings, and seemed very much interested. The sisters talked with her each night. She acknowledged that she was under conviction and needed a Savior, but as often said, "I can not seek the Lord tonight." There was a woman that came with her that told the sisters that she was a theater-goer, and not of very good reputation, but they plead with her the same, and one time the burden was on one or more of the saints. They went to this woman and told her she must move right away, for they felt there would soon be a change with her in some way. She said, "I am going to seek the Lord in this meeting, but not tonight." The one burdened put her arms around her and begged her not to leave the house until she was saved. She said again, "No, not tonight," and left the house. About two o'clock in the morning they came and called for the

preacher and some of the sisters, and said, "Come quick to this woman's room." They were soon there, and as she looked up in their faces, said, "I wanted you to come and see one who is just going to hell," and turning to the preacher, said, "Christie, you preach hell-fire as you never have. I feel the beginnings of it already, and shall soon be there." They begged of her not to talk so, but begin to pray. They knelt around her bed and engaged in prayer.

"It is no use," she said, "the last night when the burden was on that sister and she invited and I refused, my doom was sealed. There is no mercy, no hope for me now any more than if I were the devil. Pray no more; save yourselves for sinners who will repent; I have sold my soul to dress my body." Pointing to a door, she said, "Look in that closet, there is the price of my soul, my virtue, my all." Then she jumped up in the middle of the bed, stretched her hands over her head, and said, "Can you sing 'Eternity?'"

"Will you go to heaven or hell,  
One you must, and there to dwell ;  
Christ will come, and quickly, too,  
All must meet Him, so must you.  
Then you will cry and want to be  
Happy in eternity!"

Then she ceased singing and screamed, "Eternity! eternity! Christie, preach hell-fire." And then again screaming, "Eternity! eternity!" she fell dead.

Again I feel like exhorting all who have ever wept over, or been burdened for the lost, and have grieved the Spirit, and the burdens and weeping are gone, to find out the cause and get into your place again, at His feet, where the blessed Holy Ghost power will come again and abide with you until your work is done. I often weep that there are so few, even among us, that will spend sleepless nights and days of fasting, that they may rescue lost ones from sin and hell, and as often wish I could stand a few moments where all our preachers could be assembled, and warn, entreat and exhort them, with all long suffering, never to rest until they are sanctified and filled with the Spirit. That will do away with tearless and prayerless sermons and altar services, for God wants us to have power when the few come forward, and that we have the spirit of prayer, and we shall prevail, for God has no use nor place for us when we cease to prevail with Him, but will raise up others.

When we worshipped in the old Morgan Street church, Brother C. B. Ebey was our pastor. His holiness meetings were every Tuesday night, and were wonderfully blessed with power. I never attended a holiness meeting while he was pastor, but that there were souls saved and sanctified. The meetings were always attended with wonderful manifestations, falling, leaping, dancing, jumping, shouting and screaming. Sister Gates often lost her strength standing on her feet.

One night as the pastor was standing on his feet to pronounce the benediction we noticed his hands up, and they stayed there and he was speechless and stiff for a long time. The house was full of heavenly power and glory, and God manifested Himself to Brother Ebey in wonderful ways. I have seen the burden on him until his head would hang on one side of the altar and his feet on the

other touching the ground, and groans that needed no words to tell us why he was hanging there. The appearance of his countenance at such times was as one dead, but he got souls.

The first meetings by the Free Methodists in Chicago were held by Brother Julius Buss and myself in a little old dingy room. I think formerly a grocery-store of some kind, on a small scale. We visited some families and gathered a little handful together. Now there are four churches right in the city and three in the suburbs. "Despise not thou the day of small things."

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## CHAPTER 32

Meeting at Aurora -- Scene at a Camp-Meeting -- Terrible Deeds Revealed -- Astonishing Burdens -- Souls Saved

While Brother Brooke was pastor in Aurora they sent for me to come and help in a revival meeting. I was there six weeks. It was a hard place at first, some of the members had become worldly, covetous and proud, and of the few of us that were ready to fast and pray until we prevailed, Brother Finch was one. His wife had been a confirmed invalid for years, and he was obliged to do much of the house-work and wait on her, and was always at his place in the meeting. The burden of prayer that rested on him day and night was most wonderful. He was an old man then, nearing eighty, but would take hold of God for souls like a man of forty, and when the victory came would walk, run and shout, leap and laugh.

One day after meeting he said, "Sister Coon, I want you to go home with me and see my wife. I want her to go to these meetings, but she thinks she is not able, but I think it would do her a great deal of good."

"I will go right with you home," I replied.

I found her very feeble, but able to sit in a chair and walk about the room very little. I soon asked her if she had any desire to go to meeting, for they were so good.

"Yes," she replied, "but I am not able."

I told her that I felt that God would touch her body, and she would be very much better, and if she would consent to go we would send a carriage for her. After prayer she concluded to do so, and so went the next day. The meeting was very blessed, backsliders were reclaimed, confessions were made and great grace was upon us. We had testimony meeting, and while I was speaking I called her by name and said, "Tell us something of your experience." She arose and said: "I am not getting along in my soul as well as I could wish; my health is so very poor all the time and I am afraid I don't look to Jesus as I should." She then asked us to pray for her soul and body. We commended her case to God right then and asked Him to touch her now. He did and she came again. She renewed her consecration and asked the Lord to fill her with his Spirit. She was much blessed and her husband was so delighted that he could not keep still, and said, "Oh, my blessings are so great, it passeth understanding what God is doing for my soul." He praised Him again and

again for blessing his wife, and for a number of years after that meeting grew in grace and was a pattern of piety in everything, and when he was present in meeting, which was always, if possible, the meeting "went in the Spirit."

At a camp-meeting, Brother Manly was chairman. At the altar calls few came forward, but no one was saved. There seemed very little of the anointing on any one to preach, and I think about the third day we were called to love-feast. Not much of the Spirit, but when the time came for the sermon no one seemed ready to take the meeting. Brother Manly gave out a hymn and tried to pray, and called on several others. No one could prevail. He exhorted to prayer and invited seekers. Two or three sisters came, but no Holy Ghost, and the workers seemed held by some unseen power until it was almost impossible to make the attempt at prayer. Brother Manly stepped close to me and said, "Sister Coon, you have to take this meeting," and called the brethren out entirely. I stepped up and said, "There must be a way for us to get to a place where we can touch God." Told them I was going to ask questions after prayer until the strange thing that was in the way was gotten away with, so we could have success.

Then I could pray. The Spirit came as I gave the meeting right over into the hands of God. I told God I was a seeker even unto death, and the Holy Ghost must come to the rescue. Two or three others followed me. I tried to get the seekers to pray, but no one uttered a word. I said, "I want you to raise your faces from that bench and look into my own." They did so as best they could. The eyes of one woman fell as soon as she made the attempt. I asked her to tell me what was the reason she could not pray. She simply said, "I don't know." I then asked her if she did not profess to be saved. She said, "I am here seeking sanctification." And as I said, "You had better be asking the Lord to pardon your sins," the Holy Ghost fell upon me. I asked her if she intended to be a hypocrite. She made no answer. I repeated it and said, "You know you are." Still no reply. In a few moments Sister Gates fell under the terrible burden. The manifestations were terrible. Her eyes looked as though they would come out of her head, her mouth was wide open as possible, the tongue out of her mouth, with terrible choking, gasping and screams.

This woman's face was on the altar. I called her by name and said, "I want you to look in the face of this burdened woman." She said, "I can not do it." I said, "I will hold your head up for you so you can," and with hands as cold as they are when dying, I held her head and made her look, for it seemed to me that none of us could live and bear the sight.

Then I looked across the campground and saw Sister Brooke stand with her little child in her arms saying, "O, my God!" I said to a sister, "Go and take that child quickly." They did so, and Sister Brooke was there in a moment, and such manifestations under burden I never saw. Her hands grew stiff, her eyes were set, and her whole frame quivered with agony. She acted as though she put her hand in her pocket and took out a knife, held it in her stiff, cold fingers, and with the other hand acted as though she were opening a vein in her other wrist; gave a faint moan as the dying of an infant. This she repeated three times. I said to the seeker, "Look into this saint's face." She said, "I never can." I said, "God is not playing with us this morning; you will look this woman in the face in one minute or I shall help you." She looked, turned her head away and screamed.

Just on the other side some one attracted my attention. There was a woman digging graves, with her hands, in the earth. As she dug the little graves she made motions as though she let

something into them and covered them up. She did this three times. I told the woman that hell was close to her, and said, "Why don't you try to confess your sins, if you can repent, why don't you make the attempt?" She seemed like one turned to stone. I said, "You must release these three women; I can not afford to see the agony of these saints and you go to hell unmoved, you must do something, and that quickly."

At first she pretended not to know anything about what these things were meant to convey. I said, 'You have not only lied to us, but unto God.' Then she said, "Will you come away a few moments alone with me?" I went with her, and she asked me if I thought there was mercy for such a wretch.

"Yes," I said, "if you can repent; Jesus Christ died to save the worst of sinners."

"I will if I can," she said, "will you pray God to help me repent?"

"Yes, you go back to those burdened women at least, and confess that it is true, and take this terrible burden off from these women."

She did so, and we took hold of God as best we could. She prayed for an hour I should think, but shed very few tears. Finally said she did not know what else to do. I said, "It seems to me a woman as wicked and vile as you are should have other things to make right."

"I will," she said, "as fast as I see them. I believe I am forgiven."

It never has been clear to me, but God helped me to exhort and warn others not to give up, but to confess, where it could be, alone to God, and when others were concerned to go to them and straighten up. The Holy Ghost endorsed it, and souls were saved that day, and the meeting went on with power. I believe in these days were such people held to the straight line of righteousness, we should see the work of God go on in power, devils would be cast out, and the sick would be healed, for surely God is the same today, but many among us are afraid to let God give the terrible groans, burdens and manifestations, and some pronounce it fanaticism, and I fear that there is where their power has been taken away, and they are left to go to warfare at their own charges.

I am praying God to raise up workers who will be glad to let Him have His own way, men who shall be humble, teachable, gentle, full of compassion and perfected in love, and God will come to us now, as He did on Pentecost, when this is the case.

There is so much dryness, and so much of the human, and deadness because of reasonings on these lines, and resisting the Holy Ghost, that He can not come in power. Few among us would dare to let God have His way with us and let Him use us in casting out devils, and bringing to light the hidden things of darkness. They would rather have a good name and stand high in the eyes of men, and be looked up to as educated and smart than have the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and let God work among us in power. But I praise God there are some who are seeking to know the deep things and have close fellowship and communion with Christ, if it does bring them down through the garden, to Calvary and to the cross.

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## CHAPTER 33

"Aunt Betsy's" Burden -- Preachers in a Tight Place -- Found Out -- Jewish Girls Saved -- Parents Persecute Them -- But a Preacher's Conduct is the Cause of Their Backsliding -- Heart-Breaking Record.

Some years ago I attended a meeting at Silver Lake, and from the very commencement it seemed God was a thousand miles away, and I wondered, suffered and prayed, and about the second day as one of the preachers was beginning his sermon I heard somebody crying, "Don't let him! My God, he is black, black; O Jesus, put him down; do it now." I looked from whence the sound came and a woman lay nearly under the seat, still sending up her terrible cries. All the preachers looked terrible, but the one in the pulpit seemed determined to go on. Still the cries, "Stop him, Lord! stop him; he is a hypocrite!" And the entire service was a failure. The woman was still there. Some of the people tried to talk to her. She lay like one dead till the next service. When the preacher began she said, "All right, Lord; he is good; help him through." There was not very much stir. After preaching some one exhorted, called for seekers, two or three backsliders went, and when one certain preacher prayed the woman screamed as though she would die, "He is a hypocrite; he is as black as hell; stop him, Lord, stop him," until none of the preachers dared to move, nor could they preach. Finally they came to me and said, "Sister Coon, what do you think of that woman?"

"Do," they said, "see if you can stop it."

"Likely, if some of the preachers would get down, there would be no more of it, but I will do what I can."

I went to her gently. She had lain there so long the flies had literally covered her face, and she was a sight to behold. Her lips had bled. I put my face close to hers and said, "Darling, can I help you any?" She opened her eyes and said, "Oh, it is you."

"Yes, my dear one, I have come to see if I can be of any service to you. Your lips have been bleeding and the flies have done terrible work on your face. I want to help you up, and, if need be, wash your face and talk to you some."

"Yes," she said, "I will."

After she was washed and had taken some refreshments I asked her if she was acquainted with all the ministers. She said, "Nearly."

"And, mother, do you know of any that are unclean or bad in any way?"

"God does, and He told me who they were."

"Then were it not better for you to talk to them alone?"

"God wants me to warn every one."

"Well, you have done that very faithfully. Praise the Lord. And now, my dear woman, since you have reproved and rebuked, I feel as though Satan would like to kill you right here on the ground for your faithfulness, and I don't want him to triumph, and now the light is on everybody, you just come in and rest and sleep some, if you can, for God has come to break through this meeting, and is going to give us souls; you have done your duty."

"Thank you, Sister Coon, I believe it is as you say."

She found herself very weak. That night the burden seemed to come with crushing weight on my heart, and God began to show me strange things. The next morning a preacher took the service, and I noticed a strange nervousness about him. Many seemed to get wonderfully blessed, but my feelings intensified, and I prayed God to make manifest what it all meant. He stood in the pulpit until after the seekers were at the altar, for a good man had exhorted. I sat still in my seat, for the burden was too heavy for me to move under. I saw that preacher look around and wink at someone in the congregation, then took his Bible, put his feet over the back of the seat, and slipped out of the meeting and started for the woods. I also saw a woman get up and go in nearly the same direction. I took one of the preachers aside and asked him where his preacher was that did the preaching. He looked around and said, "I don't know."

"He has not gone to rest," I replied, "but has gone into the woods and a woman with him."

He looked at me in horror and said, "What do you say?"

"Yes, that is what I say; that preacher winked at a woman, then left for the woods and she followed. Will you find them? I don't wonder that Aunt Betsy lay there and screamed, 'Black as hell, black as hell!'"

"Well, this is awful."

"Yes, you will hear something after this."

The woman later confessed to awful deeds of darkness, but the preacher never did, until compelled to do so at a church trial.

I will relate an experience of nine years ago I was in Chicago attending certain meetings. I had attended there several times before, but felt this time that the preacher was not at all glad to see me, but the pilgrims were exceedingly glad, and the young people gathered around me as though they had been my own children. When the meeting at the church was over they would ask if they could come to my room and we would have a little meeting by ourselves, Sunday afternoon. I asked the lady with whom I stayed if I might, and she said, "Certainly; I would be glad if you would do so."

I think there were eight or ten the first time they came. They asked me to question them so we had a little close class-meeting. There were two Jewish girls among them. One of them thought she had been converted, and the other seeking. One of these girls desired a little private conversation. She said,

"Father and mother are bitterly opposed to my coming to these meetings, but we must come, we must have our souls saved. They have threatened us, and mother says she will kill us if we keep on this way."

I asked them if they were ready to die for the Lord Jesus. The older one said, "I believe I am.

A great blessing attended that first meeting, and when the preacher found it out he took great pains to not only make me welcome, but to invite me into his altar and pulpit. I declined, saying, "I am very well right where I sit."

The next Sabbath they gathered around me again and said, "May we come once more?" I made them welcome. The preacher and his wife came also. The meeting continued as before; was more joyous, because of a stronger faith. All were much interested in the case of the Jewish girls.

The next Saturday night I was invited to stay with a brother and his wife on the second floor of these girls' home. They were not allowed to come up stairs, and their people became very angry when we prayed. But in the evening I was obliged to go down-stairs and one of them slipped out and whispered in my ear, "We will be all ready in the morning, auntie, to go to meeting with you; we don't know just how, but we are going to get away; we are determined to go."

They watched the clock closely the next morning, and just before the meeting hour the younger one slipped around the corner of the house and ran almost like a bird flying through the air across the lots. They missed her, but too late to follow, but then watched the elder one -- who was in her seventeenth year -- lest she too should go away. She waited for me to come down stairs so as to accompany me to church. The mother took her stand on one side of the house and the father confronted us on the other. I could not understand what he said, but the curses, and then that strong old Jewish father doubled up his fist and struck her three times in the breast; hard enough it seemed to me to kill her. She staggered, but did not fall, did not speak one word and before he could strike her the fourth time she was on her way to church. Her mother followed us, throwing stones at us with all her might. I said, "Clara, you run and I will walk between you and death." She did so, half a mile. Her mother followed, cursing continually and throwing stones, and she got two boys to help her throw them, but not one of them touching either of us. She met a policeman and tried to get him to stop her daughter, but he told her to stop her noise and go home. They enjoyed the meeting that day and again presented themselves for prayers. The older one said that fear of man was gone, but she wanted to be baptized for terrible suffering or death, for at night when they had retired they took their little Testaments to bed with them, that had been given them, and their mother stood at the door and listened to their whispers to Jesus. "Then," she said, "she comes in and jumps on us in the bed and tries to kill us, but we are going to follow Jesus."

We talked it over in the society, and felt it was best for them to go to a Christian home. They both had a good business and were earning wages. The preacher volunteered to take them. They were to pay for their board, which they did. He walked to church with them every time, he said that no harm might come to them, and called himself father to the young ladies. I went home after a few weeks. Some one of the pilgrims wrote me a letter saying, "I write you freely because you love those Jewish girls and were their mother while here, but we fear the results of their being in the preacher's home and we don't know what to do." My advice was for their class-leader to go to the preacher and tell him of their fears. They did so; also talked to the oldest girl. She told him he not only took pay, but asked them every little while for every cent they earned, showing his empty pocketbook each time. Then they questioned the young lady as to his manner and behavior toward her. She said, "When we go to church in the evening he always takes hold of my arm, and when alone in the house often asks me to sit on his knee." They said, "Never goes farther?" She said, "Yes, he kisses me often, calling me his precious daughter." They asked her if she was getting along well religiously. She said, "No; I have serious doubts about his intentions." They asked her if she had told him so and had reproved him. She said, "Yes, I have, several times. He says, 'Certainly it is not wrong for a father to love his daughter and kiss and embrace her as often as he chooses.'"

The members took the proper course to deal with him. He said he had no intentions but the very best. They told him he must desist and have nothing whatever to do with that young woman or they would certainly bring him to justice, and that the girls must immediately leave the house.

They brought him to trial and he was expelled.. The girls were both backslidden and are still unsaved, and this one that he treated in such a shameful way is now married to a wholesale liquor-dealer. It would be impossible for me to express the sorrow of my heart. Had they died when saved and blessed it would have been a real comfort, but to know that those beautiful girls were ruined by a preacher seems almost more than I can bear. I had thought, should they live for Jesus, their parents might possibly have been reached. The mother died in her sins a year after and no hope for any of the family. That poor preacher is today living a life of shame, gathering swill and feeding hogs; on his way to hell, but professing religion.

I often spent many sleepless nights, as God has been asking me if I would write these things, and if the tears are taken into account, they have run down my cheeks from time to time as I have been made acquainted with such things.

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## CHAPTER 34

Attends Quarterly-Meeting -- Preacher and Wife Baptized -- Members Fall in Line -- Hard Cases Dug Out -- Victory After Hard Fight

Just before going to Virginia, I went twelve miles to attend quarterly meeting. After the sermon Sunday night I talked a few moments, and exhorted those who had left their first love to seek the Lord now. At altar call two or three came, but no one got through, and as I was passing down the aisle shaking hands the pastor said, "You won't go home tomorrow." I said, "I intend to."

"No," he said, "you must not go; I want to protract this meeting and want two or three of you to stay, but whether any other remain or not, you must stay."

I dared not say it was impossible, so said, "I am going home."

"Well, please just stop over tomorrow until Tuesday morning."

I did so. He put the meeting into my hands. God helped me, and with tears I besought them to come back to God, and asked them how they expected to labor for sinners when they were not filled with the Spirit themselves. I told them I had not slept much the night before, God had been talking to me about so many members, and so few enjoying perfect love, and the reason why there were so few -- the differences among ourselves. Told them I would be willing to lay down my life when our own members were all they ought to be, but I was not willing to stay and labor where no one was free and not one could prevail with God, and asked every one who would promise to get where they could work for the lost to stand to their feet. Nearly every member arose. I called them to the altar. Called on some of them to pray. Most of them cold and lifeless. I sent up my petition as I would if it had been my last in that place; told them I expected to go to Virginia with my sick daughter, and we might never meet again until at the judgment, for I had had terrible and strange feelings about going. Most of the class gathered around me and begged of me to stay. I told them I was not very strong, and should need all the strength I had to care for my child, and get through the long journey. Some of them, with tears, asked me just to stay that week. I promised to do so. Soon after breakfast next morning the preacher came and told me I must not be in a hurry to get away from them, for God wanted me in that meeting. I told him I wanted to have one good plain talk with him.

"Yes, do so," he said; "come over to our home and stay a day, or a week, if you like."

It was only a block and a half. I went and immediately commenced my little talk, questioning both the pastor and his wife. I asked him how he expected God to work when there was such differences in nearly every case.

"We shall have to get at these things," he said.

"Well, are you ready to be the first one?"

"Yes, mother, if that is necessary."

Then I asked him if he were aware of ill feelings to one of the members of the most prominent family in the church.

"All I know," he said, "the wife and mother of that family has terrible feelings toward me, and I suppose some of the other members on her account, and I have talked to her repeatedly, telling her what I saw wrong in her, and she talks back always in an unchristian-like way, to say the least."

I asked if in his conversation with her he had manifested a tender spirit, such as he thought Jesus would have manifested had He been in his place.

"I am sure that I have not."

"Will you pray about it?"

"I will begin from this hour, and will not only pray but will fast until I know just where I am and of what spirit I am, and if there is anything for me to make right or unright, I will get where I can do that and anything else God shall show me. I want you to say everything to me that you fear, feel and think."

I then questioned his wife. She said, "I believe I am saved, but not sanctified." For two or three years she had been having strange spells, would fall down most anywhere, and lie like one dying. I exhorted her to make haste, for unless she was sanctified would be right in the way of any real work being done.

"I will," she said, "but I can not do anything in public, for I fall any time or anywhere."

I told her that God would take care of that, but she must get right about the work. The meeting was appointed for the afternoons every day that week. It was at the place where I was stopping for my home. Most of the class were there on time, and our pastor said, "Sister Coon will take the meeting." After prayer and reading the Scripture I told them I felt like asking questions all around the room, not because it was pleasant, but I could see no other way to get at things, as they would not talk out things by themselves. The pastor said, "Do with this meeting just as you think best." I questioned him again the first one, asking him if God was talking to him and showing him how he should move.

"Yes," he said, "I am fasting, and shall never eat a mouthful until I know I am where God is well pleased." The Lord talked to him last night, every hour, and told him he had not had Christ's spirit in His fullness, and had shown him that he was harsh, and when he had reproved had done so without the Spirit. He said that he was ashamed and sorry, and asked forgiveness of every member and asked them to pray for him, and then went to this one sister, shook hands with her and asked her forgiveness, and said, "I have not reproved in the spirit of Christ, my Master; I can not say that I have accused you wrongfully, for I believe everything I have said is the truth, but I have not done it in the right way, and I am going down before the Lord and will never rest, day nor night, until I am filled with the Spirit, and if it is necessary for me to repent like a sinner, I shall do that, for I must and will be right." He asked her again if she had forgiven him.

"As well as I can," she said. "I don't feel like it; I think you have wronged me ever since you have been our pastor."

"My sister, I have confessed, and do still, that I lacked the Spirit, and so had better not spoken to you at all. Then you say you can't forgive me?"

"Yes, I say so, but I don't feel it."

I felt I had said what was necessary. We had not time to go around the class that day. I put a few questions to each one and found they would follow these two, and we knelt to pray. The pastor started in as soon as he touched the floor, in a few minutes fell full length. In a few moments turned on his side, then he went round and round like a wheel, his shoulders being worn on the floor and his feet going round, I should think, one hundred times. The agony was intense, not many words, but the groans touched eternity. His face had the appearance of death, and an occasional gasp, "I will, yes, I will! They shall all go right out of me or I shall die." Still going round, he said, "So harsh; so unkind; so cruel; so cross; so carnal;" and like expressions; certainly going round for half an hour or longer, until he lay as one dead. His countenance changed into a heavenly smile, then he whispered, "Blessed, sweet, white, heavenly; you have come back again, heavenly dove. I will never grieve thee any more; oh, stay in my heart; forever let me lie at thy feet."

The power and glory of God filled the place. Nearly all were weeping; some groaning, others screaming. The sister where I was staying was powerfully baptized, rose to her feet, clapping her hands, and said, "I've got it! I've got it. I'm sanctified, I'm filled." Then I asked how many in the room were sanctified. No other, but the pastor. We separated to meet in the evening, but I asked them if they could let me go home now. They said, "No, don't talk about it, but stay at least this week." The pastor was ready to preach that night. God used him in a wonderful way. Seekers came forward and could pray. A brother from the country drove his team, came forward and prayed through. He had been a backslider for some time. The Holy Ghost fell upon him. He arose and testified, and went leaping and shouting from pulpit to door, hugging the brethren. Such love as was manifested between him and the pastor made it a heavenly place. That night I slept but little. God let me see the state of that sister who could not forgive, until it seemed the pains of death were upon me, and I was obliged to walk the floor or sit up and pray all the night to breathe at all. I had been having heart failure for eight years from excessive work at altars, and when in meeting, where our own members were backslidden, it was not possible for me to get two hours sleep any night. I told the pastor and his wife, also the sister where I was staying, that it was not prudent, to say the least, for me to stay. I told them death would be preferable than what I was passing through. The pastor said, "Just stay in the meeting; just be there in person, and we will take good care of you, and we shall not leave you alone another night. At one time, from overwork, I had brought on the same thing on myself, and for weeks they expected me to die." I asked how he possibly could ask me to stay another hour if he had passed through the same, as it was impossible for me to be in a meeting and turn responsibility aside, or only be a looker on.

"Mother," he said, "we can't let you go; if this one sister were out of the way, or in a way to get through, we might consent."

I appealed to her and said, "You have always professed great love and sincerity to me, but how is it possible that you do not move; are you willing to go and stay one night in my room?"

"I don't believe I could."

"You seem like a stone."

"Well, that is what I am; I feel like a stone, can't pray nor talk; I am really turning to stone; but if you will stay I will do the very best I can. And, Sister Coon, I want you to say everything you feel, and do just keep right after me, or I am lost forever." I commended her case to God, and sent after the other members of the class. Her daughter had been a member of the church many years, but had become discouraged, and was greatly wrought upon because of the condition of her family. I had talked with her alone, told her the terrible consequences of herself not being out in the light, and that unless she was clear in her own experience her mother might never be. I found she had settled down after God had called her out into the work, and got a promise from her to move out at any cost. It seemed an impossible thing to get her separated from father, mother, brother and sister, and throw herself out into the hands of God to be and serve Him as she would do if she had not belonged to the family. We opened the next afternoon meeting at their home. Brother Ketels was elder, and he and the pastor were at that meeting. I questioned every one who came, and found them yielding. By the time we were ready to pray, the Holy Ghost came upon us in great power. A few of us gathered around this daughter, concentrated prayer and faith until we prevailed. The power struck her and she fell to the floor, and she rolled over from side to side in the room in agony, crying for help and saying, "Yes, Lord, I will go; I will turn away from papa and mamma and will leave every relative. I will go out into this whitened harvest-field. God help me to die right out here; I will never stop praying until I am crucified." And then, rolling and tossing for at least half an hour, cried, "God help me down, I must get down; I must get through, or I shall die if I do not. I shall be lost unless I wholly abandon myself. My God, I put myself into Thy hands forever.

"Let me die, let me die,  
So dead that no desire shall rise  
To appear good, or great, or wise,  
In any but my Savior's eyes,  
Let me die, let me die!"

And it was done according to our faith. This had great bearing on the mother. Others prayed through that same day, but the mother seemed not to have power to do anything. The house seemed filled with the presence of God, and we left it so to go to the evening meeting.

My nights were almost sleepless. It has always been impossible for me to leave a meeting or the different cases who were hard to reach or in any trouble, and two young lady evangelists took care of me every night. Every two or three hours each night it seemed as though I might die at any time, still I went to the afternoon meetings, also every night, but one.

The Lord got everything out of the way, and now we were ready for the hardest case. We could not seem to get at it in the evening meeting, as we had desired. I felt we could not undertake it in a public meeting, but God's ways are not always like ours. In the evening meeting the burden came upon the elder, pastor and myself. The pastor was prostrate on his face near the pulpit. The elder was sometimes on his face, then again on his knees and again on his side, with screams unutterable, and sometimes flew from the pulpit to the door, and sometimes held to the seats as though he would tear them from their fastenings. He was saying, "O God, send the devils out of here; put the devils out of this house; they are legions, but they must go; they shall go out." Then he would go back and look into the face of this sister and say, "You have to move; you have to do

something." I was kneeling by her side, imploring and beseeching that she move out while these burdens were upon us. Finally she said, looking right into my face, "I can not move, I am lost, lost! O God, I have turned to stone; I can't pray nor shed one tear." Her son raised up from his knees and came up to her and said, "Why don't you try, mother? Don't you care that Auntie Coon dies? You don't try; why don't you?" and went back to his seat. I felt what was to be done must be done quickly, and said, "My sister, will you let me go home now to die?" She put her arms around my neck and began to weep.

"This is cruel, but do stay by me," she said, "and tell me, Sister Coon, am I lost forever; must I go to hell?"

"No," I said, "your heart is breaking; there is mercy for you, but you must hurry. If my life goes and you come out clean and clear and remain so, I shall be paid."

"What a horrible thing for me to take the life out of one that I love next to Jesus Christ," she said, and the burden still remained on the two brethren, and in the night the powers of hell gave way and we rejoiced in the salvation of our precious one. Her husband had stayed away from the church a few nights. We supposed he was offended at the course we had taken with his wife, though nothing had been said. The next afternoon meeting was appointed at their home again. We were there on time, and when we were ready to open the meeting I asked where her husband was. One of the girls answered, "Papa is out at the barn, busy; there is a man out there on business." I said, "Will you please go and tell him to come in to the meeting as soon as he is through with the gentleman?"

"Yes, but, auntie, he won't come; papa won't come into this meeting today."

"We shall see," I said. "Sister, get on your bonnet and we will go out to the barn."

"Yes," she said, "we will."

We went and stood right by the barn door. Both of the men looked at us. I passed the time of day and said, "Were you nearly through with your business for the day with this gentleman?" The man turned his horse and said, "Yes, ma'am, we are through now." I told the brother that we were there to get him to come to the meeting, and that we would just give him ten minutes to change his appearance, and told his wife to take hold of one arm and I the other. He said, "I will come right now." And in ten minutes made his appearance. When we were ready to pray four or five of us knelt around him and poured out our souls. The Holy Spirit filled the place, and soon he was weeping and praying and making vows to God, telling Him if He would help him back he would walk with Him to the end of his life. Every one in the room was melted, and together we covenanted with God and each other to be true and push the battle. I think every member but one came in line.

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## CHAPTER 35

Old-Time Methodist Camp-Meeting - -Looks into Hell -- A Murder Case -- Glorious Times at May Street -- Goes to Atlanta -- Reminiscences of Brother Roberts

In Chicago, 1902, there was a campmeeting among "the Old-time Methodists." Brother Shelhamer was there ten days. It rained nearly every day the two weeks I was there. The congregation was small in the day, but at night the attendance was good; some members from other churches and seekers, both among white and colored, and two Salvation Army captains, seeking holiness. The two weeks we had good congregations it seemed the powers of hell were turned loose on the outside of the tent. We made it a special subject of prayer to know the cause of it. Found we were surrounded by a community of Christian Scientists. Brothers Brooke and Humphreys also were led to preach on Judgment and Eternity, and at such times the crowds were held, but very few seekers. The last night of the meeting Brother Humphreys preached. The tent was packed and it seemed like eternity, and on the outside seemed almost like a pack of bloodhounds or fierce animals. I think I never heard such preaching on hell and the judgment. I began to shake and grow weak, and it seemed the pit was opened close to me and I could see in and hear the screams and wails of the lost. It seemed impossible for me to live five minutes. I tried to stand, but was unable. I raised my hand toward the preacher, and two of them lifted me to the stand. I staggered like a drunk man and leaned against the pulpit and, with my hand and arm stiff pointed downward into the horrible place where were the sights and sounds. People on the outside pressed their way in. Horror seemed depicted everywhere, and, as my finger still pointed, I asked if they could see and hear. Told them that God had let me know that that was to be the final home of many in that congregation. I said, "Many of you are as near heaven tonight as you ever will be; there will be awful dying soon in this vicinity; terrible scenes will be transacted, for hell is certainly turned loose in this community, and if you could see and hear as I do, if it is not already too late, you would fall down on your faces and cry for mercy now."

There was weeping and groaning, some covered their faces, and when I was helped to my chair from the stand they gathered around me in a swarm. Five young people came together at the close and said, "Auntie Coon, don't close this meeting; O, don't think of it." I told them the tent was not ours, that another party had it already rented and it must be taken down next morning, but that if they would seek God we would stay with them and see them through. I think only one remained, and they were obliged to take me to a tent, and I had to have a colored sister by my side, and for hours she had to keep her hands on me to keep me alive. Just toward daylight I slept a few moments.

We afterwards found there had been a young lady murdered just two blocks from our tent by a villain who had wished to marry her, and her body had lain two weeks in the tall grass but a little way off. The same man had killed his mother and buried her in one corner of the cellar to get her money. There was a reward offered for his body, dead or alive. A woman found him afterwards in a cornfield, where he had taken his own life. A note was in his pocket confessing the murder of the two. For two weeks I was not able to hold a pound weight in either hand, but spent most of the summer in the city and attended meetings at May street. There were a company of backsliders and compromisers, but I felt, and made the assertion publicly, that God was coming to our quarterly meeting at May street in wonderful and glorious power. They could throw all their fears to the wind, for it would be so. The quarterly meeting came. God let the Holy Ghost use Brother Hubbard in a wonderful way. He talked in the love feast of God's mercy, love and power,

and said, "I feel glorious and grand, because God is in our midst." The tide was rising higher and higher, and as the Spirit came I stood on my feet and just cried, "Land ahead!" A number of them were on their feet. One young minister we had been praying for a long time lifted his hand, stood up, and said, "Today I assert my liberty. The devil has held me just as long as he shall; I will be a free man, today and now." I stepped out into the aisle, walked a few steps, and cried, "Victory! victory!" and he started on the run, Brother Hubbard leaped the altar rail and, with arms around each other, they praised, leaped and ran, and a little sister who had gotten right started on the keen run and they met in front of the altar, I should think, fifty times. The two brethren ran one way and she the other, she just tall enough to sail under their arms, and such cries of victory and triumphant shouts as you seldom hear in this city. Then our short, fat Brother Gates left his corner and came jumping down the aisle, taking both my hands in his, and we did justice to the jumping together; and all over the house people were free and flying, running and shouting. The victory continued all through preaching and sacrament and came back with us to the evening service. The Holy Ghost helped the preacher, and the house was full of the power and glory of God..

In the fall I accepted the invitation of Brother Shelhamer and came South to Atlanta, Georgia, for the winter, and have dictated as best I could the story of my life. And right here I want to mention some reminiscences of Brother B. T. Roberts, of blessed memory, formerly the senior general superintendent of the Free Methodist Church.

It is wonderful to me that at this late time of life I am carrying out his injunction. Often he said, "Sister Coon, do not put it off, you must write your life; the church and the world need it. Promise me you will do it." I have often commenced, but as often burned it, and now, in and through the greatest trial of my life, I am doing the best I can, and when the Holy Ghost comes I write as He gives utterance.

I don't believe much in dreams, but this one comes to mind, and it might be a blessing to some one.

I seemed to be with a number of saints where there was a nice, even lawn. I had not gone far when I saw Brother Roberts with a lovely girl baby in his arms. I said, "Why, Brother Roberts, whose baby is that you are holding?" He said, "The baby is my wife's, but I carry it." I asked why, and he said, "That is the way it should be."

I awakened and it still seemed real, and I did. not sleep much after that. All that day, now and then, that dream was before me, also the next day, and it occurred to me that if I would write it down it might not remain so vividly, so I commenced writing a letter to Brother Roberts himself, and while writing 'twas made plain that my dream was concerning his work in the school. I wrote that also, and immediately came a return letter saying, "Glory to God, Sister Coon, your dream was from God, and also the interpretation thereof. My wife felt that most of the young ladies were becoming serious, and she not only talked with them, but followed some of them to their rooms. It was not long before we heard the noise of praying and shouting through the building, and it seemed that nearly every one that was unsaved was in deep concern about their souls. She not only followed up her work from room to room, but called them together and held prayer-meeting, not only with the young ladies, but with all the students, and we are now having the most wonderful times that I have ever seen in this school. Sometimes while they are marching to the dinner table

the power of God strikes them and they dance, scream and shout around the table, and some of them fall and roll under the table. It is certainly wonderful and glorious. So you see the child belongs to my wife, and it is beautiful, and I nurse it. And every time you dream about me, Sister Coon, please write it. If God thinks enough of us to put his clean saints to dream we certainly ought to know it, and I want you to keep on praying until there is not one unconverted student in the school. It would do you good to be here. Instead of any being driven away by the noise or manifestations, it is bringing in more.

I never think of Brother Roberts but a perfect pattern of humility, love and greatness come before me, and at camp-meeting or conference was careful to see to it that every one had their liberty, and the sisters in a very special manner. Of course, you would all know that because his desire was not only to see, but to ordain women, and often when it seemed the Holy Ghost did not use the preachers, at least they did not preach with the Holy Ghost, he would call on some sister to exhort, as he did at one time in Michigan with a noted preacher and himself in the pulpit; he called on Sister Coon to come into the pulpit to talk.

At another time, at St. Charles campground, he called on me to pray. I was quite a distance from him and, while praying, felt a head come under my two hands. He had walked on his knees on the ground, and said, "Put your hands on my head." The Holy Ghost honored it, and there was leaping and falling, and he preached with wonderful power. When there were any sick in the tent he would get his "precious wife and Sister Coon" and say, "Come with me, my elders," then would close the tent and tell us to put our hands on the sick person, with his own, and I can not remember one case that was not healed.

I speak of these things to show what a humble, saved, wise man he was.

I get lonely often to see him, and I shall before long.

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## CHAPTER 36

Souls Helped by Letter -- Burdened for Compromisers -- Son's Death -- Losses -- Deep Resignation -- Bright Prospect.

One day there came a letter and a small package by mail. I opened the package and found two yards of blue and white gingham, and I wondered what it could mean; then opened my letter, which I found was from an entire stranger. "I have heard about you, Sister Coon," it read, "and read about you in the papers, and I want to ask you to pray for me. I once had a good experience, but trouble and sorrow have come over me and I became discouraged and have lost my hold on God, and there is no one here that enjoys the blessing of perfect love, and every time I read anything from you or hear others speaking of you have felt I ought to write, feeling assured I could get help."

Immediately I took her case to the Lord, and had the assurance that he heard and would help her. I wrote her a letter immediately and held close class and told her if she could answer

before God every question I could hold her before His face, and I already had the assurance she should get all she had lost and more. I set an hour for both of us to pray with fasting, and soon had a return letter praising the Lord that she was satisfied and would never stop till she was filled with the Holy Ghost, which was so. She said in the letter that when her husband died she felt she could not live, and in that way had lost in her soul. The gingham she sent was all she had to send, and asked me please to wear it that I might remember her often before the Lord.

That apron proved one of my beautiful things and lasted for years, and so God has made the smallest things great blessings to me, and a voice has been in them, constantly saying, "Pray for me.

God has given me many who had entirely lost their experience, and some of them had gone close to the pit. Many times the burden has come and taken the relish for food and kept me awake many nights, till they seemed like my own flesh and blood who had departed from God. Some cases seemed almost impossible to recover, but they were so laid upon my heart that I felt I must see them brought back to God or I could not live. I have taken them to God with confidence, telling Him He could not look upon His Son without seeing these lost ones I held before Him. Then I could demand the answer and my heart said, it must and shall be done.

Letters have been sent hundreds of miles saying, "I feel you are praying; how could you know what I was passing through? I am so troubled, day and night, that I have no rest. Keep on praying, for I am coming back to God."

Then I could write them all my heart, and there has never been one case but that has been redeemed and brought back with a deeper, better experience than they ever had before. And still my heart pursues the same course, and I am convinced that every Christian should be more for God and see greater results than in the past, and all within me cries out, "O, for a thousand holy men and women so abandoned to God that He can use them every hour, and in ways that few in these days know anything of. We are too superficial; we do not go down after the deep things of God, because we dread the suffering it brings. Most of the people connected with the holiness movement still live the self-life. They want to be, and are, like other folks. So few have their conversation in Heaven; so few nowadays who live without light and trifling conversation. Some professing holiness jest and joke, preachers among them, and if they are found in the company of one whose citizenship is in Heaven they want to get away as soon as possible, and such are heard to call the faithful "old timers" and "extremists;" and so take their place among the worldlings and feel and sometimes say, "I don't want to wear my dress so plain, or my hat without a bow or puff or twisted chiffon, and I don't want to wear such plain material," and so choose worldly colors and as near the worldly fashion as they can without open reproof. My heart is so sad and filled with weeping that I feel I must once more sound the alarm in Zion. What I have seen in the past year with my own eyes, and some things I have heard, makes me feel I must walk carefully and speak things I know belong to the experience of those enjoying perfect love. And today I love the plain pilgrim way and garb, and dress as plainly as when I was twenty-nine. I have never since I was saved had a bow anywhere. Neckties and bands of velvet were laid aside then, once and forever. I prize one ray of heavenly light or one smile of approval from Jesus Christ more than all beside. My soul is delighted with the fare of the way, and I do have fellowship with the purest and most devoted saints of God.

One morning before dictation the Holy Ghost filled my soul and all the place where three of us were kneeling, and for a moment I saw the books opened and those standing before God who once took the plain way and had power and now are among the professors, and it seemed for a few moments I should die. Then I saw those who had gotten the victory over the beast and over his name, over the world, flesh and the devil, standing at the right hand with harps in their hands and crowns on their heads, and a halo enclosed them. It appeared in the shape of a rainbow and then enclosed them over their heads down to their feet. The light was so dazzling it seemed to cover the entire place here in this world where the saints of the Most High live. Its rays were almost burning heat, until we all cried out with ecstasy and joy and with one voice we said again and again, "I stand with these forever; I have taken the track till I strike eternity's shore. Hallelujah!"

I am praying for the preachers to see where they stand, who have been saying for years, "God does not notice these things, we are all right and we shall dress as we please, no matter what anybody says," and so they let the worldly things make their appearance, and they are shorn of their strength and their power is gone. I lie with my face in the dust, while I ask God to send a shaking among us such as has not been since Redfield's day. Amen.

We have a band of young pilgrims in Atlanta, which makes me feel that I grow younger every day. They are not the dressed up worldly kind, but real saints, and if they keep on as they are going now, they will be ready to take our places when we go up, and I shall not be ashamed to stand at the gate and welcome them when they get there. I am not telling half the joy I feel, for it is unutterable and full, and I feel in all my Christian life of forty-five years I am after my thousands for Jesus. Though tears flow as rain and heartaches are frequent, I welcome all, "They bear me on where God and the angels are."

Of late, when the calls are so often and my age and infirmities prevent much that I might do, I find myself asking God why He does not make me a new body. I have never heard that anything like that has been done when one is past seventy-four, but when I know people are hungry and they say, "God sent me to you," I feel the need of a new and young body, for the soul that is in this one can certainly wear out another. Many times have I felt that could I be divided into fifty pieces with a living soul all on fire just as the one I have could be put into each piece I would immediately go on the table. After forty-five years of suffering, toil and weeping I am not satisfied to cease. I often wonder, when all my family are gone, why I don't ask Him to take me home, for since I have had sciatica, with all the added pains, which have been like being torn into pieces with wild beasts daily, I have wondered that I do not get homesick, but my soul reaches out for the young women of Atlanta especially, and of this Southland, and I keep singing, "I am after my thousands for Jesus "

The last of October I started from my home in Marengo, Illinois, for Atlanta, Georgia, to spend the winter. The third of December a dispatch came saying that my son suffocated in the Lincoln Hotel, burned in Chicago. For a time it seemed impossible for me to stay in this world. I was too feeble to go home to the funeral, and for two weeks I suffocated at night with him, but God helped me to put my sorrow aside sufficiently to pray with souls that came to my room almost daily. We received the news Thursday night, and on the following Sabbath I walked to the little Mission with the dear family, and God put His strength into soul and body and helped me to stand

on my feet and praise Him. He doeth all things well. Hourly I praise Him that all my treasures are above; my home is not here.

"Why should I murmur at trials severe? Be hushed, my sad spirit, the worst that can come will shorten my journey and hasten me home."

My soul is ever burdened for the lost or filled with praises for the salvation of others.

I have recently received letters, one from my old home, stating indebtedness of which I was not aware, saying if not attended to immediately all would pass out of my hands. For a short time it seemed not only strange, but cruel, for a rheumatic, crippled woman, seventy-four years of age, to lose her old home that had been willed her for life.

My son having taken stock, ten years ago, in a stove factory, which has proved his financial ruin, was so loaded down with interests and assessments, having paid only one rich man in that time six thousand dollars interest money, he let the taxes run until the whole will be bid off unless paid for soon. Three or four of us are talking to God about this. While the scalding tears come in floods all within me says, "The will of the Lord be done." I would much rather be homeless and penniless than to have less grace. I praise the Lord I have spent forty-five blessed, happy years in crying, "Behold the Lamb," and this morning I claim tenfold increase of Holy Ghost power and fire. I have, and will, strive as those running after earth's gold only for souls. Praise God, it has been my life-work and shall be till my last breath. Heaven seems very near this morning, and the door seems to stand ajar and I get glimpses of the martyred band where I belong, for I am going up through tribulations to wear a starry crown; yes, a never fading crown. Hallelujah!

"With the prophet I soar to the heavenly shore  
And outfly all the arrows of death."

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THE END