

SEE THE GLORY

by

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

COSTLY VICTORY

IN SPITE OF CONSTANT and definite witnessing for Christ, Adelaide was unsatisfied with the fruit of her life, saying, "I felt that somehow I should be more useful in the Lord's service." A comfortable salary and congenial work could not restrain her from investing her whole time and energy, if that were possible.

Although she was greatly improved in health, there was still uncertainty about the advisability of her going to the foreign field. But whether or not she could go in person, she was determined to pray and give for missions. Faithfully, she sent from her tithe to the China Inland Mission. She probably chose this agency because she had read the biography of its founder, Hudson Taylor, and the story had greatly inspired her ever since her days at the University of California. Her subsequent personal contact with some of the hundreds of China Inland Mission workers also challenged her prayer interest.

Even if her feet were in America, she knew that by intercession she could enter into all the activity of the China Inland Mission, reaching aboriginal tribes, Tibetans, Mohammedans, and Chinese, as well as working with children and students, rich and poor, sick and leprous—for intercessors are not confined by boundaries.

Adelaide joined a Saturday afternoon prayer circle at the home of her friend and physician, Dr. F. Jean Holt, near Pasadena. Although attendance at this meeting necessitated a special trip of some distance, she not only went herself but also often took her friend, Betty Presley, with her.

The two girls, who had been special friends while attending the university in Berkeley, were glad to be together again. Betty had moved to Southern California in December, 1940, and Adelaide had promptly taken her to Los Angeles' New Chinatown and initiated her into the mysteries of prawns and mustard, chopsticks and tea. Few weekends went by without Adelaide's going to Los Angeles on Saturday or her friend's going to Ontario on Sunday afternoon. Adelaide always returned to teach her Sunday school class, feeling it was as binding an engagement as instructing her weekday classes at Chaffey. The rides back and forth to the metropolis were usually in Betty's "Chevvy." "These times," to quote Betty, "were precious to both of us. She taught me several of the Bible Institute choruses, and we sometimes memorized Scripture. She read while I dodged traffic."

Since they had lived not far apart in Northern California, Betty and Adelaide headed the car homeward on vacations and long weekends, singing as they sped those four hundred miles or more. Adelaide's favorite hymns were "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and "Love Divine." These songs the two girls often sang while driving along the broad highway.

As soon as school was out in the summer of 1942, Adelaide went to her sister's home to help care for her niece, Ruby, and to welcome another little gem, whom they named Esther—Marian Gustafson's second child.

That same summer Adelaide also spent some weeks at the ranch in Alta, busy with sewing, Sunday school superintending, and the like. She wrote a friend:

Helen, I thought I was to have a vacation; but instead of a single class, I have a whole Sunday school on my hands! It was organized just before I got home in the Alta schoolhouse and then "given" to me as soon as I arrived. This is truly a missionary locality if there ever was one, and we're just about starting from scratch. Please pray for it, that God will be glorified and that this summer's work will not be mere waste motion.

Then referring to her Ontario Sunday school class, which she had left in Helen's hands, she assured her former pupil, "Every Sunday morning I think of you and pray especially for your lesson and for each member of the class."

Adelaide apologized at the beginning of the letter: "Time never ceases to be a scarce and valuable commodity in the economy by which I reckon." She closed by saying, "Gran wants me to go to bed earlier!" (And Gran, you may have had a point there! Since Adelaide starts another letter: "The hour is late—1:30 a.m. to be exact, but . . .")!

After that supposed-to-be vacation Adelaide returned to her work in Southern California to resume her teaching. She was then twenty-nine years old.

The fellowship with Betty continued through these months. Of one occasion together, Betty writes:

One time Katheryne Samuelson (Flick) invited Adelaide and me to the China Inland Mission home for dinner when the General Director, Bishop Frank Houghton, was staying there. Unavoidably, we were ten minutes late. I thought Adelaide had reached the depths of despair until I saw Katheryne, to whom it was a worse catastrophe.

"Depths of despair . . ." Surely this was the only time these words were ever used of Adelaide!

Another day the two girls attended a prayer meeting together. Suddenly they were as startled as if their names had been called over the loud speaker in Grand Central Station. Someone was praying for Betty because of the brevity of the skirt she was wearing! This would have been enough to turn some girls everlastingly from prayer meetings—but not these two.

Though naturally high-spirited, they were schooling themselves in submission to others for the Lord's sake. With only a faintly whimsical note, Betty refers to the incident, "Right after the meeting Adelaide took me shopping and helped me select a suit that was a particular favorite of mine for a long time."

Only an intimate friend could open the door and reveal this late-at-night picture:

If you ever went on a Saturday shopping-tour-prayer-meeting-dinner-visiting episode with Adelaide, you know how very dead tired you were at bedtime. It happened many Saturdays; and on each one, after I'd raced through the formalities and fallen into bed, her praying went on for a half hour to over an hour. She went down a list of over a hundred students at high school whom she remembered in prayer because she knew no one else would pray for them, plus all the services to attend the next day, plus all the missionaries and many intimate things besides.

She also did all her Dawson Trotman lesson ("Martures" course, issued by the Navigators) if she dropped in the attempt. Then she had to do up her hair, brush her teeth, etc . . . She had made Philippians 3:10 her prayer—"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death"—particularly, the last part—to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

She prayed that prayer many times very earnestly and spoke of it as her heart's desire.

Always teaching; always praying; always studying; always befriending someone; as a servant of the Lord, she was always filling her days to the brim. That was Adelaide Locher's life those days and all a part of her zeal for "**the glory of God.**"

She taught her third year in Ontario. Then concerning the summer of 1943 she wrote:

Still hoping to go to China after the war if my health should remain good, I took the opportunity of going to Camp Wycliffe Summer Institute of Linguistics held on the campus of Bacone College at Muskogee, Oklahoma.

I halfway expected that I might not return to Chaffey, though I had no idea what the Lord had in mind.

For some time I had felt that my life in Southern California was too pleasant and too easy to constitute good missionary training. I had been praying along the lines of a poem which had long been a favorite of mine:

"From a subtle love of softening things,
From easy choices, weakenings,
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified,
From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me love that leads the way,
The faith that nothing can dismay,
The hope no disappointments tire,
The passion that will burn like fire;
Let me not sink to be a clod:
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.”

- Amy Wilson Carmichael

All summer at the Institute of Linguistics while I studied I considered what I should do, though I had already signed my contract at Chaffey so my return there seemed necessary. Then three weeks before the end of the session, the Junior College English teacher resigned from Bacone College. For the first time in my life I felt that the Lord might be asking me to do something that I really did not want to do. I felt that I was more needed at Bacone, but I did not wish to break my contract at Chaffey, and I also knew that most of my family would be disappointed to have me go so far away.

Then the Lord gave me a promise of Isaiah 45:2,3, “**I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight,**” etc . . . and, “**I will give thee the treasures of darkness . . .**” He did go before; the crooked places were made straight; all the barriers were removed; and He did give the treasures of darkness, though I trust that there will eventually be seen to be more than I have visualized.”

Adelaide made no easy choice when she left Southern California’s congenial environment and Chaffey’s excellent teaching system. In signing a Chaffey contract for the fourth year after her re-employment there in 1940, she had attained, under California’s tenure law, status as a permanent teacher. With competition very keen in the state which has one of the highest salary scales in the nation, this professional recognition had been a real achievement. Too, in the California community of Ontario, her contacts and program of Christian work were well established. Friends and family were near or easily accessible.

It was no “subtle love of softening things” that led her to go to Bacone, where she had to begin anew! The staff was unfamiliar to her, the students of a different race, and the salary offered little more than half what she had been previously receiving. In leaving Chaffey she reluctantly left a vacancy on the teaching staff; but she knew that soon there would be a score of well-qualified teachers applying for that coveted place, while at Bacone, there might be great difficulty in finding a suitable instructor. It was the need in the Indian school and the fact that the Lord seemed to be asking her to meet it that settled the matter for Adelaide. Not in a poetical sense only, but in a practical way she regarded her life as fuel in the hand of God. She was glad to have Him use it to kindle His flame at the place of His choice. It was all right!

When Adelaide checked with her doctors in Southern California and they gave her a clean bill of health, she asked her principal at Chaffey for a release from her contract. He granted this. She then accepted the Bacone position, made a quick trip to Northern California, told her family of her changed plans, and moved to Oklahoma.

It happens that the school, originally founded in 1880, is the oldest institution of higher education in the state of Oklahoma and the only Protestant Indian university in the world. When it was moved to Muskogee in 1884, A. C. Bacone believed that there should be a work in Indian territory with a definitely spiritual emphasis, a Baptist Indian university where:

- (1) The faculty were all Christians,
- (2) The students ought to be Christians,
- (3) The workers were God-called, having a sense of concern for their fellow-men.

Certainly Adelaide fitted into Bacones ideals for the school that bore his name. Her enthusiasm for her work, her real affection for the Indian students, as well as her desire that they might know Christ in a vital way, made her a valuable asset to the school.

Appreciating this, Dr. Earl Riley, then the president of Bacone College, wrote: "I can honestly say that no single staff member was ever so loved and respected. If I have ever seen scholarship, a passion for souls, and a real Christian character all in one, it was in Miss Adelaide Locher."

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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