

O n e



I LEARNED . . .

that God is good and that all things work together for good to them that love Him.

In that first moment, when word came that there had been an accident—a bad accident—we knelt in anguished prayer. I could only say, “Lord, let it be good for everyone concerned. Let it be as good, Lord, as it can possibly be.” And it was. Before I called He answered. It was good for Ned: He went immediately to be with Christ. It was good for Katherine, his eleven-year-old cousin who rode with him: She was not seriously injured. There was no other car or person involved, and that was good. And then, strangely, it was good for us. For in the eternal greatness of our Father’s love this is one of the “all things” that is working together for our good.

“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee” (Psalm 31:19).

Two



I LEARNED . . .

that God is fully trustworthy and that in the vast realm of His knowledge and wisdom there is no room for the faithless question, "Why?" With God there is no "if." *If* I had not sent Ned on the errand, *if* we had not let him have his driver's license, *if* we had never gone to the beach, *if* he had only gone elsewhere for the summer as he had once considered. An endless line of "ifs" could stretch before us—an "if" for every moment of our lives. *If* we had only done it differently. But up above each "if" and beyond each finite thought stands One who is the eternal God, and from the realm of His abode He sees the end from the beginning and charts the course that leads us. His purposes are sure, His will absolute, His foreknowledge supreme. Before the foundation of the world His plan was made, and no unexpected accident has ever taken Him by surprise. His hand—His loving and almighty hand—was in control of

NOT BY ACCIDENT

that car that day. And when the sixteen years of Ned's bright life on earth were completed, God took him home where now a brighter life has begun.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

Three



I LEARNED . . .

that all the things I have believed are true. Since becoming a Christian years ago, I have believed in the Bible—that it is the inspired, holy Word of God, and that God has not harbored any error in its pages. I have read the Word and trusted it. I have had no doubts concerning God and Christ, His blessed Son and our Savior. I have stood in this same place with many heartsick souls and read to them the Word of God and prayed, believing God when He said, “My grace is sufficient” (2 Corinthians 12:9), and trusting Him to fulfill His Word when He said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5); “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). John 15:26 speaks of the Comforter, “whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth.”

But in the hours that followed Ned’s call home, I suddenly and silently found an awakening within my soul that declared that all the things I had be-

lieved true, were true. The silence of eternity crept upon my waiting soul, and I was stilled before its limitless ages. Time rolled before me in its endless sea, and my soul moved to touch the fringes of the firmament, while my being bowed in quiet reverence to the greatness of God.

God seemed not far away but near, and in His mercy and faithfulness He reached across the universe to touch my life that I might acknowledge the magnitude of His power. All that God is overcame the little that man is, and my spirit was released into the infinite ways of the almighty One.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139:7-10)

There was no psychological release of prayer that somehow vaguely stilled my heart that day. Let scientists sneer, agnostic souls contemptuously lay their man-made claims to peace of mind through the universal tuning of their spirits to the meter of transcending thought. My hope was "built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness"; and in that hour of my great need all the power of heaven was ready at God's command. A supernatural summons from the throne of God let angels speed their way to minister by my side, and the Holy Spirit came and comforted me.

F o u r



I LEARNED . . .

that the Word of God is an anchor to the soul, and to flee to it is to find strong consolation from God. As the hours dragged their weary way across the stillness of that first night, it seemed as if time had ceased, and we were held suspended in deep despair. No rest or sleep, no quietness or light—nothing but the deep, deep pain—nothing but that and God. As our senses began to take in what had happened, and we began to believe that Ned was gone, I closed my eyes and asked for help. And the great Lover of our souls, our blessed Savior who is Himself the Eternal Word, poured into my listening heart the sweetness of the Word of God, and I was quickened. It was my comfort in affliction, and each soothing sentence became sweet to my taste. I did not take a Bible in my hands and read it, but I lay in quietness and listened. And it was as though Jesus Himself drew near and spoke to me, for my mind pored over verse after verse.

NOT BY ACCIDENT

The Shepherd's Psalm was there, and as I walked through the strange valley of the shadow of death I knew the comfort of His rod and His staff.

The Holy Spirit took the things of Christ and showed them to me: "I am the resurrection, and the life"—this verse is underlined in Ned's Bible—"he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26).

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:16–17)

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. (Isaiah 63:9)

For hours the gentle voice of the indwelling Christ brought healing to my soul, and I was stilled. There is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there (see Jeremiah 8:22). "He sent his word, and healed them" (Psalm 107:20).