

IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND

BY CAMILLA HOLBEN COLLINS

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CHAPTER 1

The train whistled out of the Kansas City, Missouri, station toward the West. I settled back, exhausted, in my window seat, still clutching a big box containing the results of a very wearisome day of shopping. Trying to please three relatives seemed hopeless.

"Honey, your bony neck shows," Aunt Carrie Hill piped up as I admired myself.

My mother, eyeing my knees as I donned the next gown, frowned. The roaring twenties fashions were not easy for her to accept. To add to the ordeal, Cousin Hortense, and I had our hearts set on pale blue. After hours of going from shop to shop, we all agreed that the just-perfect creation had been left hanging elsewhere.

"Oh, well," I sighed as the train picked up speed, "pink is pretty, too, and at least the coat pleased everyone.

While the porter was making up the berth I took refuge in the dressing room, and when I opened my suitcase rice showered in all directions. That mischievous little cousin in Independence had sprinkled it generously through all my things. I very carefully shook every article of clothing into the wastebasket and cleaned up the floor as best I could. To my surprise I walked back to the berth on little dribbles of the telltale rice.

All night long there were hushed exclamations as people boarded. "Oh a bride and groom. ... Aha! Look at the rice." . . ."Shucks, we missed out on the fun."

The next morning every eye was upon me. Here was the bride by a rice-strewn berth, but where was the groom? No one asked any questions, but everyone was extremely kind with offers of books, magazines, newspapers, and fruit. I'm sure they thought that something terrible must have happened to the other member of the wedding party. I enjoyed keeping them curious.

It was a beautiful trip. The wild flowers blossoming from every crevice of the Tehachapi Range were a welcome change from Iowa's icicles and drifts. Even the desert was fascinating, and when I peeked out the window at 2:00 a.m. and saw an Indian chief parading in full regalia outside a western depot, I thought I was in a different world for sure. But the real surprise was just beyond. For miles and miles the orchards of southern California were in full bloom, smelling heavenly.

On the last day the porter brought me a telegram. I was delighted to read, "I'll meet you at San Jose." I didn't look back as I left the train, but I could imagine the curious ones feeling relieved, though perhaps still a bit puzzled, as I joined my smiling fiancé and sped off in a car.

I had wished for a church wedding in my hometown, Lamoni, Iowa, where Bill Collins and I had met at Graceland College. But it seemed foolish to both of us to spend the extra fare for his trips when he wanted so much to save money for his third year of college. So we were married in

his home in Oakland, California, on May 10, 1928.

After a brief honeymoon along the Pacific we set up housekeeping with Dad Collins. Bill's mother had died when he was nine years old and his good stepmother, Armelia, who had reared him and his brother had also died after a long illness. Dad was delighted to have us with him, and I was thrilled to have a father to enjoy. When he learned that my father had died before I was a year old he seemed to sense added responsibility in his fatherly role. I appreciated his thoughtfulness and didn't even mind his teasing.

As a cook I was very anxious to please. For a while California's large variety of fruits and vegetables made meal planning fascinating. Then I tried my first pie. It looked lovely, but when Bill attempted to take a bite, pressing down on one side of his slice, the other side flipped up. He glanced at me quickly in surprise and, seeing my crimson face, silently pressed down very carefully on the other side only to see another decided tilt. By this time his eyes were twinkling. Glancing under the table he carefully braced one foot, gritted his teeth and bore down again extra hard. This time his whole portion flew off onto the floor. We all howled with laughter before I burst into tears. That was my last pie for over a year. No amount of coaxing could persuade me to try again until I found a never-fail recipe on the Crisco can.

At the end of four months Dad Collins married a lovely lady, and Bill and I moved to a homey, three-room apartment in East Oakland.

We made frequent trips back to the Senior Collins' hospitable home on Foothill Boulevard. Dad was fun-loving, kind, and generous. He was also a man of great faith. Early in his ministry as an elder he had had some marvelous experiences; these he gladly shared with me. I shall never forget listening to this story

"One time, Camilla, while living in Michigan, I was called to a home to administer. After work I went in my buggy to answer the call and found a grandmother with her infant grandchild alone in the home. 'The baby is in need of God's help,' she told me.

"So I went to the crib, felt of the baby's head and, detecting no fever, I was very puzzled, for it seemed to be sleeping peacefully and breathing regularly. Then the lady uncovered the baby and I was shocked to see a tiny pair of clubfeet. It was a pitiful sight, and I was greatly moved.

'Have the baby's parents requested me to come?' I inquired.

"No, they know of our church, but they care nothing about its teachings. I care greatly, and I have much faith that God can heal my grandchild. I've heard that you have great faith, too, Brother Collins, so won't you please ask our heavenly Father's blessing?"

'You are sure the parents wouldn't mind?' I asked.

"No, they won't mind at all. I'm positive it will be all right with them,' she promptly replied.

"So the sister wrapped the baby snugly again and, after the anointing, I poured out my heart to God in behalf of the child. When I had finished I felt led to lift the blanket. . . and we were both overcome with joy. Our faith was truly rewarded. With God's blessing those two little feet had been made perfect and were pointing in the right direction."

As Dad Collins finished his testimony of God's great love, tears were streaming down his face. "Never limit the power of God, Camilla," he said. "He is a God of miracles and, as Moroni promised, he works by power according to the faith of the children of men-the same today, tomorrow, and forever."

Bill's father was privileged several times to be the instrument through which God performed miracles. Many people felt that he had the gift of healing, but as he related these blessings to me he always gave God the glory.

He seldom gave advice as we visited in his home, but one good-natured, fatherly bit that he

offered was, "You kids should settle down and save your money. I don't like to see you letting so much of it slip away sightseeing."

Bill answered with his favorite slang, "Oh, raspberries, Dad, you forget that my gal is from the Midwest. Don't you think she needs to see something besides hogs and cornfields and haystacks? You should have seen her face on the ocean drive from Monterey to Carmel. Why, she had never seen a seagull or a cy press. . . let alone the Pacific. I have a lot of surprises stored up for her."

So on Long weekends and holidays we toured Yosemite with its granite mountains, nibbled prawns at Fisherman's Wharf, watched the seals sunning on the ocean rocks, browsed through the shops in Chinatown, spent hours in museums and aquariums, strolled through Golden Gate Park's Hawaiian Glen and Japanese Garden, visited the Pinnacles, Muir Woods, and Burbank Gardens, drove up the Redwood Highway, and camped in parks throughout the state.

We usually tried to be back in time for Sunday evening services to ease our consciences. We had been taught in our homes that we needed the church and, even though we found it easy to worship in God's beautiful outdoors, we both missed sharing in fellowship.

CHAPTER 2

Dad was certainly right about saving money, for the depression began the next year. As I look back, though, and recall how closely we had to stay home then, I'm grateful for the joy and beauty of that first wonderful year.

The year 1930 was to be an eventful time. Dad was to retire, and one night he told of his plans. "After Ida and I take a trip East to visit my family, I'm going to convert the garage into a toy shop. When my boys were young I made all their toys out of wood. . . and I didn't fool around with tiny trains and wagons either."

"I'll say you didn't," Bill chimed in. "Why, all the neighbor kids could climb on the train you built for Frank and me. I'll bet it would cart us around yet if someone hadn't stolen it."

But Dad's plans never materialized. In July 1929 he had three strokes within twenty-four hours and quietly died.

I'm sure that was one of the saddest days of my life, not only because of losing him but because the baby we were expecting in December would never have a grandfather or be allowed to play with those well-built toys he had described to me.

Our cloud had its silver lining, however. In settling up Dad's estate Mother Collins wrote Bill a generous check, and with this money and our savings we were able to move back to Lamon i.

Bill entered Graceland again in the fall and changed his course from engineering to an

education major. At that time two- and three-year college graduates were allowed to teach, and he needed a job.

My sister Carrie rented us two rooms of her big house on Cedar Street. There, in early December, William Hale arrived to liven up our family and introduce us to a whole new world of joy.

Nearing graduation in the spring of 1930, Bill took a group of the graduates in his car on weekend trips to apply for teaching jobs. The depression had begun, and school boards everywhere were cutting down on their teaching staffs. None of the group found work.

Bill kept looking until August when he finally gave up and decided to return to California. His best boyhood friend, Roy Weldon, had promised him a job for a year working with his bees and selling honey.

When this job ended Bill walked the streets in the East Bay area trying to find work. One night he came in with a worried look and approached me cautiously.

I have a chance for a job, It surely isn't a very exciting one. In fact, I've hesitated to take it."

"Why?" I queried.

"Well, because it might embarrass you. It's a dishwashing job in a restaurant. If I take it I'll go to work at 7:00 each morning and return home around 9:00 or 9:30 in the evenings according to how good business is.

I gave him a big hug. "That's wonderful news. What's wrong with washing dishes?"

He brightened up and continued to explain. "I'll get all my meals and thirty dollars a month. There will be no cash, but my wages will cover our apartment rent. At least we won't have to live in a tent."

"Oh, you'll be working for Aunt Laura and Uncle Gussie at Prosperity Grill. What wonderful landlords. . . and what wonderful cooks!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, and they'll pick me up and bring me home, so there won't be any transportation costs."

I was so proud of him. We had both agreed that we should not go on relief. "If Mama could make it alone with eight offspring, certainly two of us can with only one chick," I kept saying.

Bill would nod and add, "Surely there are many others less able-bodied or with more children who need help worse than we.

A few weeks earlier I had found a job which paid me three dollars a day for two days a week, but one dollar each day went to Hale's baby-sitter across the street. Occasionally I had a chance to work an extra day-so things were looking up.

Almost everyone was in the same financial condition, and we helped one another as much as we could. One day a dear friend, Emily, asked me at church if I'd be interested in laundering the uniforms for her beauty parlor. There would always be two and sometimes three a week. I went home with a light heart. God was surely watching over us. Later this same thoughtful friend let me clean her house each Friday.

As I look back now it seems impossible that such a small amount of money fed Hale and me, covered the utilities, bought necessary gas, paid postage, and kept up an insurance policy. But with early home training, much prayer, and the Lord's help I continued to take care of these needs.

After paying the bills I can remember many times searching under the rugs, the couch cushions, and in pockets for another penny so I could buy a three-cent stamp. Often, however, I had to wait until payday to send a letter to my mother.

In spite of the depression we were a very happy family. We had a comfortable home, health, and steady though not very remunerative employment. Each day we became more convinced that

money has very little to do with true and lasting happiness. Love for our heavenly Father, our neighbors, and one another took priority over material things. We began to realize that seeking to live good lives was more important than wealth. We sought to find more time to treasure the teachings and promises of the scriptures and to put them into practice in our home.

We were thankful, too, that we had been taught how to economize. We learned that making a small amount of money do can be a very rewarding experience. I recall that once when I went to the store almost broke I saw a sign on a counter: ASK THE CLERK FOR SOUP VEGETABLES... ONLY 5¢ TODAY.

In the sack the clerk placed three carrots, two stalks of celery, an onion, two potatoes, a wedge of cabbage, and a few springs of parsley. Then smiling at me the clerk said, "Our butcher is giving away soup bones today."

After waiting my turn I was delighted to see that a few bits of meat had been left on the bone. I gratefully named the finished product "heavenly stew." Evidently the sale sign brought added business to the store, for many times that year Hale and I enjoyed this dish.

Occasionally I bought a whole pound of beef for stewing. I used a generous-sized kettle to cook it, then divided the broth and meat into pint jars. With one I made vegetable soup. Another I thickened to make gravy for mashed potatoes. The third served as the base for a dish of homemade noodles. And the last went into vegetable stew. I was grateful to have been reared in a widowed family of eight where skimping and recycling were a part of daily training.

How did we manage for clothes? We just made do with what we had. Aunt Laura, our jovial landlady, nicknamed me Pitchy Patchy as the tiny squares on Hale's knees gradually extended farther and farther down toward his toes. There was no ending to the mending and darning to keep us all from looking tattered. That was as far as my sewing ability extended.

I'll never forget the day a wonderful friend, Marion, brought Hale a little overcoat made of brand-new cloth and trimmed with buttons. It was a welcome replacement of his too-small Sunday sweater.

Many times during that skimp-along year Bill would measure the car's gas tank on Sunday morning and announce, "It's almost hitting bottom. Shall we risk it?"

I could tell by his eyes that he intended to go. "Oh, let's do," I'd answer. "They're depending on me in the children's department. We've always gotten back, Bill, so let's have faith again." Then away we'd go, ten miles to church, without a cent of money in either purse-except the Lord's share sealed in the envelope.

Sometimes after services I delivered two or three uniforms to Emily, and we felt rich with sixty or ninety cents in reserve. Never once did we run out of gas on those Sunday trips.

It seemed as if each new day brought another occasion for us to express thankfulness to the Father who was lovingly watching over us. We were grateful that the seeds of faith our parents had planted had not been rooted out of our hearts by unbelief; they were, in fact, expanding and growing

Christmas found us with no money for gifts to make our small son happy. What a joy when I discovered a coupon on the cereal box. For ten cents I could send for a cloth pattern of the Cream of Wheat Boy Doll. Soon he was stuffed and tucked away But what else could we do?

"All kids are crazy about blocks and books," Bill suggested. "You make the book, and I'll scare up the blocks.

So with clippings from Aunt Laura's magazines, some heavy cardboard, and rings from an old college notebook, a picture book emerged.

"Looks great, but Sonny is going to keep you busy asking, 'What does it say?'" Bill criticized

that evening. "Might as well get the jump on him."

In a few days it had turned into a Jingle Book. In the meantime Bill came home with odds and ends of blocks donated by a lumberyard. After much late evening sanding, they blossomed out in various shades of the primary colors.

We had done the best we could as Santa's helpers, and we were delighted when our artistic friend, Carlotta, stopped by with a hobbyhorse. She had fashioned it from a broomstick by adding a stuffed and embroidered oilcloth head to harmonize with the painted body, then adding shiny reins to delight the youthful jockey.

"Walter and I have decided to spend ten cents on each other," Carlotta said. "Now wouldn't it be fun if several of us equally rich folks drew names and had Christmas together?"

Bill turned his pockets wrong side out, but I assured him I'd save two dimes.

What a happy surprise for me on Christmas Eve to receive a red vegetable peeler. Mine had ridden off with the garbage several weeks before. It was a most welcome gift, for I detested peeling with a knife.

This was the Christmas I learned that all gifts are not bought with money. At first I thought we had only a few Christmas cookies to give, but we realized that we could give of ourselves also. There were those who needed baby-sitters or help with cleaning. We found pleasure in family caroling and arranging a Christmas worship service to share with others. Each day brought another idea for sharing.

When we went to church on Christmas Day and watched the sanctuary fill with worshipers, Santa slipped into his proper place. This Christmas became my most memorable one. As the choir sang "God so loved the world that he gave His Only Begotten Son," something happened to many of us I'm sure. The message came across clearly as I meditated. Christmas was a time to rejoice because of God's wonderful Gift to us—a time of dedication of our services to him. Christmas was sacrificial giving that God's work might be carried on. It was a time of caring. Christmas was not just a family day of gift giving and feasting, it was a season of self-giving, and of thanks giving in prayer and deeds. Christmas was a time of renewed faith, joy, peace, and love.

CHAPTER 3

For over a year Bill washed dishes without complaining. One day he came home looking more radiant than I had ever seen him. I have a new job he announced as he swung me around the kitchen

"Where?" I asked breathlessly

"At the East Bay Utility Company It's a really *new* job—they made it just *for me*."

"Who made it, Bill?"

"Well, you remember my old high school friend Bob who smokes those huge cigars? He works in the main office there. Today he offered me a chance to deliver the water bills to their customers instead of mailing them. I can use a company car to go to and from the office and I can also drive to the area of delivery each day. There will be scads of walking but I Won't mind. It won't take a full eight hours a day and I'll get \$90 a month for my work. What do you think of that?"

"It's almost too good to be true, Bill. We'll feel like millionaires!"

"Yes, and with the first million, Camilla, let's buy a home. The boss says we should live nearer to Richmond, as much of my route will be in that area. I've already phoned Brother Ralston, and he has a number of low-priced five-room houses. He says they've been empty so long that they're practically being given away." Bill's eyes were sparkling.

"It sounds as if we should be able to find one just right for us," I spoke up happily. "I hope it won't be far from the Berkeley Church."

"Let's set a limit of five miles- that will be great after driving ten. What do you say about looking tomorrow? I'll ask Aunt Laura for a few hours off."

It took just that long to locate our dream cottage a half block from a good school in El Cerrito, California. It was a nice little three bedroom house with shining oak floors and many built-in features, including a buffet, bookcases, breakfast nook furniture, and even a drop-down ironing board. Best of all there was a fireplace.

We were delighted with our find, and the real estate agent was happy to make a sale. He gladly turned it over to us, with no down payment, for twenty dollars a month at a total cost of \$1,600. Both of us thought that the gorgeous view of the sunset on San Francisco Bay from the large living room window would be worth that amount. Now and then we would also be able to see the U.S. fleet anchored there.

We felt we had chosen a great neighborhood, too, for within a block were three Reorganized Latter Day Saint families, all dear friends. How wonderful it would be to have the Strands, the Carlsons, and the Ralstons for neighbors!

We had a happy time furnishing our new home. We bought a second-hand table and four chairs from our realtor, and at the Good Will Store Bill picked up a sturdy cookstove for five dollars and a bed for two dollars. We managed to buy a few comfortable living room chairs and three new scatter rugs.

Our ever thoughtful friend, Mabelle, silently counted our windows on her first visit and returned later with a big box saying, "We've lived in a furnished apartment ever since we came West. You might just as well have these curtains from our Nebraska home." What a thrill to have our place look homelike so soon!

Within a year after moving to our little El Cerrito cottage by the sea, as Bill named it, our family numbered four. We felt our joy was complete when Vivian Fae, the little girl we couldn't afford any sooner, arrived to join her nearly five-year-old brother.

After the first few weeks of adjusting to food, she was an almost perfect baby. Although her wants added a lot of steps and many additional tasks, I found that with training and scheduling I still had plenty of time. So I joined the creative writing class of Sister Elva Sturgis (later Oakman) at the Berkeley Church. This opened up a whole new field of happiness for all of us who learned under her supervision on one night a week for two years.

One day, during the second year, when I was busily creating for the class the house became unusually quiet. "Hale," I called, "please look for Vivian and see what she's doing."

Hale began calling her name as he peeked in all her usual hiding spots. Soon he yelled from the toy room. "Mother, come quick! She's playing barbershop."

I ran. There she sat, in a hidden corner, looking very sheared. One whole side of her pretty golden hair, which she had cut almost to the middle of her head, lay in her lap.

Another day my neighbor, Ruby, stopped by on her way to the neighborhood grocery. We always found much to talk over in preparation for our church school work. Since she was in a hurry, Ruby gave Vivian the money to go to Angelo's little store in his garage next door for some cottage cheese. She was delighted.

We were involved in our planning when suddenly I realized that our errand girl hadn't returned.

"Maybe I should go after her," Ruby said. She got no farther than the back door when she motioned for me to come. There on the porch sat the little lady hastily sampling the cottage cheese with her fingers.

"Well, after all, it's her favorite food, and we didn't tell her it wasn't for her," tenderhearted Ruby reasoned.

Later in life our daughter became an expert at working with scissors and food, and I often chuckle when reminiscing about these two very early incidents, which were preludes to this practical application of her talents.

I cannot recall this early period of Vivian's life without reliving some beautiful experiences I had in trying to stretch our increased and yet not too ample income. It was during these depression years that our Berkeley, California, congregation decided to buy another church building. Many people had very low incomes. Some had lost their jobs and were attempting to live on earnings from part-time work, but they pledged what they could. The spirit of sacrifice made it a joyful experience for all, even though it took quite a while to pay off the debt.

On Saturday afternoons I always counted out the nickels and dimes to cover our weekly pledge for the building fund and the twenty-five cents we had determined to pay each week on the tithing we owed on our financial statement. On this particular day, after I filled the envelope, the purse was empty.

I scanned the cupboard and cooler. Sunday dinner was prepared. There were eggs, potatoes, carrots, onions, and beans, and I found enough yeast and flour for bread baking. The fruit bin contained only three apples, but there were plenty of oranges, and the milkman would leave two quarts of milk each day. Then I remembered that we'd need extra milk for Jeanette and Walter's family when they came for Sunday dinner. On further searching I discovered I was out of laundry soap, and there were only six matches to light the gas stove and water tank.

When I explained my predicament to six-year-old Hale he exclaimed, "Wow. . . and payday isn't until Wednesday!"

So we decided to talk to God about our problem, for we knew he would listen (even though I was certain he must be weary of excuses). My prayer was full of them:

"Father, milk and soap and matches are so necessary. If only we had a pilot light on our stove we wouldn't need the matches, and if we had more clothes for little Vivian we could wait to wash. We do want to pay our tithes and offerings, Father, but I'm sure you understand. Next Sunday we'll bring two envelopes. Amen."

Then Hale prayed, "Dear God, do you get low sometimes on milk and soap and matches up in heaven? Please let us use the nickels this week and we'll do better next time. . . we promise, God. Amen."

Hale went skipping off to play, but somehow I wasn't as happy as he. Beautiful words from

the Bible kept coming to my mind: "The windows of heaven. . . the windows of heaven. . ."

Three times I put the coins into the envelope, and three times I juggled them out. Then the inner voice reminded, "Remember the windows of heaven." I found the scripture in Malachi and read it aloud: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Once more I emptied the coin purse into the envelope, and this time I sealed it tightly. Again I prayed, "Lord, I don't really know whether you expect us to give up milk and soap and matches in order to share with you, but you have done so much for us. You have blessed us with health and a happy home. Bill has a better job now, and when we sense the spirit of thankfulness for all your blessings it is nothing to sacrifice a bit of milk and soap and matches. We do want to keep the promise we made to you, Lord."

Then a wonderful thing happened. My heart was filled with happiness. I smiled and sang, and my work seemed unusually easy. I didn't seem to care at all that we had needs and no money to meet them. Surely this joy was the wonderful blessing promised from "the windows of heaven."

Sunday morning as Hale was struggling with his knotted shoestrings, the doorbell rang. He raced to answer, yelling, "It's Jeanette with a big pail."

Jeanette laughed happily. "Yes, Hale, the biggest pail we have. It has six quarts of milk from our fresh cow. We have more than we can use, and it seemed a shame to waste it. We decided to share with you, and I've come by on my way to church so you could put the milk to cool."

How grateful I was that I wouldn't have to serve skimpy glasses of milk when Jeanette brought the family to lunch after church. I silently thanked the heavenly Father for her thoughtfulness.

That afternoon while the babies were napping Hale called, "Look. . . here's a taxi. It's stopping at our door."

Our good friend Walter Davis, who lived in Sacramento a hundred miles away, rushed in. "I have just a couple of hours between trains," he exclaimed. Tossing his hat to the couch he hurriedly draped his coat on a chair. Then loosening his necktie he said, "If you don't mind I'd like to shave." As his electric razor hummed Walter visited, pausing now and then to search in his suitcase. Each time out came a handful of matches. Everyone watched as the pile on the table grew and grew. He took matches from every corner of his suitcase. He found some in each pocket of his coat. Then he began bringing them from the four pockets of his trousers until there was a mound of matches.

When Bill took Walter to his train Hale rushed for a vegetable bowl "Look. . . the matches filled it up!" he exclaimed,

"Isn't it strange," I mused. "Walter doesn't smoke. There was no reason for his having all of those loose matches, and he didn't say a word about them. Somehow I knew he wouldn't take them with him."

"Now if we just had some soap, Mother." Hale frowned a bit. "Won't it be a funny washday without soap?"

On Monday morning I lit the gas water tank and began sorting the clothes as Hale played hopscotch over the growing piles on the laundry room floor.

"Shall I run down to Ruby's for a bar?" he asked.

"No, son," I said hesitantly. "I know she'd gladly loan us some, but I think I'd rather not ask. We gave our soap to the Lord on Saturday, and it doesn't seem quite right to borrow it back."

After breakfast the doorbell began to buzz. "It must be one of those peddlers," I sighed. "They are such pests. They're always wanting us to buy something we don't need or can't afford. Since

we're out of money, let's pretend we're not at home; maybe he'll go on." But the doorbell buzzed and buzzed and buzzed, each time a bit longer.

"You'd better go," an inner voice urged.

I fairly ran with Hale at my heels. There stood a very tall, pleasant-looking man. He was immaculate and strangely dressed in a three cornered hat and a pure white smock that reached almost to the knees of his well pressed trousers. In his hands was a huge basket filled with all kinds of soap samples, and in the center was a giant box of Oxydol. When he smiled, his eyes seemed kind yet penetrating.

"Lady," he began, "I was over on the other side of the city this morning. I hadn't intended to come over here, but something kept telling me that you need soap."

"Oh, yes, sir, I surely do," I assured him. Then to my surprise he handed me the giant box of soap powder. Hale and I were almost speechless, but we managed to express our thanks.

With a warm smile the stranger returned to his unusual car and waved good-bye from its high seat which resembled a coachman's in an English carriage. Hale and I wondered where such a car could have come from with its high side lights and its queer wheels. We stood on the porch and listened as he drove the mile back to the avenue and on toward the city of Richmond. He made no other stops.

When we could no longer hear it, I was suddenly overcome with joy. I realized that these three suppliers of our needs had not just happened by. God was keeping his promise. Together we knelt inside the living room door, and I thanked our heavenly Father for opening the windows of heaven and pouring out his wonderful blessings, and for the joy we felt because of his goodness. I then asked him to help us as a family-and all his children-to always be willing to sacrifice to pay our tithes and offerings.

Hale's prayer was simple but right from his heart. "Thank you, dear God, for seeing our empty cupboard. Thank you for milk and soap and matches." Then he queried, "Will God always look down from heaven and send us exactly what we need when we pay our tithing?"

"No, son, I answered. "God is much wiser than that. If he did we would soon lose the joy of giving. But I'm sure that if we keep his law our heavenly Father will always do what he knows is best for us, blessing us in his own time and in his own way. Even though this is the first time he has sent the exact things we needed, I can recall many times that he has blessed us by showing us ways to serve and to help. You know he has blessed us with his healing power, and twice-when we sacrificed to pay a bit more on our debt to the Lord--Daddy was allowed to earn overtime pay. I could go on and on, son. His love has never failed."

Then opening the Bible we read again the beautiful words of Malachi about the windows of heaven. This time they became a treasure in our hearts.

About a month after the milk-soap-and-matches episode I was once more attempting on Saturday to persuade myself to honor our pledge. Again I had only forty cents in my purse. This time I scanned the food areas and I was happy to find only one item missing. The whole wheat can was completely empty. "But we have fruit, milk, and eggs for breakfast and plenty of whole wheat bread for toast. The children's nutrition level won't suffer at all." I convinced myself and tucked our last forty cents into the church offering envelope.

Then remembering the milk, soap, and matches I prayed, "Lord, please don't think that I'm expecting anything in return. You've shown your love for us so many times, and this is such a little bit to give up for you. It's the least we can do to show our appreciation for your continuing blessings."

Midmorning on Monday Hale called excitedly from the front porch, "Look what the mailman

brought us, Mother. It's a heavy package."

"How nice. Let's see where it's from," I said as he plunked it into my lap. "Oh, it's from San Jose, and guess whose address is in the corner?"

"Aggie's!" he yelled. "Mother, I'll bet it's a toy for me. Hear how it rattles?" For a few minutes he tried to identify the sound.

As the paper came flying off I sniffed an unmistakable odor. Sure enough, it was whole wheat cereal!

"Just what we need for breakfast, Mother." Hale's eyes were filled with wonder. "Did God send it?"

"I'm sure he did, son." My eyes were getting misty. "No one but God knew our can was empty. No one else could have known that we gave it up for him." Together we offered our prayers of thanks.

Hale ran off to play, but I was so curious I couldn't settle down to work. So I started a thank-you letter to my good friend, Agnes, and told her we wondered how she knew we were out of our favorite breakfast food.

After a few days the answer came. "As I was vacuuming my apartment," the letter read, "a little inner voice asked, 'Why don't you go over to the Health Food Store?'"

"I answered silently, 'There's nothing I need,' and kept right on cleaning. For several hours the question was periodically repeated. Each time I answered in the negative; 'I was just there a few days ago. Why should I waste time when I'm busy?'"

"But finally, in exasperation, I grabbed my sweater and answered aloud emphatically, 'All right, I'll go, but I don't need a thing.'"

"Reaching the little store down the street I walked past the jars of honey. Mine at home were almost full. I looked in the cases of dried fruits. There was not a kind that I didn't have. Inwardly I was saying, 'See. . . I told you so.'"

"Soon I came to the bin of ground whole wheat. It smelled delicious. 'My, I haven't cooked any of this for quite a while,' I said to the waiting clerk. 'Sack up five pounds, please.'"

"Then a strange thing happened. That same little voice piped up again. 'Bill and Camilla and the children enjoy whole wheat cereal, too,' A happy feeling came over me that this might be an unexpected treat for someone I loved."

"As the clerk handed me my package I said, 'I'd like another five pounds... and would it be too much trouble to wrap it for mailing?' He assured me that it wouldn't."

"I was soon hurrying to the post office, giggling as I walked along, thinking, 'This is surely the craziest thing I've ever done,' but my heart was singing."

"On Sunday Brother Arthur Oakman preached a sermon in our church about listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit. He said, 'A member of the San Jose congregation recently responded to the urging of the Spirit by sending a food package to one of my families in the Berkeley congregation. It was a unique package, for it contained not only the one food they lacked but the one they had sacrificed in order to pay a small weekly pledge to the Lord.'"

"Of course my tears flowed freely, so those around me guessed who the listener was."

After reading the letter from Agnes, my listening-ear friend, I was filled with a deeper gratitude for my heavenly Father than I had ever experienced before. That little package we had received might well have been postmarked "Heaven." I comprehended a bit better the words of the psalmist David:

The Lord looketh down from heaven and
Beholdeth all the sons of men..
God is my helper...
I will freely sacrifice.

With David I wanted to sing, "I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good." The Doxology became my theme song for the day.

CHAPTER 4

One summer, a few weeks before reunion, Arthur Oakman, our Berkeley pastor and district president, asked that all who were able to do so join him in a workday at the Irvington reunion grounds on July 4.

When we reached Irvington we were divided into crews. Some trimmed the geranium hedge. Others worked in the restrooms. Many joined the raking detachment, and most of the women took over the job of cleaning the old two-story building that served as kitchen, dining hall, children's classrooms, and dormitory quarters for the visiting ministers.

By four o'clock in the afternoon everything was in tiptop shape, so Brother Oakman asked that we gather in one of the upper rooms for a prayer service. We were to pray for the coming reunion and dedicate our services in helping the reunion to be one that would meet the needs of the district.

Old and young alike sat on the floor and joined in songs of praise and thankfulness. Then the prayer session began in a spirit of love, joy, and dedication. I believe every person in that upper room prayed.

I'm sure the remark of a primary child best describes the service. "Mother, it seemed that the prayers just fitted on to each other." They truly did. The Spirit of God moved from one to another in a heartwarming flow that even the children sensed.

Traveling back home I sat between two women friends in the back seat while Hale and a young boyfriend sat in front with Bill. Someone suggested that we sing hymns. With two sopranos, an alto, and Bill singing bass we made quite a chorus. It seemed a fitting way to close our day.

Finally someone chose everyone's favorite, "Onward to Zion." As we sang the second stanza I'm sure all were feeling the beauty of the words:

We have the promise that Jesus will come,
Zion the beautiful beckons us on;
Let us be faithful, his will be done,
Zion the beautiful beckons us on

As we began the next line, "Jesus the Savior meeting the throng," the most beautiful tenor voice I have ever heard joined in. I stopped singing and looked in amazement, first at Ruby Strand and then at Sister Bloom, as this melodious voice from the front of the car sang with us:

O may his coming be not delayed long;
To God be the glory, to him lift the song, Zion the beautiful beckons us on;
Zion the beautiful beckons us on.

When we had finished I tapped our young friend's shoulder saying, "Jack, that was wonderful. You have a beautiful voice. Why don't you come to choir practice? We have only three tenors."

Jack turned quickly, frowned, and answered, "A beautiful voice? I can't sing. I didn't sing a single word."

Now it was my turn to look perplexed. "But I heard someone singing tenor while Bill was singing bass." Then tapping Hale's shoulder I said, "Jack is just kidding me, isn't he, Hale?"

Hale shook his head emphatically. "No, Mother, Jack didn't even open his mouth." Bill quickly assured me that both boys were telling the truth.

Still puzzled I queried, "But the rest of you surely heard the voice?" No one had. My eyes filled with tears.

Then Ruby spoke up: "But I know exactly the line where you stopped singing."

"And I wondered why you were gesturing toward the front seat with such an amazed look," Sister Bloom added.

Then everyone was assured that an angel was journeying with us and wished to know how the voice sounded, I tried to explain that it seemed an octave higher than tenor. "But that couldn't be right. The tone would be in the soprano range," I mused.

When we reached home I couldn't settle down to do anything and finally, playing with one hand, I sang the hymn, "Blest Angels, We Greet Thee with Gladness."

Later I told this experience to Brother Oakman who said he had also heard an angel sing. As I, he had had trouble placing the tones until he realized that the angel was singing in a different register than ours I knew very little of music but, since he did, it seemed to be a logical explanation.

This experience bothered me. In spite of the fact that it was the most beautiful one I had ever had and the music still rang in my ears I couldn't understand why no one else in the car had heard it. As I prayed, the mystery began to unravel.

A few weeks before our trip to Irvington an elderly man had stood in prayer service and said, I was given a dream in which I saw a special angel with a specific work to perform His clothes and his hair were pure white. He will visit each home in this congregation for one week, recording the words thoughts and actions of those there He will be with you at work at play, in your business activities, and at home for a full week keeping a complete record of your life I saw him go with Brother M for a week and one week with Brother William Collins. I was not informed when he would commence or finish."

There were varied opinions of this testimony Some thought this elderly brother had eaten a bit too much pie before retiring. Others complained that he was always having dreams Some thought he was just confused in his old age Still others argued that only God could record our thoughts They were reminded however, that Alma said to Zeezrom For behold he [God] knows all thy thoughts and thou seest that thy thoughts are made known unto us by his Spirit

In spite of all the negative comments it had seemed to me that a fine spirit had accompanied

his testimony I was especially touched when he said he had seen the angel with my husband. Those in charge of the service had reacted favorably, and I saw no reason to doubt. So I talked about it in prayer and made a special request. "Lord, perhaps I shouldn't ask, but if Brother Y's dream is from you, please help me to know when the angel is with our family."

God had answered that prayer in the car. He had helped me know. I still feel remorse that I had prayed so selfishly, for I'm sure it was for this reason that the others were denied hearing the angelic music and feeling as if they had glimpsed into heaven itself.

Since this experience a passage in the Book of Mormon has become very meaningful to me:

Hath miracles ceased? Behold, I say to you, No; neither have angels ceased to minister to the children of men. . . The office of their ministry is to call men to repentance. . . that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepares the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ.-Moroni 7:29-34.

The ministry of this angel has helped me repent of praying selfishly. Since then I have tried to pray in a more Christlike manner. This experience has greatly increased my faith, and I pray that my testimony may help others to have greater faith in the wonderful God of angels who is ever ready to answer prayer.

CHAPTER 5

During the depression years we found the joy of depending on the Lord and putting his promises to the test.

One day Vivian went racing out the back door. I heard a thud and then everything was quiet. Sensing that something was wrong I followed and found her lying very still on the ground when she had fallen from the porch. I picked her up and carefully carried her inside. Bill and I were quite alarmed because she was so pale and limp, and he called our friend, Ned Jacobson, at once.

Together they administered to our daughter. During Ned's beautiful prayer the color crept back to Vivian's face and, as soon as he said, "Amen," she opened her eyes, straightened up, and looked about. Then she smiled and slipped from my lap saying, "I'm all right, Mother. I want to go play."

This proved to be a very happy occasion, for it was Brother Ned's first administration and one which he says he will never forget. It was a testimony to all of us that the prayer of faith, on occasion, can heal. We didn't realize it at the time, but later we felt that this experience was given to help us exercise greater faith in times of sickness and trials.

Conditions continued to improve for us financially. Bill worked up to a much better job in the company, but some health problems he had had for a long time steadily worsened until it was necessary for him to be hospitalized. The X rays revealed a duodenal ulcer which the surgeons said would heal if a new opening from his stomach allowed the food to bypass it. But ten days after the operation he had to have a second one because of a strangulation of the new opening.

The surgeon said it was the most difficult operation he had ever performed. Our friends, Clara and Dale, bolstered my spirits during the long wait. Bill grew thinner and weaker until almost everyone had lost hope that he would live. I wouldn't give up. Somehow I knew he would make it and kept assuring our anxious friends that he would live if only we would keep our faith strong.

Visiting Bill each day at the hospital became quite an ordeal for me. There was always a volley of questions with two foremost in his worries. "Have you checked to see how much the hospital bill is? How much longer are you going to be able to hold out if I don't get back to work soon?"

Avoiding the first question, I could truthfully answer, "We're getting along fine." Each time there was some bit of good news for him: "Aunt Laura and Uncle Gussie came today with two big sacks of fresh fruit." "I still have that five-gallon can of honey and the smaller one for baking that Roy and Lillian brought last week." "Brother Browning phoned that he has a big box of shredded wheat biscuits for us from the factory. One of the bakers allowed them to get a bit too brown on the edges and they couldn't be sold-but they're still tasty."

After each encouraging answer he would brighten up and say, "I guess God *is* watching over my three." Then I would remind him that he, too, was included in God's care.

All during his illness we had assurances of our heavenly Father's loving concern. One day a pleasant-faced deliveryman rang our bell and presented me with a huge carton of groceries.

"I'm sorry, sir. This must be a mistake," I protested. "I haven't ordered a thing."

He turned the box around and pointed to the red writing. "This is your house number. How about the name?"

"It's my name, but I still think. .

"Never mind, lady," he interrupted. His eyes twinkled as he spoke. "I took the order, and I'll take the responsibility for its delivery. Good day, ma'am."

I called the children who excitedly helped me empty the box. There were generous amounts of baking supplies, both fresh and canned fruits and vegetables, and other food.

"There's even cow-butter," Vivian announced with pleasure. (Ten-cent-a-pound oleo had been on our table for months.)

We thanked God daily for our generous giver who in anonymous sharing was following Christ's instruction in the Sermon on the Mount.

At the end of the month that same jovial deliveryman brought another box-a full month's supply of heaven-sent food.

In emergencies such as this, one finds how kind and helpful friends can be. All those who furnished transportation to the hospital were much appreciated. Ruby and Elsie, my neighbors, willingly took good care of the children while I was gone. And members of our Berkeley congregation gave much needed moral support. We knew without a doubt that we were in God's loving care.

One day while Bill was still in the hospital I was busy in the kitchen-hurrying as usual to be able to make my afternoon visit. Vivian came hobbling in carrying one shoe.

"Where is your other shoe?" I asked.

"I don't know," she answered.

"Did you leave it in the pup tent?"

"No, Mother."

"Then where did you leave it, honey?"

"I don't know," she pouted.

"Oh, dear," I sighed. "We should have put your old shoes on when we came from church."

How thankful we can be that it isn't the rainy season."

For almost a week that one white shoe set on the shelf by itself. Many times we questioned Vivian and urged her to try to remember. Those same three words, "I don't know," were all we heard. We sent her to look for the shoe often, and Hale and I searched in every new spot we could think of-in the garage, the playroom, the flower beds-but no little shoe showed up.

On Saturday, a week later, as the three of us sat eating lunch a new thought came to me. All week we had been searching on our own. We hadn't once asked God to help us.

"Children," I began, "tomorrow is Sunday. I need to be at church to help in the Children's Department. Do you want to go to church school, too?"

"Oh, yes," they both exclaimed.

"Then we must find Vivian's shoe today. Her old shoes are past repair."

"My toe sticks out. See?" Vivian giggled as she held her foot up. "Can we buy some new shoes, Mother?"

"No, dear, not until Daddy gets back to work. But I was just thinking, children, of Someone. He alone knows where the shoe is. He could help us."

"It's God," Hale announced.

"It's God," echoed Vivian.

So we all bowed our heads and each prayed. Then, looking at Vivian, I asked, "Honey, where did you put your shoe?"

Her eyes grew bright as she answered immediately, "I threw it out the window,"

"Which window, Vivian?" Hale almost shouted as he ran toward the door.

"The bathroom window," she answered quickly. In a few minutes we heard a joyous shout and in came Hale with the shoe.

"Where was it?" I asked.

"Under the big bush, right beneath the bathroom window," he answered triumphantly.

Then gratefully we again bowed our heads to thank God for helping a little girl remember.

(Some may say, "Oh, she knew all the time where it was." Just recently as we talked about this incident of forty years ago, Vivian remarked, "Mother, I wasn't pretending. I can still recall how quickly, after we prayed, I remembered what I had done. I knew God had answered our prayers." I was grateful for her additional testimony of God's love.)

Bill had been longing to see the children and when I related the little lost shoe story to him it made him all the more lonely. So the doctor granted permission for them to visit for a few minutes.

The next morning I was horrified to discover that Hale had swollen glands, and on the following day he resembled a balloon. The nurse next door pronounced his malady-mumps. I immediately reported it to the surgeon who remarked, "Well, we'll just have to hope that Bill won't take them." But in the allotted time he was sent to isolation with three special nurses a day.

The doctor met me in the hall on my next visit. "Mrs. Collins, your husband has been in the hospital a month already, and I know you folks can't take this added expense. He's not making any improvement here and all this additional worry isn't going to help. So I'm going to send him home and turn him over to you. See what you can do. I'll call in three days."

A trained nurse came home with him in the ambulance and stayed overnight to teach me how to dress his incision and to give other instructions.

I knew what foods Bill liked, and soon he was eating heartily. He also enjoyed the many attentions of his two junior nurses. His tensions and worries seemed to fade away. Several times a day he would remark, "I can't believe I'm really here," and his expression became more and more

radiant.

When the doctor paid his promised visit, he took one surprised glance at Bill and then turned to me. "This is unbelievable. I don't know what has happened to bring about such a change."

"Well, I do, Doc," Bill spoke up unhesitatingly. "My little pal, Hale, got me out of the hospital. These mumps are one of the best gifts I've ever had."

The doctor laughed. "I believe you're right, Bill." Patting the children and smiling at me he said, "You three have done great. Keep up the good work."

Within a week Bill was able to sit in the sunny back-yard for a while each morning. One day he came in with a beaming face and exclaimed, "Camilla, I'm going to live!"

I smiled as I answered, "Why of course you are. I've had that feeling since the day you took sick."

"But I'm sure about it-there can't be any doubt."

"From your expression I know something has happened. What was it?" I asked

"Well, I was sitting there watching Hale and the neighbor children play, and I was silently wishing that I would not have a recurrence of my ulcer trouble and could live to help rear our family. Then I heard an audible 'voice as I watched Hale tossing the ball."

"What was the message?"

"Only seven words: 'Until he reaches the age of maturity.' I heard it just as plainly as I'm hearing my own voice now. I know it was the Lord speaking." We rejoiced together for the peace this message had brought and moved out with faith and gratitude. After a month of convalescing at home, Bill was able to return to work.

CHAPTER 6

Work for Bill soon consisted of more than just a five-day-a-week job. At our district conference he was chosen district president of Northern California. This area extended to Bakersfield on the south and to Oregon on the north, and it required much weekend traveling.

I think one of the most thrilling experiences of his ministry came when he was acting in this capacity.

One day John Sheehy, the district missionary, invited Bill to go with him to San Francisco to secure a pass on the railroad. Arriving at the station, they edged their way through the crowd of travelers in the big waiting room until they reached the travel agent's desk.

"Mr. C., I'm a minister of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and would appreciate a pass on your trains," said Brother Sheehy.

The agent smiled as he filled in the church affiliation on an application blank. Then parking his pencil over his ear he tipped his chair back and repeated the church's long name, adding, "My grandfather was a member of your church,"

"Is that so!" exclaimed Brother John.

"Who was your grandfather?" Bill asked almost in the same breath.

"Oh, I'm sure you boys have heard of him. His name was David Whitmer--one of the founders of the early church

"And one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon plates," Brother Sheehy spoke up excitedly.

"Yes," agreed Mr. C "Perhaps you might be interested to hear that I visited Grandfather Whitmer's home many times when I was a child."

"Tell us more, Bill urged.

"Well," began Mr. C., "I was just Five years old, but I remember being in Grandfather's home in Richmond, Missouri, the day he died. Although I was but a child, I recall Grandfather's dying testimony. He said, 'I *did* see the angel. I *did* hear the angel bear testimony that the Book of Mormon is true, and I *did* see the golden plates'"

How grateful Brother Sheehy and Bill were to be able to share this experience with others. They always expressed their appreciation, too, for the emphatic verbs David Whitmer used in his testimony. Although he had left the church, he did not doubt the divinity of the Book of Mormon, and he wished to reassure his family that he *did see* and *did* hear.

While Bill was busy in district work, I helped at the Berkeley Church as supervisor of the Children's Department (primaries and juniors). It was a difficult job, for we didn't have enough children to have two separate departments. It was rewarding, though, for the teachers were all dedicated workers and willing to stay on for Junior Church to help with the story telling and in other ways. Our gifted and dependable pianist, Evelyn, added much to the beauty of the services, and the children were very willing to share in testimonies, prayers, scripture reading, and singing.

Once, in the early years of my work in the children's department, while I was looking out at the eager faces of the youngsters sitting before me, the thought came to me, What does our heavenly Father expect? Is it possible for even little children to sense his Holy Spirit? Can they grow toward him at this early age?

A few nights later I had a dream in which I saw a bare, plowed field. As I watched I saw tiny plants spring through the ground, row by row, until the whole field was covered. To my surprise, while they were still very young and tender, all the plants burst into bloom.

Then beyond the lovely field, in the far distance I glimpsed the towers of Zion. As I watched, briars and weeds sprang up between them and the flowers.

This dream was puzzling, although a most beautiful spirit had accompanied it, and I was sure that God was speaking to me. Did the little plants represent children who were capable of blossoming with God's Spirit while young?

The next Sunday, at the close of the children's worship hour, we sang "That Sweet Story of Old." As we began the second stanza, "I wish that his hands had been placed on my head, that his arms had been thrown around me," One girl stopped singing and an expression of wonderment spread over her face. I had to stop singing, too. After the rest of the children had left, Margaret came running up, threw her arms around me, and said, "Oh, Sister Collins, as we sang those words in the second verse I *did* feel Jesus' arms about me. . . and it seems they are there still." We wept tears of joy together as I assured her that his love would always be available.

Many times since this experience I have seen children respond to God's Spirit and become beautiful under its power. I know that it is the privilege of all of us who are older to help them through the briars and weeds until together we build the Zion of God's planning.

CHAPTER 7

With growing children we felt the need of a bigger home with two bathrooms and located one in Berkeley. We were happy to be a few miles nearer the church.

Soon we were a growing family. In April we all warmly welcomed David Ray, although Vivian, now seven years old, had very much wanted a sister. She reasoned, however, that a baby brother might be better "because he'll never have to have cold legs like little girls do." She was a second mother to him, and naturally he became very fond of her.

Sixteen months later we moved to Lamoni, Iowa. Living in a land of ice and snow was a new experience for our Californians. To their joy Mother Nature accommodated us in early September with one of her lovely shake-the-featherbed snowfalls, leaving every tree and bush loaded with the fluffy flakes.

As winter progressed David became fascinated with Jack Frost's drawings and tried to trace his own on the windows. When he was still very small he informed me that his name was Jack Frost. I remembered all day to address him as Jack, but at the end of the day he asked, "Does Jack Frost have a sister?"

"No," I answered, "I don't believe he has any sisters at all."

"Well, then, I don't want to be *him*," he emphatically concluded.

What nicer compliment could a loving and attentive sister ever have!

We enjoyed our first year in Lamoni. Bill worked with my sister Helen's husband on his turkey farm. Our children had scarcely seen farm animals and loved to watch their capers. All the farm procedures were fascinating. One day our daughter happily summed up this change of pace from city life by remarking, "I hope I can always live where I can look out into a cornfield."

The next thirteen months proved quite trying. Both Hale and Vivian had appendectomies, and Bill was hospitalized for a week with a flare-up of his ulcer trouble. Following that Vivian had a severe case of pneumonia with fever of 105 degrees. There was only one doctor in town, due to World War II, and we were far down on his list of waiting patients. He was very alarmed when he finally made it to our home, and he worked with Vivian almost all night. With his good care and the blessing of administration she pulled through without any sign of brain damage.

A few months later Hale returned from Boy Scout Camp very ill. The doctor diagnosed his ailment as polio. While waiting for the ambulance Bill and our bishop administered to him, and as he left Hale smiled and said, "Don't worry, Mother, I'm not going to be paralyzed." After the third day the doctor joyfully reported, "He can move all his limbs. With his spinal count-the highest I have ever taken-I felt certain he'd be paralyzed for life in all four."

Surely God was with us. Each member of the family was greatly blessed through exercising faith in the promises of the Great Healer. We were grateful for the many prayers for our loved ones. We had no hospital insurance at this time and a substantial check from our understanding friends, Jerry and Vi, was a lifesaver we can never forget.

Because of World War II, teachers were very scarce and even though Bill had but three years of college he was asked to teach mathematics in the Lamoni High School. This was the type of work he had wanted since the depression and he very gladly spent the summer at Iowa City working toward his degree.

The next three years for him were a combination of teaching high school math for nine months

and attending twelve-week summer sessions at Central Missouri State College in Warrensburg. After completing his fourth year, he took a job as principal of the Bagley (Iowa) High School.

This was another eventful year, for we gladly welcomed our third son, Robert Allan. We had always wanted four children, and our family now seemed complete. Vivian and I were quite outnumbered, but she showed no real disappointment. For a while she called him Roberta and tied ribbons on his hair, but she soon abandoned her efforts to make her husky brother look feminine. Since she was now nearing twelve and Hale was past sixteen, we had built-in baby-sitters as well as an efficient nursemaid. I almost had to sign up for a chance to bathe the baby.

Bill continued to work toward a master's degree in the summers. The constant grind was affecting his blood pressure, so he left his job and, with a teaching assistantship, entered the college at Warrensburg to complete his master's. He was assigned two high school math courses in the College Laboratory School and one in the college.

Finding a place to live was quite a hassle. Bill was to receive one hundred dollars a month, so he couldn't be too choosy in selecting an apartment for the family. He soon learned, however, in answering ads, that although four offspring were a decided advantage in making out income tax reports, quite the opposite was true in securing adequate housing. Finally he persuaded a rather doubtful elderly woman that our family would cause her no problems. What a goal he had set for the six of us to live up to!

Hale had a summer job at Graceland, but the rest of us spent three months in a tiny two-room apartment. Bill suggested, on moving day, that we might change our name to Sardine. Very soon we made our cramped quarters more livable with the substitution of bunkbeds.

Luckily our front door opened out on a long porch. Bob, our chubby little charmer of sixteen months, practically lived out there in his large pen. He captured the hearts of the three elderly women who were our apartment neighbors, and they were soon vying for seats in the porch swing to observe his antics. We really appreciated their watchful eyes after young Bob removed two spokes from his outdoor home and went for a stroll on busy College Avenue.

If we ever lived on a shoestring that was the year. I admit I silently wondered many times if it could be done what with the children's arms and legs growing out of their clothes.

As usual God saw our need. A dear friend, Grace, who had attended the Berkeley, California, congregation with us took Vivian to Independence, Missouri, for a week's vacation. When she returned she brought a large box bulging with the nicest wardrobe Vivian had ever had. Grace's daughters were growing, too, and she had remodeled their clothes to fit Vivian perfectly.

A few weeks later another box arrived for David from Lamon. It was a winter's supply of school clothing. Later he proudly told his teacher, "My Aunt Carrie made everything I have on except my socks and shoes."

As I thanked the Lord for these two helpers, I wondered if all the angels lived in heaven.

In September Hale came home to enter the College Laboratory High School as a senior, and Vivian and David enrolled in the College Laboratory Grade School.

We were fortunate to get a much larger three-room apartment upstairs before we had to be shut in for the winter.

One day Bill came home looking very happy. "I found a real bargain today," he announced. "The good Lord was really with me.

"Sounds interesting," I answered, eyeing him curiously.

"Interesting hardly fills the bill," he went on. "I'll guarantee this bargain to tax your curiosity,

your patience, and your ingenuity."

"Then why keep me in suspense?"

"Well, I picked up a lot of canned goods dirt cheap at a fire sale downtown. The drawback is that the cans are all unlabeled."

"Hmmm! I'm glad we're all trained to eat what is set before us," I answered.

Soon the deliveryman arrived. The first can we opened was apricots and the next one pears. Everyone was delighted. Our ESP was surely working well. With other cans of green beans, pineapple, sweet potatoes, and peaches we all agreed that these blackened tins were really great providers.

Then one day company arrived unexpectedly. The three chosen cans produced sauerkraut, hominy, and spaghetti, and that triggered my frustrations. I'm sure that even Betty Crocker would have yelled for help. My family had devoured many casseroles but I lost my imagination on those foods. A second try proved even more disastrous with lima, kidney, and baked beans.

Planning menus with unlabeled cans began to tax my culinary ability to the limit as Bill had predicted. I doctored up hominy that winter with everything from hamburger, onions, and tomatoes to mushroom soup and cheese before I finally caught on.

To arouse curiosity, after recording in my notebook for a few days, I began asking which food the family preferred. Then I proceeded to return from the basement with their order. No one could figure out how the problem had been solved until I showed them the tiny code numbers on the bottom of the cans. Our only regret was that I hadn't spotted the numbers sooner.

Those fourteen months at Warrensburg were really a very happy time. Several families we had known in California were members of the Warrensburg congregation, and others lived nearby; we picnicked and reminisced with them occasionally.

We particularly enjoyed the college activities and our evening strolls on the beautiful, well-kept campus. It was a thrill, too, to have such fine learning opportunities for the children, and Bill enjoyed his classes very much. Hale had found an after-school janitorial job in a hardware store to supplement the family income. All in all, we had no regrets about making the move.

Christmas found us remembering the depression years. By very careful budgeting we managed a sacrifice offering to honor Jesus' birthday and saved a total of four dollars to spend on the children. The two older ones gave me suggestions, and we did all of Santa's shopping at the dime store.

I look back on that holiday season now as one of our most beautiful ones. Everyone in the family seemed to sense the real meaning of Christmas more than before. We took time to read aloud the Christmas scriptures and stories and to express our thankfulness for our many blessings. We enjoyed the beauty of the school's Christmas program and the worship experiences at church. Most of all we appreciated finding that in little ways we could make others happy.

Although we had never mentioned our skimpy income to anyone, several friends brought gifts of food. One good farmer came to our door with a hundred-pound sack of potatoes. I hope you won't be offended,"he began, "but my wife and I have more potatoes than we can use. We just thought we'd like to share with the six of you."

When our egg lady arrived during Christmas week she carried an extra grape basket filled with banty eggs. "They're just two-bite size," she apologized, "but I hope you folks can help us use them up. My, how those little rascals lay!"

That evening our eighty-year-old landlady came puffing up the steps with a huge sack of fresh fruits and holiday nuts to add to our joy and gratefulness.

Undoubtedly the Lord had already been good enough to us, but the day before Christmas Roy

Weldon appeared with three large cartons and a smaller one. "I just came from Lamoni and your sister Carrie sent these things for you," he said.

There were a dozen quart jars of vegetables, twelve of fruit, and several little jars of jellies and jams.

The last box contained gifts from her ever humming sewing machine. There were aprons, shirts, and cunning stuffed animals.

The next surprise was delivered early on Christmas morning and proved to be a box of nicely wrapped packages from our oldest nephew, Sam, who was always sharing with others.

Surely God had spoken to these loved ones concerning us, and we felt a growing sense of gratitude for the thoughtful response of his listeners during that holy season of love and caring.

The biggest surprise of all, however, was tucked away in the closet. David had been born just before World War II. During the war years, because of the scarcity materials, it was impossible to buy the toys that little boys liked. Consequently, he had learned to make his own. He had often devised train motors by inserting long sticks through the lids of cheese cartons. Then, with a row of chairs behind, he would guide his passengers on imaginary journeys, bracing his feet on the cartons and braking with the sticks.

Now Hale thought it was time for his brother to have something real. So with some of his hard-earned after-school money, he bought a little red wagon as a Christmas gift for David. I doubt if any little boy ever had a happier surprise or any big brother a greater thrill.

In March we received news from Lamoni that our twenty-acre plot which we had hoped to sell much sooner, had finally been purchased. The depression for us was over once again.

Summer brought two happy occasions. Hale was graduated from high school in June and Bill received his master's degree in August. In late August we moved to Mendon, Missouri, and Hale enrolled at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa.

CHAPTER 8

During the next two years as a school superintendent, Bill's blood pressure steadily rose until it often reached 260. He was becoming very troubled that he soon would not be able to make a living for the family. The specialist had already told him that there was nothing that could be done to improve his failing eyesight. The continually mounting blood pressure had impaired his vision and a change of glasses would not help. There was nothing to do but move out in faith and live one day at a time.

A few months after the eye examination I had a very vivid dream in four scenes. Although we lived in west central Iowa, I saw myself sitting in the swing on my sister Carrie's front porch in Lamoni, Iowa, and it seemed that I was at home.

In the next scene I saw Bill and me riding down the highway together when a very strange thing happened. A heavenly personage appeared dressed in pure white and wearing a three-cornered hat. His face was radiant and shone with kindness. He spoke softly and cheerfully to Bill: "How would you like to come and work with me?"

Bill's face became radiant, too, as he nodded approval. Then the messenger lifted him gently

from the car, and I watched them ascend until they disappeared beyond the clouds.

Suddenly I realized my predicament and became very frightened. There I was in a moving car, and I had never learned to drive. As I grabbed the wheel it seemed that the road became extremely rough and muddy, and a long, steep hill loomed ahead. I was frantic. How could I ever journey up it alone?

Then a wonderful thing happened. The faces were not visible, but I saw many pairs of legs and hands. Together they guided the car onto a smooth, level highway, and I moved along without fear.

Awakening immediately, I was assured by the beautiful Spirit accompanying the dream that the Lord not only had other work for Bill to do but that he would assist me with the family.

It seemed wise not to tell the dream, and it was completely taken from my memory until the evening of December 2--almost eight months later.

In July my brother Jim and his family came to Lamoni from Florida for a visit. When he and Gladys saw how difficult it was for sister Carrie to take care of our mother, who had been confined to a wheelchair after a serious fall, they decided she must have help. So they set out to find someone who would be willing to assist her. There was nobody available in all of Decatur County, so Bill and I offered our services--and Carrie gladly accepted. In August, with wall-to-wall furniture in her big house, we set up housekeeping together.

Bill was fortunate to secure a job nearby as superintendent of the Redding (Iowa) School and was able to get home on weekends. But by November he was going slowly downhill and was able to work only four days of that month. In late November he was hospitalized with a heart attack, and soon he became completely blind.

On the evening of December 2 as Hale, Vivian, and I returned from the Decatur County Hospital I suddenly recalled the dream God gave me in April. As they listened we all agreed that it was both comforting and reassuring.

When the Lord promised Bill that he could live until Hale reached maturity, we had not taken it literally. But he died on December 3 and was buried the following day--Hale's twenty-first birthday. God had kept his promise, made thirteen years before, right to the day. (At that time a male became legally of age the day before his twenty-first birthday.)

For several years I had thought of death as going home, so I chose No. 354 in the *Saints' Hymnal*, "Beautiful Home," as one of the hymns for the funeral. Since none of us had read all of the words the family was filled with emotion when those ministering voices sang:

And at the time appointed
A messenger comes down
And takes the Lord's anointed
From cross to glory's crown.

I

These words fit my dream perfectly, and we all felt that it was more than a coincidence that I had chosen it.

I was determined to spend no time feeling sorry for myself. If Bill were taken in order to work again for the Master, surely he could now see. With the assurance of such blessings for him, how could I be sad? There was real joy in trying to picture where he was and what he might be doing.

Alma's words concerning paradise became very comforting and meaningful. I had always been glad that he described it as a state of happiness and peace "where they shall rest from all troubles, care, and sorrow." But now I felt certain that our loved ones were actively engaged in doing those

things for which they were best fitted.

Great peace and happiness came to us, too, as we watched the dream continue to be fulfilled. In a few days we saw the meaning of the numerous hands that had helped to ease our burden. Relatives and friends knew that with Hale in college, Vivian in high school, and David in elementary, we would have many needs. Wonderful letters came containing expressions of desires to help, each with a bill or check enclosed. I was particularly touched by a generous contribution from the Moorhead (Iowa) Branch which we had formerly attended and a sacrificial offering from the little group of college students with whom Hale worshiped in Ames, Iowa.

The Redding, Iowa, School Board sent a check for the entire month of November. I didn't feel that I should accept it when Bill had taught only four days, but it was returned to me with an appreciative note which ended, "God bless you and your family."

The next two years were happy ones. The children all adjusted well, and it was a good experience for me to be able to work with Carrie in helping care for our mother who, all her life, had done so much for the entire family.

Our brothers and sisters helped with food, clothing, and money so that Carrie and I could be full-time nurses. They kept the mail coming and visited as often as possible, though they were scattered over several states.

It was a joy to see how uncomplaining an eighty-year-old could be though completely immobile. Since Mama could no longer read or write and was very deaf, she found happiness in snapping beans, shelling peas, and being wheeled to the kitchen to wipe dishes. This she did with a pleased smile, even the day before she died (twenty-seven months after Bill's death).

CHAPTER 9

God again watched over us following Mama's death. Other hands were prepared to help us on our journey. Just two days after the funeral Dr. Bill Gould, director of public and alumni relations at Graceland College, offered me a job. "I have chosen you," he said, "because I need someone who likes to write. There will be articles for the *Herald*, news items for the Alumni Bulletins, and letters to those who send money for student savings accounts. You will also keep the alumni address file up to date, search for its 'lost sheep,' supervise putting out the alumni mailings, record and receipt the alumni drive funds, and make out financial reports." He finally stopped with "etc" "It sounds as if it would be a job I'd enjoy," I answered, "but, Bill, I've never done anything but teach school. I can't even type."

For a moment he looked disappointed, then he asked, "Well, you could learn, couldn't you?"

"I suppose I could," was my hesitant answer.

So he brought me an ancient typewriter and a borrowed typing instruction book. Six months later, in September 1952, at the age of forty-eight I took the job and stayed on in the Alumni Office for seventeen and one-half years. I never ceased to be thankful for this opportunity to earn

a living for my family.

When I was first employed at Graceland there were five of us to clothe. Sometimes it was hard to stretch the budget to include all necessities, but late one December I determined to spend twenty-five dollars on myself. My scanty wardrobe was really looking shabby.

During the same week I completed my financial statement and discovered that I hadn't been too accurate in my payments. The tithing due was exactly twenty-five dollars. It was a difficult decision to make. . . but surely the Lord must come first. The money was soon on its way to the bishop.

Just a week later I received from a dear friend in Berkeley, California, a package insured for twenty-five dollars. The contents brought tears to my eyes. There were two skirts, two blouses, a pale pink and a pale blue sweater, plus several scarfs. How could anyone find so much for twenty-five dollars? I visioned my friend walking from sale to sale. Most of all I wondered how she knew of the need. My thank-you note and story were on their way to Zelma the next day.

In a short time she responded:

On the very day you sent the tithing check I was awakened in the night. My mind was flooded with thoughts of thankfulness for the many things that friends have done for me, especially during the depression when I was often out of work. Then the idea came, 'You have a good job now. Wouldn't it be a happy surprise if you expressed your gratefulness in a material way?' I knew you were in the office and Vivian in college and could probably use more clothes. I knew your sizes and the colors you liked, and I could hardly wait for morning so I could scan the paper for sales.

I have never enjoyed shopping so much in my life. Yes, my feet did get tired as I searched for good quality clothing, but I was amazed to find the sale prices so low. At the end of the day I was sure that the Lord had guided me from store to store.

Once more the windows of heaven had opened wide-wide enough to bless Vivian, too, for some of the clothing also suited her needs.

I believe that each time the heavenly windows open, the recipients of God's love glimpse a bit farther into his realm, sensing the beauty of King Benjamin's plea: "Believe in God, believe that he is."

God does love and care for us. Of this we become increasingly aware. How, then, can we rob him of that which rightfully belongs to him?

I'm sure all of those who seek to keep the stewardship law have sensed their rich blessings. Mine have not always been material ones, but the joy of them has been very warm and real. I have especially appreciated greater opportunities to serve, phone calls from those who truly love and seek to cheer, long awaited answers to letters, visits from friends, helpfulness of neighbors, answers to prayers, and insight in solving problems. There seems to be no end to the ways in which God pours out his blessings, and each time he reveals himself as a very personal Father, a God of love who wants to aid his children in growing toward him.

As this awareness of God has increased in my life I have determined to keep my tithes paid, as accurately as possible, each week. They belong to him. Why keep him waiting? In doing so I have had even greater assurance of his love, and with this renewed confidence I have experienced an ever increasing desire to find my place in his great kingdom-building plan.

CHAPTER 10

Recalling all of God's blessings to us as a family brings to mind Bill's last request, "Do all you can, Camilla, to encourage the children to get a good education and to stay with the church."

Hale was in his junior year at Iowa State College in Ames when his dad died. He had been graduated from the two-year course in premed at Graceland, but we weren't at all surprised when he changed to electrical engineering. From junior high days he had been building radios and in high school received his ham license. He was fortunate to find a job working late afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays in a TV store (a total of twenty-six hours a week) to finance his education.

He believed in stewardship and tried hard to keep his tithing payments up to date. I appreciated this testimony: "Mother, never once was I without the money to my room rent, or tuition. Sometimes a few days before the deadline I lacked perhaps five or ten dollars, but before the due date God always came to my rescue.

Several times the needed money came as a loan from a cousin. Once a check arrived in payment for an old car he had sold, and occasionally he found a bill tucked in a letter.

Again God was with him, for nearing graduation time he secured an excellent job with Page Consulting Engineers in Washington, D.C., and was sent on a ten-month assignment to an air base in Greenland. Later assignments took him to several foreign countries before he accepted the job of Assistant Director of Research.

For the past fifteen years Hale has been under World Church appointment and is now a stake bishop.

We had talked college to our children from babyhood, so Vivian planned for it all through high school. After a year in Graceland she married Glen Campbell of Lamoni. On completing the second year, they decided to continue their studies at Iowa State College in Ames.

Trailer living had to be abandoned when their young son caught the college spirit and began climbing up repeatedly to sit amidst their projects on the table. From then on it was college housing at Pammel Court. I'm sure these two could have written a best seller on "How to Stretch a Penny a Mile." With practically nothing in the budget for household items they curtained with tinted sheets, painted their four chairs in harmonizing colors and added many creative touches to make the apartment cheery.

The Campbells solved the baby-sitting problem by carefully scheduling classes and forming a "little red wagon brigade." Many times a week they transferred books around their youthful passenger, parking in a designated spot long enough to say, "Hi and good-bye" as one headed back home and the other hurried to class. Is it any wonder that the youngster replied without hesitation when asked if he were going to college, "No. . . I've already been!"

I'm sure his guardian angel watched over him on his several times-a-day jaunts, in all kinds of weather, for he never once caught cold.

The Campbells had rewarding experiences, too, with help at unexpected times. Glen got a work assignment in the agriculture lab to bolster their finances, and the garden plots made available to married couples proved a great blessing.

They were graduated together, Glen receiving a degree in agronomy and Vivian one in home

economics. Later, after several years under World Church appointment, they received master's degrees which qualified them to work as a team in home ministry.

All through grade school and high school David came home several times a week with a stack of books.

"He's one of my very best readers," the librarian always told me.

He showed an early interest in astronomy and spent many hours with his telescope. I decided that the spot reserved for the tripod-between the lilac bush and the incinerator-was a great place for a teen-ager, even though I had to grab a coat and hustle out many times to view his finds.

He didn't need any special encouragement to go to college. Naturally enough he signed up for the science major at Graceland. During his third year he became interested in economics and went on to the University of Kansas at Lawrence for his fourth year.

By graduation time he had decided to continue at KU. in law. I wasn't too surprised, as I had often jokingly told him I thought he could argue the head off a tack. I also recalled a comment of one of his junior high teachers made in his yearbook: "David, I'm expecting great things of you, but remember you don't always have to win the argument."

He was fortunate to get a job as a dorm counselor to help with his expenses. The good Lord was still providing.

David received the juris doctor degree and began practicing law at once in Seattle, Washington. He is now senior attorney in charge of the Misdemeanor Department of the Public Defenders.

Bob was a reader, too, but mechanical magazines soon became his favorite reading material. At a very early age he followed the role of his dad and Hale in becoming the family fix-it man. When he was around there were no' squeaky doors, loose knobs, or balky appliances. "Let Bob do it," was the family slogan when things fell apart or failed to function.

Once, at a school conference, his best-loved teacher, Martha Lester, showed me his notebook with an engine drawn on every page. "But bless his heart," she exclaimed, "he's the first fourth grader I've ever had who could run the projector. He not only shows me what is wrong when it refuses to run but fixes it."

One time, in his early high school days, I came home to find a battered old car in the backyard. The proud owner took me out to look it over, explaining, "I got it for a song, Mom, and I can use a lot of the parts. Now if I just had some gravel to park it on."

It was a joy to find him at home happily tearing it apart. With money earned running the Lamoni theater movie projector, he later bought another old model, tore out the engine, and began building from scratch.

As I watched him working one day I asked, "Bob, how do you know how to rebuild an engine?"

He answered, "Why, don't you remember? Once when Dave and I were visiting in Washington, D.C., Hale tore his old Plymouth apart. I was only eleven then, but he suggested that I put it back together again. Boy, was that fun!"

When completed his new model boasted donations from many junked cars and a few new parts. Did it run? Yes, to the West Coast and back without any trouble.

During his senior year we seldom sat down to supper without the doorbell ringing. It was usually one of the local hot rodders and always with the same question. "Bob, would you have time to listen to my car? There's something wrong, and I thought maybe you could spot it and tell me what to do."

Bob would roll up his sleeves and promise to finish his meal later.

I admit I often wondered if my youngest would ever attend college, even with encouragement. He had thought high school very boring and much preferred working with his hands to studying. Near the end of his senior year, to my joy, he enrolled at Graceland. But his heart wasn't in it. The next year he was drafted and spent two years in Fairbanks, Alaska, playing the French horn in the Ninth Army Band. This assignment seemed more than a coincidence, for his sister and his brother-in-law, then under World Church appointment as a seventy, were living in Fairbanks.

Bob later remarked, "Mom, I was only six when Glen and Vivian got married. If I hadn't been sent to Alaska I never would really have known them." The Lord works in marvelous ways.

After returning from the service, Bob was graduated from Graceland with a double major in business and economics. With his GI and teaching assistantships he received his Master's and Ph.D degrees in Economics at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

He is now teaching economics and doing research at the University of California in Davis.

With our children's educational achievements and two serving under World Church appointment, Bill's last wishes are approaching fulfillment.

CHAPTER 11

I was sitting in a church school class in Anchorage, Alaska. The lesson topic was poverty. As I listened I was amazed to hear how high the poverty level was in the United States and I was startled, as I realized for the first time that my income since my husband's death had fallen beneath it. I looked about and saw that all in the class held high income jobs, although I'm sure they didn't consider themselves rich.

Was I really poor? My mind flitted back to Magnolia days. I saw our bare, gadgetless kitchen but I smiled, as in memory I heard the singing teakettle, the crackling fire, and smelled the freshly baked bread. I recalled my happy childhood, the love of my mother, brothers, sisters, and playmates. I thought of the many opportunities I had had all my life to learn of the Master.

Then I began to think of my heritage in the church. The first missionary to the British Isles, Elder Charles Derry, had performed the wedding ceremony of my mother and father. He had blessed all eight of us children. His adopted daughter, Pearl, had married our Uncle Sim Van Eaton, and we had lived for five years just across the alley from them. How I had loved slipping in and listening to Grandpa Derrv's stories of his missionary experiences. Although he had once had to pawn his overcoat to get his postage-due mail, could anyone have called him poor?

When his hair was snow white and his eyes almost blind he performed the wedding ceremony of my oldest sister, Carrie, and Guy Chatburn. Later my daughter, Vivian, and Glen Campbell had chosen his worshipful hymn, "O Lord, Around Thine Altar Now," to complete their wedding vows.

Once again I envisioned Apostles Gomer T. Griffith and U. W. Greene visiting with Grandpa

Emmerson on our front porch. Brother Gomer must have had a little girl, for he always held me on his lap as he rocked. I couldn't recall any of their words, but the light on their faces still shone in my mind.

I saw dear Brother Sidney Pitt later conversing with Grandpa and heard again the gospel themes as these men of God hoped and prayed for the progress of the church.

I pictured the happy faces of Apostle Caffall and his wife as they visited their children, the James Stuart family, in our little town.

From story hour time I saw Joseph Smith, on a quilt under a shady tree, baby-sitting with Carrie and his daughter Audentia's first child. With his willing help Mamma and Audie, as she called her, could sing in the reunion choir.

I daydreamed of my uncles reading the Book of Mormon by the dim light of the haymow because of the prejudice of their mother. I felt again the joy of Grandma's conversion and pictured Grandpa still preaching, although too blind to read his own text.

I remembered the night that Apostle James Gillen came for supper and told us of times he had been filled with apostolic power. He testified that on these occasions his faith was so strong that he knew the Lord would grant whatever he asked. I heard him again reading to us from his worn Bible. I felt the remorse that came over me when, in attempting to mend a tattered page, I had scorched a whole sheet of his beloved book over the kerosene lamp.

Between services the substitute teacher of the class, Brother Duane, met me in the hall. "Camilla," he began, "where were you this morning? You didn't seem to be with us. You didn't say one word in class."

I admitted quietly to him that I had suddenly realized my status. Then I protested, "But I don't feel poor. I feel almost rich. I have a small but comfortable home. It's paneled, carpeted, insulated, and equipped with electric time-savers. I have the Three Books to treasure, plenty of good reading material, and a piano to enjoy. I have fine health, priceless friends, and many opportunities to serve. I've been reviewing this morning all my blessings, my heritage in the church, and the promises the Lord has made me."

Our teacher patted my shoulder and agreed with me that poverty is without doubt a relative term.

"Surely the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is maker of them all," I quoted from Psalms.

How can people ever feel poor as long as they seek to retain a hunger for the good things of the kingdom? There is no wealth sufficient to buy love, happy memories, a rich heritage in the church, or experiences with the Master. So I hope to continue to move out with faith, putting to the test the promise in my patriarchal blessing: "The Lord hath blessed thee with the gift of faith and with an increase of faith as your experience in Christ shall ripen." My testimony is that his promises are sure.

Again Patriarch Butterworth said to me, "The Lord has held thee, as it were, in the hollow of his hand. He has protected thee from evil and from danger. and his protecting care shall be round about and over thee and thine for good."

I know these words are true. Once I came out of a four-car crash without a scratch. Another time I was on a train when three cars came uncoupled in the mountains. While I was traveling on a plane from the West a few years ago, serious trouble developed and the pilot had to make a crash landing when we arrived at our destination. Many fire engines stood by unneeded. I was in a bus at the summit of a mountain when the brakes gave way. And once the tie rod of our car

broke, sending us jolting off into a mountain meadow. A very short distance in either direction we could have plunged into a deep canyon.

Because I know that God's loving care and guidance have been with my family-I have chosen to title this book *In the Hollow of His Hand*. I feel that this choice is pleasing to the Lord for, after much prayer, the name came to me in the early hours of the morning with the assuring warmth of his Spirit.

I pray that all who read it may also sense the nearness of His loving hand.

Note: The authors church, *The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS)* is now known as *The Community of Christ*, World Headquarters, 1001 West Walnut, Independence Missouri.