

Excerpts from the Autobiography of Allie R. Fisher

By Harlan Sorrell

Alice “Allie” Rosetha (Smith) Fisher was born November 21, 1854, in Chesaning, Michigan. On July 6, 1868, at the age of 13 years and 7 months, she married 22-year-old Civil War veteran, Joseph C. Fisher, in Chesaning, Michigan – a man who would divorce her 19 years later, saying God had transferred his love to another woman. In her autobiography she writes as follows:

“When I should yet have been a child and carefree, I was married to Joseph C. Fisher. On his knees before my mother, he made solemn promises to care for me and consider my tender age. He seemed so desperately in earnest that my mother, fearing he might persuade me to elope gave her consent. My father, having so much confidence in mother's judgment, consented also. We were married the same day. ...

“In about the year 1875 we, with another family from Chesaning, located some land in Gratiot County, one-half mile from the main road. We had a road winding around through the woods on a ridge. The first winter we were there a lady and her husband came to the schoolhouse out on the road and held a meeting. She did the preaching. Mr. Fisher went and came back and told me he had made a start to serve the Lord. I had not been there because going out and back was difficult as the road was wet and long. Mr. Fisher wanted me to go, so I went to the afternoon meetings when I could pick my way. The first meeting I attended, I went to the altar and gave my heart to the Lord and went home happy. From my childhood I had prayed when in need and had prayed much for my husband as well as myself. He had a quick temper. I hated to see him angry and hear his profanity. So, when anything happened that I thought would make him angry, I would ask the Lord to keep him from it and the Lord always answered when I prayed. I was glad when he was saved and said unto me, ‘Come, let us go unto the house of the Lord.’

“The lady who held the meeting was undenominational. She did not advise us to join anything. That suited me as I still held to my childhood determination never to join a church. When we were not asked to do so it suited me well. ...

“[Around the spring of 1877] ... we sold our place and stored our goods. Mr. Fisher went to South Whitley, Indiana to work for his brother who had more business than he could well attend to. He had a store which needed his attention, also bought staves. Mr. Fisher took care of the stave business. While at South Whitley he heard of a holiness meeting not far away. He went to hear and there met Brother Warner, who was doing the preaching. While there he consecrated for sanctification and invited Brother Warner to come to Michigan, which he did that fall. This was our first introduction to Brother Warner.”

She goes on to tell how the Lord faithfully led them and Brother Warner together into clearer light and understanding of what the divine church really is and how the Lord alone organizes it. She tells of various meetings and how the Lord manifested Himself,

even in opening the eyes of Sister Emma Miller, who was physically blind, in a camp meeting in Bangor, Michigan in 1883. (Emma Miller was a cousin of Frankie Miller who would later marry D. S. Warner.) Regarding that miracle, Allie wrote:

“I happened to be kneeling at her side while all the camp were on their knees in silent prayer and all praying and believing for the same thing. She quietly looked me in the face saying, ‘It is done,’ and immediately the power of God was on us all. Everybody was on their feet shouting with their hands up. It was a veritable Pentecost, while Sister Miller stood before them looking at the scene.”

J. C. Fisher became co-editor and publisher of *The Gospel Trumpet* with D. S. Warner early on and being gifted in the composition of music, wrote the notes for most of the songs in the first songbook, “Songs of Victory,” published by the Gospel Trumpet Company in 1885. His wife, Allie, also assisted in the music writing. But soon this blessed work they were doing together for God was interrupted. Moving on to late 1886, Allie writes:

“This was a time in my life that I would like to pass over unmentioned. While in Pennsylvania several months previous to this I had a vision. I saw the whole surface of the earth, as far as I could see, a melting and boiling mass – hills and mountains would tumble in, then it would heave up in another place. Houses would shake and fall and sink out of sight. I was standing *alone* upon a rock – the only place that seemed to be solid. I did not understand the vision until the Lord showed it to me.

“After we came home in January [1887], Mr. Fisher had fallen and had decided to get a bill of divorcement and marry again. I will not mention the trials through which I passed at this time. While all this was going on before my face, I will let you imagine yourself in the same position domestically, and on top of this, the burden of what might be the outcome to the church, as so many people were simply wrapped up in him. After returning home they did all within their power to put the blame upon me, but the Lord gave me a special promise in the 64th Psalm, and also kept reminding me that He was led as a lamb dumb before his shearers and opened not his mouth. I left it all with the Lord, believing He could bring out the truth better than anything I could do or say. ...

“Mr. Fisher was a man of very strong magnetic influence, and the people were swayed by him until it was clearly manifest that he had gone wrong and, even then, it was hard for some to pull away from him. But finally, things adjusted themselves once more and settled down, but not without the loss of some whose faith was fastened to him. He applied for a divorce. Some thought I should fight it. The worldly people offered assistance. One lawyer offered his service free, and a number of the saints went to the county seat the day it was to be heard thinking I would be there, and they would be on hand to witness for me. But I knew it would mean the destruction of the *Trumpet* as he was publisher and proprietor of it, and I knew he would sell it out to a worldly company for the means to accomplish the end he sought. So, for the sake of saving it, I suffered myself to be defrauded and my name cast out as evil, but I knew God would take care of that. I would rather have suffer myself to be a cast away than to see the Trumpet Office

lost to the church. He afterwards sold the copyright of the 'Songs of Victory' to the songwriter, E. O. Excell of Oil City, Pennsylvania for means to carry on his work of opposition. He was at the last camp meeting held on the Bangor campground that came after he had gotten his bill [of divorcement]. Brother Warner gave a public statement of things as they were and told the necessity of someone buying him out, also renounced him as a fallen man. E. E. Byrum was at this meeting, it being the first one he had attended of the Church of God meetings or camp meetings. ... He bought Mr. Fisher out and became publisher before he went home. At the death of Brother Warner, he became editor and served in that capacity a number of years."

At the end of her autobiography, she wrote these words which should be resounded to every generation following:

"... We saw God did not intend that anyone should be exalted as the head of this Reformation, as had been the case in other reforms. This thing was not done in a corner, but the movement spontaneous, and simultaneous, and **Christ** the headstone we were extolling as we came out of Babylon, bringing the headstone, crying, 'Grace, grace unto it!' [Zechariah 4:7.] This is as it should be, for **Christ is the Head of all things to the body, which is His church.**

"Brother Warner was a very humble man, and one who exemplified the life of Christ more perfectly than any person that I ever knew. He had so much patience and sympathy for the erring and those who were weak and vacillating, helping them unto their feet time and again, and speaking encouraging words to those under trial. It seemed the church needed him so much. His place has really never been filled, in that line, by any one person. He lived very close to the Lord. He started the day with an early morning walk, and somewhere on his walk he would find a place to pray. He would start out about four o' clock, if the weather would permit, and return about five-thirty or six, in time for breakfast, strengthened and refreshed soul and body for the day's toil, for he always worked hard. ...

"Let us always be careful to remember that **the Lord is the Head of all things to the church** and we shall not make the mistake that brought about the apostasy in the beginning – **by exalting man** until finally the Holy Spirit and Word were entirely crowded out and man took the reins of government into his own hands and the blessed, precious privilege of looking to the Lord for all things became a thing of the past, or unknown to the generations following. So **let us exalt Jesus only**, as Brother Warner wrote: 'We are coming, hallelujah! We are coming home to God; **Jesus only we're beholding, who has washed us in His blood.**' ... If we keep low down at His feet, He will exalt us in due season. When we hear His welcome voice saying, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,' surely we shall then be exalted."