

Copyright 2001 By Lucille King
All Rights Reserved and Duplication
Of This Publication Is Forbidden,
Except For Personal Use

* * * * *

Digital Edition 09/01/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

Cobwebs

By Mrs. Paul E. King

From the January 11, 1981 Sunday School Beacon

Millie settled back against the seat in the breakfast nook, sipping her third cup of tea. The day was overcast and gray, matching the gloominess of her thoughts.

Looking through the window, she saw a flash of red dart out of the pine tree and land on the bird feeder, the cardinal's scarlet coat a glaring contrast against the newly-fallen snow.

"Well, that's one bright spot in today's drab world," she muttered, getting quickly to her feet and frightening Pudding, the Maltese cat, out of his dreamy mid-morning cat nap.

"Sorry if I frightened you, Pudding," she apologized in an indifferent tone of voice. "But this just isn't my day."

Pudding, his gray ears tucked back in apparent offense, made no pretense of his hurt feelings and stalked away to a corner of the room to sulk and pout, his cat brain wondering what had happened to his once-gentle owner.

Washing the few dishes and putting them back into the cupboard, Millie hurried to the already clean living room and swept, dusted, polished and cleaned until her own image was reflected back at her from the tops of the coffee table and the end tables. Then she hurried upstairs and repeated the process in both bedrooms and the bath; still the gloom and the despondency remained intact inside her.



She made her way down the thickly-carpeted stairs and called for Pudding, but the cat remained adamant and refused to come, preferring rather the seclusion and privacy of his own corner where he could sulk in his own way to his heart's content.

Millie heaved a tired sigh. Why was it, she wondered, that she could so easily "upset" the smooth order of the household by her moods and temperament.

She thought of Harold then and how, instead of being kind and loving and gentle to him, she had sent him off to work fully absorbed with her gray mood. The children, too.

A hot tear slithered out of the corner of her eye and dropped to the floor. Hadn't she always been a good wife and mother? And she was a super-clean housekeeper and homemaker, not allowing so much as a single cobweb to long remain in the corners of her four walls.

At thought of the torn-down and swept-away cobwebs, Millie cringed. What had Pastor Carson said about spiritual cobwebs remaining inside the walls of one's heart?

Turning quickly, she fled to the breakfast nook and watched the hungry birds eating from the bird feeder, her heart hammering loudly inside her chest.

Did she really have "cobwebs" in her heart? she wondered suddenly, not able to get away from Sunday morning's sermon. If she had cobwebs, she theorized, then without a doubt she must be a possessor of the "spider" that made those cobwebs.

She thought of Mildred then, her younger sister, and what she had told her so recently:

"Honestly, Millie," Mildred had said, "unless you get rid of this resentment and these bitter thoughts toward Fred, you'll lose your soul."

"But how, Mildred? After the way he has treated you and.., and forsaken you and the two children for this.., this hussy of a woman? How can I?" she had asked in all sincerity and openness.

Mildred had put Charmaine down then and said, "It hurts me deeply, Sis -- far more deeply than you can imagine -- because Harold's never been unfaithful to you nor left you to raise your children alone -- but God's sanctifying power within me has cleansed my heart from every trace of bitterness. Holiness is wonderful, Millie. Sooner or later, you'll see that it is a necessary heart experience . . . a second, definite, purifying work subsequent to regeneration. I hurt inwardly, yes, because I love my husband dearly and deeply; but the resentment is gone. So is the bitterness I felt toward him and this woman."

"That's impossible; absolutely impossible, Mildred!"

"With the natural man, yes, Sis; but not when one has been filled with Divine love. Fred's always been a good provider, and before Hilda plied her charms on him he was a wonderful husband and father. I've thanked God for these good qualities about him, confessing my own unintentional neglect of him. The two little ones came so close together, keeping me busy and needing my attention and help almost constantly. God has been my 'ever-present help' during this time of heart-break and grief, Millie, and the Holy Ghost has indeed been my Comforter."

Standing in front of the window, thinking of Mildred's words, Millie trembled. That something supernatural had taken place in her sister's heart she hadn't the least bit of doubt. But this "holiness of heart" teaching was all so new to her. Not until she started going with her sister, after Fred deserted her and the two girls, had she ever heard messages like Rev. Carson preached.

The more Millie thought about it the more confused she became.

"There is no way one can rationalize holiness of heart," the minister had said in one of his sermons; "it must be experienced to be understood and appreciated. Best of all, it works in the lives of those who really possess it."

At thought of it "working" in the lives of the possessors, Millie's mind wandered to her sister again. Without a doubt, it worked in Mildred's life. She was patient and loving and kind with the children and so sensitive of others' feelings, saying nothing but good words about everybody..., including Fred.

Conviction gripped Millie's heart. How different the setting could have been this morning, she thought, had she sent her husband and the children away with gentle words and kind deeds as remembrances of her all day long. Might Harold even not long for the same thing that was holding Mildred secure? she wondered suddenly.

The thought was staggering. It filled Millie's heart with fear. She, of all people, needed this holiness, this cleansing of the heart.

Falling to her knees, she wept and prayed. They were not words she had heard or been told to say, but from deep inside her heart she cried out to God for Him to give her the same wonderful experience that He had given to her sister--an experience of heart cleansing that would keep her sweet under pressure and hold her steady when the storms of life beat in upon her.

How long she prayed she had no idea. But when she arose, finally, it was with full assurance of heart and soul that the "old nature" within her was indeed dead and she was truly cleansed, sanctified wholly.

The view through the kitchen windows revealed an even deeper shade of gray outside in the overcast heavens than when she had sipped her tea a few hours earlier, but the sunshine of God' s love and the presence of her newly-received Divine Comforter filled her inner being with such joy and heavenly sunlight that she found herself laughing and singing for pure joy.

In a cheerful, pleasant and beautiful mood, Millie began pulling things out of the freezer: a boneless rump roast (Harold's favorite), blueberries for his favorite crumb pie, frozen black eye peas and broccoli spears. For the children, a quart of strawberries for shortcake and corn on the cob. Beside this, they would be greeted with kind words and a smile, not just this night but from here on out.

Singing joyously now, Millie set to work with a happy heart. Not only were the cobwebs gone from her heart, but the spider was gone as well -- the "spider" of carnality -- the thing that was the root of all her resentment toward her brother-in-law.

She was now free indeed. Free and filled and happy.

Mildred must know, she decided, hurrying to the phone.

* * * * *

THE END