

## Column

Georgia, the state where I have lived for a third of a century, has produced a host of notable men and women. Some whose names come to mind include songwriter Johnny Mercer, actor Burt Reynolds, journalist Ralph McGill, slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, novelist Margaret Mitchell, baseball legend Jackie Robinson and of course one U.S. President, Jimmy Carter.

Ecclesiasticus (a book from the Apocrypha) says: “Let us praise now famous men,” and surely, we do right so to do” (44:1). The Georgian whose life I wish to highlight today may at first seem an unlikely candidate for the list of notables I have already mentioned; nevertheless, she made her mark and has something to teach us.

The person of whom I am thinking is Mrs. S. R. Dull, Georgia’s ‘first lady of cookery’. Generations of Georgia brides have received a copy of her *Southern Cooking* as a wedding gift. Published in 1928, the book is still available on Amazon, and there may be some still around who remember her column that ran for a quarter of a century in the *Atlanta Journal*.

Born Henrietta Stanley in 1863 during the midst of the War between the States, her family lived in Laurens County but later moved to Atlanta when her father took a job with the railroad. In 1887, she married a boy from Virginia by the name of Samuel Rice Dull, and the couple settled in Atlanta.

In the early 1900s, trouble struck as Mr. Dull became sick and unable to work, propelling Mrs. Dull into the role of the family breadwinner. A devout Christian, she did not get bitter or complain but began making cakes and selling them to members of her church. Her fame spread, and soon people began asking her for other cookery services, and she found herself in the cooking-school business. After her husband died in 1919, she was hired by the Atlanta Journal, where her

columns continued to appear until 1945. She died in 1964 at the age of 100, and in 2013 she was inducted into the Georgia Women of Achievement Hall of Fame.

From Mrs. Dull's life we can learn that being a Christian does not ensure smooth sailing on a sea without waves. No, some of the most fervent of Jesus' people have had to traverse rough waters, and Mrs. Dull was no exception.

We can also learn from her story how God gives strength and provides. The Psalmist says: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (27:10). In Mrs. Dull's case it was not her father or mother who forsook her but whose husband, through no fault of his own, was unable to provide for her. Yet God did not forsake her but took on the role of provider.

In the Old Testament book of Ruth, we find something similar happening. Naomi and her Moabitic daughter-in-law Ruth both became widows; yet God did not forsake them. A near kinsman, Boaz, first allowed Ruth to glean in his field and later married the younger woman. Ruth's name, as you might remember, appears in our Lord's genealogy.

Trouble can defeat us or if given to the Lord make us strong. The latter was the experience of Naomi, Ruth, Mrs. Dull and many others in both Bible and modern times. It can be our experience. In a world of change and chance, God cares, God provides, God remains an unshakeable rock!

Let us now praise famous men and women, especially those who are survivors, but let's not stop there. Let's follow in their steps, allowing, as one American evangelist was fond of saying, "God to turn scars into stars!"

*O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy*

*mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen. (The Book of Common Prayer)*

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