He stood on the comer of Winthrop and Fifth Avenue calling to passersby in a loud, clear voice, "Paper! Here's where to get your Times." Turning to a well-dressed man who paused nearby, he asked, "Paper, sir?"

The man handed him a quarter and uttered not a word.

"Your change, sir," and the small land handed two dimes toward the man. "Keep it!" he said, hurrying away.

"So-o! This is where you work!" and a burly lad stopped in front of the pale-looking boy and laughed aloud in mockery. "You're just a poor newsboy! Wait until I tell the boys at school!" and he made such loud sport until the passersby had by now formed into a crowd around the newsboy.

"Patches! No wonder some of the kids call you that. Look at your clothes. A newsboy! Just wait till the boys in school hear about this!" and he laughed wickedly and loudly then disappeared into the well-dressed crowd.

"Paper! Get your paper!" he called. The hot burning tears stung at his eyes and a choking sensation rose up in his throat. Mustering all his courage, he smiled and called loud and clear, "Paper! Get your paper."
Some of the crowd, looking at the pale blue eyes and the paler cheeks and threadbare clothes, took pity on the lad.

"Paper, please," a well-dressed man said, handing him a bill. "Keep the change, sonny." He smiled kindly as he walked away.

A woman, whose face was almost totally concealed by the mammoth fur-piece around her white neck, handed him another bill. "Paper, please," she said, and, like the gentleman, she smiled and, patting his well-combed dark hair, she whispered, "The change is all yours."

In a very little while he had sold every paper. A group of wicked-looking boys made sport of him then hurried away, laughing and mocking. "Paper," they shouted as they went on their way.

The lad smiled sweetly at the passersby and, after the crowd was dispersed and had scattered, he hurried home.

"You're home early," Mother said as he entered the door. "Did things go well today, Joey?" she asked affectionately as she continued rubbing the piece of wash across the washboard.

"Very well, dear Mother," the boy said, smiling sweetly and pulling the money from his patched pant's pocket. "The Lord turned evil into good for me," and he began counting.

"He must have," Mother said tearfully as she saw the bills.

Then, fearing lest she should ask what had happened, the lad said, "Two well-dressed persons handed me these bills for a paper and would take no change--said the change was mine. I felt it was of God."

"'Tis that indeed," the poorly dressed but beautiful and clean mother answered.

"I thought of the rent payment, Mother. I do believe I shall now have enough to take to Mr. Jacobs and pay him all we owe him."

"You're not forgetting your tithe, son?"

"Oh, no! That is here by itself, with a dollar extra for offering. But what about yourself, Mother? Do you need some of this for food or... or... clothes? Your dresses are so thin and the colder weather is coming on."

"I can make it, Joe. After I take these washed clothes to Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Coker, I'll have another four dollars."
"I do wish you didn't have to work so hard," and Joe walked over to the washboard. Rolling his shirt sleeves up, he pushed his mother aside and began the job.

"No. No, Joey!" she said tearfully. "You work too hard. I can do this."

"Lie down and rest awhile, Mother dear. I noticed your eyes look tired again. I'm strong; I can finish this while you rest."

With a sigh, the weary mother slowly retired to the worn dark green velvet couch in the room. "Oh, Joe! I wish you could have known your father! He was a good, brave and noble man like you. He'd be proud of you, Joe--as I am. You're a good boy and such a blessing to your frail mother."

It was this, Joe thought as he rubbed the soiled clothes over the washboard, that kept him going. This--his sweet, angelic mother and the Lord--that took away the worst of the hurt when the boys laughed at him and called him "Patches" in school. Patches! Mother must never find out! It would break her already-failing heart that was so overworked. The tears fell down his cheeks and splashed into the tub of sudsy water as he thought of his mother. How alone she must feel without his dad.

Joe paused; turning his head, he gazed for a long while at the fine portrait of the man on the wall. He was fine! Not only was he fine, but he was handsome and clean-looking as well.

"It was years and years ago," Mother had told him one night while the snow was fanning and drifting high around the humble door, and when the teakettle hummed a soft relaxing song that gave Joe a warm, cozy feeling all over in spite of the few sparse furnishings in the house.

"Your father was a brave General in the army, Son. The enemy was approaching and the soldiers were petrified with fear. Your father called his entire group of men around him and led them in earnest, fervent prayer. "Now, men," he said. "we must advance. Follow my orders closely and do as I say and we shall come out victorious. I have prayed for you--each one of you by name. Most of you do not know the God in whom I trust. Therefore, be it known to you this day that, should my time come to die, I am ready to meet my Lord and the Commander of the skies! But let it be known also that I died for you, and may each of you come to love and to know the Saviour I so dearly love and who means everything to me. Now, shall we advance! I shall lead in this battle. I feel my time on earth is short. I do not fear. Send my precious wife my few belongings and tell her I loved her to the end and that I was faithful to her and our unborn child. Tell her I gave my life for my men--if I never return!

"Advance they did," Mother had said on that cold night, her own heart full of loneliness and sadness. "Your father, and my beloved husband, never returned. His men
fought bravely and courageously and won a tremendous victory—in fact, it was a decisive victory that resulted in the termination of the war. His men came out unscathed, unharmed and unhurt. He alone went down to the grave. This one death resulted in the conversion of almost all his men. He was a brave man, Joey." And Mother had wept softly as she added, "He was a holy man and clean."

She had then given Joe a small pocket knife, one of his few personal possessions they had sent to her. The knife was the most prized possession the boy had.

He turned back to the clothes and finished washing and rinsing them, then hung them on the line to dry.

The wind seemed chilly now. Quickly he took all the dry clothes off the line and put them into the basket, then carried them inside where he sprinkled and rolled them for ironing. After he had emptied the wash water down the little drain, he sat in the rocking chair near the big wood stove and read from the Bible. In a short while, the Bible dropped to his lap and the boy, overcome by the warmth of the old cook stove and his own fatigue, was sound asleep.

The boy Joe, called Patches by the unkind school associates, grew into young manhood. For his speech as valedictorian on the night of commencement, he spoke on wisdom.

Mother sat in the front row. To Joe, she was the most perfect and beautiful specimen of womanhood in the world. Rising to his feet, he spoke in a clear, steady voice:

"Friends," he said, "I welcome you to this, another commencement exercise. It is not by mere chance that I stand before you tonight. I have no goodness in which to boast; God gave to me a wonderful mother. To my personal Lord and Saviour, and to my mother, I owe everything. She it is who taught me the fear of the Lord.

"All too frequently man is prone to feel his own capabilities and, in feeling thus, he fails to recognize in what way wisdom is achieved.

"It was King Solomon, the wisest man of all times, unto whom the Lord appeared in a dream and told him to ask anything he desired. 'Give me now wisdom and knowledge,' he said, 'that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this Thy people, that is so great?'

"Any gift or special endowment that man may possess comes directly from God. None of us has any goodness wherein to boast. It is God that exalts or abases.

"I was blessed with a noble father."
The students gasped.

"He not only was a handsome man, but he was a holy man--a gallant and brave man! He, it was, who led the 55th Division of soldiers on to victory. He lost his life, but through that triumph the war was terminated.

"It costs something to succeed. Likewise, it costs something to get and maintain victory. The price of the war just mentioned cost my father his life. The price of my inner spiritual victory cost the Lord and Saviour, whom I found in saving grace and sanctifying power--that price, I say--cost Him His life on a cruel rugged cross. Spurned and despised as He was by the majority--and is yet today--but loved, honored, adored and revered by a minority, of which number I am," and a heavenly radiance shone on his face. Handkerchiefs were drawn from pocket and purse as tears flowed freely across the huge auditorium.

"The price of success! Ah! I cannot adequately describe my feelings. If I have attained to any degree of success, or shall ever be called a successful individual, it must be attributed to the Lord God of all wisdom and to my godly mother. The writer of Proverbs said 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.'

"I was taught the fear of the Lord at an early age by my wonderful mother. She, it was, who taught me the many Scripture verses and chapters I now retain and know. Yes, she taught me, with her body over a washboard--doing washings and ironings for all who could use her services. I am from a poor family who knows God. I was taught to trust Him for temporal as well as spiritual needs. Mother sacrificed to put me through school, wearing threadbare clothes and eating scanty rations that I might be able to finish my schooling. She deserves the plaudits and the praise. Not I."

Turning toward the principal, he said, "Mr. Baker, I should like my mother to come up beside me, please," whereupon the audience broke out in loud applause.

Going to the seat on the front row, Joe escorted the small woman to the platform. There was no corsage on her bosom; neither was her body clothed in finery. Standing before them was a small woman in a plain cotton dress with the dignity and refinement of a queen. Joe kept his arm around her small, slender shoulders as he said brokenly:

"She deserves this honor and this credit. I am merely a by-product of her sound teachings and her faithful, consistent living. This is my mother!"

Pandemonium broke loose. Strong men wept as they remembered old-fashioned, godly mothers of bygone days. The students, who had many times mocked the poor lad, now came to shake his hand.
"Joe! Joe Blake!" one of the burly boys exclaimed in disbelief. "It was your father then whom we read about and heard about! It... it's almost like a dream." Joe noticed he had called him by his right name and had not called him "Patches," for the first time ever!

Mr. Baker stood up to say something but to no avail. Some of the audience were running toward the front. "Will you pray for me?" they inquired, sobbing bitterly. "I want what you've got," another implored tearfully.

At the close of the service, a middle-aged gentleman, his hair graying at the temples, came toward Mrs. Blake.

"God bless you," he said tearfully. "God bless you, Mrs. Blake! I can't believe my eyes."

"Who are you?" she asked timidly.

"I am now General Rushmore. Pvt. Rushmore when I was under your husband. A great man he was, and a holy man." The tall, athletic-looking man paused to weep. "I became a Christian that night. His testimony! Oh! it rings even now in my ears. Fear? He knew no fear; so sure was he of his God. He loved you, lady! How he loved you! Next to his God, you were loved above anything I've ever seen. And now, here I am, beholding not only his wife but his then unborn son! Oh, how proud he would be of Joe, Jr. ! I should like the honor of visiting with you both at your convenience, Mrs. Blake. I have many things to tell you that you know nothing of. Joe and I were close friends and, should you be kind enough to consent to it, I would consider it an honor to put Joe, Jr. through the college of his choice. You see, I made the Army my career and I am well able to help finance any vocation the boy may have chosen. I had a son Joe's age," and his chin trembled as he sobbed bitterly. "I lost Jack and my good wife in a head-on collision five years ago. They were en route to join me in El Paso, Texas, where I was to be in command for a year. If it had not been for the Lord, I could never have endured the shock and the loneliness. However, that drove me more to my knees and drew me ever so closely to my wounded, loving Saviour. I should be most happy if you would permit me to do this small favor in memory of Joe."

Joe, feeling God was in it and sensing mutual blending of spirits as the man talked, said, "I thank you kindly, Mr. Rushmore. I shall work some on the side though to send money home to Mother. I plan to prepare for the ministry, the Lord willing."

"Your father would rejoice in that knowledge," Mr. Rushmore said. In a gentlemanly way, he again asked, "Would it be convenient for you if I dropped by to see you tomorrow afternoon? I have the afternoon off, going on duty at eight in the evening."

"It would be fine with me," Joe said. Turning to Mother, he asked, "What do you say, dear Mother?"
Shyly she looked at the tall stalwart man before her. How like Joe he looked! And how courteous and mannerly like him too! She blushed prettily as she said softly, "That will be fine."

"One o'clock then?" and Mr. Rushmore smiled as he shook her small hand.

"One o'clock," she said, smiling back.

As Joe retired for the night, he looked out the window upon a world bathed in pale moonlight. The crickets were chirping softly, musically. His heart felt good and peaceful. Not only had God worked something out for him by answering his prayers concerning whether he should go to college and leave Mother or not, but, in his heart, he had the confidence that God had answered his prayer in behalf of Mother. He had sent Gen. Rushmore! Of this, he felt confident. He noticed the look in his mother's eyes as the good man had spoken to her. But he also noted the General's look when he saw his mother.

"I can't blame him," he whispered to the singing crickets. "She's a wonderful woman and so beautiful yet--in spite of hard work and many griefs and heartaches. You'll get the best woman in the world, General Rushmore. Believe me, I know!" and he crawled between the clean white sheets and was soon sleeping soundly.

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

THE END