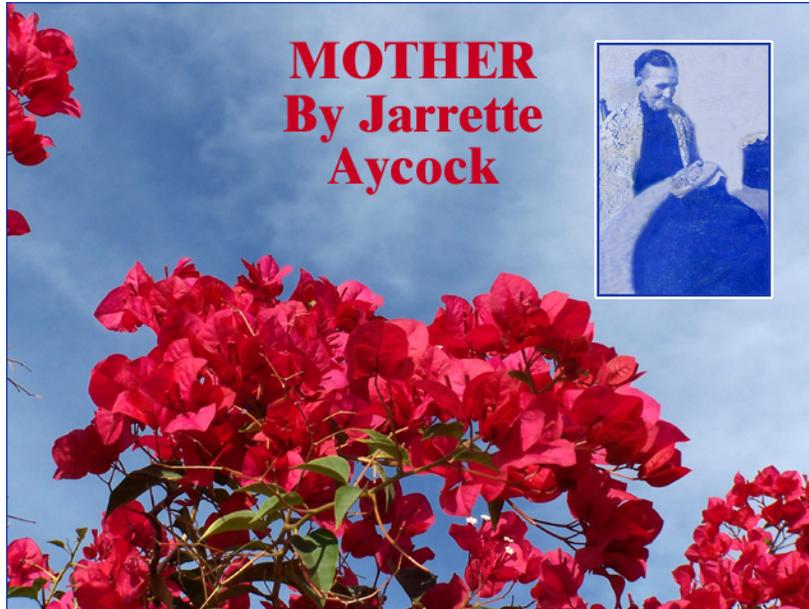


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MOTHER
By Jarrette E. Aycock



Beacon Hill Press
Kansas City, Missouri

By the same author:
The Nightingale of the Psalms
The Story of Two Prodigals
The Prince of This World
If Christ Had Not Come
The Grand Old Book
The Crimson Stream
Win Them

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Jarrette Aycock

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DEDICATION

To the two whose sweet Christian lives have meant more to me than all others, my mother and the mother of my child, is this book lovingly dedicated.

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FOREWORD

Friends, having often heard me use in messages incidents from the life of my old-fashioned back-country mother and thinking they might prove a blessing, have urged me to set them forth in print. In doing this, I also wish to give you stories,

songs and poems from the pen of others eulogizing God's greatest human gift to earth -- Mother.

In writing of my mother, I am in a way writing of yours, for whether she be young or old, reared in country, town or city, the heart of every real, Christian mother beats the same.

*** * * * ***

INTRODUCTION

**"If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole:
Mother o' mine."**

These lines of Kipling express a beautiful sentiment, albeit somewhat hyperbolic. Yet the more one knows and hears about good mothers, the more inclined he is to wonder if exaggeration is possible in giving them tribute. Certain it is that countless thousands of us owe every vestige of respectability with which we might be credited to mothers' prayers made effective in the grace of God.

Other thousands of us can only conjecture the irreparable loss sustained when early in our lives a devoted, godly mother was taken from us. Is it strange then that a wistful mood takes over when one reads of a mother's admonition, encouragement, prayers, letters -- everything that a mother contributes to an offspring's life -- following through the years until a Christian life and character is established? But on second thought, it is entirely believable that the influence of a mother's passionate prayers can effectively follow over the span of a few fleeting years.

It has not been my privilege to meet the particular mother about whom this book centers. But she must have been a woman of strong character and godly life. Doubtless the supreme tribute to a virtuous mother is a noble son. Jarrette Aycock as such -- a son, a friend, a minister of the gospel, one who lives for the salvation of the lost and the glory of God -- would gladden and satisfy the heart of the most exacting mother.

It was my pleasure to hear the author in one of his sermons give some of the interesting facts about his mother which are printed here. I was impressed with their worth and their potential appeal to every mother and every son and daughter of a good mother. I was convinced that such a book would be read with appreciation the world over and begged the speaker to prepare the material for publication. This book is the result. If you enjoy it, see to it that copies get into the hands of others that its message may bless and inspire many.

P. H. Lunn

* * * * *

01 -- A TRIBUTE TO MOTHER

Mother -- gentle, true and always kind. Beneath her breast there beat a heart touched by God and filled with love divine. Love for her home, her family and everyone who crossed her path. Her theme was love, unselfish love and though she did not preach, she practiced daily in her life these things, for they were as much a part of her as her hands and feet. Following the example of her Master, she emptied life of self and in her heart made room for others; and like the mother of our Lord she'd ask for work too heavy to perform. Though her tired body often ached with pain, she'd only smile and sigh when loved ones called and begin some menial task again. She wore no medals for achievements great and no awards to her were given, but she deserved them all, far more, a thousand times, than many others. If I owned the medals of the world, I'd give them all to mothers.

My mother was old and wrinkled and gray,
Yours may be young and jolly and gay;
Mine from the backwoods, not even a town,
Yours from a city of fame and renown;
But the same kind of heart, o'erflowing with love,
Was given our mothers from heaven above.

To one who has had a good mother, there is no more wonderful promise than the tender words God spoken through the lips of the prophet Isaiah, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

It is a gracious thought, God is like mother. That means we can go to Him with all our troubles and He will share them. We can take to Him the most trivial things and He will understand. We can talk to Him of the most delicate matters and He will listen. Don't you remember? No matter how heavy the load or difficult the problem, mother would always try to shoulder it. It was the spirit of a mother's heart which said on the day of the resurrection, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away." That is just like a mother, "I will undertake it." Though sometimes her strength is insufficient, she will always try -- but Jesus never fails. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

My Mother

She was a quaint little woman,
This mother of mine,
And memories of her
Still my heart strings entwine.

My mother was born in the deep South but emigrated west at the close of the Civil War with my father in a covered wagon which was pulled by oxen. Her originality made her different from everyone else. She was interesting, jolly, and full of fun. She had a most quaint way of expressing herself. On the lips of others her expressions might have sounded like slang, but not when Mother used them for they were a part of her quaintness.

"Well gentle Annie," or "Land o' Goshen," she would exclaim if suddenly excited. "It hurts like six bits," was her expression, if she hurt herself. The breakfast coffee was often "as strong as aquafortis." [aquafortis was a name given to Nitric Acid. -- DVM] The worthless fellow in the community was "an old shite-poke." If she wished to further describe him, "He is not worth the powder and lead it would take to blow him to Halifax." If wishing to emphasize a statement she would begin, "Well dipend." You might say, "It all sounds very crude." Yes, possibly it would from the lips of your mother, but not from mine.

Little of Stature

As the Bible says of Zacchaeus, Mother was "little of stature," but little in no other way. Her tiny body possessed the soul of a giant. She was big in heart and despised littleness in anyone. Freehearted? Father said if he did not watch her she would give away all he had. Few neighbors ever passed over the lonely road leading by our home without Mother's hailing them and inviting them to stop and eat. When declining years dimmed her sight she often called to the passer-by with a hearty, "Stop and have dinner with us," before she realized the driver of the wagon was a stranger. She "lived in a house by the side of the road to be a friend to man."

A Country Woman

Mother always lived in the country, so far removed from a city or even a town that she never knew the convenience of a modern home. Our fire came from the hickory wood, our light from the oil lamp and our water from--

"The old oaken bucket,
The iron-bound bucket,
The moss covered bucket,
That hung in the well."

Mother Makes a Visit

I am not sure Mother had ever been on a train, before she made the trip to visit me while I was a pastor. What traveling she had done was behind the old farm horses. I met her at the train and took her to the parsonage. After we had visited a while, I led her to the light switch saying, "Mother, push this button." She did, and when the lights flashed on she jumped and said, "Well gentle Annie, I never saw anything like that." I then led her out to the kitchen sink and told her to turn the

faucet. She did, and when the water came gushing out she sprang back and exclaimed, "Well land o' Goshen, look at that. Son, if I had water in the house like that I wouldn't know what to do. In my sixty years of married life I've never lived where we had water closer than a hundred yards. I've had to carry water all my life."

"She was a little old-fashioned
That sweet mother of mine.
There are many whose beauty
My mother's outshine.
She was a little old-fashioned,
I plainly can see,
But she was the dearest
Sweetest mother to me."

"She has gone home to glory,
That mother of mine;
To the land of the angels,
Where the sun always shines;
Some day I shall join her
In the land of the free,
And she'll be in heaven
Sweetest mother to me."

-- William Ramsey

I often tell people I know my mother was old-fashioned because she and my father lived together nearly sixty-five years and were never separated or divorced.

* * * * *

02 -- A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE

When it comes to influence for God and souls, mothers head the list. In the years I was in mission work, dealing with men who had lost their way, human derelicts tossed on the waves of time; I saw many redeemed, but very few who had not been influenced by a Christian mother.

Walter

Walter had a godly mother who had tried to rear him right, but he left home while yet a young man and was soon bound by sin and habits. He was in the city of Denver, Colorado, when the law laid its hand upon him and finding him guilty they sentenced him for a number of years to the penitentiary at Canyon City. While he was serving his sentence his old mother died. He was heartbroken for a time, but prison life soon replaced the tender memories with bitterness. When he was released from prison he turned again to his old life of sin, drinking and gambling.

Many years went by and while he succeeded in not running afoul of the law, drink got the best of him, and one night he was found in the gutter with delirium tremens. He was taken to a hospital and for nine days lay chained to his bed while he fought imaginary snakes and demons.

He was released on a Sunday afternoon. It was Mother's Day and a group of us were on a corner conducting a street meeting. A great crowd had gathered and we sang:

"When I was but a little child,
How well I recollect,
How I would grieve my mother,
With my folly and neglect,
But now that she has gone to heaven,
I miss her tender care,
O angels, tell my mother
I'll be there.

"Tell mother I'll be there,
In answer to her prayer,
This message, guardian angel,
To her bear.
Tell mother I'll be there,
Heaven's joys with her to share,
O angels, tell my mother
I'll be there."

-- Charles M. Fillmore

As this grand old mother song floated out on the air, a sweet-faced mother began passing out white carnations to all in the crowd whose mothers were dead. Walter reached out his hand and took a flower, then wiping a tear from his eyes he slowly turned and walked away.

The next night we were holding services in a little mission located in the slums of the city. Walter passed the open door of the mission as the crowd was singing:

"Blessed assurance
Jesus is mine,
Oh, what a foretaste
Of glory divine."

He listened for a moment, then hurried away, for that was his mother's favorite song. How often he had heard her sing it around their home when he was a boy. It revived memories that were dead and touched chords that had long been

broken. In order to drown these memories he turned into a saloon and ordered a whiskey; when the bartender placed the glass before him, he raised it and started to drink. Later he said, "When I lifted the glass I saw in it, not whiskey, but a little white carnation, and I could hear my mother singing:

"Blessed assurance,
Jesus is mine."

He did not drink the whiskey, but placing the glass on the bar he left the saloon and returned to the mission. There at the altar he gave his heart to his mother's God, and until the day of his death, about twenty-five years later, he lived a wonderful Christian life -- a mother's influence.

"Can a boy forget his mother's prayer
Though he has wandered, God knows where?
No! Down the path of sin and shame,
A mother's prayers are heard the same.
Come back my boy, come back I say,
And travel in your mother's way.
Come back my boy, come back I say,
And travel in your mother's way."

* * * * *

03 -- I WANT TO SEE MY BOY

It was a midsummer day, and the sun's shining down on the hot pavement made it extremely uncomfortable, even while driving. The city was miles behind and as I drove along the highway I saw ahead of me the bent form of an old lady. As I approached she turned and lifted her hand; I stopped the car and she got in. Her face was wrinkled and lined with care; her hair was white. She must have been long past her threescore years and ten. I asked her destination and she told me she was going to see her son who was in the penitentiary. She had walked and hitch-hiked more than a thousand miles and still had many more to go. "Son is a good boy at heart," she said. "I know when he gets out he will never do wrong again. He just got in with the wrong crowd and they led him astray." I did not inquire as to why he was in trouble. It made no difference. He was her boy, a child of her heart; she had gone down into the valley of the shadow of death to give him life, and no matter what he had done she still loved him.

"I did not have the money to buy a ticket," she continued, "only enough to stop nights and get something to eat, but I knew he was lonely and I wanted to see him so much, so I just made up my mind I was going."

It is just another incident which might be multiplied a million times, showing to what lengths the love of a mother will go for her child.

* * * * *

04 -- PRISONER'S SONG

One evening from a prison cell in a state penitentiary a clear, rich voice was heard as it sang:

"Gold has its power, the sages will say,
Riches in life hold a wonderful sway,
But there is a power hails from above
Richer and grander, power of love."

The voice of the singer was heard to break for a moment, then with an effort he continued:

"Love of a mother for her darling child,
Love for a son, though he's wayward and wild."*

* * * * *

05 -- SOMEBODY PRAYS

"Somebody prays for a boy astray
Afar from home at the close of day,
Somebody loves him in spite of his sin,
Would give her all, to bring him in;
That somebody is mother.

"Somebody's heart is filled with joy,
To meet a penitent erring boy,
To know her prayers were not in vain,
To welcome home her boy again
In spite of every sin and stain:
And that somebody is mother."

-- Author Unknown

* * * * *

06 -- MY MOTHER'S INFLUENCE

The influence of my mother and the knowledge that she was praying for me followed me through years of wandering in sin. Never a letter came to me from my mother that did not contain some passage from God's Word and a reminder that each day she prayed for me.

One night when bitterness possessed me, I was clouding my mind with rash vows of where I would go, what I would do, and that I would never write home again. I dropped into a little hall where religious services were being held. Hardly was I seated when my eyes were attracted to a large sign stretching across the platform asking:

"HOW LONG SINCE YOU WROTE TO MOTHER?"

That sign revived memories of Mother's prayers, and of my sin and neglect. As I sat there with such thoughts racing through my mind, a sweet-faced Christian mother came to me and kindly, tactfully urged me to go forward and give my heart to Christ. I was saved that night. Later I learned that at the same hour I had gone into the mission, Mother was on her knees two thousand miles away, praying for God to find her boy, save him and send him home.

"I grieved my Lord from day to day,
I spurned His love, so full and free,
And though I wandered far away,
Still mother's prayers have followed me.

I'm coming home, I'm coming home,
To live my wasted life anew.
For mother's prayers have followed me,
Have followed me the whole world through."

I woefully neglected my mother before I was saved, but I changed that night and never neglected her again. I wrote her a letter at least once a week during the remaining fifteen years of her life.

"If you have a gray-haired mother
In the old home far away,
Sit right down and write the letter
You put off from day to day.
Don't wait until her weary footsteps
Reach heaven's pearly gates,
But show her that you think of her
Before it is too late."

* * * * *

07 -- TELL YOU MOTHER HOW MUCH YOU LOVE HER

Is your mother living? Then write a letter to her, write to her now and write to her often. Tell her how much you love her. Tell her of your appreciation and esteem for her. Give thanks for the many things she has done for you. A love letter from

you will bring her greater joy than anything else you can do. Love is something you cannot say with flowers. Love is a sentiment you cannot convey with beautiful dresses. Love is something which gold and silver cannot express. You must speak it with your own lips or pen it with your own hand.

"Your mother is your friend,
And will be to the end,
And if her hopes and dreams
Would just come true.
No woe would touch your life,
No bitterness nor strife,
You know your mother,
Always cares for you.

"Don't wound that tender heart,
Don't cause the tears to start,
And don't neglect her
For your friendships new.
Though she be old and gray,
Caress her every day.
You know your mother
Always cares for you.

"You know her heart beats true,
Through shade and sunshine too,
There's not a day
She does not think of you
She grieves when you are sad,
Rejoices when you're glad.
You know your mother
Always cares for you."

-- Author Unknown

* * * * *

08 -- MOTHER BELIEVES IN YOU

A poor little woman, with bent form and furrowed face and shabby dress, stood shivering in the cold, in the yard of the police station. She was waiting to see her boy. The prison-van was standing ready to carry off the men upon whom long sentences had been pronounced. Presently they appeared, under police escort. The crowd outside the gates were amused and excited; but she had no eyes for the crowd. She was thinking only of that boy of hers; he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. He looked to be such a lad. The two were allowed to converse for just a moment before the van drove off. She had no word of rebuke or

reproach. A wan smile played over her pinched face, and she talked of old friends and old times. A policeman nudged him and pointed to the van. She put her arms about him in farewell.

"I always knew," she exclaimed, through her tears, "I always knew that you'd grow up to be a good man, George. And you will yet; I know you will."

"When temptations round you gather,
And your courage almost fails,
Trust the faith and prayers of mother,
E'er the evil one prevails;
For, though other friends may vanish,
There is One who will not flee,
For the sake of mother conquer,
For she still believes in me."

* * * * *

09 -- MOTHERS BUILD MORALE

The greatest morale builder for the soldier in battle is the memory of a good home and a godly mother. It is that for which he lives, it is that for which he fights and it is that for which he will, if necessary, die.

Many a boy has unflinchingly turned the nose of his plane out over enemy territory, worked calmly the controls of his submarine in the deep, stood bravely at his guns amid bursting shells on the battle ship or marched courageously forward into the hell of machine-gun fire, spurred on by the thought:

"Your mother still prays for you Joe,
Your mother still prays for you.
In a home far over the ocean,
Your mother still prays for you."

-- Author Unknown

It is the thought of a praying mother that has revived the wounded on the battlefield, strengthened them in the hospital and pulled them back to health. Or if they have not survived, mother's prayers have proved a beacon as they passed over the great divide.

* * * * *

10 -- GOOD-BYE SON

It was not easy to say good-bye to this big, handsome boy. He meant everything to her, but since his country had called she bravely fought back the tears and placing her arms about his neck she said, "Good-bye, son, I have long since committed you to God, and I'll be praying for you. While you are fighting over yonder, I will be fighting here and if you don't come back, I'll meet you where there will be no war, no battles, no strife."

It was in the battle for North Africa, he and his buddy were fighting from a fox hole. He started to climb out, then fell back mortally wounded. His buddy tried to revive him, but he regained consciousness only for a moment and whispered, "No war, no battles, no strife, I'm coming, coming Mother." That was all except a telegram which began, "We regret to inform you."

"After the din of the battles roar,
Just at the close of day,
Wounded and bleeding upon the field,
A dying soldier lay.

"He thought of mother at home alone,
Feeble and aged and gray,
Thought of a mother who loved her own
And never forgot to pray.

"He lifted a ringlet of thin gray hair
Then dropped it upon the ground,
Closing his eyes to the earth and skies,
Just as the sun went down."

* * * * *

11 -- NO MOTHER

When I was a child, an older sister would take me upon her lap and sing, what to me then, and is yet, one of the saddest of songs:

"I have no mother now,
I have no mother now,
Long time has she been sleeping
I have no mother now."

I do not think anything is more to be pitied than motherless children. How my heart goes out to those who never felt a mother's touch or knew a mother's love. Others may try to fill in, but they cannot take her place. The loneliness of an orphaned heart can only be realized by those who experience it.

Call it foolish sentiment if you will, but my heart has always been stirred by the story of the motherless little child who picked up the telephone and said:

"Hello central, give me heaven,
For my mama's there.
You will find her with the angels
On the golden stair;
She'll be glad 'tis me who's speaking
Tell her, won't you please,
That I am so sad and lonely
And I want her to come home."

Again we are reminded of that wonderful promise, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Jesus only can calm the troubled heart and comfort in times of such bereavement. He has a way of filling the aching void, of taking her place and healing the broken heart. Has He not said, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you"?

* * * * *

12 -- THE LOVE OF A MOTHER

A young girl had drifted into a life of sin and shame. Her mother was brokenhearted. She went to a minister and said, "My daughter has gone. Can you bring her back to me?" The minister said, "Bring me all the pictures you have of yourself." She brought them and placed them before him. He dipped his pen in red ink and wrote at the bottom of each one two words -- "Come back." He took these to all the mission stations and to the haunts of vice as well. Three months passed, and one night, as the girl was going into a place of sin, she suddenly lifted her eyes and saw her mother's face looking at her from a picture. She read the two words -- "Come back." Quickly she went along the streets of London to the city's edge and when she reached the house she hesitantly lifted the latch. The door yielded to her touch. The moment the door opened her mother took her in her arms and welcomed the wandering girl home.

"Mother come back from that echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep;
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep."

* * * * *

13 -- WHEN MOTHER PRAYED

My mother had two places to pray and it largely depended on the season as to which place she chose. In the summer, when the weather was fair, she often

slipped away among the rustling rows of corn and there under the stars she would kneel upon the good earth and commune with her Lord. But when the weather was bad, after supper was over and the dishes were put away, she would kneel by her chair near the old kitchen stove and let her request be made known unto God. She never stormed the skies as if to take it by force; but quietly, earnestly, sincerely she made her petition to Him who sees and knows and understands.

"When mother prayed,
She found sweet rest.
When mother prayed,
Her soul was blest.
All heaven moved,
At her request,
For God was there
When mother prayed."

The prayers of godly mothers have done more to uphold our country and keep it true to the "faith of our fathers" than any other one thing. The great need of the world is more mothers who love God and know how to pray.

* * * * *

14 -- A SINGING MOTHER

I often tell people I know mother was not a trained singer, because I could understand every word when she sang. Mother loved to sing. She sang in church only as she joined with the congregation, but around the home she sang from morning till night.

You have heard the old song:

"When I'm happy,
Hear me sing."

Mother did that, but she did not cease singing when she was unhappy. She sang when her heart was heavy with sorrow. She sang as she went about preparing the frugal meal when poverty stalked our home. When one of her brood of eight was away in sin, breaking her heart with his wayward ways, she went about her work singing the prayer of her heart:

"Go for my wandering boy tonight,
Go search for him where you will,
And bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still."

Mother literally sang the clouds away.

* * * * *

15 -- A HUNGRY HEART

Mother was converted when she was a girl, but it was many years before she learned that the God who had saved her, was more willing to give her the Holy Spirit than she was to give good gifts unto her children. Though she had not known this wonderful experience was for her, through all the years she had hungered for the deeper things of God. How often she went about the home singing the longing of her heart:

"Religion makes me happy,
And then I want to go
To leave this world of sorrow
And trouble here below.
Lord I want more religion,
Lord I want more religion,
Lord I want more religion
To help me on to Thee."

One day as she stood at the end of the old log cabin home, singing the prayer of her soul, the Lord whom she sought "suddenly came to his temple," filling her soul with divine love and changing her song to:

"When I saw the cleansing fountain,
Open wide for all my sin,
I obeyed the Spirit's wooing
When He said, 'Wilt thou be clean?'"

* * * * *

16 -- MOTHER'S OLD SONGS

Mother knew snatches and verses of many songs. Some I have found in old books, others I have never seen or heard anywhere else. She sang in the old-fashioned southern swing, and many of her songs were in a minor key. Limitation of space permits listing only a few of the many she sang.

Mother sang at her work. Often when a boy I was awakened in the morning, not by her call, but by her song as she went about preparing the morning meal. One of her favorite breakfast songs was:

"Hold the fort for I am coming,
Jesus signals still.
Wave the answer back to heaven,

By thy grace we will."

Her song would be accompanied by the clashing of pots and pans and occasionally by the creaking of the oven door as she opened it to look at or remove the biscuits. Sometimes she would sing a line, then whistle the next, but whether singing or whistling she was a bundle of melody.

The Judgment

Mother often sang a song about the judgment which brought me face to face with eternal things,

**"And must I be to judgment brought
To answer in that day,
For every vain and idle thought
And every word I say?"**

**"Yes, every secret of my heart
Shall surely be made known,
And I'll receive my just deserts
For all that I have done.**

**"We are passing away,
We are passing away,
We are passing away,
To that great judgment day."**

It was a solemn warning, a sermon in song reminding me that some day I must stand before God and give an account of the deeds done in the body.

Song of Calvary

She often sang a song of Calvary I have never heard anywhere else. Though it had a very mournful melody it contained a message of the wonderful love of Christ.

**"What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul.
What wondrous love is this,
To cause the Lord of bliss,
To bear the dreadful curse,
For my soul.**

"When I was sinking down,

Sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down,
Sinking down.
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown
Christ laid aside His crown,
For my soul."

Only a repetition of words, set to a weird melody and sung by the untrained voice of an old-fashioned, backwoods mother with the ringing of pots and pans for an accompaniment, a farmhouse kitchen for an auditorium and an unsaved boy for an audience; yet no cathedral sermon was ever preached with more earnestness or carried a more effective message of Jesus and His love.

End of the World

There was another song with weird words and doleful melody about the end of time, which Mother often sang. I have never seen it in print or heard any other sing it. In reading my Bible I find it is based on the last verses of the sixth chapter of Revelation.

"I've a long time heard,
That the sun will be darkened,
And the moon will be bleeding, In that day.
O sinner, and where will you stand
In that day?
You may cry for the rocks,
And the rocks will flee away
And the rocks will flee away
In that day."

Songs for the Sunset

"When her youthful days were gone, and old age was stealing on, and her body bent beneath the weight of care," Mother sang more frequently:

"E'en down to old age,
All my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal,
Unchangeable love.
And when hoary hairs
Shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs, they shall still
On my bosom be borne."

Another old song which declining years seemed to raise to first place among Mother's favorite hymns, and which she sang almost daily was:

"My latest sun is sinking fast
My race is nearly run.
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun.
O come angel band,
Come and around me stand,
O bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home.
O bear me away on your snowy wings,
To my immortal home."

I love this old song. A few years ago I found it in an old song book and had it republished. As the old miner said of the mountains, "Thar's gold in them thar hills," I say, "There is gospel in these old songs." As someone has aptly said, "We need to sing more of the old songs to keep religious enough to sing the new ones."

Longing for Home

Mother followed the Scripture injunction, she fixed her eyes on Jesus and ran with patience the race set before her. Heaven was her goal and she sang on her way. She loved "The Blood-Washed Pilgrim" and would often sing it clear through climaxing each verse with,

"Then palms of victory,
Crowns of glory,
Palms of victory,
I shall wear."

It seems strange as I think of it, but she seldom sang "The Old-Time Religion." However, she immortalized in our home:

"I am bound for the promised land,
I am bound for the promised land.
Oh, who will come and go with me,
I am bound for the promised land."

Mother's religion was a joy, her objective was heaven, and she had no doubts, and evidenced her faith as she sang,

"I Feel like, I feel like,
I'm on my journey home,
I feel like, I feel like
I'm on my journey home."

* * * * *

17 -- A MOTHER'S FAITH

Moses' mother saw that he was a "goodly child." This means that she saw more than that he was a beautiful baby. She saw the possibilities wrapped up in the little bundle of flesh. She saw what he might become if properly trained. It was this faith in the child that helped her in the long struggle of hiding him from the Egyptians, and in bringing him up in the way that he should go.

This is a true characteristic of mothers. Most mothers can see good in their children when the neighbors cannot see anything of promise.

The fact that mother had faith in him, has often been the one anchor which has held in the storm and brought the wandering boy back to shore, back to mother, and back to God.

"Say, Chimmie," said an urchin,
"I'd be as happy as a clam,
If I only was de feller
Dat me mudder tinks I am.
Chimmie, she tinks I'm a wonder,
And she knows her little lad
Would never stoop to nuttin'
Dat was ugly, mean or bad.
And sometimes I sit and tink,
Chimmie, I'd be a whiz;
If I only was de feller
Dat me mudder tinks I is."

-- W. C. Adkins

It is our mother's faith in God that keeps her praying for us. It is her faith in our possibilities, which keeps her boosting for us. It is her faith that some day we will awaken, that keeps her patient with us. It is her faith that "Bread cast upon the waters will return again" that keeps her working for us.

* * * * *

18 -- A MOTHER HOLDS ON

A few years ago I received a letter from a boy who was far away from home and had not seen his mother in years. The letter read in part, "I have just finished reading your book, *The Story of Two Prodigals*. It was sent to me by my mother. This is the first religious book I have read in years, and it brings back old memories

of home and boyhood days. I don't know why I read it, except that Mother sent it. I know she is praying for me and if I can ever find the Saviour that you found, perhaps I can yet be a man. I cannot sign my name as I am a fugitive from justice, but I wish you would pray for me. Mother is the only one who holds on or seems to care about me now."

"I never can forget the day
I heard my mother kindly say,
'You're leaving now my tender care,
Remember child, your mother's prayer.'

"I never can forget the voice
That always made my heart rejoice,
I see her by the old arm chair,
My mother dear in humble prayer.

"Though years have gone, I can't forget,
hose words of love, I hear them yet.
Though I have wandered, God knows where,
Still I remember mother's prayer."

May God grant that the memories of his praying mother, and her prayers for him, will bring the writer of this letter, and others like him, back to mother, home and God.

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19 -- PREACHING BEFORE MOTHER

It was not an easy task to return to my old home community and preach my first sermon. The country church was packed with a curious throng made up of friends and neighbors, largely present to see if the boy could preach. On the front seat sat my father and mother. Father had his head down, as though the light hurt his eyes. But not my little mother; her head was up, her eyes were shining, and the expression on her face said, "Courage, my boy, I know you can do it."

There was not a doubt in Mother's mind about the sermon being all right; had she not prayed for many years for just such an hour? To her it was not a time to look down, but to look up, this was an answer to prayer. Her faith, her hope was being vindicated. As the message progressed, Mother would wipe the tears from her old eyes and look around at Father and the neighbors as if to say, "Are you surprised? I'm not. I told you he would come back. I told you he'd make good. I knew if I kept praying God would save him and send him back to me."

"My dear mother she was true,
To her children and her home.

She was faithful, tender, kind,
And loved us all.
I praise God for her sweet name,
She was ever just the same.
I can ne'er forget my mother
And my home."

* * * * *

20 -- MOTHER IS GONE

Mother was past eighty when God called her home. The last time I saw her, I went to her bedside and taking her frail body in my arms said, "Mother, you have been the best and sweetest mother a boy ever had."

She replied in her quiet humble way, "Not as good as I ought to have been, son."

"Yes, you have, Mother," I answered. "As I look back over my life, I do not see a place where you have failed. You've been a wonderful mother."

Again she said, "Not as good as I ought to have been."

I said, "Mother, I must leave you now, I can't stay any longer."

Placing her old arms around my neck she said feebly, "Good-bye son, I'll meet you in that better land where there will be no sad partings."

I never saw her again. But since she went away I've been singing an old song she used to sing:

"I've a mother up in heaven,
Tell, O tell me if you know,
Will my mother know her children
When to glory we shall go?
Is it wrong to hope to see her
As I roam this distant shore?
Will she know that I am coming,
Will she meet me at the door?"

* * * * *

THE END