



Ancient Prophets

Chapter 21 – OUR MOTHERS – THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS' DAY

How fitting, how beautiful, that a day should be set aside by the nation and the nations to do honour to that vast army of delicate soldiers, infinitely greater in numbers than the men who fought in the Great War, that numberless host whose sentinel watch is never done, whose arms are never laid down, whose warfare permits of no discharge, and in which there is never an armistice until they fall on the field of battle – the great army of mothers.

We hail them today and do them honour. They are a sacrificial host, the great givers and sufferers of the race. We never see a strong man striding forth in his strength for whom some mother has not suffered and given of her strength. We never see a blooming girl with rosy cheeks and laughing eyes and bewitching curls for whom some mother has not gradually faded and given of her own bloom and beauty and youth.

They bleed that we may be blessed; they keep watch that we may take rest and sleep; they suffer and oft-times die that we may live.

Our mothers are our comforters in sorrow and the healers of our hearts when they are hurt. When the little child cries with loneliness in the dark and still night, and sobs and moans, and reaches out little hands and arms, it is for mother.

When it is hurt it runs to mother and finds in her kiss its balm, and in the warmth and tenderness of her encircling arms its comfort for all fear and grief, and healing for every wound.

When the big, foolish, awkward boy has a problem that perplexes, a hunger to satisfy, a shame to confess, or a triumph to announce, he goes to mother, for she will understand.



When the strong man is wearied by the toil and strife of life and his heart is harassed by uncertainties and doubt, he turns to mother and mother's God.

And when at last death wrestles with a man and tightens its icy fingers upon him, and mocks him and claims him for its own as his strength fails, how often his thoughts turn to mother! When stern old Thomas Carlyle lay dying, he was asked if there was anything he wanted; turning his face to the wall, the granite of his Scotch heart broke up, and the old man sobbed: 'I want ma mither.' In the hour of death his heart turned as a little child to his mother.

Here is the might and the responsibility of motherhood. She can hold her children to goodness and God, not by force, but by affection, not by the compulsion of command, but by the compulsion of high and holy character.

I have been asked how mothers can hold their boy and keep them in paths of rectitude and godliness, and I can only reply to such questioning mothers 'You will help your boys, not so much by what you say as by what you are and what you do. Command their respect, their admiration, and their love by loftiness and firmness of character, by patient steadfastness in well doing, by sweetness of spirit, by gentleness and graciousness of speech, by the power of the Spirit of Christ abiding ungrieved in your cleansed heart, and though they may for a time wander away from you, yet unseen chains still bind them to you, and they will return, drawn back by mysterious cords of love and reverence.'

Abraham Lincoln's mother died when he was only eight years old, but at the height of his fame and power he said, "All I am I owe to my angel mother.'

I had just passed my fifteenth birthday and was away at school when one day the first telegram I ever received was handed me. I read, 'Come home, come quickly, mother is dying!' and when I got home she was dead. For the next twelve years I had no home. I went off to school and college, but I received no home letters. When holiday time came I saw the other students



trooping to the train with laughter, for they were going home; but I stayed behind, for no home awaited me. But my mother's sweet face was ever before me. Her lovely eyes were ever turned upon me, so it seemed to me, and if ever I was tempted to evil, grief and reproach seemed to fill her eyes, while I could see love and sweet joy beaming in her face and from her eyes when I resisted the temptation. Indeed, her memory and influence were like a presence ever before and about me, and like a flaming shield between me and youth's temptations. And I have known many a boy whose love and high and tender regard and reverence for his mother were like a pillar of fire and cloud to guide and protect him by day and by night. One boy I intimately know wrote to his mother and told her she was to him as 'A piece of God, a dear little piece of God.' And every mother should be to their boys and girls as 'A piece of God, a dear little piece of God.' And so she may be if she loves God with all her heart and seeks in all her words and ways to represent Him to her children.

Some mothers are not worthy of the love and respect of their children. A little orphaned boy was committed to one of our Children's Homes, and in its sweet and sacred atmosphere he was convicted of sin, but he said: 'I can't get saved. When my mother was dying, I spit in her face.'

Her wickedness had reproduced itself in her little boy, and strangers had to undo the deadly work wrought in his poor little child heart by her sin.

It is religion pure and undefiled that crowns motherhood.

The glory of motherhood is the glory of sacrifice. A little lad noticed that tradesmen presented his mother with a bill for service. So a happy thought awakened within him and he presented a bill:

'Mother debtor to Tommy' –

Minding the baby s.0 d.6



Chopping and bringing in wood ... s.0 d.9

Mailing letters for a week s.1 d.0

Going to the shop s.0 d.6

TOTAL... s.2 d.9

and this he laid on her plate at the table. Mother looked at it, smiled, and then grew serious. At the next meal Tommy found a bill at his plate:

'Tommy debtor to Mother'

For caring for him through years of infancys.0 d.0

For nursing him through two dangerous illnessess.0 d.0

For getting his meals for him for ten years every days.0 d.0

For washing and mending his clothess.0 d.0

TOTAL.... s.0 d.0

Poor Tommy! When he read it the long sacrifice and unwearied devotion of mother dawned upon him, and with tears in his eyes he threw his arms around his mother and begged pardon for his thoughtlessness.

The glory of motherhood is the glory of unfailing patience. The father of John and Charles Wesley said to Susanna, the mother, one day: Mother, why do you tell Charles the same thing over twenty times? She quietly replied: 'Because nineteen times won't do.' Oh, the patience of mothers!



The glory of motherhood is the glory of unwavering faith and undying hope. A mother dedicated her baby to God, and in prayer felt a conviction and assurance that he would preach the Gospel. But instead of giving his heart to God, he fell into sin, and instead of preaching, he became a drunken infidel lawyer, mouthing infidelity. But the mother still prayed and believed and hoped on. One day she was sent for and told that he was dying of delirium tremens. She went quietly to his home, saying, 'He is not dying. He will live and yet preach the Gospel.' And live he did and preach the Gospel he did like a living flame of fire; and years after his sweet granddaughter, too, preached the Gospel in The Salvation Army.

The glory of motherhood is the glory of self forgetful unselfishness.

A Salvation Army mother with six sons and daughters in The Army Work lay dying. Her youngest daughter, a Cadet in the Training Garrison, hastened to her side, but the saintly mother said 'Dear, I shall be cared for. I dedicated you, and God has called you to His work. Return to the Training Garrison and continue your studies. We shall meet in the Morning at home in Heaven.' The dying mother forgot herself in her love for Christ and her holy ambition for her child.

The glory of motherhood is the glory of love that never faileth. Some time ago I was in a city where is located a great State's prison. In my Meetings I noticed a sweet-faced, tiny woman with silvery hair and the peace of God in her face. One Sunday we went to the great prison for a service with the prisoners and she was there. Her boy – I think he was her only boy -- had wandered away from home, fallen in with evil people, and was shut in behind the grim prison walls. When the little mother heard the heart-breaking news, all the tender love of her heart for her wayward boy burst into flame, and she left her home in the north and came to this city to live, that she might be near her son. And every Sunday she went to the prison to see him, seeking to win him back to goodness and God.

You can never wear it out, mother-love is strong; It will live through sin and shame, hurt and cruel



wrong; Even though the world revile and your friendships die, Though your hands be black with sin, she will hear your cry, And she'll love you and forgive.

Such is the glory of all true mothers, and for them we give praise to God, and to them we give the tribute of our reverence and tenderest affection. The bravest battles that were ever fought, Shall I tell you where and when? On the maps of the world you'll find them not, They were fought by the mothers of men.

Nay, not with the battle or cannon's shot, With sword or nobler pen; Nay, not with the eloquent words or thought >From the lips of wonderful men;

But deep in a walled-up woman's heart, A woman that would not yield, But bravely and silently bore her part, Lo, there is the battlefield.

No marshalling of troops, no bivouac song, No banners to gleam and wave, But Oh! these battles they last so long, >From babyhood to the grave.