

SIGNS
and
WONDERS

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Maria Woodworth-Etter



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The author's selection of Bible versions has been retained wherever possible, including the Revised Version when it was originally cited. The text of this book, however, has been gently edited for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been updated for clarity and readability.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. Scripture quotations marked (RV) are taken from the Revised Version of the Holy Bible.

SIGNS AND WONDERS

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EARLY LIFE

I was born in New Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio, July 22, 1844, and was the fourth daughter of Samuel and Matilda Underwood. My parents were not Christians; therefore I was left without the religious teachings and influence with which so many homes are blessed. My father and mother joined the Disciple Church one year before my father's death, which occurred in July, 1855. The death of my father was the first great sorrow of my life. He had gone away to harvest in usual health, and I will never forget the night he was brought home, cold in death. Some neighbor children and I were out watching a terrible storm raging, when we saw two strangers approaching the house. They came to bring the sad intelligence of what had happened, and as we looked out we saw the conveyance approaching, bringing the remains of our dear father. It was a terrible blow to our young hearts to see our father carried into the house cold and stiff in death, and my mother fainting as fast as they could bring her to. We children were screaming and the storm was raging in all its fury. Father died of sunstroke; he was only sick a few hours and died praying for his family.

My father was a fine looking man, very intelligent, and full of energy, but addicted to the accursed cup. He could control his appetite very well until he went to a town or city; then when his friends would persuade him to take a drink, he was largehearted and easily persuaded; when he took one drink, he

was like a crazy man for more, and thought he was rich, and would give his last penny away. Then when he had no money to buy drink with, he would pawn his clothes and come home to his large family and brokenhearted wife without a penny to buy food, and all in rags. And we little children would run and hide. Our young lives were full of terror and hardships. This is the reason we were left in poverty, with a sickly, brokenhearted mother and eight helpless children; not one in the wide world to come to our rescue.

Yes, I am a *drunkard's* daughter, with all the other dark trials to go through. I have never given this to the public before, but feel led of God to let the world know how the Lord has called and lifted me out of the depths, that He might be all and in all, to prove that no flesh shall glory in His Presence. The Lord must be doing the work, and it is not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit of the Living God.

My mother was left with eight children to provide for and almost destitute. Then began the battle of life with us all. My mother was obliged to seek work in various ways. My oldest sisters and myself had to leave home and work by the week. We had not only ourselves to provide for, but also our brothers and sisters at home. It was very hard for my sensitive nature to go among strangers. I was discontented and homesick. I wanted to go to school where I could learn, for I longed for an education, and I often cried myself to sleep over this matter. I would have my books in the kitchen, where I could read a verse and commit it to memory; then read another, and so on, thus improving every opportunity while at my work. I had no opportunity of going to church from my earliest recollection. My heart went out in strong desires to know of God, when eight years old. Two of my sisters were converted in a Methodist meeting. I went once or twice. My heart was melted with the Savior's love, but they seemed to think children had no need of salvation, and I was kept back.

At the age of thirteen I attended a meeting of the Disciples Church. My family were all Disciples at this time. When I heard the story of the cross, my heart was filled with the love of Jesus. My eyes seemed to be fountains of tears.

I was seated in the back of a large audience, and was the first to make the start to seek the Lord. It seemed so far to the front seat, that it looked like I could never make it, but I said,

I can but perish if I go.
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away I know
I shall forever die.

The minister took great interest in me and said many good things to encourage me and prayed that my life might be a shining light. If he could have looked forward and could have seen my life's work for the Master, he surely would have rejoiced to know how kindly he had talked to the poor little orphan girl.

But I did not get converted then. They did not believe in a change of heart and nature; but praise the Lord, He did not leave me in the dark. The next day, as they took me down to the creek to baptize me, there was a great crowd around. I heard someone say, "Maybe she will be drowned." It scared me a little. I thought, "Maybe I might," but I said, "Lord, I will go through if I do": so I asked the Lord to save me fully, trusting myself in His hands; and while going into the water, a light came over me, and I was converted. The people saw the change and said I had fainted.

Then began my new life of peace and joy in a Savior's love. Then I was contented and happy, singing and praising God all the day long. I never went to any place of amusement. I attended four meetings on Sunday and three or four during the week. I did not stay away from meeting once a year unless I was sick. I was more anxious now than ever for an education, for I wanted to work for Jesus and be useful in the vineyard of Christ. Soon after I was converted, I heard the voice of Jesus calling me to go out in the highways and hedges and gather in the lost sheep. Like Mary, I pondered these things in my heart, for I had no one to hold counsel with. The Disciples did not believe that women had any right to work for Jesus. Had I told them my impression, they would have made sport of me. I had never heard of women working in public except as missionaries, so I could see no opening—except, as I thought, if I ever married, my choice would be an earnest Christian, and then we would enter upon the mission work. A few years after this I married Mr. Woodworth.

We settled in the country and thought by industry and honest toil to gain a little of this world's goods to sustain these physical bodies, but my health failed, and everything we undertook seemed to be a failure. I was away from all Christian influence and could not often attend the house of God. Often when hearing the church bells ringing, which had been the signal for me to repair to the house of worship, and knowing that I could not go, I would cry myself to sleep. I had one trial after another, and temptations and discouragements beset me on every side. The angel of death came to our home, and after hovering around for a few days, he bore away our only little boy, a bright, blue-eyed darling. As he was passing away, he looked up and smiled. He looked like an angel and seemed to say: "Mamma, do not weep for me; I am going to a better world."

It almost broke my heart to lay him away in the cold grave; but I could see the loving hand of God and hear Him calling me to build up higher, to set my affections on heavenly things and not on the things of the earth.

One year had hardly passed by when the angel of death came again to our home and took away our baby Freddy, and at the same time I lay for weeks between life and death. In all this I could see the hand of the loving Father calling me to leave all and follow Him. About this time our little daughter Georgie was converted. She was about seven years old. She was a great comfort to me. She loved to talk of the goodness of God and our Redeemer. Many happy times we enjoyed talking together of the beautiful home over the river, where her brothers had gone. I did not think she would leave me so soon to join their ranks and raise her voice with theirs in singing salvation to our God, who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever. She was taken sick with that dreadful disease, scrofula, and lingered about eight months. Her sufferings were great, yet she never murmured or complained, but only said it was for her good. She loved to read about Jesus and the beautiful mansions He was preparing, and about the robe and crown that were waiting for her. She would talk to all who came to see her of Jesus and His love, and tell them to meet her in heaven.

She sent messages to her Sunday school teacher and scholars and to her friends far and near to meet her in heaven. For weeks before she died her face was all lit up with the glory of God. The angels seemed to be hovering about her bed. She could hear them singing. Her body was with us, but her spirit seemed to be above the earth communing with God. She was willing to go and be with Jesus, but it seemed hard for her to leave me. She would say, "O Mamma, if you could go with me I would be so happy. I hate to leave you; but oh, say, you will meet me in heaven." I said, "Georgie, I will try." But that would not do. She said, "O mamma, say you will: I cannot die unless you promise to meet me in heaven." I said, "Georgie, by the grace of God, I will meet you in heaven." She said, "Now I am ready; I know you will come, Mamma; I shall always be looking for you, and when you die I am coming for you."

The Sunday before she died she called me to her bedside and said, "Mamma, I am going to leave you this week," and she began to set her house in order. She talked of dying as we would talk of going to visit a dear friend. She gave away all of her earthly possessions. To me she gave her testament; she said would like to see all her friends once more. She selected her burial robe and place to be buried, and requested us to leave room for me to be buried by her side. She stayed with us until the last of the week and was frequently heard to say:

I am coming, Lord
 Coming now to thee;
 Wash me, cleanse me in that blood
 Which flowed on Calvary.

She kept inviting everyone to come to Jesus and be saved. Her sufferings were intense toward the last. When she could not speak, and we would ask her if she was happy and if Jesus was with her, she would smile and nod her head. She thought she was going. She put up her mouth to kiss each one and gasped good-bye between her struggles, saying, "Meet me in heaven;" but she rallied and lived two hours. In this way she talked on until the last, and her face shone with the glory of heaven. Looking up she said, "O Mamma, I see Jesus and the angels; I see my little brothers; they have come for me." And they bore her away in triumph to the heavenly land. It seemed to me that I could see them as they went sweeping through the gates into the New Jerusalem.

It was like death to part with my darling, but Jesus was very precious to my soul. Heaven was nearer, Christ was dearer, than ever before. I had one more treasure in glory.

My health had been very poor all through her sickness. Three weeks before her death, little Gertie was born. She was the picture of Georgie and seemed to have her sweet disposition, and I thought as she grew older she would take her place; but the precious bud was not permitted to bloom in this world of sin. At the age of four months, the angels bore her away where the flowers never fade nor die, there to join her sister and brothers, who were waiting to welcome her at the golden gates. I could say with David that they cannot come back to me, but I will go to them. (See 2 Samuel 12:23.) Praise the Lord for the Christian's hope.

Look to the Lamb of God

If you from sin are longing to be free,
 Look to the Lamb of God
 He, to redeem you, died on Calvary,
 Look to the Lamb of God.

Chorus

Look to the Lamb of God,
 Look to the Lamb of God;

For He alone is able to save you,
Look to the Lamb of God.

When Satan tempts, and doubts and fears assail,
Look to the Lamb of God;
You in His strength shall over all prevail,
Look to the Lamb of God.

Are you a-weary, does the way seem long?
Look to the Lamb of God;
His love will cheer and fill your heart with song,
Look to the Lamb of God.

Fear not when shadows on your pathway fall.
Look to the Lamb of God;
In joy or sorrow Christ is all in all,—
Look to the Lamb of God.