

A Boy's Story

D.L. Moody:

Some years ago, as I was about to close a prayer meeting, a young man got up and urged all those men present that had not yet accepted of Christ, to do so that night. And in closing up his little speech, he said, "I once had a father and mother that cared more for my soul than for anything else. At last my father died; and when my father was dead and gone, my mother was more anxious than ever for me, and sometimes she would come and put her loving arms around my neck, and she would just plead with me to go to Christ. She used to tell me, after my father was dead, that she was lonesome without having me a Christian. I told her I sympathized with her; but declared I wanted to see a little of the world. I did not want to become a Christian in early life. Sometimes I would wake up past midnight, and would hear a voice in my mother's chamber. I would hear that godly mother crying to God for her boy. I was her only child. I was very dear to her. At last I felt I must either become a Christian or go away from that mother's influence; and I ran away. After I had been gone a long time, I heard from home indirectly. I heard my mother was sick. I knew what it meant. I knew that she was pining for me. I knew her heart was broken on account of me and my wayward life. I thought I would go home and ask my mother to forgive me. My second thought was, if I did, I would have to go and be a Christian. I could not stay under the same roof without becoming a Christian. My rebellious heart said, 'I will not go.' When I heard again, I heard my mother was much worse. The thought came, supposing my mother should die, supposing I should never see that mother again, I never could forgive myself. I started for home. There was no train to my native village. I took the coach. I got in just after dark. The moon was shining. I had to go about a mile and a half to my mother's house; and on my way I thought I would go by the village graveyard, and I thought I would get over the fence, and go to the grave where my father was buried, to see if there was a new-made grave. It might be that mother was gone. When I drew near that grave, my heart began to beat more quickly, as by the light of the moon I saw the new-made grave. The whole story was told. The whole story was clear. My sainted mother was gone. It was a fresh-made grave. It had just been dug. For the first time in my life this question came stealing over me: Who was going to pray for my lost soul now? Father and mother both gone now. And, young men, I would have given the world, if I could have called that mother back and have her put her arms around my neck, and heard her breathe my name in prayer. But her voice was silent forever. She was gone. I knelt beside that grave, crying that God might have mercy on me, and that God would forgive me. And I did not leave that grave all night till the morning dawn. But before morning I believed that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven my sins, and that my mother's God had become my God. But, young men, I would never forgive myself. I never can. I killed that mother. I trampled her prayers and her entreaties under my feet. I broke her heart, and sent her to her grave. Young man, if you have a godly mother, treat her kindly."