JDSON TAYLOR
1918 - 1922

Joseph Taylor was born in Mayo (Henry County), the son of Daniel and Martha King Taylor. His early education was at the Academy; then in high school he earned a degree; and he earned a degree from Howard University. He then went to Union College, where he earned a degree in divinity from Howard University. He then went to Anna Sydnor and earned a degree from Union College. His pastorates included Virginia, St. Louis, and Freeman College, which he spent four years in Kentucky. He was educated at Rutherford College and remained there as a Methodist minister and as a teacher until his father's death when he succeeded his father as president of the college. During the period 1903-1921, he served about nine charges in North Carolina and ended in Portsmouth, Virginia. The North Carolina Baptist Convention Minutes of Session December 12, 1922, stated that "W. E. Abernethy, who has recently come to us from the Methodist ministry..." This statement implied a shift from the Methodist to the Baptist Church. Apparently, he served several Baptist churches and taught school until 1928 when he returned to his old home in Rutherford College. He died March 15, 1936.

WILLIAM ELLIS ABERNETHY, SR.
Pastor 1923 - 1925

William Ellis Abernethy, Sr., was born the sixth child of Robert Laban and Mary Ann Hayes Abernethy on May 28, 1860, at Rutherford College, Burke County, North Carolina (later incorporated as Excelsior). He married Bertha Thomas Winn of Chase City, Virginia. They had four children: Mary Winn, William Ellis, Jr., Guy Hunner, and Robert Laban. He was educated at Rutherford College and remained there as a Methodist minister and as a teacher until his father's death when he succeeded his father as president of the college. During the period 1903-1921, he served about nine charges in North Carolina and ended in Portsmouth, Virginia. The North Carolina Baptist Convention Minutes of Session December 12, 1922, stated that "W. E. Abernethy, who has recently come to us from the Methodist ministry..." This statement implied a shift from the Methodist to the Baptist Church. Apparently, he served several Baptist churches and taught school until 1928 when he returned to his old home in Rutherford College. He died March 15, 1936.
MOTHER'S DAY SERMON

By W. E. Abernethy, D.D.
Pastor First Baptist Church, Leaksville, N. C.

Text: Exodus 2:9: "Take the Child and Nurse It for Me."

On the walls of a great church in France there is the sculptured figure of a woman with a baby in her arms, standing on the world, while under her feet lies a crushed and bleeding serpent. That sculptured image is the symbol of civilization. There is no other institution under the stars so divine as motherhood; no sacrament so sublime as giving life to an immortal; no power so potent as a mother's love; no altar so holy as a mother's knee.

Mothers are moulders of men, makers of history, saviors of society. Just as in the wildest storm that ever swept the air or stirred the sea, there is one central spot where all is at rest, so there is one dear spot where the clang of closing doors is the last echo of the day's battle; where the stinging shafts of coldness and calumny cease to wound; where battered armor is ungirded, and love's soft hands bind the bleeding wounds; where rest refreshes and new hope is born—that dear spot is—Home. We may wander far in lands across salt seas and deserts drear, but ever, as the Mohammedan turns to Mecca when he prays, so memory turns toward the old home. Falling on the field, the dying soldier whispers to his comrade: "Tell Mother." The shipwrecked sailor sends his last thought back to the port whence he first set sail. We may kneel in rich cathedrals, gray and dim, but we shall never again pray so close to the ear of God as when, with folded hands, we said, "Now I lay me down to sleep." We may sit in gilded salons and listen to the queens of song, but never again shall we hear such strains as the mothers' nursing song. Listening to Melba one evening, a critic said to his friend: "Did you ever hear such perfect
music?" His friend said: "Yes, I have heard
three sweeter songs. The other day, as I was
going home, I heard the voice of a toddler
amongst the garden flowers, singing, 'I'm Dad-
dy's Little Girie'; it was my own little girl; that
was finer. Some years ago, returning from a
long journey, I heard a voice floating through
the window, singing something about 'True Love
Coming Home to Me'; that was for me my wife
was singing—that was finer. But back through
the years come snatches of the sweetest song of
all, when I was baby, tired and cross and sick,
when Mother crooned a lullaby—and I slept.
Men are but grown-up children at best, not much
wiser, a little sadder—and to those of us who
have reached life's summit, upon whose heads
the westering shadows fall, there come times
in the stress and storm when we thirst like David
for the water from the old well, by the gate of-
home; when we sigh with Ernest Leslie:
"Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your
flight;
Make me a child again just for tonight;
Mother, come back from the oceless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep—
Rock me to sleep, Mother, rock me to sleep."

Mothers are makers of men. Take the world's
warriors; the Spartan mother disowned her son
if he lost his shield in battle, and when Pau-
sanias offered to betray Sparta for the hand of
Xerxes's daughter, his own mother was the first
to decree his death. Phillip fired the martial
fever of Alexander; but Olympia, his mother,
taught him that tenderness and chivalry which
he showed toward all women. Aurelia so stammed
her spirit on her son, Caesar, that when Sylla
offered him life on condition that he divorce his
wife, Cornelia, he resolutely refused.

The inveterate passion which hurled Hannibal
at the gates of Rome was born of an oath sworn
at his mother's knee. Cromwell confessed that
he owed all to his country mother, and he gave her a tomb amongst the queens in Westminster Abbey. Napoleon idolized his mother, Letitia; he said the future depends on the mothers. When France, with her thirty millions, had renounced God, her churches were closed; her prayers were hushed; over the gates of her graveyards blazed the lying legend, "Death is an eternal sleep;" there came a day when once again the church bells tolled the hour of prayer throughout the land, when once again the marriage altar and the bed of death were blessed by the ministrations of the Gospel—it was at the word of Napoleon's mother. When Sam Houston left home his mother handed him a musket and said, "Sam, remember my door is always open to brave men and shut to cowards."

Take the rulers in the realm of song and story: Shakespeare, the myriad-minded, the unrivalled prince of poetry, was a butcher's brat; but his cultured mother, Mary Arden, made him master of the human heart. Lord Byron was the soul of lawless passion set to music. Like some storm wave his life dashed itself against the cold rocks of a world he hated and shunned; it was all because his mad mother, one moment, lovingly caressed her beautiful boy and the next moment cursed him as "a lame brat." Bobbie Burns was the master alike of the world's pathos and its chivalry. His father was a rugged, religious Scot who knew no pity for a boy's weaknesses; but his gentle mother, Agnes Brown, told him the legends, and sang to him the songs of Scotland. Walter Scott's mother, Ann Rutherford, hugged her home boy to her breast, and wove into his soul the legends of the lakes and hills. John Milton's mother set the Psalms to music for her boy to sing. Tennyson's mother so fixed the faith of her boy in Christ that it withstood every shock of skepticism. It was so with the elder Bulwer and with Browning. Cowper cleansed the foul atmosphere of literature, and showed the world that poetry can be the preacher of religion rather than of lust. His mother died in his sixth year, yet her image was ever the angel of his
vision, wooing him to pure speech and clean living. John Ruskin, the undisputed master of English prose, said: "I have learned much from men and books, but I owe most of all to my mother's teaching me the Bible every day." Tom Carlyle, like Burns, was afraid of his father, but was passionately devoted to his mother, and when she died he said: "Mother, your poor boy, Tom, long out of his school days, has fallen very lame and very lonely on the road of life." I am not surprised at the sad lives of Keats, Shelley, DeQuincey, George Eliot and Edgar Allan Poe, when I remember that they were denied a mother's love and care. For years, the genius of Guy de Maupassant struggled in vain for recognition; his mother, a poor laundress, saved enough to slip into the back doors of the bookstalls and buy up his books—wore out her life to give him to the world of letters.

Take the leaders of the church. Macrina, the grandmother of Basil the Great, stirred his soul with stories of the saints. St. Bernard tells us that though his mother died when he was a child, her memory brought him to the Christ. The father of St. Augustine was a skeptic; but his mother, Monica saved him to the church. Chrysostom, Wesley and Spurgeon owed all to their mothers.

Pass to the rulers and statesmen. Washington, with packed trunk and a commission as midshipman in the British navy, was held for America by one word of his mother. John Adams and John Quincy Adams both attributed their success to their mothers. President William Henry Harrison, on a visit to his old Virginia home, left the crowd and walked to the plain, old house to see his plain, old mother. He said, "I owe all I am to her." Lincoln said, "I owe all I am to my country, to my mother." President Grant, at his mother's funeral, said to her pastor, Dr. Henderson: "Don't say anything about me; she gained nothing from me; speak of her as an earnest Christian mother to whom I owe all I am." Garfield, after his inaugural speech, turned and kissed his old mother to
whom he owed all. Cleveland, on the night of
his election, wrote his brother: "If mother were
alive, I should be writing to her to whom I owe
my success." When Earl Brewer was inaugu-
rated as Governor of Mississippi, some one
asked his mother, "Is not this the proudest, hap-
piest day of your life?" She answered, "No, the
proudest, happiest day of my life was when Earl
was converted and joined the church." And her
answer was given a permanent place in the records
of the State. Aycock, the crusader for the cause of
universal education, fell in battle harness, dying on
the platform where he had just been pleading for
the people. In his boyhood home he saw his
mother making her mark to all papers demanding
her name. There at her knee, like another Han-
nibal, he dedicated his life to the lifting of illiteracy
from the State. Governor Glenn, every
night, before he said his prayers, wrote to his old
widowed mother in Winston.
Let me draw for you a common picture: It is
morning; the sun has risen. Yonder goes a bright-
faced boy, fresh from sleep, going out to the com-
munion with the bounding life of God's great out-
doors. With bright eyes ablaze, he sets his little
cap and joins the whistle of the mocking-bird. He
walks alone; holds no hand; faces dangers he
knows not of. The path that stretches before
those dear, sturdy little feet hath never an end,
forever and forever. If his little body aches and
hurts, it is not his fault. If his little brain is
handicapped, the blame is not his. If his little
heart has kinks and twists in it, somebody else
must answer for it. Look at him well. Who is
he? He is your own boy. You brought him here,
and now that he is here, you are responsible for
his eternal destiny. No wonder Margaret Fuller
said: "God be merciful to me—I am the mother
of an immortal."

The Bible is the mother's Book. The memory
of Moses is dear to Jew and Gentile alike, but
back of that titanic figure, taxing the art of
sculptor, painter, and poet, in the shadow stands
Jochebed, his mother, who laid her goodly oov on
the heart of God before she laid him in the lazy
waters of the Nile. In that sweet duet of Deborah and Barak her highest name is not Judge, under her palm trees, not leader of armies; not poet and singer, but it is "Deborah, Mother," and that motherhood which marshaled armies and struck the strings of her harp was born in communion with God, by that sacred stone in Bethel whereon she swore that Israel should be free. Samuel, the stainless judge and uncrowned king, was clean from the cradle; the prophecy and assurance of that white life leaped from the lips of Hannah, his mother, when she said, "I poured out my soul unto the Lord." Solomon followed not his father, David," because Bathsheba was his mother. His son and successor, Rehoboam, rendered and ruined the empire; the explanation lies in the line, "His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess." The record: "Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord," follows the words, "His mother's name was Maachah." Hezekiah had a wicked father, Ahaz; yet it is written of Hezekiah: "He clave unto the Lord and departed not from following Him." And, again, one line explains it all: "His mother's name was Abi, daughter of Zachariah." When we read that "Ahaziah walked in the ways of the house of Ahab," we read along with it, "His mother's name was Athaliah," the daughter of Jezebel. Such is the story of the centuries. Bob Ingersol's father was a Presbyterian preacher; but before the boy was born, his mother was secretly reading skeptic books. Mothers make or mar the world. God bless our mothers; God give them a realization of the truth, that the crown of motherhood is not in shining in the social circle, at the club, or in the dance, but in being God's mothers of men to save the child for Christ. My earliest recollection of life is that of two love-lighted eyes, gray as the fish-hawk's wing, touched with the blue of the sky when the trout leaps to the snare; eyes that for years have lured me toward the Father's house, like some beacon set in the windows of heaven; and when safe inside the golden gate I shall fall at my Saviour's feet, I hope to lay a stainless life at the feet of my mother.