

11342 Church Street
Chicago, Illinois
September 28, 1948

My little Darling,

It is a beautiful morning in Chicago. Everything is so nice and fresh - just a typical early fall day. Dad and I just drove Elaine to school. It was just a week ago this morning, at about 7:45, that I kissed Mom good-bye. At that time Elaine drove me to the station, where I caught my train for Wheaton. Mom did not look so very good when I left her. But she had gained a great deal of strength and was in good humor. Little did I know that our parting would last till the coming of our Lord. But I praise Him so that we shall have a reunion some day when we gather around the throne of God. There is a little song I wrote some time ago; the last verse reads as follows:

Transformed shall be my earthly form;
His likeness my reward;
Conformed unto the perfect man,
The fulness of my Lord.
The trumpet soon shall becomd me
Unto my glorious tryst;
And there forever I shall reign,
The finished work of Christ.

Just shortly before Mom went away I sang the whole song to her and she was so proud of both it and me. I am so glad that she is now experiencing the rewards of the redeemed and the faithful.

Strangely, Darling, throughout the whole time from Mom's parting unto she was laid away yesterday, there were two words that continually rang out - a sort of theme that prevailed. It was "the love of God" and "our thanksgiving unto God." This seems like a strange theme for a funeral, doesn't it? There are those who rebell against the Lord

when sorrow comes. But it seemed that the Lord was able to manifest his love for us in a peculiar way in the passing of the one we loved so dearly. And there was nothing for us to do but raise our hearts in thanksgiving unto Him. Mom was laid out at the undertakers for the first time of Saturday afternoon. That night it was very hard to realize that she really was gone. At times the burden seemed almost too much to carry. But I believe it was the Lord who personally gave courage^{and} encouragement, and strength all the time. Once, however, I had to leave the funeral parlor to be alone. But instead of breaking down, I began to realize anew how much the Lord had done for us and for Mom. If He had not come to earth to die and had not arisen from the dead, truly of all people we would have^{been} most miserable and the situation for Mom would have been most hopeless. But He had provided a way to escape the consequences of the grave. He has provided a means of victory for those who must taste the bitter cup of death. Darling, I saw the true significance of the redemptive works of Christ that night when I was alone. No, I did not shed a tear of sorrow just then; but my eyes were streaming because of the joy that was placed within me. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, I started singing loudly "The Love of God." Over and over again, Sweetheart, the Lord placed within our hearts a song where by all common sense one would expect a void. Truly we have a great and a wonderful Lord.

Mom first was taken to the hospital two weeks ago Saturday. She had not been feeling too strong and was complaining of a heavy chest. Previously we had taken her to a number of doctors to try to discover her trouble. Finally we went to a fine Christian doctor - Dr. Meyers. He told Mom that her heart was about a half or more over-size. You recall my telling you that I called a nursing association

about your transferring training to the States. That same day I took Mom to the clinic for an X-ray. While she was getting her X-ray, I went to a drug store to make the phone calls for you. She was rather tired and weak that day; but look pretty good. Then a few days later, on the night of the Church home-coming, I drove her to the Dr. Meyers office to get the reports of the X-ray. I dropped her off at his office and she walked in. Then I drove to the home-coming with Dad. He then went back to pick up Mom to take her to Church in time for the social hour. Right after the formal service ended, Mom and Dad arrived. Mother didn't look too good. She seemed rather haggard and pale. As soon as I saw her, I went up to her and grasped her hand and she mine. We always were very close to each other. Then she told me about her heart. After talking for a few moments, she wandered off to talk with some of her friends. We stayed for a long time. But I became very nervous and wanted to leave. But **B**ecause Mom hadn't been able to get to Church for some time, I stayed with them. That was her last time in our Church. She has been a member of that Church since 1903. Her father was a deacon for many years there and vice-chairman for eight years also. Mom always has been very active in the work. She and Dad first learned to know each other when they were less than ten years old and would make eyes at each other. When they were sixteen or seventeen they were going steady. And when they were twenty-one for Mom and twenty-two for Dad, they were made man and wife. So, you can see, how happy I am that I let them spend their last moments together there then. But my hearing of Mom's condition upset me completely and I had to go to bed as soon as I arrived home.

Two weeks ago Saturday Dad had to go to Grovertown and I agreed to go with him. We were to arrive home in time for the wedding at

the Church. Mom took a turn for the worse that Saturday evening. Elaine, who was supposed to serve at the wedding, decided to stay with Mom until we would arrive home. But Mom persuaded her to call La Verne at Grovertown to see when we had left. Thus, learning when we had left the farm, Mom decided we would be home shortly after Elaine would go to Church. So, she made Elaine leave her. Fortunately we arrived within a half hour after Elaine left. As we came in the door I shall never forget seeing Mom sitting in the dark on the sofa with a blanket wrapped around her. She looked terrible and was in great pain. Immediately we called Dr. Meyers; but he was out of town. Then we called out old doctor, Doctor Dahlberg, and he was out of town too. Dr. Dahlberg is an old friend of the family and the owner of South Shore Hospital. He was at his summer cottage in Michigan, a place we have visited with him many times. But his son, Dr. Dahlberg Jr. was available. So he came to the house. By the time he had promised to come, Mom was relieved somewhat. She told me that she had promised Elaine that I would pick her up and she didn't want her to come home alone. She insisted that I go to the reception, since I already had missed the wedding proper. So, I kissed her and left. The reception kept on until after twelve, but Dad called me at eleven and told me that the doctor had ordered Mom to the hospital. Immediately I arranged for a boy friend to take Elaine home, and come home myself. Then we drove her to the hospital. Mom was in good spirits and joked with us before we left. A real cute nurse helped her in bed. This nurse took a real interest in Mom because she was a Christian herself and a member of a Baptist Church in Chicago. Then too, the nurse learned that I was a student of Wheaton College. It so happens that her former pastor teaches at Wheaton. I only saw the nurse that first night with Mom and no more. But I would always

tell Mom to get me a date with her. Mom would only give me a dirty look and tell me that I already have a girl I should be faithful to. Then I would laugh. Mom really loved you, Darling. She wanted above everything to see us married. Just a few days ago Elaine told me that she asked Mom if she really thought you and I would get married. Mom just smiled and said, "of course they will." And she always reminded me that there was no better girl than Doris.

At the hospital we visited Mom every evening. During the day she had a good many other visitors too. But she was not satisfied with being away from home. Finally she convinced the doctor that she should return home. Her trouble had been that fluid was gathering around the lungs and the heart. This would give her great pain. It seemed that her heart was just too weak to carry off the body wastes. The hospital gave her a number of shots to cause the heart to carry this off. When she received these shots, she would pass off the fluids every way, even vomiting. Then she would feel better and gain strength. But in a few days she would need another shot. When the doctor released her, she was so happy. I can remember so well when we picked her up; she waved good-bye to the other two women in her room and said in a really jolly way, "good-bye, I'm going home." Then she waved to them. Yes, she was going home - home to a far fairer land where there is no more pain or sorrow. Praise His holy name! We really should have used the ambulance in taking her home. Neither she nor we realized how weak she was. Before we arrived home, she hardly could hold her head up. So I took an extra coat and packed it behind her head and she thanked me and rested a little. At home we carried her in as soon as possible. While Elaine was getting the sofa ready for her, Dad and I placed her in a large, soft chair. No

sooner had we placed her there than she said that she was fainting and started to black out. She kept saying softer and softer, "I'm going, I'm going, I'm going," Her eyes rolled and turned blank. Immediately I ran into the kitchen for a towel and some cold water. This I placed on her head and ran for some colder water. By the time I had returned the second time, Dad was bringing her out of it. We kidded her for giving us the scare and hugged her good. Then we placed her on the sofa, where she slept that night. She looked like a lovely flower laying there, so delicate and beautiful. I loved her so and told her so. She smiled at me and, as she often did, patted my hand. Then I ran out for some ice-cream for her. When I arrived home, it was cut, but she was not in the mood to eat any just then. So I didn't eat any either. She went to sleep and rested well for the night. The next morning I kept giving her ice cream all morning. In fact, I gave her mine too. She needed it more than I did. She was jolly and joked with us, as she always did. All Saturday morning, until early afternoon we stayed with her. But in the afternoon Dad and I went to the country to get a nice comfortable day-bed for her. We arrived home with it early that evening. She was so pleased to receive it. All this time she was getting stronger and stronger. They would have to lead her to the bath room at first. Once, however, my aunt, who has been staying with us since that Saturday I believe, took her to the bath room and then answered the phone. In the meantime Mom started to return and was afraid that she couldn't make it. So she called me. I came on the run. But I refused to help her. Rather I walked along side of her, ready to grab her if she fell. She walked all the way back to her bed alone and I told her that she was getting ~~stronger~~ stronger all the time. She smiled and felt

better because she was improving. Sunday morning I told Dad to go to Church in the morning and I would go in the evening. That way some one would be home with Mom all the time. I believed I squeezed a little orange juice for her and tried to cheer her up a little. Just now I don't remember too much about that day. At dinner I know she had a nice meal for a change: chicken, mashed potatoes, etc. In the evening I went to St. Paul's Church. Dr. Hagstrom was in our church in the morning and wanted to see me. So I tried to find where he would be in the evening, but couldn't. So I went to St. Paul's. Then I drove down to our church to pick up my aunt and Elaine. We arrived home at about ten-thirty with some ice cream. Of course Mom had some too and felt good. All the previous week I had been going to Wheaton for a few classes, but coming home in order to go to the hospital in the evening. This made me get behind in my school work. On Monday I drove out to school again and returned in the evening. Mom felt pretty good Monday night and I decided to return for the whole week on Tuesday. In the morning I rushed around to get ready and agreed to take Elaine to school. Rather she took me to the station and went on the school herself. Before leaving the house, I stood besides Mom's bed and just looked at her for a long while. Then I told her to be sure to get well and she said she would try. Then I kissed her and she patted my hand. Then I left for school, the last time I saw my Mother. I saw her remains at the undertakers and the Church, but Mom was not there; she was with the Lord. Tuesday she had some guests and even was up for a while. On Wednesday she even was up for a while ^{again.} But on Wednesday she started filling with fluid again. By that night she had great pain and the doctor was called. He gave her another shot. She again cast off the wastes, but was

made very weak. At around mid-night on Wednesday, my aunt heard her moan and went in to her. Dad had been sleeping on the floor with her; but apparently had gone to his room that night or at least didn't hear her. Then they called the doctor and I guess he came and ordered her back to the hospital. When the ambulance arrived, she was still in pain and waved good-bye. Dad went to the hospital with her and didn't get to bed till about four. On Thursday she felt rather good. Russell and Fran were there in the afternoon and Al, Hazel, Dad and Elaine were there in the evening. Elaine joked with her and Mom was laughing. Apparently everything was alright. They left and she slept well. In the morning, I believe at about 4:30 the nurse made her rounds, took Mom's temperature, and found she was alright. In a half hour Mom's doctor stopped by and to his surprise found that she had just slipped away. She didn't suffer at all, and quietly went to be with her Lord. What took her life was a blood clot that went to the lung. I don't understand too much about it, but it seems that the clot originated at the faulty heart valve. This valve seldom closed completely. Mom always complained of a fluttering in her chest. The doctor told her it was a stomach condition. I believe the doctor really knew what it was, but didn't want to scare her. Dr. Dahlberg is supposed to be quite an authority on the heart. Surely if anyone would know, he would. I suppose her circulation was not too good either. She has been getting clots in the legs the last couple of years. In fact, last week, my aunt said that she had a clot in the leg. Dad helped bind it up. Well, Darling, that is the story of the passing of the best friend that your hubbie ever had, outside of the Lord Himself. I praise and thank Him for such a fine Mother, I have been and am real proud of my little Mom.

The last two years with the folks, since discharge from service, have been wonderful. We have had so much fun together. All the time we have been kidding each other and laughing and having the best times possible. And now especially during Mom's illness, we have tried our best to cheer her up. Two or three weeks ago, before she went to the hospital the first time, she was not feeling well. One evening we noticed that she was sleeping in a cute position on the sofa. So I suggested that we take a picture. Because Mom slept very lightly, we were very quiet. Elaine and I rigged up all the lights for the camera while Dad got the film ready. Then when Dad gave us the word, Elaine and I turned on all the lights that we had turned toward her. And Dad snapped the picture. Mom awoke, of course. Then she smiled and shook her head, figuring that there was nothing to do with such a bunch of nuts. We all got a good laugh out of it. We told Mom that she was such a good girl, we would take another picture if she would let us. So she smiled the best she could and we took another picture. All the time something like that happened. Another day I was building a picket fence in the basement. Mom was laying on the sofa. As soon as I had part of the fence finished, I carried it right into the living-room. Mom looked at me and asked me what I was trying to do, bringing it into the living-room. I told her that I had to show her what a good carpenter her handsome son was. Whenever I would get dressed up, I would have to parade before her to get her O.K. Then she would tell me how nice she thought I looked. I would say that I knew it and would kiss her. Darling, I liked to speak to her just as I speak to you. I called her my little Sweetheart, and she loved to hear me do this. When we would go out somewhere, I would offer her my arm and tell her that I was going on

a date with my best girl. She would squeeze my arm real tightly. Every day I was home, I would put my arm around her and tell her that she was the sweetest girl in the world. Mom liked to be loved and liked me to be real nice to her. And I loved her dearly and wanted to show her this fact. Sometimes she would tell me that I should save my love for Doris. Then I would tell her that there is plenty for her too. Not only did I love my Mom, but the Lord loved her too. He loved her so that He decided that the earth is no place for her and took her unto Himself - into a far better land. Praise His wonderful name.

After Mom left, everyone was very, very kind to us. You should have seen all the flowers people gave to her. Some of the spreys were even filled with orchids. I was told by a number of people that they had never seen so many flowers ~~at~~ any funeral. And as Dad said, the prettiest flower was in the middle of all the rest. Mom was really beautiful as she laid there. I loved her so. On her face actually was a smile, very clearly seen. My uncle went to the hospital just after Mom passed away and said that her face actually beamed then. This was very comforting for us to know, feeling that she did not suffer at the last. And you know that some folks testify of seeing the Lord coming as they are called to leave this earth. I like to think that the Lord also called Mom and showed Himself unto her that fateful morning. Otherwise why would she be smiling at a time of death? So many folks mentioned how peaceful she looked and that she seemed to be smiling. I am so thankful to everyone for their kindness to us during the whole experience. We requested that the people should not give flowers at all, but should give toward a fund for China missions - Sten Lindberg. This many people did. Yet the chapel was filled with flowers anyway. Mom knew that I wanted to

return to China and was greatly interested in the field there herself. So, I am sure she would (and is) pleased at our request. The neighbors and everyone was wonderful. We didn't have to cook any food for the whole time from her death to her burial. The neighbors and friends always were bringing something. Mom was kind to everyone and everyone liked her. A number of the neighbors told me that she was the finest and the sweetest neighbor they ever had. I praise the Lord for this. I believe there were all of a thousand people who came to the undertakers. At the funeral someone counted over thirty cars that went to the cemetery. The service at the Church was conducted by pastor Olson. Mrs. Hildur Rodberg, an old friend of Mom's, sang "Wonderful Love" and "Tack Min Gud." Then An Oscar Green, another friend, sang a beautiful song. The pastor read a number of telegrams and gave a fine message. Even those who were unsaved were impressed with everything and commented on how different a Christian funeral was from a non-Christian one. The family gathered around the casket and the pastor led in prayer after everyone else had left. I was the last one at the casket and took Mom's hands in mine and said a little good-bye and lifted my heart in thanksgiving to the Lord for such a fine Christian mother.

We were driven to the cemetery right behind the house. The drive to the cemetery was a blessed time. Elaine and I started singing hymns. We sang such songs as "The Love of God," "Oh, What Love," "In the Sweet By and By," the hymn I composed and others. It was interesting to notice the driver of the car. He was a hardened man, really rough looking. I suppose he had been driving in funerals for years. Before we arrived at the cemetery the tears were streaming down his face. It was wonderful, Darling, to be able to lay aside one's Mom and yet have a song in his heart. There would be no song if we didn't know

about the resurrection. We mourned Mom more than words can tell; but we were so thankful that the grave has been conquered by Christ and that we shall meet Mother again. We were thankful to realize that Mom didn't lay before us, nor did we lay her into the grave. Rather she had arisen to a new position. Like Eleanor said today, Mom took three trips this summer: one East, one West, and one to be with the Lord. Praise His name!

After the service at the cemetery the people all sang around the grave. A couple of the songs were Swedish and another was "The Sweet Hour of Prayer." One of the Swedish was an old favorite of Mom's, speaking of the loving care of the Master. When I find the name of it, I'll tell you. After the funeral we went to our home for a little coffee. This was primarily for the out-of-town guests. But everyone was welcome. The ladies of the church prepared this for us.

Darling, I just can't write more. There is much more to say, but I cannot stand any more. I haven't broken down; I have had to try to be brave for the sake of Dad. He has taken it all very hard. But I do get very blue and have a few tears every once in a while. But the Lord has sustained me marvelously. When others have been the most distressed, the Lord has given me power to comfort them. But when I am alone the tears flow often. I praise the Lord for you, Sweetheart. If your answer to me had been negative, I believe I could not have been able to stand the great sorrow. But I believe it was the Lord that inspired you to send your "yes" so that I would get it on the same day Mom died. Thus I was given strength and encouragement. I only wish Mom could have known for sure. I like to think that perhaps she does know. I have prayed that the Lord should tell her that you now are mine - all mine. And your wonderful picture

came the morning of the day Mom was to be laid away - yesterday. This strengthened me then too. How wonderful is the leading of the Saviour. How I do thank Him for His infinite love. Sweetheart, I love you with all my heart; honest I do.

So many things remind me of Mom these days. Just now as I typed "honest I do," it came to mind that Mom would real sweetly put her arm around and tell me that she was proud of me and that she loved me and then would say real softly, "honest I do." I can just hear her now. Forgive me, Darling, for saying so many things about Mom. I know they will bother you to read them. But I just had to tell someone; and you ~~are~~ the one I love. I must share my ~~bundens~~ with you, Sweetheart.

Tomorrow I shall fill out the papers at the immigration office down-town Chicago. I was down there today, but must return tomorrow. Also today I stopped at my uncle Dave's (David Swanson) and had him draw up some papers for you to give to the American Consul in Stockholm. As soon as I have all the papers, I'll send them to you.

Darling, here is something you must do immediately. YOU MUST BE IN THE STATES BY THE 28TH OF DECEMBER; IT CANNOT BE ANY LATER THAN THAT DATE. We need not be married then; but you must be here. Otherwise you cannot come to the States at all. Now here is what you do. Immediately go ~~th~~ to the shipping lines and tell them that you are engaged to me and must be IN the States by the 28th of December. Otherwise we cannot get married. Tell them that you must have passage and must be here by them. Then see if you can get passage earlier than January. If you cannot, I don't know what to do. YOU MUST GET PASSAGE AND BE IN, BE IN, BE IN, BE IN THE STATES BY THAT DATE. If you cannot get passage, then notify the airlines. That would be more money than I can afford; but I'll have to get the money some way. Most important is getting

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you here before the 28th. If you can get passage, immediately reserve yourself a place by boat or by airplane. I know we shall have all the papers ready by then. But you must book passage IMMEDIATELY.

It is late again and I am very tired. Tonight we had supper at Al's. Didn't get home till late.

All my love to the one I love,

Bernie XXXO