

## FIRESIDE READING.

### WATCH PROVIDENCE AND BE THANKFUL

"The child of so many prayers can never be lost," was the reply of the Christian Bishop to the weeping mother of St. Augustine. Eternity can alone exhibit the full extent of this truth. Prayer poured from the hearts of mothers is one of God's grandest and noblest instruments of love in the keeping of the weak ones of the earth. It is of world-wide extent; it has been in constant use since the days of fallen Eve, "when men began to call on the name of the Lord," to the present time. The stream of a mother's prayers has gone flowing on, and on, in an unbroken channel. It is fed by a mother's love, and many tears; it is a golden rill in life's wilderness, a stream in the desert, and will only lose itself in the boundless ocean of eternity. The outcast Hagar, the trembling Jochebed, the gentle mother of Samson, Hannah of a sorrowful spirit, Elizabeth, and Eunice, recorded in Holy Writ, have all swelled the tide of mothers' prayers; and blessings, which have issued in the salvation of thousands, have resulted thro' the same instrumentality. There is a phase of answers to mothers' prayers of which I desire much to speak, because I think it is not put sufficiently prominently forward, and, indeed, in many cases, is well nigh overlooked. The blessings of grace for our beloved children do, of course, infinitely outweigh those of providence, inasmuch as time is outweighed by eternity; but yet, I think, mothers are apt to overlook the providential mercies bestowed on their children, in answer to their prayers. I love to dwell upon (if I may so say) the indirect blessings that flow from a Saviour's love, and come pouring in upon our children through a thousand inlets; and God would have us own them. We cannot be *too minute* in our grateful acknowledgments to our Heavenly Father.—What is that trait which, in childhood, is so precious and endearing to a parent's heart? It is its ready acknowledgment of proofs of love. The loving arms are thrown around the mother's neck for the gift of a bead, a ribbon, or a rattle. The happy child loves to display its treasures, and again and again exclaims, "My mamma gave me this!" Oh! let us be children in spirit towards our Hea-

venly Parent. We ask, and we receive: let us joyfully acknowledge it.

A loved son goes forth to face a world of sin, and danger, and death. The anxious mother commits him, with fervency of soul, to the Lord. Gracious Providences meet him at every step—disease passes by him. Is it not the Lord? Death overtakes others; he is preserved. Is it not the Lord's doing? Year after year our loved ones are spared to us: let us not be backward, as heretofore, in acknowledging God's Providence as well as his grace. There is not a letter we receive, which speaks of health and happiness, from an absent child, that the praying mother is not privileged to take to the Lord, and exclaim, "I thank thee, my God, for thy Providential blessings to my child;" "for it becometh well the just to be thankful."

"How wonderfully your son has been preserved in the battle-field," said a friend to a pious mother, who had received him unscathed, though the arrow had fled around him by day, and the pestilence had walked at noonday.—"Yes," was the mournful reply, "but he is not converted." Praying mothers, look at God's watchful care in all that concerns the well-being of your children; test God's loving mercy in answer to your prayers for their safety, their health, their guidance in the intricacies of life, as well as their true conversion to Him, and "He will not disappoint your hope." "Mother, I felt you were praying for me," said a soldier in writing to his parent in England; "and when I was in the battle-field, and death and destruction were all around me. I felt you were praying for me; and oh! how the thought seemed to strengthen me; and here I am, safe and sound, in answer to your prayers."

A pious mother was expecting the arrival of her sailor son, and was awaiting his return to her heart and home with the intense longing which a mother alone can know. She heard of the vessel in which he sailed as outside the Cape—the winds were adverse, the storm ran high. With faith strong in God, she prayed for her son's safety. The fearful news came that the vessel was wrecked. "He is in the hands of Him who doeth all things well," she exclaimed,