

Ottumwa, Ia.
Feb. 11-43

Dearest One:-

Here comes your mother, it is now 8:15 and I have the house fairly warm and mine and bobby's supper over. He is the sweetest old punkin that ever punked. Brother and Sister Welshon's was to come over tonight but I haven't heard from them yet.

Well when I went to the mailbox I got a lot of mail, two letters from you and one from Carroll Martindale., from Miss. I had sent him a Valentine card and he was so happy to receive it that he wrote me a nice letter. He said that he had heard from you at Grangeville and he was so glad that you got to preach in the little church and he said he knew that you could do it with utter genuiness. He said that he had wished you greater heights of success than Billy Sunday, well Billy was a good actor that was sure if you call smashing of chairs and things sincere but I would rather have the smashing power of the Holy Ghost myself. He said you vibrated with life at two subjects, the gospel and ~~his~~ Mother. He said you could readily settle arguments over the interpretation of a verse that is under debate and that you well liked by the Co and him. He said that he could honestly say that no one every said that they disliked you. Well if he only knew how God would lead his dear children along he would yeild to him too wouldn't he?

Well I was glad to hear from Carroll just the same and I am remembering him in my prayers. I sent McCarty a Valentine greeting too but he has not acknowledged it yet and I sent you one at Grangeville but I don't know whether you got it or not but just the same you are my valentine and hold the key to my heart entirely.

Your last few letters, since you have been at Kentwood have been so sweet and precious. I have enjoyed and rejoiced over them more than any you have ever wrote yet my Angel. I know you are so much better in spirit since you got with the full gospel people and I am so happy to think that they are having revival and everything. I praise God for the kindness and liberty which he has given you thro Jim. I will hold Jim up to the alter in prayer that God will bless him and make him wise and understanding with all the boys. I am sorry that the others take advantage of their place because they could have more liberty if they would live a different life too.

Jack came in today with the blanks for getting the "B" ration book for the car. I have to have the number off of my "A" book for him tomorrow so that he can finish out the report and fill out the blanks. He phoned me today and if I can get off Saturday afternoon like I did last week for a couple or three hours we are going to haul some of their things down, if not we will have to do it on Sunday morning, sorry to say but that will be the only time open for either of us. It is so good to have him call me and to see him come into the store with his cheery smile. I think he is the nearest like you of any lad I have met lately. He is not as good as you but he is as good as he can be without the full spiritual life. I am so anxious for you to meet him. I am praying for them that they will awaken and that I may be able to say and do before them that will win them over to God. Help me pray for them my dearest.

You just tell those boys that the preacher has another book now from his mother and that I know they would be glad to read it too if you would offer it to them. My heart aches for the lads who do not have home folks interested enough in them to write them faithfully much less not to remember them in prayer asking God's divine protection on them.

Well I am going to enclose Miss Weirsmith's letter with this one and if the one from Morrells or Woodman ever comes I will send it but I don't think we can count on them. You had better write Welshon's for his commendation. I know you would like to have one concerning your work and I wonder if Charlie White wouldn't write one for you or some other person from your department like that.

I got your box of letters today. The express company took them up to the store after I called them and told them to do it and then I brought them home from there with me this evening.

Do tell Dr. Upchurch and his good wife that I haven't forgotten them but tell them how busy that I am and that I am going to write them just as soon as I can get a breathing spell. It would be wonderful if they could come over to see you darling. It would make me so happy. I enjoyed knowing them and want to retain them as my christian friends. That Mrs. Collins from the church who wrote you, lives in that old dump of a place across from the German Luthern church there on the corner of 2nd and Vine. You must remember her now. She is always froxy and sloppy looking like Blind Jim's mother is only she is much younger and has a little girl about 10 or 11 who is always so froxy looking too.

I hope that everything will be harmonious with Betty and Jack but I can only try and that is all. I am sure that it will be with Jack as he seems so kind and good, of course I haven't met Betty but the once and she may be just as good too. She seems very sensible.

Well, Woodman just now phone to tell me that he talked with Larabee and he wanted me to phone him, so I did and he will be in Chicago and I will not be able to contact him until Saturday morning but his wife said she was sure that he would be glad to write the letter for you. Well I will phone him and get the ball to rolling Sat. Morning and in the meantime I will send Miss Weirsmith's letter to you with his one.

Yes shoes are rationed but I just got in under the wire by sending to Lane Bryant for an inexpensive pair of suede pumps, low heels and then I still have my stamp #17 and I am going to get a pair of nice dress shoes for summer from Harold Gilchrist. All canned goods goes on point rationing here the 21st of Feb and no canned goods, ~~or~~ dried fruits or meats and things that comes under it can be sold for a week. I hope I get that week off but I suppose that I will have to help mark the cans and invoice again at that time. It won't be any picnic. The navy base is getting all that they want here now, no rationing for them.

God does provide my darling and Uncle Sam is going to be one of his channels but still he will not forsake his children. God certainly has been good to us and I sing his praises with my every breath. I am so glad that Jim lets you go to church and have liberty. Of course he knows that you will not do anything you shouldn't by this time and I am glad that you have Herman to go with you. You don't know how happy it makes me to know that the people are taking you in for meals and in their homes. That is the reason that I think Jack was sent to me, so that I can pass along the same kindness to some lonely lad and help him in my small way. We must not hold our kindness or it will become stale and pass away with us. I want you to get one of the pictures from them that they made of you saluting. Now get me one. I want it, got to have it or bust. I am going to be looking for the pictures you took at Baton Rouge until they come and I hope it is not too long.

I was introduced to Mrs. DeVol's widowed sister today, she came into the store. She is very sad, her sorrow is so new and alive yet. I will be glad when Sunday comes although it means another day of work, I don't have a single day of rest all week long, the kids will be moving in and getting acquainted with the house and how to take care of it and getting their things settled in it. I should be at work now getting the things fixed better for them but I have to write to my darling first above all things.

I will do all I can to take care of my health and will try not to worry but that is easier said than done. I will not worry if I know you are to stay in the states. I would not feel forgiven if I worried knowing that you wouldn't have to leave the good old U.S. so keep that first in your prayers that you may be able thro all this to stay here and then I know I won't worry. God has kept Estell here for a long long time hasn't he?

I saw Mable this morning and she got a letter, no not a letter, but heard from one of the fellows who went to Camp Dodge Sunday that Vernon is either a Sgt or something like that now and has been over the K.P's and M.P's. They said something about putting him in cooking and baking school too and he said he didn't want the darned place, so I don't know how he will come out, he is not physically able for much harder work than that. I am glad you wrote to Lotus because they said he was nearly dead from homesickness. Carroll came to me a week ago Sunday night with tears in her eyes and said. "Oh, Henrietta, I can sympathize with you now because I know now how you feel". If she was mother instead of wife, she would feel still more different. A deeper feeling than a wife could feel, for the child is part of a mother's blood, bone and soul, it goes far more deeper to the Mother Heart than the wife's. I know now why the Catholics honor Mary the Mother of Jesus so much, it is because of the sorrows and sacrifice she bore for her Holy Son. I will not criticize them because of their honor and love for her as I can understand now in what manner they give the honor.

I am sorry about Mrs. Bittner's brother because it will make life so much harder and sadder for him and those about him will not have the love for him that they would have if he had a kind, sweet loving way about him. Yes I am glad that you are not in the army for more reasons than one. Welshon's are pretty sure that Bud is in Guadacanal now. Oh how I want you to get your leave, it may not be right away but stay with it and come as soon as you possibly can. My heart and my arms are both aching for you. I know you want to come too and when you do, how we will just try to make up for the months that we have been separated. I remember every little move you made, the shape of your hands and body the expression of your eyes and the movement of your lips and even standing on one side of your foot. I can see you at the old kitchen table with your feet up under on the stretchers of the table, I can see you in the bathroom shaving and getting ready for church. I can see you at the wheel of the car, your smile, your frowns and every little thing about you is so real to me. How I want to see them again. It is so lonely at night without you at home with me and to look across at your empty bed nearly floors me. Jack is going to be a comfort in a way and yet he will be a sadness too because I will want it to be you instead of him. I would not have him around at all if he was not kind, pleasant and courteous. He has just turned to me like a little lost boy and I hope that I can be the kind of a person that will help fill the lonely spot in his heart for his Mother and Betty too. I am going to have a lot of fun with Peggy Ann. She is just getting to that Cute stage. She don't cloud up and cry every time you look at her but seems to be a jolley little thing. Bobby can't figure out what kind of a little animal that she is.

My mail is piling up on me too and I don't get time off when it is raining or snowing to answer like you do. I have a letter from Aunt Lillie, Carroll and Dallas as well as the Round Robin to answer. Dallas will think that I am not going to ever write to him.

I feel awful at not writing to UpChurh's yet and will you try to explain to them what an awful cold winter we have had and how much I have to do every day. It was milder today and the report was milder yet tonight and tomorrow so I geuss this spell will not be so bad but it was a whizzer when it was here yesterday.

Now I must go and fix the fire and get off to bed and get a little more rest tonight than I did last night but I am glad that I have my fitting over and my other Spencer will be here in a day or two now, I mean a week or ~~two~~ two, what is the matter with me anyway? Sleepy I geuss. Friday and Sat will be our heavy days. There hasn't been any pork in the store for several days and not much beef. Will be less. They only had seven lbs of bacon all week to take care of their trade. I have got two full cans 3lbs each of Crisco and another one about two thirds full besides by bacon grease, and I have plenty of canned things in the basement. About 15lbs of surplus sugar. Don't you think it nice of Jack to get the extra gas ration for me? That is what I mean by him being so nice to me, he does those things that really mean something, he don't seem to be out to get all that he can from other people who befriend him, he wants to do all that he can too. Betty seems to be a little wife that does the way he wants her to, that is, she don't set up and whine for everything for herself. She is not well but I think she will snap out of it with good care, it is anemia. I want you and Jack to correspond after he gets settled here with me. He wants to meet you so much and speaks about you every time I see him. I think I have a pretty nice family of boys, Dallas, Wayne with music, Darroll with his appreciation of you and I and Jack with his friendliness and kindness to me and YOU my joy and crowning glory. YOU who are the every ounce of perfection to me. God Bless you my dear. And Bobby my little pestiwink. He is pouting now wanting to go to bed. Well I must go and fix the fire and get ready for bed with him. I will write again tomorrow night but Sat I will not get home until about 9:30 so I won't be able to write them but may be able to write a note anyway ready to mail Sunday night when I go to church.

So now my darling I will say Good night and look for your letter tommorrow. God Bless you and keep you and make you as happy as possible so far from home and the Mother who loves you more than her life. Good night Baby mine. My little boy and the Sailor with the Navy Blue eyes.

Goodnight from

Mother

Bobby

Ottumwa, Ia.

Jan. 1-43

Feb.

My Darling Angel:-

Here it is eleven o'clock and the house just now warm enough to sit down and write you a note, yest just a note tonight in a grand rush to tell you that I walked down to Nora's after work, had supper with them and had a fitting for another Spencer belt so that I could change off and laundry them and have one clean for church.

When I got home it was so late and the fire had to be fixed because we had a hard cold windy blizzard all day long. Bobby was cold and so was the house. I got your letter and also the M.O yesterday. I did not write last night for Sister Welshons talked until ten and after, she was alone and so was I so we just had the best visit. I will tell you all about it in the next letter. They are very likely to come over tomorrow nite and I suppose that will hold up my writing to you too again. I don't like for those things to happen for I want to get my letter off to you every day, just as I expect one from you ever day.

Oh yes, she told me that Mrs. Goebbles, the woman who when to Waterloo with us and Newman's, you know, was just as good as churched. She was turned out of the choir. Well so it goes, in churches and out of them we all have our problems.

Jack and Betty will start moving down Sat if he gets part of the day off. I will have to be at home to get them started off on Sunday. It is a good idea. The wind is blowing a gale now I hope it lays by morning.

I am so all in tonight with my side that I can't hardly do anything. So I am going to bed. for the last two nights it has been midnight and will again tonight I suppose. It sure is taking its toll on me believe it or not. I wanted to answer your letter in detail so much but I just can't until I get an evening to myself and I have to move the desk cupboard out of my room yet and move the sewing machine in where it was and do a lot of cleaning in the back bedroom for the kids. This house is really a dirty one if you ever saw a dirty house.

Right after supper Nora and I jumped up from the table and I got my fitting and then I walked on down to 2nd and got clear over to market before the bus came and then got home so late. I was all in as I had two dozen eggs in one box and a sack with all kinds of things in it that I had got at self serv. I want to get them before the ration goes on the 21st.

I got a card that your letters were at the express office so I will have them deliver them to the store tomorrow and then I can bring them on home from there. I saw Miss Weirsmith today at noon and she wanted your address so that she could send you a valentine. I am trying to get all the films that I can to send along to you with the camera. I am going to take Jack, Betty's and little Peggy Ann if I can first before I send it. I will have to take mine to Hoffman's and have them send it in for repairs because the kodaks are almost depleted here in all the stores., and the government is seizing the films too. I am getting all the films I can add Mrs. Gillian is saving me one roll out of every batch that they get at Self Serv. They only allow one to a customer at a time but I told her I wanted to send them to you so that you could have the use of it and she is going

to save me one roll out of every batch. Well I guess I had better get off to bed before midnight and get some rest. I overslept this morning even after the alarm went off, I was so dead tired. I didn't get up until seven and believe me I had to fan it. Yesterday was like summer the temperature went up to 70 and tonight it is down to zero so you can imagine how everyone feels in Ottumwa.

As soon as you say that my letters are getting thro to you now O.K I will send Miss Weirsmith's letter of recommendation and I think I will get one from Welshon's too. Then I doubt if I will get any action from Morrells. They haven't sent me the amount of your last year's earnings as yet. I will have to call King again I guess.

It makes me so happy that your officer treats you as he does and I will pray for him and you too my darling.

Don't you ever ~~days~~ dare say that I might have warbled like Dragonett if it had not been for you. I will shake your shoes off of you. If it were not for your precious self I would not have had the years of joy that I have had and If God wants me to warble I will but I only want to be the best that is in me and while I don't have the time to practice don't you dare say that I am not getting places, you just ask Stoltz. She is getting me right up there to "A" flat already and I am singing some songs now that I never could even approach a year ago. She is well pleased with me and with the time that I have to put in on practice she said I was going along fine. and if I had time to practice as I should she said I would go places. But don't you ever make such a reference to yourself again for I am yours all yours ~~whether~~ whether I sing or not. I love you, I love you and that is all that I want to do and do it to the glory of God and your dear life.

Now baby mine, I am going to say Goodnight and tell you again how wonderful and precious you are to me and that nothing or no one in this world matters but my own darling baby boy and I would write two books tonight if I had the time and you tell the boys I said so. I will send the camera and picture out of the bedroom for you very soon. Just as soon as I can get a-breathing spell, which will be the first of the week that I will mail it to the dearest little boy in the whole wide world.

God Bless you my littel darling sailor with the Navy blue eyes. How I would love to look into those beautiful eyes tonight. It would be a ray of light from heaven to me. Keep working on the Leave. Jack wants you to come so bad, I think almost as much as I do. He is lonely for his brothers too who are in service. God Bless you my dear and forgive me for not answering your letters fully but when you get an answer be sure that you have a days liberty so that you can read them all. Love from the lonesomest Mother in the world to the same kind of a little boy. Oh, my baby how I love you.

Love
Mother
Bobby

Ottumwa, Iowa.
Feb. 14-43

My Dearest Valentine:-

Here I come, Love and greetings to you on this wonderful day. It is quite cold here yet this morning at eleven it is still zero but a bright still cold day.

The children got partly moved in yesterday and now Jack and Betty have taken the car and gone to finish by bringing the baby's high chair and some other things which they have left in the apartment. I cannot say that I am going to like this arrangement because it makes me so sad and blue to see them here and you not that it is just going to kill me by inches. Then to top it all off I have to hunt another job of some kind. I was notified Friday that my job will terminate next Saturday due to the fact that Mrs. DeVol is letting her widowed sister have my place and her sister is investing her money in the store.

They are losing business right along and I think they will faster than ever after the point system goes on too because it will limit the food consumption to just a certain amount and then too they are raising the prices as they get every new shipment in while the stores down town are underselling them as much as seven to ten cents on every can of food. Their customers are going down town and getting a lot of their groceries. I think this business is all to squeeze the little man out. I have phone Guy Worth about a place and I have answered an add in the Courier and then after I get some work done around the place for a week or so I will go to the employment office and ask help from them again. However with the children's rent and the government allotment I will get as much per month as I would have got working and not have to give any for Victory tax either. I only get \$16.00 and some odd cents with social security taken out and Victory tax and then I have buss fare of 24¢ each day and have to go out to buy my dinners which come to 30 and 35¢. So you can see what is left of the principal.

The baby is with me now and she is asleep in her buggy with the bottle in her mouth. She was very restless all last night which I think was due to the change of homes and then it was so cold in their apartments that they couldn't even sleep in the bedrooms and they rented one out to a sailor boy and he got froze out of it so you can see what they were up against. Jack brought some ice cream and pop home with us last night and we had that before going to bed. He is a great deal in his habits like you and he don't smoke or swear, at least he don't swear around me. He is and Episcopailian and she is a Catholic but has not been going to church for a long time but she is a sensible little thing about it all and don't want to go to church where there is a mean hateful priest. I told her to go to sacred heart here in the East End but Jack has not gone to her church since he married her so you see it don't register so deeply with him, anyway but they both sensible and good about it all. They are open minded to the other churches, so maybe I can live a life before them that will win them to the full gospel of Holy Ghost.

Just the same I am so heartsick and lonesome for you today that I could scream to the top of my lungs. How I want you, I can't hardly keep from bawling all morning long. I have to button up my lip and go to it and get ready for work tomorrow just the same. I have hose to mend and slip to wash and all those things. I will have a lot to do when the new rugs are delivered Monday or Tuesday and I am making ready for your coming home. Baby has woke up and I have her lying on the davenport and she is watching me, not taking her eyes off of me for a minite. She is talking, cooing and all like that. I think the trains and strange noises bother her here.

I feel awful bad about the work ending up at the store because I was just going good and getting acquainted with the people and all that but maybe it was the thing to prepare me for a better job and also to contact the children and have them here to help me thro the jobless time. I don't know how soon I will land another one but if not I suppose I can get thro with their rent and the allotements but I wanted to be able to soak them down for keeps. I have not received all of my order from Lane Bryants and I will have to fix my dresses and things when they come and maybe all is for the best, I am trying to trust and see it in that manner. However I do wish that this cold spell was over and that spring or milder weather would come.

I am so blue and discouraged today that I can't hardly write you, I wish I felt as you do about things in general but I don't so that's that. Bobby was awful sick with those cramps last evening. He just went from one right into another as fast as one one end until it had me scared stiff. I had to put the hot water bottle on him and hold him tight and pray hard. He even whined and cried with them. I think he bolted his hamburg to fast and had a spell of indigestion, when he got to feeling better he went out of doors and emptied out and then he wasn't bothered any more but he sure felt all in. If anything would happen to him with you gone I would just die, I couldn't stand losing him.

I sure do want the people to love you and take you in, but I want it to be the right ones and to love you in the right way too. But I am so glad for you that they are so kind and good to you. I have to keep one eye on the baby and one on the letter and I am not doing a very good job of it. She is wet now and is going to start howling because her mother never lets her go wet day or night so I will have a 4 square job on my hands. She is getting so active and pulls hereself up on everything until she is not to be trusted in the buggy and on a seat anywhere. Her mother don't want her to start crawling on the floor because she said they always go around over the house and learn to get into things and pull them down and then they are too hard to control and to teach to leave things alone. She wanted to sit on my lap at breakfast time and so she did and ate toast.

You evidently didn't get my letter to the fact that I had got the table and four chairs. It is solid walnut and the leaves as heavy as logs, no veneers on them. It is still on display in the window of the store but won't be after Tuesday morning. It does not have a single inch of veneer on it or the chairs and the chair seats are upholstered with tan tapestry material, very pretty and will be beautiful but I am not going to enjoy them one speck without you with me, you can count on that. Yes you are coming back when this affair is over and coming back to be with your old mother. Won't we have some jolley times together? We will go an visit our friends in the south. I am sorry that I bought the table if you wanted to go to Amana but I am not going to take a minute off of your time running around for me when you come home, you are going to enjoy the time you have for yourself. The table didn't cost much more if any than it would have up there and then I got the chairs to go with it at the same time, the set cost \$110.00 but it is paid for every cent and so are the rugs which cost \$244.00, but they are all paid for and are all yours. It is an awful dirty time of the year to put them down. But I geuss I will have to, there is no getting around it.

You hold on to your money to come home on and push that leave as fast as you can because I am dying to see you. Then if I don't find work I will have to live on the allotement and the kids rent. I want you to pray that something will open up for me

3 I knew that was just what would happen to my job when she wrote that she was bringing her sister home to live here, my hunches have never failed me. The men at the store is not going to like it one bit so they said because it means that they are going to be under a watchful eye every minute of the day and when that happens I know two of them that isn't going to stand for it at all and Mrs. DeVold made the butcher mad yesterday and he made her mad and then Frank got sort of bawled out by her the other day and so it isn't going to be so smooth with her sister there from morning until night with an eye on them all the time. I am glad that I am getting out of there before that point system goes into effect the 21st because it is going to be so much more extra work.

I want Jack to see if I can get in at the base at typeing. They are laying a lot of the construction men off and some others and Morrells are laying off a lot of folks now because they can't get the meat and then when they do they can't sell it where they want to and have to give to the Government the most of it or have it frozen, so they don't care whether they kill or not. I geuss it is best that I didn't get on down there after all but I would like to get into office work somewhere where it will not be too hard and too long hours, the hours are awfully long up at the store and I get home so late that I don't have any time to take care of the home or myself either. I feel like going to the river and jumping in while it is good and high right now. I am so darned blue that I can't hardly see. I thought the kids being here would help but it hurts worse than helping. It makes me so lonely for you and want to see you that I am just sick today. Maybe it is the devils work to send discouragement but just the same I want my boy. I have a lot of work today to get done and it is afternoon now. We have all of the kids things to place yet today and I want to put some things of mine out of circulation because they don't need them. They are mother's glass dishes and things like that.

I must get busy now at my clothes and other things that I want to do with them gone, and then I have to get some big packing boxes and put the extra ticks off of the bedroom bed away in them. I will get them from Harold one of these days soon but until then they are piled up on your bed and I don't like it. So now the old woman must go and get busy with her work. I am so glad that you like the church and are enjoying it and having such food for your soul, I can't go today because of getting the kids lined up but maybe I can get away tonight. I hope so. So I will be looking for your letter tomorrow. I didn't get any Friday, I geuss you had too much church Wed to remember me. Whatever you do keep up your letters to me or I will go crazy and I mean just that, no kidding about it. I didn't get to write Friday as I had to clean up around here until midnight and then on Sat the kids came down as I came home from work and also I got home late but I just had to write today or die. So while they are up finishing the apartment and getting their other things I will use the time to write. Baby Peggy is in her buggy standing up just rocking the life out of it, it swings on springs and is she ever having a good time. When Bobby barks sharp it scares her and she cries. She will have to get use to him or they will have to change for he comes first.

Well I must get busy now and wash and do things like that, some life. Oh dear God how I wish you were here with me today. I am just sick of the whole thing. Now write to me often as you possibly can and Larabee said that he would get your letter off to you Monday, I hope he keeps his word. I have sent Miss Weirsmiths to you and you should have it before this letter. Well Now I must close, even tho I don't want to, but how I love you and want you my darling. I will never live this duration thro without you, I can't stand the loneliness that is sure. God bless you and keep you my darling and bring you home soon so that I may get one glimpse of your dear face. Love to my precious angel and God bless you and keep you safe. Pray for me.

Love Mother + Bobby

