

Coming Home to Roost

Coming Home to Roost
by Gov. Jimmie Davis
First Presented at
The Baptist Tabernacle
Danville, Virginia
March 5, 1972



by Gov. Jimmie Davis

http://www.cmt.com/artists/news/1472470/06102003/davis_jimmie.jhtml-- excerpted from an article ("You Are My Sunshine" Singer Jimmie Davis Dead at 101) by Michael Gray

Davis began recording in 1928 and was still recording 70 years later, giving him one of the longest recording careers in entertainment history. Davis also (was) one of the earliest country singers to record with a racially integrated band.

One of 11 children born in Beech Springs, La., to a sharecropping couple, Davis rose to prominence in the 1930s with a smooth vocal style that helped popularize country music far beyond its original rural southern audience. The singer's best-known songs, particularly "*You Are My Sunshine*", helped carry him to the governorship of Louisiana in 1944 and in 1960.

With its easy-to-follow melody and sweet inspirational message, "*You Are My Sunshine*" has been recorded more than 350 times by many top artists. Now a country music anthem and a children's favorite, the song became nationally known in 1941 through recordings by Gene Autry and Bing Crosby.

Davis' own Decca recording was released in 1940. The copyright to "*You Are My Sunshine*" is now perhaps the most valuable in country music. Davis is the reason it is one of the most-recognized and most-loved songs in the world.

In 1934, Davis' ... first release on the (Decca) label, "*Nobody's Darling But Mine*", became his first substantial hit. He scored Top 5 country hits in the 1940s with "*Is It Too Late Now*", "*There's a Chill on the Hill Tonight*", "*Grievin' My Heart Out for You*", and "*Bang Bang*". Davis' biggest chart single was "*There's a New Moon Over My Shoulder*", which topped the charts in 1945 and lingered on them for 18 weeks.

Between 1942 and 1947 Davis appeared in five Hollywood films... (including) his own life story, "*Louisiana*". In 1944, standing as a Democrat, Davis was elected governor. After his first four-year term, Davis began singing full-time for the first time and began to specialize more in gospel music than in straight country songs.

"*Where the Old Red River Flows*" gave Davis a Top 20 country hit in 1962. After the death of his first wife, Alvern, in 1967, he married Anna Carter Gordon, a member of the Chuck Wagon Gang gospel group.

A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And the father divided unto them his living.

And not many days after, the young man gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he fain would have filled his stomach with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave to him. (Luke 15:11-16)

I remember so well when I, as a small boy, was so fascinated as I stood in amazement in our back yard between sundown and dark and watched the chickens, turkeys, and guineas come rushing home from the nearby fields and woods and go into the chicken house and fly up on the roosting poles that stretched across that chicken house up above our heads and some would fly up in the trees and spend the night and when the weather was real cold they would put their heads under their wings to stay warm.

I asked my father why they came in like this each day and got up on these poles and in the trees. He said, "Son, CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST, and they get up off the ground to stay away from the predatory animals such as the minks, 'possums, wildcats, foxes, etc., that would come to get them after dark."

Some years ago the pastor of our church gave me fifteen wild turkey eggs from Alabama. I put them under an old Dominecker hen that hatched out fourteen little wild turkeys. When they named them "wild" turkeys, they gave them the right name, for they, like quails and guineas, literally come out of the shell running, and they stay wild until death.

We kept those turkeys locked up with their mother hen until they were about one-third grown, then we decided to open the door so they could roam in the fields and forest behind our home and come back at night . . . but when the door was opened they wouldn't come out for eight days. On the ninth day they ventured out for a few feet but were soon back in the house.

In two or three days they roamed farther from the house and

would come back at night, some roosting on top of the chicken house and some high up in the trees. In about ten more days they wandered off into the dense forest and they didn't come back.

About four years later we had an unusually dry year; in fact it was a drought. There were no berries or nuts in the forest and they were almost without food.

Then! One day, late one afternoon I looked down the old road that led into the woods and I saw eight grown wild turkeys slowly walking toward our house. I eased back (so as not to scare them) and went to the barn and got a bucket of oats and chopped corn. I put a little of it in the road where they were headed and then a little more up toward the house where they were hatched. In their old home I put a lot of feed.

They went in, ate and spent the night. They went only a short distance from the house the next day and came back about dusk. They never left home again. We kept them and fed them until they died. They had COME HOME TO ROOST . . . a place where they had friends, and a place where they'd never missed a meal.

I doubt if a day ever passes that I don't get a letter or more from this part of the country – and I can't tell you how glad I am to be here today. I know when I am with the people of this church – the people who come to worship God – I am with some of the best people and best citizens your state has to offer.

I am not here, of course, as a minister. I'm here – like most all of you – as a layman. I wasn't called to preach, but aren't you glad that some men were – like your own pastor and other clergymen throughout the land? I often think of how "physically tiresome" it must be for a minister to do all the things he has to do, and still never get it all done. In other words, I think it is very trying to be a minister of the Gospel.

It is not easy to be governor. Someone asked me the other day, "Did you ever have any problems as governor?" I said to him, "My friend, I have been tried, fried, tantalized, scandalized, and crucified." And I might say to you, if you want to find out something about yourself that you didn't know, you just throw your hat in the ring for mayor, governor, or some other public office. But I always get a great deal of consolation in remembering that the greatest man who ever lived on earth and the man who did more good than all the people put together was crucified on

http://www.sgma.org/inductee_bios/jimmie_davis.htm

Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame

James Houston Davis
1899 - 2000
Inducted 1997

Jimmie Davis overcame immense poverty to become one of the most beloved writers and performers in country and gospel music as well as a two-term governor of Louisiana.

Davis' early musical success was in the country field as a recording artist for the Victor and Decca labels. In 1940, he composed and recorded his signature song, "*You Are My Sunshine*", a song that was subsequently recorded more than 350 times. Over the next two decades, Davis returned to his gospel roots with recordings such as "*Supper Time*", "*Honey in the Rock*", "*Take My Hand, Precious Lord*", and numerous other gospel favorites. His best-known gospel composition was "*Someone To Care*."

Davis traveled extensively with the Plainsmen Quartet in the late-1950s, frequently appeared as a soloist alongside other prominent Southern Gospel groups, and served as President of the Gospel Music Association in 1967. In 1971 Davis was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and the following year was also inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

no man gave unto him.”

And when he came to himself, he said, “How many hired servants of my father's have bread to spare, and I perish with hunger.”

Then he said to himself, “I will arise and go to my father and tell him that I've sinned against him and against Heaven. I am no longer worthy to be his son, I just want to be one of his hired servants.” And he arose and started home to his father.

And the Bible says, “When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

And his son said unto him, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

But the father said to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.” And they began to be merry.

In fact he was simply saying,

*I've wandered far away from God,
Now I'm coming home,
The paths of sin too long I've trod,
Now I'm coming home.*

He had seen the light, and was coming home to roost.

Calvary's hill.

The people throughout this country have been very kind to me, and I suppose that “responsive hearts” is the richest reward any singer could ever hope for, and I suppose that most people at some time or other need consolation and comfort. It could come from a sermon, from a visit by a friend, a song, or otherwise.

It so happens that I too, at times, must find shelter for my own heart – and so often I find it in trying to sing a song that might be of condolence and inspiration to somebody, somewhere.

I took quite a bit of ribbing about my singing each time I ran for office because I carried my band with me and always sang a few songs along with my speaking. But I have never had any apologies to make for singing a few songs because when I was in college there were many days that I sat on a box on the street corner and played a guitar, sang, and passed the hat to get a little money to go to school on, and that old guitar fed me when I was hungry and clothed me when I was ragged, and I never ran out on a friend.

You know, when people are singing they are not fighting. I think if we had more singing and less fighting we would have a much better world because in all my life I have never seen people singing and fighting at the same time.

If you were driving down a country road and stopped to fix a flat and you heard a family in a house on the hill singing “*Amazing Grace*” do you think they would be fighting? No, they would be preparing to make a trip where there'll be no more fighting – a place where “*We'll Study War No More*” – where we'll walk hand-in-hand “*On the Sunny Banks of Sweet Delivance*”.

And of all the music we have there is none so charming and inspiring as our good hymns that have lasted through many generations. “The language of music is a universal language. It is the medicine for the breaking heart of the lover, the tranquilizer for the infant, and the property of saint and sinner alike.

“Music has played a greater part in our country than any of us can realize. I am sure it will continue, for if the day should ever come that good Christian hymns fail to be an integral part of our nation, then we can wrap our arms around it, hold it close to our breasts, take one last long look, and kiss it goodbye. For the world as you and I have know it will have passed forever. Music is after all the language of the angels that mortal man is only privileged to

borrow.”

My friends, our country could not have survived without the influence and prayers of the churches. The greatest heritage any young man can have is that of a Christian home.

I am thankful that I had the privilege of being raised in a Christian home – a very poor home, “a sharecropper's cabin” – but a good home. I was one of eleven children, and the longer I live the more I appreciate my own Christian parents, our own Christian neighbors, and the people like you and your pastor, who fear God and eschew evil, know God and worship God.

I left home one time along with two other boys. We were about fifteen or sixteen years of age. I thought I could do better somewhere else. I said to myself, “I'll just get a job in some bank and run the bank for them or get me a job in one of the bigger stores and soon be financially independent.”

We rode a freight train to a town about sixty miles from home and sixty miles from where I lived was a long way, for about the only places I had been was to breakfast and to the cotton patch.

I went to the bank in this town and met the president of the bank and told him I would like to more or less take over and you can imagine what a look he gave me. I know he must have thought that I had just escaped from some mental institution. I left there and went to the biggest store in town. I offered my services for a top job there and the results were the same. The boys with me were having the same experiences.

We tried this for two or three days and nobody gave us the time of day. So, I said to the other boys, “I think we had better head for home because this is the only chance I'll have to get an education.” We went back.

I walked in and told my father what we had done but he was very kind and considerate. He said, “Well, I know boys pretty well and sometimes you just like to look around a little bit, but I am glad you are back.” He asked me if I wanted to go to school. I said, “Yes, I do.” He said, “You go down to the school and tell the principal of the school just exactly what you did and what happened and I hope he will take you back.”

When I first went to college I wasn't a Christian. I didn't feel like I had time to give much consideration to God and the church. I had never thought of giving proper consideration and gratitude

family.”

After we had eaten, we went down the road some two or three miles to the house where he lay in state. We walked up to the house and his wife and the children met us at the gate. I guess someone told them we were coming. She said, “Governor, I am glad to see you and we have lost a good husband and a good father here at my house and maybe you would like to see him.”

I said, “I certainly would.”

We went in the house and there he was in about as poor a casket as you will ever see. He had on a blue suit about as threadbare as you will ever see with a face that literally showed the signs of wear and care.

As I looked at this preacher I thought to myself that I may be looking at the richest man in the state of Louisiana, for he has just inherited the Kingdom of Heaven and when you inherit that, my friends, that is all there is for any man – there is no more.

He didn't know many people down here but all Heaven knows him and awaits his coming and God can call him by his first name. This penniless preacher will have the inexpressible thrill and the unspeakable joy of reaching out and shaking the nail-scarred hands of the Man who went to Calvary to hide your sins and mine.

When I got back to camp we got the hunters together and took up a collection of a few hundred dollars and sent it to his family.

This is something for me to remember. For even in this world, there is untold satisfaction in knowing you have a place to hang your hat – a home. And in the world to come we're going to have something to cling to – that something is “Jesus Christ”.

Little as we think about it, it won't be long 'til life on this earth will be over and when the singing's all over, and the shouting is all done, and the amen's have been said, and we've gone home and gone to bed for the last time, it'll be comforting to know we have something to cling to, although we've wandered too far from God and stayed too long – like the prodigal son who left his home for greener pastures – as good a home as a young man could ever ask for.

He left his home, left everything, and lost everything – down to the clothes on his back. He got a job feeding swine, feeding hogs, and he was so broke and so hungry he said, “He would fain have filled his stomach with the husks that the swine did eat, and no

The Bible is our greatest asset. It is a complete code of laws, a lamp unto our feet, and light unto our path. This great book has traveled more highways and byways, hills and hedges, streets and the alleys, and has knocked on more doors and has spoken to more people in their mother tongue than any book the world has ever known, yet it is a neglected book – a book criticized and despised by some. Our mothers stained this book with grateful tears. Our fathers touched this book with reverent hands.

The Bible is a fountain in which dying martyrs cooled their hot faces, the pillow on which saints of all ages have rested their weary heads. It breaks the fetters of the slave, takes the heat out of life's fierce fever, the pain out of parting, the sting out of death, and the gloom out of the grave.

Without the Bible there would not have been such a nation as America, and without the Bible America cannot survive.

5. And finally, we should be a praying people. Prayer should be our portion, our pastime, our passion, and our practice. You can muzzle a man so he cannot talk, but you have not made it impossible for him to pray. You can cast a man in a dungeon and bind him with chains, keeping him from his fellow men, but you cannot keep him from having communication with God.

The door has never been forged, the dungeon never constructed, that can exclude God from His people. It matters not how sick or how poor his people may be, for God does not forsake His children.

I recall one day when I was governor, I went on a duck hunt in South Louisiana. That morning soon after sunrise, in the duck blind, my guide said to me, "We had a sad thing happen in our community last night." He told me his pastor passed away. A comparatively young man with a wife and five children, he was a man that had nothing materially to speak of. He didn't own his home and didn't own a foot of ground and I suppose most of the clothes he and his family wore were given to them.

"They are going to bury him about four o'clock this afternoon and I wish you could see him because I guess he was the kindest man we ever had in our community. He gave his life to the community and all the churches in the community, not just his own church, but doing what he could to help where he could."

I said, "After lunch we'll go over there and see him and the

to the Man who went to Calvary's cross and gave me everything I have or ever hope to have.

One afternoon while I was walking across the campus I met Dr. Robert G. Lee, of Memphis, Tennessee who was there for a revival. I was surprised to see him, but he said he was just taking a walk on the campus for a few minutes.

We talked for five or ten minutes about school affairs and most everything in general. Then he said to me, "Jimmie, I want to ask you a question – if the Lord should call you today, are you ready to go?"

I said, "Well, Dr. Lee, I just hope that he doesn't call me today." He said, "Well, that is all I wanted to ask you and it is something to think about and I just wanted to pay you a visit and I hope to see you tonight at the church."

I went to church that night and listened to Dr. Lee very attentively for I have always considered him the most eloquent speaker with the best use of the English language of any person I have ever known and I use a few quotes from him in this message to you. I became so enraptured with his message that I could hardly wait until he extended the invitation. I was the first one down the aisle to give him my hand and make a confession of my sins and accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior. I have made a lot of decisions, but this was the most important one I ever made.

It's a great thing to pass on to others God's plan of salvation and its extreme importance. But you know this is not always an easy thing to do – for when you or I approach some friend on this subject he might think to himself and rightfully so, "Well, you're not perfect yourself." But it might be that a person who is not a devout Christian could, on some occasion, tell someone the importance of repentance and using his life and talents for the glory of God, and I myself experienced a great example of this.

Some years ago when I was having hit after hit in the field of country music, I received a lot of calls to sing at dance halls. I would sing three or four songs and then get my money and go to the hotel. Business was good, money-wise.

But one night in a city in Texas I had sung my three or four songs and gone over and sat down at a table in a corner of this tremendously large dance hall, when a young soldier in uniform came up and said, "Do you mind if I sit down with you?"

I said, "Of course not, have a seat."

We had been talking about most everything for fifteen or twenty minutes when he said, "I hope you don't mind if I make a suggestion and speak very frankly."

I said, "Go ahead."

He said, "You see, of course, that I have this glass in my hand and you will recognize that I have been drinking pretty heavy, but I had good raising and I think that a man who has been in the movies, been a college teacher, police commissioner, public service commissioner (I hadn't been governor at this time), shouldn't be singing at a place like this. You could render a much greater service and be an inspiration to more people than these that you are singing to in dance halls like this. I hope you will pardon me for this – coming from a drunk and a boy who hasn't been in this world but twenty-one years.

I said, "No, you have no apologies to make and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it for frankly I have been thinking along the same lines."

It was soon time for me to make my way through this large crowd and sing again. (So many people, they hardly had room to dance.) I walked on that bandstand and asked the crowd to come up close by and we would all sing a song together. When they had gathered around I said to them, "This will be the last song I will ever sing in a dance hall. Not that I am all that good but that I have so many more things to do that I am convinced will be more important.

"Now here is the song I hope you will all help me sing." And we all sang "*Lord I'm Coming Home*".

Such singing you have never heard and right in front stood this young soldier with tears falling down his face like rain. He wasn't the only one, for most of them had sung this song many times as children at their old home church.

When I had finished I said, "Thank you so much and good luck." I never had a greater ovation. I wish I knew who this soldier was, but I don't suppose I ever will.

"Salvation" means so much to any man. It means everything. As an influence it could mean the salvation of his own children.

Some years ago when General Douglas McArthur was selected as Father of the Year, he sent a wire to the National Father's Day

Louisiana. It gave me renewed inspiration and a stronger belief in people and a more vivid insight into the hereafter with an everlasting peace in that heavenly mansion where cares, worries, pain, tears, and sorrows will be no more. I had come home to roost.

There was a man who –
Failed in business in 1831
Defeated for the Legislature in 1832
Again failed in business in 1834
Sweetheart died in 1835
Had nervous breakdown in 1836
Defeated in election in 1838
Defeated for Congress in 1843
Defeated for Congress in 1846
Defeated for Congress in 1848
Defeated for Senate in 1855
Defeated for Vice President in 1856
Defeated for Senate in 1858
Elected President in 1860
That man was Abraham Lincoln.

In all the problems we face today, I guess it comes down to this: What can we do? What should we do – as a church and as individuals?

1. I think we should remember the power of "togetherness".

2. We should maintain righteous principles.

3. Acknowledge the necessities for spiritual realities. We should remember that "righteousness exalteth a nation and sin is a reproach to any people." – "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" For what are we profited if, with wood enough to house the world, iron enough to supply the world with tools, corn enough to feed the world, and cotton enough to clothe the world, we forget the worth of the Bible in the production of lives of spiritual quality? The greatest power within our reach is spiritual power that comes through right living and worship.

4. We should see to it that we keep God and the Bible uppermost in American life. The Bible says, "Look unto Me, and ye will be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else."

upon it. Then if they approved a pardon or commutation of sentence, I could either approve or disapprove of their action, and I said to her, “The next meeting of the pardon board is two weeks from tomorrow. You go down before the pardon board without a lawyer, go just like you are and take these children just like they are, bare-footed and dressed like they are, and tell them your story and I will wait and see what their reaction is.”

Frankly, I am glad they recommended clemency for I was not only ready to sign the papers, but I was ready to give them the building, and it so happened that he was released and hasn't had any problem since and has made a good citizen.

Being governor of course is one of the most trying and difficult jobs a man could ever have. Problems you can settle with your hands won't hurt you, but mental strain and problems that tug at your heartstrings will wrinkle your once-smooth brow and put streaks of snow in your coal-black hair.

I recall once, after the most trying day I had ever had in office and with a more trying and difficult day to follow, I decided to drive out in the country two hundred miles to my old home and spend the night with my father and mother. When I walked in I know I must have looked pretty tired and haggard. My mother said to me, “I am surprised that you would come in the middle of the week because you look like you might need some rest.”

I said, “There are sometimes you just like to come home for a few hours, so I am here.”

We had supper and were sitting around the fireplace doing a lot of reminiscing as all of us do with our families and when it was time for me to retire for the night, I said to my mother, “Mama, you remember when I was a small boy how occasionally we would have a family prayer down by the fireplace and you would pray for all of us and all the neighbors and for the leaders of our county, our state, and our nation and peace for all of God's people throughout the world?”

She said, “Yes, of course I remember,” and I said, “That is why I am here tonight, and I would like for you to pray again.”

She knelt down by the old rocking chair and prayed as she had in the past and I must say that I left there with more courage and fortitude to meet the trials and problems of the day than all the voters could have given me in every ballot box in the state of

Committee thanking them, in which he said, “By profession I am a soldier and take great pride in that fact, but I am prouder, much prouder, to be a father.

“It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me, not from battle, but in the home, repeating with him our simple daily prayer – ‘Our Father, Who art in heaven’.”

It is just plain good common sense, because all of us are here today only by the grace of God – it is by the grace of God that you didn't have a heart attack or weren't killed in a car wreck last night instead of somebody else – “It is given unto man once to die, after that – the judgment.”

Any man that doesn't realize that he is here on earth for just a few days or at the most a few years and after that the judgment when he will have to stand up before the One Who will pass judgment on all men, has to be – I started to say “crazy”, but that wouldn't be a proper word, because I wasn't crazy and you were not but we were just derelict in our opportunity to accept the greatest bargain that any person ever had the privilege to have and to own – that of eternal salvation – for life is too short and eternity is too long to do otherwise.

Of course, we don't know when we're going to die and it's a good thing we don't. If everybody in this city knew they'd die by 10:00 o'clock tonight, do you think we'd have room in this church, or any other church, for the people? We wouldn't come walking. We might not come running. More than likely we'd come crawling. But there's one thing for sure – when Death's Messenger knocks on your door, you'll be home. He's never found anybody gone yet. You can't say, “I'll see you Saturday,” or “Will I have a minute to get my hat?” He will say, “No, you are not going to need a hat.” Or, “I would like to kiss my folks goodbye.” Death's Messenger's answer to you will be, “Your goodbyes here are over for we are on our way. They have already started the soft music and slow walking.”

I don't especially like to, but I must look to a time when they're going to take me just like they're going to take you, out to that silent city on a hill – where there are no big men, no little men, no rich men, no poor men, no big shots and no little shots – a place where six feet of earth make them all the same size.

It's a place from whence no traveler returns, but a place from

whence God's children will be borne away on the wings of Heaven's angels to a beautiful home, not made with hands, with walls of jasper, gates of pearl, and streets of gold -- in a garden of flowers that never fade.

In spite of the seriousness of the call of Death, it's quite easy to forget the most important thing that we will ever confront. We get too busy.

We have traffic jams from too many cars, heart attacks from too much to eat, juvenile delinquency from too much idle time, and headaches from too much television. We have moved into a land of milk and honey. But we have never been so in danger of handing down our blood-bequeathed legacies so reduced in quality and quantity . . .

Science has meant so much to us. It has accomplished many things, but there are some things it can never do.

We read about the sputniks and the miracle of missiles, how they circle in space and take men to the moon. I'm glad that these men who have made these trips to the moon have given God credit. But many other people have not. Some who have never left this earth, and have never been any higher up than pulling corn, will tell you that God had no part in it. They seem to forget that somebody, sometime, somewhere had to build a place big enough to fly them, had to make the men that fly them, had to give man a God-made computer, the brain that can take over when man-made computers fail as was the case a few years ago.

This reminds us of the song, *"My God How Great Thou Art"*.

It is a great comfort to know that in the final outcome, God will have control and take care of His people.

And, it is evident there is one thing that the general run of people -- of all the churches -- perhaps most of the people in this congregation today like to hear, like to know, and like to feel more than anything else, and that is to have the assurance and reassurance of continued life, life eternal and life everlasting after this physical death, and that we won't just be placed in a casket down in the grave, and that is the end. No, my friends, God would not have stopped a beautiful world there.

Is Heaven as beautiful as they say it is? I think so.

A few years ago a member of my family died after suffering five years with cancer. We had nurses around the clock for over two

years and the day of her death when she was in the hospital, the nurse came by and said, "It is time to give you another shot."

She said, "No, I don't need one. I am feeling fine."

The nurse insisted on doing it and I said, "No, don't do it because she doesn't seem to need it," and she was very cheerful and said to the nurse, "Let's have a race."

The nurse said, "What kind of race?"

She replied, "A foot race," and she had not walked in two years.

She began to brighten up and said, "I wish you could see what I see. Such beauty as you can never imagine. I hope you will see this some day as I see it now," and then she passed on and I think that at that moment she was making the great transition from this earthly life to that great beyond.

But no matter what our business is, how large or how small, we all have our problems.

The first time I realized my responsibilities as governor was the day that my executive counsel brought a death warrant into my office for my signature.

I have had old women with white locks swoon at my feet in behalf of some loved one that was in prison, and old men on walking canes hold their heads in their hands and weep for some son or other member of the family who was in the penitentiary.

I recall one day very vividly when a woman poorly dressed with five bare-footed children came into my office to talk to me about her husband who was in the penitentiary for a first offense. She naturally wanted to help him if she could as did her children.

I really wished I had been out of the state that day and lieutenant governor would have had this matter instead of me. But this, of course, was one of my duties.

After we had talked a few minutes, her little girl, about three or four years of age, climbed up into my lap and said, "Governor, do you have any little girls?" And I said, "No, but I wish I had one like you."

"Do you have any little boys?"

I said, "Yes, one about your age," and she laid her head over on my shoulder and wet my shirt with tears. Her mother and all the children were shedding tears and I must tell you, I was too.

I explained to them that according to the laws of our state, there was nothing I could do until first the pardon board acted