

## 36 YEARS ON BORROWED TIME!.

I heard over the news broadcast, only yesterday, that there had been another death from the disease known as spinal-meningitis. Each time I read or hear of such a death, I am so very very thankful that I am a normal, healthy human being 44 years of age, for I too, was a victim of the much dreaded disease, just about 36 years ago this fall.

It was a lovely autumn morning, and it began in an ordinary sort of way for an eight-year old. I remember tripping off to school, which was about three blocks away, from a dwelling house in St. Louis, where I lived with my parents, older sister and three younger brothers. After about two hours of school work, I began to develop a very sick headache, and needless to say was sent home by my very kind third grade teacher, whom I adored.

On reaching home, my mother proceeded to give me a dose of medicine and put me to bed. The next thing I remembered was, later on in the day, Mother and Dad lifting me to my feet and trying to encourage me to walk, which was extremely difficult, because my legs had started drawing. Soon afterwards, I sank back into unconsciousness, and my next recollection was hearing a doctor talking to my mother in a puzzled tone of voice, and was evidently having a rather difficult time diagnosing the trouble. Several days later, he was able to diagnose it, and mother eventually told me that, when taken to the hospital in an ambulance, my body had drawn in a circle, and my feet touched the back of my head, and that I was screaming at the top of my voice. At the time of diagnosis, the doctor had informed my parents that the disease was incurable, but if by some miracle, I did live, I would be blind, deaf, or crippled and maybe all three.

I can't say for sure how long I remained unconscious in the hospital, but it was at least a couple of weeks, hovering between life and death. I recall when I did start gaining consciousness, it felt as though I was wrapped in a very tight blanket, and was being smothered by something. For several days I had a most difficult time, realizing where I was and called all the doctors and nurses by names of close friends of ours.

One day I opened my eyes and glanced through a glass window, and my eye caught a glittering bracelet, being worn by a woman standing there looking in at me. I made an inquiry as to whom the woman was, and was told that she was a very good friend of mine. Later on I found out it was my mother and the bracelet had been given to her as a gift from my father, since I had entered the hospital, thus one of the reasons why I had failed to recognize her.

As I continued to improve, and since I was in an isolated ward, my parents were no longer able to come inside to visit me, but once again the hospital staff was very kind and placed my bed by an out-side window. Day after day my parents came to visit me and stood out-side that window in the cold winter weather, and each day would bring a little carton of ice cream, which I thought tasted so much better than any food the hospital served. I seriously doubt that I would have recovered so rapidly if it had not been for those daily visits of my parents.

The next problem I confronted was trying to regain the use of my legs, which I gradually did, by my own persistence and with the patience, persistence and wonderful care I had from the doctors and nurses, whom I had come to love very much. How proud I was when I was able to take those first few steps by myself!

The Christmas season rolled around, and by that time I was well enough and spoiled enough to become very very homesick. I received a good many gifts from friends and the doctors and nurses, but somehow they just didn't take the place of being home, and I remember remaining despondent all during the holidays.

Finally about a month later came the day when my parents were told I could go home, and was I happy! I was so jubilant I was going home until I forgot all the gifts that had been given to me at the hospital. After telling the doctors and nurses good-bye, I remember walking very proudly, looking straight in front of me, holding on to my mother's hand, toward the bus stop, where we were to catch a bus that would take us home. The fresh air seemed so good, and I was so happy to be out of the hospital, that not once did I glance back. *It was as if, though, I was starting a whole new life.*

Upon arriving home, I walked into the living-room and to my utter surprise there stood the Christmas tree, with all the trimmings, and under it all the toys Santa Claus had brought me. I was so happy I started crying. My next thought

was to see my baby brother, whom I hadn't seen since I had entered the hospital. Needless to say that when the rest of the family came home that afternoon and evening it was indeed a happy reunion.

I went on to lead a normal healthy life, and at the present time, I have been married over 25 years, have three fine children, all grown, the oldest one a minister in Utrecht, Holland.

I attribute my good fortune first to the goodness of the Almighty God, second to a dedicated medical profession and third to my devoted parents, who have long since gone to the great beyond themselves.

I just hope and pray that I can be around another 36 years to enjoy the many many blessings in this great land of ours, but if I'm not, at least for the present I can be eternally grateful that the Lord saw fit not only to spare me a while longer, but also to give me a normal fruitful life, and hope that in the years to come, through the help of the Almighty, in guiding the medical profession in their tireless efforts of research, many many others will get the same chance of recovery that I did 36 years ago, not only from the crippling disease of spinal-meningitis, but from any other disease, that, at the present is considered incurable.

Mrs. Charles Davison  
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Burlington, Vermont  
Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> 1964

My Reason for Living  
It's a wonder of wonders  
Like the magic of spring  
How I met you I loved you  
And it changed everything  
But the greatest of wonders ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> just think  
it could be,

My reason for living is because you  
love me.

Since I know that you need me and  
your love I can feel

My life has a meaning and my faith  
is so real

~~Love~~ has answered life's question <sup>for</sup> and at  
last I can see,

My reason for living is because  
you love me

In your love there's a rightness  
that no words can explain

Like believing in heaven or that sun  
follows rain

I see goodness and beauty that I never  
did see ~~and~~

My reason for living is because  
you love me

My reason for living is because you  
love me