Mother's Day
West Henrietta - 1961

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IN NOMINE JESU

Proverbs 22: 6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

MOTHER'S RESPONSIBILITY

A Sunday School teacher was telling her children about God's loving care. The teacher emphasized the fact that no child could ever be where God's care did not reach him because God is everywhere. One little girl in the class, however, said, God isn't in our house. The teacher tried to explain that though He couldn't be seen God is everywhere. The little girl's face hardened as she said again, He is not in our house. She meant to say that the life of her parents did not reflect the presence of God. In how many homes is something like this to be found?

While this is a day on which we certainly want to pay tribute to mother and gratefully remember the thousand and one things she does every day to make us what we are and to transform our houses into homes, it also ought to be a day on which mothers themselves go into deep and earnest self-examination. Mothers, have you been faithful to your God-given responsibilities? God expects you to teach your children to pray. Have you taken time each day to pray for and with your children - or have you been too busy doing other things? God wants you to teach your little ones about Jesus and His love - How He, the only Son of God, came down into our sin-sick world and suffered and died in order to save us from our sins. Have you taught your children that God means more to you than anything else in all the world? Do they see how you love His Word as you read your Bible every day, as you go to His House for worship every Sunday and bring them along with you? ~~Mothers, have you been faithful to the responsibilities God has placed upon you?~~ If they do, then your children have the greatest gift in all the world - the gift of a Christian Mother! This is what ~~He~~ God says: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

When God created the beautiful garden of Eden and placed Adam and Eve into it, He said, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth; and to woman was given the high privilege of bearing children and populating God's magnificent creation. Woman is never more a woman that when she is bound by the bonds of motherhood. But When God gives a woman a child, He does not do so merely that she might have a living doll to play with and dress up in the latest frills and fashions; nor

does God give her a child merely to satisfy her motherly instinct. Rather God gives her a child in order that another soul may be won for heaven. That little baby that lies nestled in its mother's arms is not only made up of body and of mind, but it also has a precious, blood-bought soul that will live to all eternity.

As a rule parents provide well for the bodies of their children. They feed them, clothe them, shelter and protect them. They see to it that they get their vitamins and polio shots. They give them the best dental and medical care possible. They are also concerned about their children's mental development. While their children are in school, they have many a consultation with their teachers, especially if their grades are not up to par. They want their children to get the best possible education, because they want them to be a success in life.

But how about the child's soul? Is that of lesser importance than the body or the mind. It seems that a great many people think so. Yet Jesus says that one single soul is worth more than all the gold and silver and precious stones in the whole world. What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Why? - Because the body and the mind are mortal. They will return to dust; but the soul is immortal. The soul will either go to heaven and live with Jesus and all His holy angels forever and ever in eternal bliss, or else it will go to hell and be forever separated from God and all happiness. Yet, judging by the conduct of many parents, one would think that their children had no souls at all. ~~They act as if their children were merely the highest form of animal life. But~~ one day God shall call such parents to account. This is His command: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Each home is a little kingdom all by itself and the reigning queen is the mother. And I guess that is why we have set aside a day such as this It is the mother who spends the most time with the children. It is the mother who does most of the training. For the first five or six years of a child's life the mother is the dominant influence. The children come to her with their problems and ask for guidance, help, and advice. From her they learn to be kind,

gentle, considerate, understanding - or they learn just the opposite. These pre-school years are so important that modern experts on child psychology claim that 75% of a child's character is formed during the first five or six years of his life. The hearts of little children are like soft cement: When cement is first poured, it is so soft that you can write on it with your finger; and ten, twenty, forty years later, what you have written will still be there. Similarly, what you impress upon your children while they are little will remain with them all their lives. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that mothers implant a love for God and for Christ in their children's hearts just as early as possible!

In Mt. Auburn cemetery at Cambridge, Mass., there is a little, unadorned grave. Nothing is particularly attractive about that grave except the headstone that has on it the picture of a hand with one finger pointing upward, and across the stone is written one word, Mother. Here is a picture worth a thousand words. It tells the story of this mother's love, her self-sacrifice, her toil, and her Christian faithfulness. Her life was a sighboard, pointing upward to God and heaven.

Every Christian mother's life is such a signboard. You teach far more by what you do than by what you say. You simply cannot divorce your Christianity from your life. Your attitudes are contageous. Ellen Jagow tells the story of little Lu Ann, who said, I hope I'll never be a mommy, 'cause mommies only work and worry. This was the impression this mother left upon her child. If you are constantly cross and crabby, if you are always yelling at your children or quarreling with your husband - your children will soon sense that Jesus does not mean as much to you as you say He does. The mother who daily stands at the foot of the Cross, pleading for forgiveness for her own shortcomings and asking for the Savior's guiding direction in raising her children, will literally glow with the Savior's forgiving love. Her home will radiate with an inner peace and joy that only the Lord Jesus can give. And her children will never forget her Christian example.

The story is told of two young men who attended Harvard University. One night they went to hear the gifted orator, Bob Ingersoll, who traveled all over

the United States lecturing against Christianity and making fun of the Bible and of God. After the lecture, the one student said to the other, Jim, didn't old Bob wipe Christianity off the earth tonight? And Jim replied, I don't know. I am inclined to think my good old Christian mother is still left, and I wouldn't give her, with her sweet Christian life and example, for all the Bob Ingersolls that could be crowded on the earth. Here was a Christian mother's influence at work.

In conclusion let me say a final word to you fathers. You too must realize the importance of your children's souls. God holds you responsible as well as your wife. He has set you at the head of the family. Do not take the beautiful hymn, Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee and change it to read, Take my wife and let her be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee. You too must set the proper example. You too must attend church and study the Word of God. Someone has said, If I had the choice of having either the parents or the children in Sunday school, I would choose the parents. Does this surprise you? How can you hope to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord unless you are thoroughly familiar with what God says in His Word? How can Christ be real and important to your children unless you take the lead and give the example of using the Lord's day both for study and worship? How can your little daughter really believe that attending Sunday school and church is of primary importance when she sees her father and mother go back to bed or absorb themselves in the Sunday newspaper after they have hustled her off to Sunday school? How can your little boy really believe that Christ is to be the center in all of life if his father does not accompany him to Sunday school and church. Before long he will ask, Dad, when will I be old enough to stop going to Sunday school like you?

If you want your children to honor and respect you when you are old, then with God's help make Christians of them when they are young. If you want them to meet you in heaven, then teach them the way to heaven while they are here on earth. The best gift you can give your children is the gift of Christian parents.

Amen.