Mother's Day
Bessemer 1958
W. Henrietta - 1960
Rolling Meadows - 1963

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

2 Timothy 1: 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you.

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER -- A BLESSING

The children in a certain neighborhood gathered in a vacant lot to play ball. Some of them lived in a large, imposing house on one side of the lot; litt Freddie lived in a modest structure on the other side. When the hotly contested ball game was over, the battle of words continued. One of the children called out to Freddie: We live in a big house, but you live in a little house. Freddie answered happily: It's not the size of the house that counts; it's the mother. And how true it is! It does not take a castle or a million dollars to make a home. Homes are made of the people who live in them; and God has placed the mother at the very center, giving her the most strategic position or station.

It is interesting to note that when God chose an environment in which His Son was to grow up and prepare for His work of saving the world, He did not select a large, metropolitan area with certain obvious cultural and educational advantages; He picked the small community of Nazareth which today would be classified as rural. He did not select wealthy parents who lived in a mansion; He picked a humble pair, Mary and Joseph, who lived very modestly. He did not select a mother who was noted for her intellectual achievement and social prominence; He picked out a maid whose distinctive quality was her beautiful, godly personality and character. The strongest and noblest earthly influence in Christ's life and development was undoubtedly His mother, the blessed Virgin Mary.

Practically all people recognize, in one way or another, that Mother deserves special recognition. In China a mother is often remembered with gifts on New Year's Day; in Russia motherhood is rewarded with a bonus and medals; in the United States the second Sunday in May is Mother's Day and Mother is usually remembered with a card, a telegram, a dinner at a restaurant, candy, flowers, or some other gift. It is well that we observe Mother's Day! God Himself engraved a command in stone that was made a permanent part of His Law: Honor thy mother!

Christ paid His mother a remarkable tribute with His concern for her welfare even as He was dying in agony on the Cross, and His example is forever preserved in the Bible. If there is any class of people in the world who stand in a strategic position to make the next generation more loving and more peaceful, more honest and more pure, more kind and more considerate, more stable and more mature - it is the mothers. They have a great advantage over teachers and social workers. If there is any group of people in the world who have an amazing opportunity to make the world more Christian - it is the mothers. A Spanish proverb says: An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy; and there's a great deal of truth in it.

The influence of a mother for good or evil is deep and lasting. She usually spends more time with a child than anyone else does, when he is most easily influenced and when what he learns makes the most permanent impression on him. God has given mothers the wonderful privilege and the heavy responsibility of being closely and intimately bound to their children for all life. The mother is the child's first teacher, and her teaching is unforgettable. There is no classroom in any school or college that teaches more lessons for life and for eternity -- and teaches them better -- than does the home.

Ahaziah, King of Judah, reigned for one year and is remembered for his wickedness. Do you suppose the influence of his idolatrous mother Athaliah had anything to do with it? Nero was a notoriously cruel tyrant. Is it surprising to remember that his mother was the debauched murderess Agrippina? The reckless life lived by Byron is at least partly explained by the fact that his mother was a vain, revengeful woman, so lacking in sympathy for her son's infirmity that she made fun of it. Saint Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, one of the great orators of all times was a God-fearing man. He was blessed with a wonderful, Christian mother who devoted herself to his mental and spiritual development. Luther praised his mother a godly woman, full of faith and prayer. George Washington, a man of outstanding moral stature, from infancy had the beautiful example of a pure and pious mother.

Through the ages civilization has been guided and inspired by motherhood. Emerson observed, Men are what their mothers made them. (Augustine, Lincoln, Edison, and a host of others frankly admitted that they owed everything they were or ever hoped to be to their mothers.)

Henry Ward Beecher, an outstanding preacher, was abundantly blessed by a Christian mother. He frequently spoke of her and how her memory had kept him from transgression. For him the life of his mother was the greatest argument for the truth of the Christian faith. He wrote: On one side you can put all the skeptics and all the scientists who would disprove the truth of Immanuel, God with us; then show me on the other side my mother, walking in a great sorrow, but from the surface of that sorrow reflecting the light of cheer and heavenly hope, patient, sweet, gentle, full of comfort for others, and showing by her life as well as by her lips that with the consolation wherewith she had been comforted, she is comforting others, and that single instance of suffering is more to me as an evidence of the truth of Christianity than all the arguments that the wisest men can possibly bring against it.

To have a good, Christian mother is a priceless possession. Among the many godly mothers and their great sons mentioned in the Bible, Eunice and her son Timothy stand out. Timothy was a faithful friend and loyal assistant of the Apostle Paul. Although a bit timid in temperament, he had accompanied Paul on various missionary trips and had been left in charge of the congregation at Ephesus. One day, from a prison in Rome, Paul was writing a letter to his young friend Timothy. His own brilliant fight for the faith seemed to be drawing to an end. Now he wanted to strengthen the faith and zeal of Timothy. He wanted to encourage him to be true to what he had learned. At the beginning of his letter he wrote: I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you. Timothy was twice blessed with a Christian mother, Eunice, and with a Christian grandmother, Lois. Timothy, in turn, was a blessing to countless numbers.

Near Ponca City, Oklahoma, stands the famous statue of The Pioneer Woman. Thirty-five feet high, it displays the figure of a mother with a Bible in one hand and in the other the hand of her young son who walks at her side. Bravely she is going out into an unknown future, an inspiring picture of confidence and determination. The Bible in her hand speaks of her love for God and her readiness to submit to His will and guidance. The way she holds the hand of her son reveals her love for her child and her determination to have him walk God's way with her. Because a Christian mother loves God and the Savior, that love motivates her whole life. She loves her children too, and great as is her concern for their health, for their education, for their dress, comfort, and happiness, above all else she is interested in the welfare of their souls. She is anxious that they should learn to know and accept Christ as their Savior, too, and live a life of love for Him.

Because a Christian mother loves the soul of her child, she will, therefore, heed the command of God as given to the Children of Israel: And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. To that end a Christian mother will let no one deprive her of the privilege of telling her children about God as a loving Father and about Christ as a forgiving Savior as soon as they are old enough to understand. She will teach her children to pray regularly, reverently, and sincerely. Too often the responsibility of religious training is completely delegated to the church or is entirely neglected. Paul could say to Timothy, a man of strong, Christian convictions and character: From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures. He could say: The sincere faith that dwelled first in your mother Eunice now dwells in you. Mothers, Ask yourselves, "If your children knew no more about God than what they have learned from you, how much would they know? If your children knew no more about Christ as their Savior from sin than what they have learned from you, how much would they know?"

A Christian mother sets her children an example of Christian character.

She lives a Christian life and lets them watch her. A Christian mother will not only encourage her children to go to church, but she will set them an example by going with them. A Christian mother will not only advise her children to read the Bible and to pray; by example she will show them how. A Christian mother will not only ask her children to be pure and honest, kind and forgiving, tender and loving indeed she herself will be pure and honest, kind and forgiving, tender and loving-and her children will never completely forget. Many times in their later years they will rise up and call their mother blessed.

When President William Henry Harrison died, Mrs. Harrison wrote a letter to her pastor in which she said: You will not fail to pray for me and my dear son and daughters who are left, for I have no wish for my children or grandchildren than to see them the humble followers of Jesus Christ. Mothers, is that your wish? Are you doing everything you can to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Are you praying for them? Are you setting them an of Christian faith and life? If you are, you are a truly great blessing and blessed are your children. Your influence will rest on them throughout life like a great benediction. Amen.