

C.H. Spurgeon on Mothers—Like Cat like Kit

Kole Farney

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was an English Baptist pastor known for his powerful preaching and extensive writing. Below is an excerpt titled “Like Cat Like Kit” from his publication, *John Ploughman’s Pictures or Plain Talk for Plain People*, which is filled with pithy and proverbial admonitions in everyday language for everyday people. I’m praying it will challenge and encourage your hearts this Mother’s Day!



MOST men are what their mothers made them. The father is away from home all day, and has not half the influence over the children that the mother has. The cow has most to do with the calf. If a ragged colt grows into a good horse, we know who it is that combed him. A mother is therefore a very responsible woman, even though she may be the poorest in the land, for the bad or the good of her boys and girls very much depends upon her. As is the gardener such is the garden, as is the wife such is the family. Samuel’s mother made him a little coat every year, but she had done a great deal for him before that: Samuel would not have been Samuel if Hannah had not been Hannah. We shall never see a better set of men till the mothers are better. We must have Sarahs and Rebekahs before we shall see Isaacs and Jacobs. Grace does not run in the blood, but we generally find that the Timothies have mothers of a godly sort.

Little children give their mother the headache, but if she lets them have their own way, when they grow up to be great children they will give her the heartache. Foolish fondness spoils many, and letting faults alone spoils more. Gardens that are never weeded will grow very little worth gathering; all watering and no hoeing will make a bad crop. A child may have too much of its mother’s love, and in the long run it may turn out that it had too little. Soft-hearted mothers rear soft-headed children; they hurt them for life because they are afraid of hurting them when they are young. Coddle your children, and they will turn out noodles. You may sugar a child till everybody is sick of it. Boys’ jackets need a little dusting every now and then, and girls’ dresses are all the better for occasional trimming. Children without chastisement are fields without ploughing. The very best colts want breaking in. Not that we like severity; cruel mothers are not mothers, and those who are always flogging and fault-finding ought to be flogged

themselves. There is reason in all things, as the madman said when he cut off his nose.

Good mothers are very dear to their children. There’s no mother in the world like our own mother. My friend Sanders, from Glasgow, says, “The mither’s breath is aye sweet.” Every woman is a handsome woman to her own son. That man is not worth hanging who does not love his mother. When good women lead their little ones to the Savior, the Lord Jesus blesses not only the children, but their mothers as well. Happy are they among women who see their sons and their daughters walking in the truth.

He who thinks it easy to bring up a family never had one of his own. A mother who trains her children aright had need be wiser than Solomon, for his son turned out a fool. Some children are perverse from their infancy; none are born perfect, but some have a double share of imperfections. Do what you will with some children, they don’t improve. Wash a dog, comb a dog, still a dog is but a dog: trouble seems thrown away on some children. Such cases are meant to drive us to God, for he can turn blackamoors white, and cleanse out the leopard’s spots. It is clear that whatever faults our children have, we are their parents, and we cannot find fault with the stock they came of. Wild geese do not lay tame eggs. That which is born of a hen will be sure to scratch in the dust. The child of a cat will hunt after mice. Every creature follows its kind. If we are black, we cannot blame our offspring if they are dark too. Let us do our best with them, and pray the Mighty Lord to put his hand to the work. Children of prayer will grow up to be children of praise; mothers who have wept before God for their sons, will one day sing a new song over them. Some colts often break the halter, and yet become quiet in harness. God can make those new whom we cannot mend, therefore let mothers never despair of their children as long as they live. Are they away from you across the sea? Remember, the Lord is there as well as here. Prodigals may wander, but they are never out of sight of the Great Father, even though they may be “a great way off.”

Let mothers labor to make home the happiest place in the world, if they are always nagging and grumbling they will lose their hold of their children, and the boys will be tempted to spend their evenings away from home. Home is the best place for boys and men, and a good mother is the soul of home. The smile of a mother’s face has enticed many into the right path, and the fear of bringing a tear into her eye has called off many a man from evil ways. The boy may have a heart of iron, but his mother can hold him like a magnet. The devil never reckons a man to be lost so long as he has a good mother alive. O woman, great is thy power! See to it that it be used for him who thought of his mother even in the agonies of death.