

" WHAT'S A MOTHER?"

THOU EXCELLEST THEM ALL." Proverbs 31: 29

A journey through the Biblical galley of women, Ruth, Esther, Rahab, Martha, Mary, Delilah, Abigail, Rebekah, Rachel, and these names are just a few. What a great thing it would be if we could paint a composite picture which would unite the fastination of Delilah, the decision of Ruth, the beauty of Rachael, the eloquence of Abigail, the efficiency of Martha, and the pious meditation of Mary.

Fortunately, we have but to turn to the last chapter of the book of Proverbs. Here we have the words that King Lemuel learned from his mother, warning him against the intemperate use of strong drink, and becoming associated with the wrong kind of women. The book comes to a close with a hymn of praise - familiar to every Bible student - the Ideal Woman. We cannot be sure but perhaps the writer was describing his own Mother. Many a person woman or man would think of his or her own mother as one reads this immortal passage.

The King answers for me the question of the subject: "What's a Mother?"

These are the well known characteristics - she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. The bread of idleness - upon which so many women and men feed, The bread of idleness is the source of much weakness and evil in life today. The rise of unemployment among minorities is a troubling fact of our generation. Someone has defined a popular perversion of Christianity as " imagination working on idleness." But in describing this industrious mother of Proverbs - "here is a woman whose candle goeth not out by night " The burning candle is a symbol of the sacrificial life of a good mother. I copied this description of a faithful wife from George Eliot's Clerical Studies, " Mrs Barton carried up-stairs the remainder of her heap of stockings, and laid them on a table close to her bedside, where she also placed a warm shawl, removing her candle

CLOSE

A MOTHER

** Today both woman and men can give birth to
a child but ~~ixxixs~~ but others can not and
-2- yet be better -mothers and fathers.

before she put it out, to a tin socket fixed at the head of her bed..... But about half-past five in the morning, if there were any angels watching round her bed - and angels might be glad of such an office - they saw Mrs. Barton rise up quietly, careful not to disturb her slumbering husband, light her candle, prop herself upright with the pillows, throw the warm shawl round her shoulders, and renew her attack on the heap of undarned stockings." I am certain it is not always true but daughters ~~ane~~ suppose to learn from mothers and sons from fathers. By precept and precept means a method of instruction - " learn by precept and example) example means - a thing illustrate

*** ted." Good woman can be a bad mother- good man-

How many of you today can remember how your mother rose before it was day and had breakfast ready for them as they started on the battle of a new day. Allow me to insert a personal note: You cannot imagine how surprised I was to discover that Mrs. Jackson did not eat breakfast. Mother Jackson called us to breakfast - I would guess that so many children that com to school today come from homes where breakfast is not served. Solution: I learned to cook breakfast. I have a vivid picture of a ministerial friend - " When I consulted with him about this breakfast situation - he told me he got even with his wife He stopped eating breakfstt." This mother of Proverbs: " She riseth while it is yet night."

What's a mother - the ideal mother is loyal to her husband and to her children. Proverbs - says, " The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." Such loyalty brings the reward of having her husband - known in the gates. Faithful in all good things, She will do him good all th days of her life. Not just a romantic flash at the beginning of their relationship; but, clear down to the very end. a love that never tires. Nothing can surpass the loyalty of a good wife or mother. I can remember a mother - among many in a church I served. When her daughter was just a little

child - I cannot help but say - she was indeed an ugly child - but the mother worked on that daughter. I was away from Greenwich about six or seven years - That mother had worked a miracle. she had done something to the hair that knotted, oils had smoothed her rough and colorless skin, good training had produced grace and manners, good selection had given the right colors to favour her dark brown complexion, and the fine singing voice she had as a talent that training developed surrounded by such an atmosphere - she was competing for a scholarship to study in France - Mother's loyalty had worked a miracle.

Sometimes women are sacrificial and self-denying at home with their families, but outside the of the home are difficult and unfeeling. But Proverbs says this woman stretched forth her hands to the needy. She was like Dorcas of whom we read in the Book of Acts, and whom Peter raised from the dead. "This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." When Peter came to her home at Joppa, he found all the widows mourning over her, and they showed him the coats and garments which Dorcas made " while she was with them - reminds me of Mrs. Bennett.

Whats A Mother - One has the law of kindness on her tongue." In his famous description of the tongue, James calls it " a world of iniquity." which " setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is seton the fire of hell." Knowing how to speak kindly - I only know a few men that can out talk a woman - this woman does not pass along a ill report. Does not impute wrong motives, and does not rejoice in ones downfall. She praise where praise is possible; and where it is not possible - she keeps silent.

Whats a Mother - A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. " Was she beautiful- Nothing is said about beauty. What is emphasied here is another kind of beauty - beauty of soul. Strength and honor are this woman's clothing. Bodily beauty can be vain and deceitful. It may become the ally an agent of evil and temptation and even where it is tied and united with a beautiful soul it is bound to fade and vanish

despite all the creams, soaps, and all the helps of the beauty parlor. But the beauty of the soul never fades, and never leads astray or deceives

Before I close the message on the 31st chapter of Proverbs. Allow me to attempt a brief paraphrase of this hymn. A" Virtuous woman, who can find ? But the wordly woman you can find anywhere today. She riseth while it is night to engage in her labors for the family - but the wordly woman riseth sometime before noon. The candle of the vistuous woman goeth not out by night, but the candle of the wordly woman goeth not out by night as the family leaves the light so she can come in. The wordly woman openeth her mouth with folly, and on her tongue is the law of gossip.

Whats A Mother. A mother is a woman whoes influence abides from generation to generation, and her children rise up and call her blessed. The uplifting, preserving, warning, sanctifying, purifying, and comforting influence of a godly mother is one of th most powerful forces that work upon the soul of man. Well coul Paul appeal to Timothy by the faith and love of his mother Eunice and his gradmother Lois. There is no more powerful, higher, stronger, more uplifting, and more abiding influence in the life of the child then that of a good mother.

When I re-read this 31st chapter - I was comparing each characteristic with my mother - perhaps because this ancient sketch was written before Christ came.. it left an important characteristic out.. I would add - as I speak of my mother.. A mother who has bowed at the Cross, a mother who loves the church which Christ loved and for which he shed his precious blood. A mother whose Eternal lover is the Lord Jesus Christ - and there the writter could say is the Ideal Christian Mother..