

A MOTHERS' DAY MEDITATION

by Mrs. Hazel Owens

(John 19:26-27) "When Jesus therefore saw his Mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, He saith unto his Mother, Woman behold thy Son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy Mother!"

Although Jesus was the son of God, yet those who knew him in childhood and youth, spoke of him as the Carpenter's son. And so Joseph, being his earthly father, had the same love and concern for Jesus as he did for the other children who came into the family later.

After their visit to the temple at twelve years of age, we know nothing of his life, other than that he returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and was subject unto them. Being the eldest son, he undoubtedly worked in the shop with Joseph, learning the trade, as he is referred to in Mark's gospel as the Carpenter, the son of Mary.

After Joseph's death, Jesus is believed to have been the bread-winner for the family until He began His life's ministry, following His baptism by John in the river Jordan.

We can imagine how Mary watched with keen interest the things He did, and the words of wisdom he uttered, remembering the words of the angel, "that her son would be the Saviour of the world, and that he would be great, and called the Son of the highest, and of his kingdom there would be no end".

After knowing of the many miracles he had performed during the three short years of his public ministry and hoping with others who loved and believed in him, that he would at that time restore Israel and set up an earthly kingdom, it was unthinkable that he would come to such an awful death.

When the soldiers came to take him to Calvary to Crucify him, Mary was with the few devoted ones who followed closely, and again she is reminded of the words of Simeon in the temple, — "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy son's soul also."

Now he hangs in agony, and Mary's heart of love is indeed pierced, not with a Roman sword, but with a deep pungent sorrow.

For an instant Jesus forgets his own agony, and the care for his Mother once more becomes his chief concern. The loving relationship in the flesh that they had enjoyed to the full was about to cease, and even amid his suffering for man's redemption, he showed his human sympathy and filial love. Near the cross stood John the beloved disciple, Mary's nephew, and thinking of her present and future comfort and care, Jesus commits her to him in the words, "Woman behold thy son; son, behold thy Mother", this was an indication that John was to take her to his own home, and care for her as he would his own Mother, and it is believed that John immediately removed her from the dreadful scene, and afterwards returned to the cross.

The word woman spoken, was a title of high respect among the Hebrews, and probably Jesus used it, instead of calling her mother, in order to spare her feelings. He would not use a word which would wring her tender heart with additional sorrow.

It is probable that because John kept near the cross and did not forsake Jesus in this crisis hour, or even follow afar off as did Peter, that Jesus entrusted to him the care of his Mother, and did not allow him to die a violent death as did the other disciples. Herein was the promise fulfilled that if father and mother was honored, his days would be long on the earth. Blessings and prosperity always follow those who tenderly care for parents entrusted to them.

As Mary knelt beside the cross
And received her dying Son,
She knew His mission was complete.

Sterile Christians

A. Gordon Wolfe

The barren womb has caused great disappointment and distress to many would be parents. Abraham and Sarah longed many years for a son. Both Rachel and Hannah finally bore children after disappointing delays. How they rejoiced when at last their prayers were answered.

Reproduction is a law of life. Without it a species would become extinct in one generation. If the human family should suddenly become sterile there would never be another generation.

What a pity that there are so many sterile Christians; Christians who have lost their potency, Christians who never reproduce "after their kind" because their witness is silent or has been rendered ineffective by inconsistent living. How grieved God's heart must be because there are so many Christians who are not reproducing.

Winning men to Christ is the work of every Christian. So great a task cannot completely be left in the hands of the paid clergy. Sheep, not the shepherd, bear the lambs. The shepherd can only assist in the delivery and look after the new lambs; he must see that the sheep are fed and protected from danger. But it remains for the sheep themselves to bear the lambs.

The pastor, the under shepherd, feeds and cares for the flock of God. He nourishes the young lambs. He may even be called upon to assist in the "delivery." However, the greatest demonstration of godliness is exhibited in the common intercourse of life through the daily contacts of the laymen. In the same place of employment, under the same boss, with the same pressures, the Christian can say to his fellow worker "Christ is sufficient" with a greater persuasiveness than perhaps anyone else in any other position. Nevertheless, it is a fact that many times the impotency of the Christian prevents this effective witness.

The Christians of the first century said, "We cannot but speak," while the Christians of the twentieth century say, "We cannot speak." Note the difference! We are made sterile by timidity. The Christians of the early church were timid too. They had to pray, "Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness."

Sterility of the Christian renders him helpless in reproducing "after his kind" in the lives of others. The church is not growing as it should because of the sterility of its members. If God was able to restore potency to Abraham and Sarah, to Rachel and to Hannah, so that they were able to bear children, certainly He can restore life and potency to a sterile and impotent Christian and cause him to so witness that men will be born into the kingdom.

—The Wesleyan Methodist

The Victory had been won
And yet her tender Mother heart,
Was bleeding, and the sword
Had pierced her to her very soul,
Her Son, and yet her Lord,
Looked down and saw her lone estate
And spoke to John that day —
About the care he should bestow
When He had passed away.
How like the Blessed Son of God!
While dying for our sins,
Did not forget this one he loved;
Asked John to take her in.
A noble lesson we may learn
From Him now lifted high;
Perchance some loved one needs our care
Oh, let's not pass them by!