

A GODLY MOTHER - A TYPE OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

BIBLE TEXT : Proverbs 31:10-31

LESSON 228 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Proverbs 31:10-31

¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price *is* far above rubies.

¹¹ The heart of her husband doth
safely trust in her, so that he shall
have no need of spoil.

¹² She will do him good and not
evil all the days of her life.

¹³ She seeketh wool, and flax, and
worketh willingly with her hands.

¹⁴ She is like the merchants' ships;
she bringeth her food from afar.

¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet
night, and giveth meat to her
household, and a portion to her
maidens.

¹⁶ She considereth a field, and
buyeth it: with the fruit of her
hands she planteth a vineyard.

¹⁷ She girdeth her loins with
strength, and strengtheneth her
arms.

¹⁸ She perceiveth that her
merchandise *is* good: her candle
goeth not out by night.

¹⁹ She layeth her hands to the
spindle, and her hands hold the
distaff.

²⁰ She stretcheth out her hand to
the poor; yea, she reacheth forth
her hands to the needy.

²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for
her household: for all her
household *are* clothed with scarlet.

²² She maketh herself coverings of
tapestry; her clothing *is* silk and
purple.

²³ Her husband is known in the
gates, when he sitteth among the
elders of the land.

²⁴ She maketh fine linen, and
sellet *it*; and delivereth girdles
unto the merchant.

²⁵ Strength and honour *are* her

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Qualities and Attributes of the Bride of Christ

1 Of rare, precious excellence, Proverbs 31:10;

Isaiah 62:3

³ Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

Deuteronomy 32:10

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Luke 12:32

³² Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 18:8

⁸ I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

2 Trustworthy, Proverbs 31:11;

2 Kings 12:15

¹⁵ Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

2 Chronicles 34:11-12

¹¹ Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

¹² And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward; and *other* of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick.

Nehemiah 7:2

² That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and feared God above many.

Daniel 6:4

⁴ Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

1 Corinthians 4:2

² Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Revelation 17:14

¹⁴ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

3 Faithful in that which is good, Proverbs 31:12;

Luke 19:17

¹⁷ And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Hebrews 3:5

⁵ And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

Revelation 2:10

¹⁰ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

²⁶ She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

²⁷ She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

²⁸ Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

²⁹ Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

³⁰ Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

4 Industrious, having willing, conscientious application to duty, Proverbs 31:13, 24;

Romans 12:11

¹¹ Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

1 Corinthians 4:10-12

¹⁰ We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised.

¹¹ Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

¹² And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

5 Draws strength from God, Proverbs 31:14;

Exodus 15:2

² The LORD *is* my strength and song, and he *is* become my salvation: he *is* my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Psalms 46:1

¹ God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalms 73:26

²⁶ My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Psalms 84:5

⁵ Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.

Psalms 89:21

²¹ With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.

6 Diligent in service toward God and man, Proverbs 31:15;

Proverbs 22:29

²⁹ Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men*.

Romans 12:6-8

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

⁷ Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

⁸ Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Hebrews 6:10-12

¹⁰ For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

¹¹ And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

¹² That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

7 Farsighted, Proverbs 31:16;

Hebrews 11:8-16

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

¹¹ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

¹² Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed

that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

¹⁶ But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

8 Clad in spiritual armor, Proverbs 31:17;

2 Corinthians 6:7

⁷ By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

2 Corinthians 10:4

⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Revelation 19:7

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Ephesians 6:13-17

¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

1 Thessalonians 5:8

⁸ But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 Has good perception of the Word of God, Proverbs 31:18;

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

¹⁰ But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵ But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

¹⁶ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

James 1:22-25

²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

²⁵ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

10 Alert and watchful for her Lord's coming, Proverbs

31:18;

Matthew 25:1

¹ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:4-7

⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

⁵ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

Matthew 25:9-10

⁹ But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Full of charity and thoughtfulness of others, Proverbs

31:19, 20;

1 John 3:16-17

¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

2 Peter 1:7

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

James 1:27

²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Isaiah 58:6-7

⁶ *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

⁷ *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Acts 20:35

³⁵ I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Romans 15:1

¹ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Galatians 6:2

² Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

1 Peter 3:8

⁸ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

12 Has confidence in God, Proverbs 31:21;

Psalm 3:6

⁶ I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

Psalm 20:7

⁷ Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Psalm 23:4

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

13 Clad in garments of righteousness, Proverbs 31:22;

Job 29:14

¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.

Revelation 3:5

⁵ He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 7:14

¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:8

⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Revelation 21:2

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Luke 15:22

²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

Isaiah 61:10

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

Isaiah 3:4

⁴ And I will give children *to be* their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

14 Lives for her Bridegroom; her desire is in Him,

Proverbs 31:23;

Romans 7:4

⁴ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

2 Corinthians 11:2

² For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

Revelation 19:7

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Luke 14:33

³³ So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

15 The godly virtues are hers, Proverbs 31:25;

Ephesians 5:23-27

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

16 Possesses an eternal hope, Proverbs 31:25;

1 Corinthians 15:19

¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

1 Corinthians 15:49-54

⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

17 Abundant in the Spirit's fruit, Proverbs 31:26;

2 Peter 1:5-8

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

18 Evangelistic to those who are outside the fold, but still responsible for those who are within, Proverbs 31:27;

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

¹ I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and

shall be turned unto fables.

⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

1 Peter 5:2-4

² Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

³ Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

19 Has the approval of God and man, Proverbs 31:28;

Romans 8:16

¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Galatians 4:6-7

⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Isaiah 62:5

⁵ For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

20 Has a life that is above reproach, Proverbs 31:29;

2 Peter 3:14

¹⁴ Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

2 Corinthians 6:3

³ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

1 Timothy 4:12

¹² Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Titus 2:7-8

⁷ In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

⁸ Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

21 Does not depend upon her own works for her salvation, Proverbs 31: 30;

Romans 3:20

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Romans 11:6

⁶ And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Galatians 2:16

¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:4-5

⁴ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

22 Has all the Christian evidences, Proverbs 31:31;

John 15:1-16

¹ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

⁹ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

¹⁰ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

¹² This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

¹⁶ Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Colossians 1:10

¹⁰ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Philippians 1:11

¹¹ Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

NOTES:

For our Mother's Day lesson this year, this portion of the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs has been chosen. The question has been asked, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" The qualifications of a virtuous woman are set forth in these verses. They picture the character of a woman of genuine worth. What a wonderful world this would be to live in if every mother brought her life to the standard of these verses!

An eminent writer of the past said that the mother of John and Charles Wesley literally fulfilled this Scripture. He had traced her life from her birth to her death and had never found her equal among the daughters of men.

In our own generation we have known one woman whose life stood high above the mothers of our day. She was Florence L. Crawford, the founder of the Apostolic Faith Work. Her life as a mother and leader has set a high standard and example for the mothers of this day. This thirty-first chapter of Proverbs was a favorite passage of Scripture with her. She used it much in preaching and teaching on the Bride of Christ.

The standards of this chapter have been applied to a woman; and we believe the spiritual meaning refers to the Bride of Christ, which means both men and women.

The New Birth

The first qualification for a virtuous woman and for memberships in the Bride of Christ, is the new birth, at which the heart is cleansed from sin by the Blood of Jesus. The Spirit of God quickens the soul and makes it alive. This is more than just a decision to serve Christ. It is more than "turning over a new leaf." It is an experience wrought in the heart by the Blood of Jesus. Sin goes out and a new life begins. Without that experience of the new birth, sin will dominate the life and it will be impossible to live the high standard set forth in this chapter. With sin destroyed and the heart made pure, the soul starts on its upward climb toward the much sought-for prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Spiritual Virtues

Peter gives us some instruction on how to acquire many of these virtues. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:3-7).

Trustworthiness

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Trustworthiness is a rare virtue today. How many of our men went overseas in the past war to fight for our country, and came home to find that the affection of their wife had been turned toward another man. The Bride of Christ is trustworthy. Though Jesus tarries a long time, His Bride will remain true. He will have no need of spoil.

Willing Service

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." There is nothing lazy about the Bride of Christ. Paul made tents and supported himself and those who labored with him. As he worked he preached Christ to those idolatrous people.

Many of our saints work all day and rush to get to street meeting in the evening that they might have the opportunity of telling the story of Jesus to the wayfaring men on the street. In every phase of our work the same could *be* said. Our musicians toil all day and in the evening use their talents to present the Gospel in music and song, a willing offering unto the Lord. When our missionary vessel, the Lower Light, goes on its missionary trips with its crew of workers, every one of them works. There are no "idlers" on board. There are many other avenues of service that are also filled by willing servants of Christ. The sick are visited, kind words are spoken, literature and tracts are printed and distributed personally or through the mails, the church taken care of that it might be clean and inviting, to name but a few of the long list.

"She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar." She feeds on the Heavenly Manna. Jesus told His disciples one day that He had meat to eat that they knew not of. While the disciples were away buying meat for dinner, He

sat on Jacob's well and told a thirsty soul about the Water of Life.

The person who is constantly drawing his spiritual food from Heaven is ready, day or night, to arise and minister to the sick, the poor, or whatever the need may be. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them" (Jeremiah 15:16).

Fruitful Field

The Bride of Christ is ever on the lookout for a fruitful field for the Gospel. When she finds fertile soil, she considers that field and buys it. She maketh fine linen and selleth it that she may have money to buy that fruitful field. Then she goes to work to plant a vineyard. She labors untiringly to build a church and establish the Gospel in that fruitful field. She girds her loins with strength; and though the enemy may come in like a flood, she has strength to combat the powers of hell.

Winds of Adversity

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." Ill winds may blow, adversities may come; but she is prepared for them. She has been constantly building her faith to meet the hard problems of life. There is no fear in her heart. She can sing songs in the night; for *she* knows that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord.

Wisdom and Kindness

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Possibly this is the most distinguishing excellence of all her virtues. How few have attained unto it. You are a blessed man or woman if this can be said of you. It can be, through the grace of God.

"Helpmeet"

"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." She has honored and respected her husband and has done him good and not evil all the days of her life. She has fulfilled that for which she was created — a helpmate to man. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband" (Proverbs 12:4).

In this same way does the Bride of Christ have all her desire in Christ. The holiness of God, exemplified in her character, draws people to respect and honor the Christ.

Loving Tribute

"Her children arise up, and call her blessed." All over our land on this day, children are paying loving tribute to their mothers. If they have godly mothers, they have received a heritage worth more than silver or gold or houses and lands; and they feel that no gift would be too lavish to bestow upon her. Unfortunately, many children have no such heritage. The past half century has witnessed a great departing of many mothers from the clean, modest, virtuous' life, to that of drinking, smoking, and reveling. The effect of that kind of life is seen in their children and in too many young people of today. The old adage, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world," shows the influence that is wielded when sin abounds or when righteousness reigns.

Vain Beauty

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain." Many women deck themselves with the ornaments of this world, trying to

appear beautiful to people; but inside, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. A woman who possesses true religion has a grace that brings harmony to the soul, purifies and refines all tempers and passions, and gives her that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Praises

The Bride of Christ is looking forward with joy and yet with humble gratitude to the commendation she will receive when she meets her Lord in the air. The fruit of her hands, the talents gained, the life she has lived, will "praise her in the gates."

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who does this virtuous woman represent?
- 2 What is her price?
- 3 Where does she get her food?
- 4 How does she plant a vineyard?
- 5 Why is she not afraid of the snow?
- 6 With what ornaments does she deck herself?
- 7 What is said in our lesson about beauty?
- 8 Who praises this virtuous woman?