

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

A devotional commentary on Proverbs 31:10-31.

COME HITHER, I WILL SHEW THEE THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.

In the Word the highest of human relationships is lifted beyond the earthly plane, beyond and above angels in the courts of heaven, to point us to that blessed union that belongs to the Divine...*"I speak concerning Christ and the church"*. Ephesians 5;32.

In Proverbs 31:10 to 31, we have the description of the virtuous woman of any age, a glowing account of ideals, a help meet for a perfect man. As the Word of God directs us to such a list of qualities and character the Spirit of God helps us to see reflected therein some glimpses of the Bride of Christ.

The statement of perfection may bring little comfort to those who are only too aware of imperfection. The high standards seem remote as they are beautiful. As our perception deepens so the goal may appear to recede further from our reach. We know we have not yet attained, but how conceivable is it that we shall ever attain?

The answer lies in the blessed truth that this is a work of grace. *His* grace, producing *ours*. Just believing this, and staggering not, makes us pure in His eyes, and brings us into a relationship of at-one-ness with the very Source of All Perfection through our Lord Jesus Christ. That *He* is *our Lord* is special enough in the sight of His Father to give us faith's access into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Here then is a kind of check-list of those attainments of the bride in her making ready for that eternal union with the Heavenly Bridegroom. All the divine resources are at hand, the very power of God at our disposal, and the angels of God waiting upon the every spiritual need of heaven's princess, with those echoes of mercy and whispers of love.

THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY..

AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT ...
TO A MOUNTAIN, GREAT AND HIGH

The description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31;10 to 31, in which we catch glimpses of the Betrothed of the Lord, consists of 22 verses. It is alphabetical, each verse commencing with the next Hebrew letter. No doubt this was to aid the memory of a precious passage worthy indeed of engraving in the mind. This may seem of little point to us in that few of the Lord's people can read Hebrew. However, it has been noticed that in each letter there may be some deeper link than at first supposed with the principle point of each verse. *If* this be so it is a *bonus*, the main value rests in the verse. Nevertheless a further bonus may lie in that we are thus afforded an opportunity to become a little more acquainted with the language of the Holy Word.

The nineteenth century was a remarkable one for Bible students in many ways, not least in the works of the Hebrew scholar Gesenius which marked its opening years. It is to him we are indebted for the designations given to each Hebrew letter by those who used them. Thus the first letter Aleph is designated the ox, probably because if viewed with imagination it does rather look like the head and horns of an ox. Beth is a house, Gamel a camel, and so on.

If the Lord uses the ideal of the virtues of this woman to paint a picture of the virtuous woman of this gospel age, then indeed do we need the spirit's power to carry us away, to translate both the picture and also ourselves in the highest spiritual terms. The love of God that has overflowed into human hearts is this moment expressing itself in countless human ways in the lives of His saints. Here the human is but the vehicle, the vessel, of the divine. A new mind is in control, a new light in the eyes, a new life and

purpose in the step. A woman in love lives in a different world. She faces the realities around her, but she is not inhibited by them, for she has in her heart a glowing vision of a life shared with the man of her dreams.

SO SHALL WE BE . . . FOREVER WITH THE LORD.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies. Proverbs 31:10

aleph. = the ox, symbol of domesticated strength.

The ox from which all domestic cattle are thought to be derived, was for man a great source of harnessed strength. It is used to depict the strength of God's throne in Ezekiel 1;10 etc.

Virtue = strength under control.

THE ABLE WOMAN WHO CAN FIND? - so great a source of strength to man. Eliezer found her at the well. Boaz found her at his feet. Both accounts we are afforded in which to glimpse something of the preciousness of our call to the fellowship, the sharing of His Son. So important it was to Abraham that the right choice be made, the right woman found for the son of his love. Can we begin to sense, in that weight of responsibility laid upon his faithful servant, something of the great importance of the divine choice and selection in this present age? There can be *no room for mistake*. She must be right, *exactly right*, for that One Who now inherits all things, in Whom all the promises of God are positive and sure, Yea, and Amen.

PRECIOUS MORE THAN RUBIES. The mission of the age is not in vain. He has found Him a wife, a woman whose qualities of character and purity are after the likeness of her Creator (Col 3;10). He has revealed her worth to Him in the bride price He has paid.. in the ruby-like precious drops of her Redeemer's blood. Can any human husband love his wife "*as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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.*" (Eph 5;25-27) The able woman.. her first great feat of ability.. just to believe, just to say, "*I will go with this man*".(Gen 24;58) And as she thus walked with him, and as we walk in the spirit, to that faith is added.. *virtue*.. the character of full spiritual strength and ability in Christ. (Ruth 2;12,13. 3;10,11.)

I HAVE PURCHASED HER TO BE MY WIFE . . (Ruth 4;10)

AND HE SHOWED ME THAT GREAT CITY...

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

Proverbs 31:11

Beth. = a house, tent, tabernacle.

The woman is the home of the man, the place of his rest in whom he lives. There are no possessions, no material things, that can replace a woman's love. "*and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*" ..filled with her love. (John12;3) It is a place of mutual trust.

HER HUSBAND'S BELIEF IN HER Ruth 3:14, "*And she lay at his feet until the morning:*" She was at rest , and so was he. It was the highest place she knew, to lie at his feet. And at that trysting place of love he made to her his vow, and she to him.

That I believe in Him has changed my life, but that **He** believes in **me**! - That He has such confidence in His ability to finish, to perfect that state of trust of which He is the Author, - to anticipate even now that finished work of grace, - to share with me that mutual confidence which is the basis, the foundation, walls, and topmost stone of love's eternal abode.

Who shall love most? Not the one who felt most worthy, but the one with most forgiven. It is grace that enriches the heart and furnishes it right through as we treasure the love messages of the Word, follow its instructions, its revealing of His mind, the things that please our Lord, accept its corrections (His hand upon the tiller,) and value its reproof.(2Timothy 3:16,17.) His is such love that can tell us when we are wrong, and help us cleanse away the *spots* in character that would impede that perfect union, and smooth away the *wrinkles* where our flesh so poorly fits the new mind within. He sees our responses, recognises there the motivation of our heart, and cherishes the strength of its desires towards Himself.

SHE WILL NOT MISUSE THAT MUTUAL TRUST. *“He will have no need of spoil.”* This means that she becomes totally reliable in her management of all His affairs. The two think *as one*. She, above all, values His provision, appreciates with gratitude His gifts. Everything He trusts to her she gladly takes and uses to His praise. No task or service is too great. No ‘day of small things’ is despised. No opportunity she wastes, nor time. Nor will she pass by privilege of service to her Lord, some work He needs of her, that He must turn to others to fulfill. The pouring out of love so many ways, may seem to some ‘great waste’. But one thing only satisfies her mind, that He Who understands love’s language best ... believes in her. How precious to her ears is His defense... *“Let her alone, on Me has she wrought a good work..”*

THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL. ENTER INTO MY JOY..

AND I SAW THE HOLY JERUSALEM DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Proverbs 31:12

Gamel = the camel, long used in the service if man, bearing forth his goods and treasures with remarkable powers of persistence, and with great durable qualities even in the most hard-going wilderness conditions. Part of the train of Rebekah as she journeys to Isaac, and of the Queen of Sheba too, bearing good things to Solomon.

SHE DOES HIM GOOD How beautiful the thought! She is good, and she does Him good. It is her nature and her role. Fruit of God’s Own Spirit (Gal 5:22, Eph 5:9), *goodness* may be variously defined. It is the receptive state of heart ready to embrace His every word and nurture it as living precious seed to bring forth much fruit.(Mat 13:23.) Goodness is as salt, fully effective in the purpose of its being. If it should lose its savor it is good for nothing. (Mat 5:13.) Goodness is the giving of the best, the centering of the attention on the one thing needful. The Hebrew carries the thought of ‘pleasing’. Attitudes and work s are only good in that they are pleasing to our Lord. It is His definition of goodness to do only those things that please His Father, and it is our earnest desire and endeavor to more and more share that only worthy aim of existence.

ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE So does each body member function every day and every hour, with precision and sensitivity fulfilling every desire of the Head in every service it can pay. What goodness is there in the vine save to bear grapes? All other purposes are broken off from the day of betrothal. Each day is now her Lord’s, and every act has part in the language of her love for Him. In the youthful days of inexperience she tries so hard to please though lacking expertise. As the years pass, it matures into absorbing delight. In riper years, - fulfilment. His “lovest thou Me?” rings in her ears each hour, and finds relief in the outlet He supplies. “Tend My lambs.” “My goodness extendeth not to Thee..” unless directed towards “the saints that are in the earth.” In His eyes and now in hers, they are “the excellent” that ever reflect the exceeding glory of *all His goodness* as it passes before them, “in whom is all my delight.”

MAY GOD FULFILL EVERY DESIRE FOR GOODNESS 2Thess 1:11.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. Proverbs 31:13

Daleth = a door, opening into a further realm. Thus used figuratively of the door of opportunity. Knocking thereon signifies diligence in seeking and pursuing what is desired. Digging of the ear of the devoted slave to the doorpost implies the opening of our heart to the openings of service, entered with joyful satisfaction. The Lord is ever opening and closing doors for us. It speaks of His overruling care, as our responses speak of understanding and appreciative love and trust.

DILIGENCE IN SEEKING. Is ever opening doors, enquiring, exploring opportunity to serve the Master of the house. The wool and the flax are the raw materials of such service, perhaps the needs of others of the household, discovered with the delicacy of love, and developed with design and delight into the dress or durable garment or whatever may cover or furnish that need. Sometimes we need the comforting warmth of another's understanding, interest and care. Sometimes the cool light garment of uplift and encouragement. Sometimes the wool, sometimes the flax, the fine linen. The Lord supplies our needs in the needs of others, by drawing forth that generous caring love that seeketh not her own. In comforting we ourselves are comforted, in watering watered.

DILIGENCE IN WORKING. The working of that garment that will fit the need of someone we love may take long persevering effort. It may need more than one fitting, much repeated application. David epitomized the spiritual despondency of lapsing faith in his fear that he would die at the hands of Saul, in our case, that the flesh might conquer. We need many "kisses of His mouth", many reassurances of love. What priceless privilege is mine if my Lord, knowing intimately the needs of one of His anointed, places in my hands the very means of their supply. However lowly and unworthy the vehicle of His love, the tether must be loosened at the words, "The Master hath need of it." "What is that in thine hand?" Is it wool? - Flax? - A box of precious ointment do you hold? Why has He thus filled my vessel with such fulness of His love? *"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces (or boxes), whereby they (the King's daughters) have made Thee glad."* Psalm 45:8.

SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD...

HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD

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

Proverbs 31:14

He = a window or lattice, presenting a view through and beyond a wall. Figuratively it may speak of the penetration of that wall that encloses our own personal inner feelings and thoughts, as the eyes are windows to the soul. It also may be used of the barrier between the present moment and time to come. In the latter sense it depicts far sight and foresight. The "windows of heaven" also reveal the divine abundances when opened towards us, in Genesis 7 of judgment, in Malachi 3 of mercy. The Beloved of the Song of Songs makes His presence known through the lattice, but even the partial and momentary glimpse is enough. How we value those glimpses!

EPITOME OF EDIFICATION Enriched with jewels of silver and of gold bequeathed by Eliezer, the betrothed goes forth. She emulates all that is edifying. She is like the merchant ships laden with good things. She is an exhibition of blessing-laden grace. The windows of heaven have been opened unto her, and from that vast and wondrous store she draws forth supplies abundant as she has space to receive. Her sight is for her treasure. She shares a view of higher things of a different realm, and the glory of them shows in her eyes. Beyond the world of the momentary she sees the realm of the eternal. The abundances of divine goodness bring forth an abundant living that is shared with all she may meet.

FOOD FROM AFAR From this body of humiliating contradictions she looks away unto Jesus. She sees Him waiting there for her, Himself a Victor at His Father's right hand. He stands ready to intercede on her behalf, and to her prayers He adds the sweet incense of His love, confessing her before Her Father and His. Only by that preceding incense can any pass into that holy place. Thus does she find the boldness to enter and explore the courts of heaven, the land of far distances and

immeasurables. She dwells on earth, yet in her heart sojourns in a land of promise. She spy out its resources, and tastes its luscious fruits. Yet not for herself alone. Beyond her needs, by nature of this atmosphere of heaven itself in which she walks, she now the more perceives another's lack, the parched ground thirsting for the rain. And it is hers to give, and blessings shared increase. So ready to dispense, to be out-poured, and none who meet her leave with empty heart. Into their lives she enters but to bless, to edify, and leave behind her peace. Her very breath brings hope, her presence joy. She has wherewith to comfort from her God. No shallow platitude of words, but truth that stems from treasure in her heart. Enriched of Him, her Lord, she has within abundant life that yet through her is destined to make glad and satisfy the present groaning race.

OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART

AND HER LIGHT LIKE UNTO A STONE MOST PRECIOUS

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

Proverbs 31:15

Vav = a nail or hook, something fixed and solid upon which one may depend (as the “nail in a sure place” of Isaiah 22:23,24.). Its own reliability depends upon two factors, the solid firm structure of the wall, and the tenacity of its hold. Its trustworthiness is thus linked by faith to His.

VITALITY OF FAITH The English alphabet would bring us to the corresponding “F” for faithfulness. The Hebrew roots deeper by suggesting in the very sound of “vav” that vital union with Christ on which that faithfulness depends. Herein lies the vivacity of that compelling vital force of the Spirit of God which habitually rises early. In Scripture this is the language of great earnestness. Thus in Psalm 63:

*1 " O God, thou art my God; **early** will I seek thee: my soul **thirsteth** for thee, my flesh **longeth** for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;
2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
3 Because thy loving kindness is **better than life**, my lips shall praise thee.
4 **Thus will I bless thee while I live:** I will lift up my hands in thy name.
5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:"*

The daily attitude of each devoted soul may be voiced in the determination of David. Psalm 132:3-5" *"Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, 5 **Until I find out a place for the LORD**, an habitation (worthy) for the mighty God of Jacob."*

To this end each day he stored the most durable and precious materials, all that, when his course was done, would complete the Sanctuary of God. 1Chronicles 29:2 “ *Now I have prepared **with all my might** for the house of my God “*

The fullness of God is for those that thirst for Him, and is exhibited in the spiritual food and blessedness with which they each are filled to the building up of the household of God.

FAITHFULNESS OF THE LIFE Who are these maids to whom she assigns her tasks? These are all the powers she owns, now dedicated to the business of her Lord. -Her lips, her hands, her feet, her heart, mind and strength, *all that she is* in joyful service for the glory of her King. Such sentiments and blessedness, the spirit of a living faith, like coals of fire, enkindle others with their warmth, enthuse with their diligence in service, and leave a glow in the heart of that love shared between the Lamb and those who seek to follow closer every day. Thus does He betroth them to Himself in faithfulness forever. They are His jewels, His today, tomorrow, and forever.

LEANING ON THE ARM OF HER BELOVED. . .

LIKE A JASPER STONE, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL.

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

Proverbs 31:16

Cheth = a surrounding hedge or fence. Used both to mark out a possession, and to protect and defend from wind, wild beasts, and enemies. So did the Lord set a hedge around the vineyard He had planted. It was the lament of Satan that the Lord had set a hedge surrounding His servant Job. Zech 2:5 “*For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.*”

THE CLAIM OF FAITH. The character of her strength lies not in her own powers but rather on that confessed weakness which leans hard upon the Lord and the power of His might. His care for her, assured by many infallible proofs, is the joy of her heart. She knows that she is precious in His sight, that He loves and cherishes, comforts and consoles, circles her about, center of His desire. Thus corsetted with love, she clasps to her heart His promises, knowing He will never leave her nor forsake. This is the ground of her strength. It is in this blessed state of faith she dares to lay her claim on what else she never could conceive. The land of promise she considers well, and finds therein the goal of her desires. How might she gain this promised place of “rest”? What currency will purchase such a field? Her claim is one of faith, and with her feet she thus marks out the promised land as hers, and lays her hold upon eternal life. That field, that holy heavenly prize, would never be possessed save by such trust that stakes its all upon its gain. Counting all else but loss, accepting any cost that proves that faith is real, she manifests a zeal consuming as her Lord’s, an inner holy fire.

TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT Her place of rest is lying at His feet, and there she finds the sense of inward calm. She trusts Him come what may. But well she knows her faith must now bear fruit, to yet complete its growth and victory. The Vine. Its fruitfulness reflects the care of Husbandman, yet hers a precious part, to swift respond to His attentive care. To share that same design as His that she might grow to yet more fully glorify His Father’s Name. Into her hands He puts the task of planting and of watering that peace, and honours honest toil by His increase. So tirelessly she works the work of trust, from morn through noon-day heat until the dusk, and then, at last, all labour done, the fruit of her works will follow on.

Psalm 90:17 “*And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea,*

THE WORK OF OUR HANDS ESTABLISH THOU IT.”

IT IS GOD THAT GIRDETH ME WITH STRENGTH
(Psalm 18:32.)

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

Proverbs 31:18

Teth = something that twists, hence a serpent, something entwined. Be ye wise as serpents. Strength of understanding and wisdom depends not on just one strand of knowledge. Through just one single wire a thousand messages may flow. Where many strands entwined they form a cable great in strength. The pillars of the Temple were entwined about their upper chapters with chains and pomegranates, each member of the Christ a link, the bonds of love entwined with endless life.

TASTING AND TESTING As in the kitchen the woman tastes what she prepares, such is the sense

here. This woman tests and tries her work against the Lord's standards of what is true and right. She tests her understanding alongside His understanding revealed in the Word of Truth. There will be one ultimate moment of truth at the hour of her appearing before Him. Then will she stand without shame for her endeavour in the blessedness of His approving smile. And it will be of her He speaks, when, from those gracious lips she hears the words, "Well done!" The value of the finished work lies in the loving zeal that prompted toil, the hours of diligent care, the testing of each stage, all which that final state reflects. The pattern was not of her own devising, but hers the labor and the love that prompted such devotion to her task. His the instruction, closely sought, though sometimes costing concepts of her own device. So to her hands entrusted was the work, the careful application of pattern to cloth, the right dividing, piece by piece, the making up and matching of each part. Spiritual was to spiritual neatly laid, the needlework of grace so deftly sown that only He could see each tiny stitch. Each stitch endeavor showed, and one design that unobtrusively she might complete a work that brings all glory to her Head. *Together* did that daily task involve them both, He working in, she working out. Like growth rings in the tree each stitch betrayed the many varied seasons of each day, life's ins and outs, and ups and downs, contrived, by His direction all along the way.

TRIMMING AND TENDING Within the Word of Truth lie messages designed and coded for the hungry mind, and only such, to find. The students of the Light knows how impeded sight so easily distorts. His way of searching hearts is what that Light imparts whose eyes are single and whose vision one. Whose minds are full of light His lights become. His Word of truth her light, and precious is the sight to Our Dear Lord, her candle through the night. With well-trimmed lamp and vessel full of oil, she bends intent upon her task to seek, the silver piece that waits some corner of the house with joy she finds, and crumb of leaven lurking in the dark she sweeps away.

Her lamp is not allowed to dim ..So tireless does she feed and trim.

Love's own objective forms her light. Will it have beauty *in His sight*?

The tale once was told (in sacred song) of fisherman returning in his boat from days of toil, who as he neared the shore look up to see the lamp that shone so brightly through the dark. - Love's welcome at the window of his home. And as he rowed for shore the sight did cheer his heart.

She lights her lamp for Him, and in the night its light expresses love's desire, a holy warming fire. And does the woman see that love returned? In Psalm 43 the psalmist speaks for me, when to the Lord He cries "Thy Light and Truth . . . send out! Let them my leaders be to bring me safe to Thee, upon The holy Mount." Thus two-ways is this message sent of light, of those who in the light rejoice, and shall yet know inheritance of saints in light of perfect day.

THAT I MAY SHEW FORTH ALL THY PRAISE IN THE GATES OF . . ZION.

Psalm 9:14.

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

Proverbs 31:19

Yod = a hand, which performs the will in all activity. Used many times of the Lord in Whose hand we rest secure. Also of the handmaid of the Lord who ever keeps her eyes upon that hand that indicates to her by sign each dictate of His Will. Thus does she *become* His hand Whose Will she thus fulfils.

YIELDED HANDS: Her hands are yielded to her Lord. Like all her members, they are His, no longer servants of the former will, but instruments of righteousness. Touched by the blood and by the oil, cleansed from all that is unworthy and impure, they function at the impulse of His Mind Whose Spirit now controls. How gladly she accepts His filling of her hands with that which ceaselessly she waves before the One this offering exalts. Day after day, and hour by hour do they untiring seek His glory, show His praise, in working out His Will, and in her heart His ways. In homely language does this verse its lesson serve this offering to describe. In one hand is the distaff from which the thread is slowly unwound. From the other the spindle hangs. Inch by inch the thread of life passes through her hands. Moment by moment does the spindle spin the seconds by. There is no going back. Of each moment is something made, nor can it be reversed or yet undone. Something is learned, or virtue gained, the processing of time. Through consecrated hands the moments pass, experience and privilege first to last,

while to the end the spindle spins, and thus with many fibres forms the thread. Of every moment is there some thing wrought. Like forty days in embryo each hour a change, each moment does it grow, nor does one moment lapse but is so. With wondrous sense of purpose is her life transformed from pointless wandering to a shining way. Thus does she take each moment as it comes and e'er it slips through fingers and away she uses it to glory of her Lord. Thus patience does perform its perfect work, until holiness adorn the servant of the Lord.

HANDFULS OF PURPOSE: Tedious the work of gleaning, like that spinning inch by inch. The single ears of corn picked one by one. So Ruth gleaned in the field 'til evening came. But one was watching and observed that maid of Moab's stooping frame, and her meticulous care. How well she searched and gathered, one hand reaching while the other to her breast received and clasped the sheaf she gained. And from his lips (who was to be her future Bridegroom) came the instruction to his servants concerning her, that they let fall "handfuls of purpose" for her to find. Did she the message get? Did she thus realise that overruling of her lord? Do we? "Where hast thou gleaned today?"

... AND ALL THE WOMEN BROUGHT WHAT THEY HAD SPUN. . .
Exodus 35:25.

AND IN THE STONE A NAME WAS WRITTEN

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
Proverbs 31:20

Caph = a covering wing, or the hollow of a palm. Wings were used to cover and protect, to succor and defend. Comforting their warmth and cheer to those in need. Used to describe the dear Lord's care of those He owns as His. His hands too open to fulfil and satisfy each heart's desire.

CHILD OF CONSOLATION: Her name is Charity as her Father's Name is Love. The cheer and goodness that her Lord brings to her life she gladly shares, and knows whatever form such giving takes her own supply will never fail. In emptying she the more is filled, and her abundance overflows to all around. Each cool refreshing cup of water from her hands ne'er fails to guarantee her Master's smile. As many blessings fill the heart that cared. Touched with the feeling of her Lord's compassion, thus does she know the joy of love that lives most when it gives. The "poor" in this verse means those depressed whether in mind alone or circumstance. The reaching out towards all such who need that helping hand, some word of understanding cheer, encouragement and love, involves a caring sensitive heart. It cannot bear its blessed fullness know except to share with those around whose emptiness cries out. Thus deeper grows that bond with her dear Lord, both in her burden bearing and her grace, her sharing all she has, communion of heaven's love. A child of consolation she indeed a breath of heaven breaths into the lives of those whose hearts are low. Known is she, like her God, for refuge, shelter, strength, no, not her own, but His, for His comfort she fits to others needs. The Spirit of her Lord within attracts not to herself but to the One she serves in ministry of that grace received. Inducing trust, such spirit makes her first to whom they turn when earthly comforts fail.

CHALICE OF CHEER: Hers is the privilege of dispensing now a foretaste of that sweet transforming power this earth shall know in age of love to come. She cannot yet wipe out all tears, but introduces broken hearts to One Who can and will. The reaper, death, she cannot stay, but 'neath its shadow other prisoners hear that song at night's dark hour when she is called to share their pain. If thus her songs of love's salvation one heart claim to turn from prisoner of dark to one of hope, or cause one tearful face to look towards the cross, her life is not in vain. Yet greater joys remain to which such foretastes point. How blest that hour when from death's power the Bride cries "come!", and first to ankles, then to waist, to neck, the weary world first taste and then are overwhelmed by heaven's grace, and that abundant life of knowing God, and walk the path that previously she trod. Each act today of sharing, caring love, engraves more deep that likeness to the Lord, more able makes that minister of grace when heaven's windows open from above to flood this earth with glory.

AND SAVIOURS SHALL COME UP ON MOUNT ZION

CURIOSLY WROUGHT IN THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH

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

Proverbs 31:21

Lamed = an ox goad. It was used to motivate and thus to guide the ox according to the wishes of its master. In Ecclesiastes 12:11 it is used to describe the words of the wise. In Acts 26:14 it refers to the pricking of the conscience in the mind of Saul of Tarsus.

LABORS OF LOVE" The labors motivated by true love of her brethren of the Household of God ever seeketh their highest welfare and good. Such love anticipates with wise foresight the future needs of failing years, and seeks to build up and to strengthen faith in things unseen, dependence on the strength that faileth not when human strength gives way. The effect of her fellowship is thus to deepen trust and to encourage that maturing of the spirit mind, the fitting of the armor well secure against the needs of battles yet to be, that in the evil day they thus may stand. The flimsy passing arguments of time that tend with fruitless words to shipwreck faith, sow discord among friends, and serve the enemy whose devices we well know, can never serve the interest of saints. The structure founded firm, established and secure in Him we love, must grow in things divine - gold tried in fire, in truth's bright silver framed, with precious gems of promise overlaid, a building worthy of our God, His Temple Spirit-filled, made to endure. Such will not fear when icy blasts of winter chill the air, when looking for our friends, they are not there! To this upbuilding does the woman's task not cease, until, her brethren served, she is at peace in knowing that they share in deed, not word, that "secret place," where they may be secure, whatever comes.

LUXURIOUS LIVING: Having a Father Who loves to make abundant provision for His child's comfort and blessing, the Betrothed shares that deep desire that the household of God indulge in all the blessings of abundant living available to them now. The Lord's saints may be poor in the eyes of the world, yet are they rich in faith. They must learn to live with glory, learn to live in the centre of a great love the dimensions of which they have yet to comprehend. Their garments are of scarlet (margin, 'double garments'). Theirs are the great privileges of firstborns. They are of a royal line, all children of a King. All these blessed realities, the exceeding great and precious promises, the dizziness of the height of the heavenly calling, the untold treasures of divine truth, all things are for their sakes that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. This wondrous provision, the abundance of His thoughts towards us, the riches of His mercy and tender love, all combine to produce that warm inner glow of the beloved of God. Her household will not fear the snow in winter, the chill of earthly loss. The mighty fortress of all the divine resources remains her impregnable abode.

I WILL LAY THY FOUNDATIONS WITH SAPPHIRES

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

Proverbs 31:22

Mem = water, the waters of the sea. The greatest covering. When the earth was passing through its earlier stages, "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains." Psalm 104:6. In due course the whole earth will thus be filled with the knowledge of His glory.

MANTLE MAKING. With the vision of that blessed hope in her heart, the wife of the Lamb makes herself ready. As probationary minister of reconciliation she adorns herself with meekness and the mantle of mercy. Her ability as a future minister of the new covenant is related, she knows, to the preparation of the garments of glory and beauty which depict the blessed qualities required of the Christ to befit the work before them and to relate to the satisfying of every human need. Here and now is the time and place of that preparation. Then there is the wedding dress, the cutting out, the making up, the

putting on and fitting of His likeness. The sanctifying power of the hope combines with the experimental 'suffering with,' and 'dying with', that constitutes that 'fellowship,' that 'sharing' with her Lord, to form such closeness that His character and mind in her is formed. The path to glory for each saint is marked out by the footprints of the Lamb.

THOROUGHLY FURNISHED. Her hours she spends in the beautifying of the House of God, His dwelling place. She takes to heart the instructions, and corrections and reproof of the divine Word. Thus is His sanctuary 'furnished right through' in that blessed and holy way that makes the God of glory feel at rest, at home. His Spirit grants the wisdom and the skill, as in the days the Tent of God was made a shadow of His dwellingplace today. That Spirit thus adorns all she does touch, and 'everyday' and 'ordinary' transforms, for everything she does is for her God. Her garments were foreshown in priestly dress, fine linen (not here 'silk') of righteousness, while purple to another priesthood points. The order now is of Melchisedek, the King of Righteousness and King of Peace. So high the call she knows, so short the hours that yet remain to make that calling sure. In His hands are her times, Who, calling, knew the heart that would respond to favour shown. He trusts her zeal this one thing to do, all else forsaking, and redeeming time, that she might so run to obtain. In turn she trusts her Lord, Who would not call without supplying every needed aid, and grace sufficient for the pressing task.

THE BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY

HE SET THE ROYAL CROWN UPON HER HEAD AND MADE HER QUEEN
(Esther 2:17)

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
Proverbs 31:23

Nun = a fish, the name of a gate of the city of Jerusalem. Though dubious the source, the fish became one of the earliest symbols of the Christian church, an acronym for the title in the Greek, 'Jesus Christ of God the Son Savior', each first letter being taken to form the word *ichthys*, 'fish'.

THE NOBLE NAME. Wonderful Counsellor, He sits at the gate of all knowledge, epitome of the wisdom of the truly wise. Of the Creator, Source of all the great unsearchables, He alone could say, "I have known Thee." He also knows with intimate acquaintance all there is in man. Ruth 4:1 "Then went Boaz up to the gate, (where all matters were decided,) and sat him down there:" with the elders of the city. The Law had claims over Ruth, but could not help her. Boaz settled the claim of Law on her behalf. He acted as her 'gaal', her 'next of kin', redeemer. "What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" He has done for this His future Bride. "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law." (Romans 8:2,3. Galatians 3:15.) The cost of that redemption and the way that it was met conveys some inkling of her preciousness to Him. In her eyes He is Wonderful indeed, His Name the name of Wisdom and of Love. The only Name all other names above.

NEXT OF KIN. Nearer and dearer than the closest friend, His is the Name she shares. This is the honor that she treasures most, to bear His Name. What sense of honour does this bring, and with what carefulness she walks, that she be worthy of that Name. In His Name does she serve, in His Name pray, in His Name shares with God her deep desires. To call upon that Name is to be saved. To breath that Name, the deepest peace inspires. Its holiness repels unworthy thought. No impure word, no shameful act of hers shall bring upon that Name the least reproach. Her whole life honours it, and hers the first of knees that bow at its sweet sound. When one day every knee will bend, all tongues confess Him as their worthy Lord, she longs to then be at His side to lead and welcome for Him all acclaim, who first has trusted in that Name.

HIS NAME IS AS OINTMENT POURED FORTH,
THEREFORE DO THE VIRGINS LOVE THEE

A GOLDEN REED, TO MEASURE THE CITY, AND THE GATES AND WALL

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Proverbs 31:24

Samech = a prop or support. A *measure of the love* for her husband is the *total support* she seeks to give to Him and to His work. The upholding of His word, and defence of His good Name, in these things she would wish to be His '*pillar of strength*.'

SAVOUR OF SALT. The seal of a saint is the influence of the life. Her Lord is known for love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. She is His partner here below, 'salt' of the earth. Together is the title shared "Light of the world." His influence within her glows, her life in flesh does manifest the life of Christ. Salt by its nature purifies. Corruption is resisted by its power, and further it adds relish to all touched. So in her life the woman's touch endows the everyday occasions with a grace befitting to her call. The linen she prepares is yet to clothe the many imperfections of the world. The many righteous acts of saintly souls may seem today to influence so few, but this does not deter her holding forth that living Word, nor can she hide for long the torch that burns within. She whists not that her face her "life" betrays, nor knows what influence her ways may yet reveal. The time may be that others may recall, at hour of their deep need, the light she bore, and glorify her Lord.

SATISFYING SERVICE. Not only does she become perceptive in her appreciation of righteousness, and the qualities of service that distinguish human from divine, but her wearing of these adornments so fitly and with such grace models them for the world around. People tend to want what they can see brings satisfaction and delight to other's lives. The blessings of the truth and of the Light, the Christian's joy and peace best advertise. The world will hear her call to "Come and buy!" and then will sluice-gates open to engulf this earth with all the blest effects of righteousness. For this great call the Bride even now prepares. What she has learned of grace she then will share to turn the tide of human misery. His jewels who His character reveal, that light and beauty of a holy walk, will then turn men on earth to righteousness, and like the suns will shine into this world with all the warmth of heaven's love. The *reed of gold*, that standard of divine, to which all things on earth must measure up in time, *will be the finished Christ*, the Head and Body too, in whom He now engraves to His eternal praise that righteous holy law.

THE OVER COMER . . " I WILL MAKE A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE"

WALK ABOUT ZION . . TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF . .

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Proverbs 31:25

Ayin = an eye, hence vision, sight, and that which is in view. By analogy, something which is in the center of a view or landscape, as a fountain or well. In Genesis 24, seven times is the word for 'eye' used for the well where Rebekah and Eliezer met. - Rebekah's eye for the water of life, - Ruth's eye for the grains of corn, each come to the attention of the Lord and His servants.

BLESSED ASSURANCE. She lives in the sight of that Lord Who seeth not as man. She glories not in appearance, but in the view of those holy eyes of divine compassion and tender understanding of the materials in which He works. He knows her frame, knows His power, and how to use the weakness of the one to exhibit the sufficiency and glory of the other. It is this blessed reality that forms the ground of her confident assurance. In vain will her accusers point with finger of guilt at sins now past. With blood of Lamb upon the mercy seat, who is he that can condemn? He Who once died on her behalf will not now say His death was all in vain. She thus has full assurance of understanding (Colossians 2:2), of hope (Hebrews 6:11), of faith (10:22). Her strength and honor is not of flesh, but of a mind at rest with God. She is clothed with the calm serenity and poise of a child of God.

APPREHENSIONS OF JOY. Rebekah had an eye to the journey's end. Forgetting the things behind, she reached forth to what lies before, where Christ is waiting at God's right hand. The N.A.Version says, "*she smiles at the future*". When saints smile regardless of surrounds, a moment of translation may be assumed. The woman's life is dominated by hope, and hope brings forth its joy by anticipation. Her apprehension is of bliss which is yet to be, a laying hold *now* on the blessings of *then*. Rebekah's fond anticipations were not just hers alone, for they were shared by One awaiting that same bliss. The woman's smile is His smile too. The very name, Isaac, means "laughter," and in it lies the joy of countless hearts and ages yet to be. She cannot yet measure the divine immeasurables, nor yet can she know the boundaries of the love of Christ, nor comprehend that joy unspeakable with glory full, but her eye is on that goal.

AT HIS RIGHT HAND . . PLEASURES FOREVERMORE

MY MOUTH SHALL SPEAK FORTH THY PRAISE

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

Proverbs 31:26

Pe = a mouth, linked with speech (from root, 'to blow'). Means of expression of thought, hence, in consecration, an important member, not easily controlled. In some passages mouth may represent the edge of a sword. (Compare Revelation 1:16.) Personal expression of the will and mind, - "we will call the damsel and enquire at her mouth." (Genesis 24:57.)

PRECEPTS OF GOLD. Her prayer, that the hand of the Lord be upon her, that she open not her lips save when prompted and empowered by her Lord. (Ezekiel 3:26,27. Psalm 51:15.) She knows well the frailty of this member, for by nature, her lips are unclean. (Isaiah 6:5.) Yet she dwells in the presence of One Whose Name is Holy. The Lord understands her plight. It is He Who directs the seraphim to take the live coal from the holy altar of God to touch human lips. Those lips now are His, part of the acceptable offering of love. The source of cleansing becomes the source of utterance. He is made unto her *Wisdom*. The Spirit tells her what and how to speak, and heaven's wisdom graces now her mouth. The words, they are not hers, but His. - Expressions of a treasure deep within, not empty, never shallow, insincere. The very spirit of the Mind that brings them forth controls her tongue, enriches speech. Thus words of heaven's fountain pass her lips, to bring refreshing to the weary soul, and to the weeping hope. Men wondered at His gracious words, and still they speak through those whose lips He moves. The gift of wisdom from above bypassing many prudent minds, engraces now the lips of babes. Yet was it dearly sought by many prayers and earnest seeking of the Word as for hid treasure. And when HE saw the thirsting ready mind, the Lord Who answered Solomon's request, His gold bequeathed.

PICTURES OF SILVER. What is of herself has little worth. What is of Him has great worth. Divine oracles are as nuggets of gold. They are imperishable, and can never fail. But more than knowledge does the Lord desire. In inward parts He seeks the genuine reality called Truth. Light is sent forth for righteous hearts. For these alone its gladness is reserved. How beautifully does that wisdom shine, nor ever fosters pride, but full of mercy and good fruits, its purity with grace resides. So easy to approach are those endowed not only with the truth but its effect. An influence of peace with God is found, a deep attractive warmth makes common ground with those who also thirst for Zion's brook. Truth is so precious. Those whose hearts are with this treasure blessed must with that truth its sacred Source confess, and in its fruitfulness reveal its power. In season, fitly spoken be our words, as golden fruit encouched in silver frame, that those Who hear may glorify His Name.

LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH . . BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT

AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD, LIKE UNTO CRYSTAL

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

Tzade = ? (No designation given by Gesenius.) Begins the first word from “*sapa*”, to lean forward to pay close attention, or peer into the future. Here the diligent interest and care of the woman in the affairs of the household, her watchfulness and concern.

TOWER OF THE FLOCK. So, in Micah 4:8, is Jerusalem described, from which the King and Shepherd of Israel observes and guards His flock. While the Lord has special watchmen over His people, watchfulness over the spiritual welfare of self and of our brethren of the household is the responsibility of all saints. She eats not the bread of idleness, tittle-tattle and tale-bearing detrimental to others. Her deep love for her Lord demands expression, and this she finds in uncounted ways of selfless laying down of her life in their interests. Yet, like a woman caring for her home and those she loves, she makes no list of services or care, nor would she recognize in her ceaseless role the thought of sacrifice.

HER JOY AND CROWN. The ultimate attainment of these beloved in Christ, this is her earnest prayer. Their crown will be her crown, and hers their joy. As drink offering on their sacrifice of faith, she pours out all she has on their behalf, and counts it privilege indeed to even know His saints. The thought that, in the preparation of His jewels, the Lord may take, and in the smallest way might use her as His tool of grace, to further His design, what thrill, what satisfaction brings. She owes so much, and never can repay that love of Golgotha. Her sacred privilege counted dear, to wash the feet of saints, pour out her spikenard on those lowly members of His Body in her reach, with tears of love His “feet” to thus embrace. She knoweth well such precious tasks will soon be past. The hour grows late, the shadows of Gethsemane await, this day must soon be closed. Thus, while it is called ‘day’, she works to smooth the way, to comfort and to cheer, whose lives to her are dear. The poor world yet will see the feast He has in store, when saints this side the veil will be no more. Thus purposeful, and watchful does she pray she might not miss one chance His saints to bless, His “feet” caress, when tired, sore, they cry out for that caring love. The House of God is a house of love, and filled with the sweet savor of its Head. The law of Christ that rules therein is thus fulfilled in mutual care, and burdens shared. -- Quiet moments of deep feeling, heart reaching out to heart, united in that blessed hope that brighter shines through tear-cleansed eyes. Such is the fellowship of love, the bonds now wrought that will forever hold and beautify the servants of the Lord. - Each one surrounded and constrained by ready arms and willing hands that speak the passing of each heart from death to life.

“ INASMUCH . . . ”

THE FOUNDATIONS . . . GARNISHED . . . WITH PRECIOUS STONES

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

Proverbs 31:28

Koph = hole of an axe . . that is, something which needs perfectly to fit so that the function of the whole may be achieved. The Father has *made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Each vessel *meet* for the Master’s use. (Colossians 1:12, 2Timothy 2:21.)

CHARISMA OF GRACE. Her ‘children’ are her fruit, the harvest-time result of grace within. This fruit reveals her for what she is. What is now reaped is that which with care and patience she has sown and watered, nurtured on with tenderness. Upon this fruitage now depends her fitness for that future ministry of glory.

GLORY OF HIS FACE. Reflected in her life the holy place of her abode and His. Planted in the House of the Lord she flourishes in His courts. His is the glory, hers the delight. The fruit she now brings forth in its due season is what she has drawn from the river of life whose banks receive her roots. The words “in Christ” have opened up to her their blessed secrets of unsearchable riches. The hour approaches. That hidden life in Him will then be manifest in all the beauty of an express image.

KINGDOM HARVEST. Then what wonders yet await, the half of which has not been told. The life He gives her yet will fill this earth with children of the Kingdom. Hers the precious privilege of bearing and nurturing that family of His love. His Spirit and His Bride await the hour of His command that shatters every tomb and brings new life upon this earth, eternal youth in glorious liberty, the whole earth filled with fruit. And this her Lord will see, and will be satisfied, and so will she. At ninety years dear Sarah bore her child. This woman will still be bearing fruit at nine hundred! To each child she will be mother. With each new life her part will weave that deep special relationship of love, and an eternal bond of peace, harmony, unity, oneness. Such is the fruit of love, abounding and abiding. Each one a living blessing. There in the midst of His great family see the Father's face, which now reflects from every child of grace, radiant with that joy so long He sought. And there the Lamb, by Whose own blood He bought the fallen race, and there His Bride, locked in His sweet embrace.

... THY CHILDREN, WHOM THOU MAYEST MAKE PRINCES ...

EVERY SEVERAL GATE WAS OF ONE PEARL

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

Proverbs 31:29

Resh = the head. The words of this verse are the words of Christ, her Head. There is no better judge of excellence, nor yet more tender heart to be touched by sight of broken reed, smoking flax, or those two tiny mites in the Temple treasury.

HIS BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE. In His sight virtuous women of other ages have graced the pages of history. Theirs was not the privilege of the race that we are called to run, but there they stand, so many witnesses of faith, by whose obedient trust and tireless zeal they shout encouragement and urge us on to that supreme devotion that alone will win the prize. And there does Miriam stand with tinkling timbrel in her hand to lead forth every grateful soul to join with her with their timbrels and with dance, and then with voices high, "Sing unto the Lord," they cry, "sing for His glorious triumph." (Exodus 15:20,21.) Does my zeal excel hers? There see Deborah too. To her all Israel came for counsel clear, and to her looked for leadership in battle with the foe. Her song of victory in my ears still urges on, as it did then, to yield a willing offering to His praise. (Judges 4&5) What priceless privilege is ours to take from them the torch of truth, and lift on high the sacred flame of love for God, and to His Name pour tribute as we trace the path they trod. There waves dear Ruth, and Hannah at her side, and there the Shunamite whose sheltering care gave comfort to the man of God. And Esther too, whose faith withstood the test of loyalty. These all call out to me.

REWARD FOR EXCELLENCE. Between the greatest of the ages past and least within this age of grace, the difference lies not by one wit in worthiness, but in the hope held forth and privilege. In this alone the woman of this age excels, where grace abundant more abounds. Hers is a calling high, a blessed mystery, that never was revealed in ages past. For her, the greatest prize of all reserved. For this was offered not to the angelic host, nor yet to righteous hearts of faithful ones who patiently endured so great a fight, but to the "woman" of this 'better' day, when type and shadow must give way to blest reality. Thus passing by more worthy souls, He came to me, that all His wondrous grace may see. The words of Baptist John speak for them all, when heralding the Bridegroom as His friend, foreseeing there the romance of this age, He then confessed "My joy is now fulfilled." He echoed thus the aged Simeon who with one glimpse of what was yet to be, though in its very infancy, with satisfaction did request that he now might depart in peace. How they will shine, those faithful ones of old, in princely role. What lessons were prepared in their dear lives for those now called to share that "better thing"! The glory that excelleth was reserved for His dear Bride. Such honour He bestows, and this she knows. Her life reveals the depth of her response. "One thing" she seeks, and runs with arms outstretched straight for the goal, nor runs indifferently but that she might obtain. It is her beauty that her Lord desires, within whose heart His own great love inspires that yielding of her all.

WHO . . HAVING FOUND ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE . . SOLD ALL

THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD

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

Shin or Schin = ? (No designation given) It begins the first word of the verse '*sheqer*', which means untrue, false, a lie, a denial of what is true. Used in many contexts, it is never condoned by the God of Truth. 'White lies' is a term that is itself a lie.

IN THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT. As scales from her eyes, all superficial concepts of true holiness did fall. No more by works of flesh did she pursue what sinful flesh could never thus obtain. She now could see such works were all in vain, and would to heaven's grace a hindrance prove, not gain. The Edom (old Adam within,) must yield, not wrestle with the Lord to yet usurp and thus by fleshly means obtain what He must give by grace. No sense of self-achievement finds a place in one whose struggles ended with embrace, who now will not let go until He bless. Aware now of her weakness does she cling and trust to His great strength. And cling she must 'till morning light reveals to her the face of God. For flesh and spirit war within as did those two within Rebekah's womb, nor cease the struggle 'til their work is done. The Lord of Truth sees not as seeth man. No vanity of superficial gloss, nor outward show will gain approval of the eyes of holy fire of Him Who knows our works and all we are. Begun in the Spirit, we will not complete the course we run with works of flesh. No room for pride will yet reside where He is Lord confessed. The street is straight that leads us to the goal. The way of holiness is a road of purest and transparent gold. - A workmanship, not human, but divine, through which its Maker's likeness yet will shine. Transparent character does He refine, with truth in inward parts. His gold is pure and furnace-trying.

THE SHINING WAY One blinding flash of truth enough, one glimpsing of the Savior's face, and persecution turns to praise, the works of flesh to Grace. It cometh not with outward show, His reign within. Yet through the life expressed, that fullness of the heart is manifest, in love for Him. There was no point the breaking of that seal of alabaster box, except to pour out all it held within. What if that box had empty proved to be? Then empty too the act, an outward form, a shell of godliness without its power. What shame, whatever ornament without engraced that box, if there within was nothing stored that would refresh and please her Lord. But in her heart the Lord could see its contents true and precious in His eyes. That blush betrayed her love, with tears that touched a chord so deep within His soul. For ages yet to be it will be told, the love that broke the box and overflowed from every heart where He was owned as Master and adored as Lord. So shall the King with great desire that inner beauty prize, where He doth reign, that burning flame reflecting from the eyes love deep within the soul.

MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE

A VIRTUOUS WOMAN IS A CROWN TO HER HUSBAND

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

Tau = a sign or mark, like that upon a seal, and that upon the forehead of the elect, - their Father's Name. This final verse looks beyond the present signs of divine favor and love to that ultimate sign when at the end she shall receive His "*Well done*", and the abundant entrance.

TRIBUTE TO A WOMAN'S LOVE. These are His words not ours. They follow love's outpouring through the life. The broken empty box is laid aside, and all that then remains, the savor clinging to the house, the views of men upon her wasted work, as in their eyes it seems, would soon forever be forgotten. But then it is the Master speaks His gracious words. Love's labor cannot be in vain, nor any

offering accepted in His sight. So little does it seem that she can do to show her love. Yet in that little He perceives her all, and makes immortal that unworthy deed. She hath done what she could, all that lay within her power to do, with all the courage that His love could give. It shall be told. That simple act of love that was a woman's life. Her all she gave, and in response His all with her He shares. The love of the woman is linked with the love of God's Lamb. Wherever the one is told so will the other, for here the love of both entwine. He is the light of her life, and she, the crown of His glory.

ABUNDANT ENTRANCE The moment comes, that blessed hour when toil in flesh must cease. She now is clothed with raiment of His own supply, which in her hands was beautified with grace. To faith was added virtue, knowledge, patience too, and every precious quality of mind. Each stitch in love for Him was worked, in strength of His enlisted grace. It is indeed *the product of His preciousness to her*, for which she claims no praise, save that deep understanding in His eyes. Therein lies all the treasures she has stored and laid up for that heavenly home she longs to share with her Betrothed. The first sight of her dear Beloved's face, the loving smile, the look of great desire, this vision has so long her heart inspired. The object of her race, that she might win Christ. That joy unspeakable awaits as glory's crown. Then looking back will she reflect how every day the prospect grew more bright since first they met. Until it turned to burning deep desire, that first small flame became consuming fire within her breast, His presence, living bright reality, and life transferred to love.

Now at the gates she meets Him face to face, and on His arm she still does lean, leaves desert scene for His embrace, and they together share the joys of that *abundant entrance*.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT; THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, 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.

EPHESIANS 5:25-28
